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Left-wing terrorism in Europe. Past and present

Lewicowy terroryzm w Europie. Przeszłość i teraźniejszość

Abstract
In the article, the author presents the genesis and development of one of the trends of terrorism, which in the literature has such terms as: left-wing, revolutionary, anarchist, Marxist terrorism and its development in Europe in the past and present. Additional attention is paid to the current activity of left-wing terrorists and the influence of this threat on the current security of Europe. In addition, the most important terrorist organizations of this trend that have operated in the past or are still active in Europe have been presented.

Keywords: terrorism, left-wing terrorism, Europe, security, threat

Abstrakt
W artykule autor przedstawia genezę oraz rozwój jednego z nurtów terroryzmu, który w literaturze przedmiotu funkcjonuje pod takimi określeniami jak: terroryzm lewicowy, rewolucyjny, anarchistyczny oraz marksistowski, a także jego rozwój w Europie w przeszłości i współcześnie. Szczególną uwagę poświęcono aktualnej aktywności terrorystów lewicowych oraz wpływowi tego rodzaju zagrożeń na obecny stan bezpieczeństwa Europy. Ponadto zaprezentowano najważniejsze organizacje terrorystyczne tego nurtu, które działały w przeszłości lub nadal są aktywne na terytorium Europy.

Słowa kluczowe: terroryzm, terroryzm lewicowy, Europa, bezpieczeństwo, zagrożenie

Introduction

Terrorism is currently one of the challenges in the international dimension, which has an extremely significant impact on the security of the modern world. It is not a new phenomenon, because its roots date back to ancient times and forms of this problem have been present in practically every historical era. This is a threat that, even now in a situation where the contemporary world is witnessing the Russian-Ukrainian war, can significantly destabilize the state and social order.

The main aim of the article is to show the origins of left-wing terrorism in Europe and its activity in the period from the 20th to the 21st century. The area to which the author devoted his research attention are the main causes, forms and goals of left-wing terrorism in Europe and the way in which they have changed over the years in the context of political and social changes. The author adopted the following specific questions:

1. Which left-wing groups used terrorist violence and what were their ideologies?
2. What were the social and political conditions for the emergence of left-wing terrorism in Europe?
3. How has left-wing terrorism transformed in contemporary political conditions in Europe?
4. What are the current forms of left-wing terrorism in Europe and how are they manifested?

Security of contemporary Europe – internal and external dimensions

Security is a notion that is subject to numerous conceptualizations and, depending on the threats that occur, ongoing attempts at redefinition. Security can be related to individuals (humans) and the organizations or states they create and can have a positive or negative context. This interpretation of security is analyzed through the prism of threats requiring the development of a defensive posture. Security perceived in a negative context has mainly a political and military dimension.[1]

According to Ryszard Zięba, security is "certainty of existence and survival, possession, functioning and development of an object. Certainty is the result of not only the absence of threats (...) but also arises as a result of creative activity and is variable in time, i.e. it has the nature of a social process."[2]

In the 21st century, the number of armed conflicts is not decreasing, including the deepening Palestinian-Israeli confrontation, the ongoing crisis in Syria and

[1] M. Cieślarczyk, R. Kuriata, *Kryzysy i sposoby radzenia sobie z nim*i, Łódź 2005, passim.

[2] R. Zięba, *Wprowadzenie. Pozimnowojenny paradygmat bezpieczeństwa międzynarodowego,* [in:] *Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe po zimnej wojnie,* ed. R. Zięba, Warszawa 2008, p. 16. See also: B. Buzan, L. Hansen, *Evolution of International Security Studies,* Cambridge 2009.

Yemen, and the active supporters of the so-called Islamic State. International terrorism remains a significant threat, being one of the main threats to international security, which the modern world is unable to effectively counteract.[3]

Security is a system of interconnected elements that are interrelated. Proper security management must be based on joint countermeasures to threats.[4] The scale of terrorist threats, problems with illegal migration, profiling of weapons of mass destruction, regional conflicts and organised crime are still current threats that make Europeans aware of the growing threat to this region. The current actions of the European Union (EU) resemble clumsy reactions to incidents that have occurred without a rational policy aimed at reducing these problems. The EU's internal security problems may result in an escalation of tensions within the Community, which may result in a regression of the integration process.[5] EU policy in the aspect of internal security constitutes a form of collegial support for the associated countries in their efforts to ensure security and public order.[6]

The European Security Strategy published in 2003 states that "terrorism threatens lives; it comes at great cost; it seeks to undermine openness and tolerance in our societies and it poses a growing strategic threat to the whole of Europe. Terrorist groups are becoming increasingly better equipped, more tightly linked through electronic networks, and more willing to use unrestrained violence to ensure that their actions result in mass casualties. The recent wave of terrorism is global in scope and is linked to armed religious extremism. Its causes are complex. They include pressures of modernization, cultural, social and political crises, and the alienation of youth living in foreign communities. This phenomenon is also present in our society. Europe is both a target and a base of terrorism in this sense: European countries are targeted and have been attacked. Logistical bases of Al Qaeda cells have been detected in the United Kingdom, Italy, Germany, Spain and Belgium. Harmonised action at European level is necessary."[7]

The contemporary development of economic and social relations in Europe influences the formation of new criminal structures, including terrorism. The ongoing

[3] M. J. Malinowski, *Bezpieczeństwo we współczesnym świecie. Istota zjawiska i jego uwarunkowania (refleksje osobiste),* „Civitas Hominibus" 2018, no. 13, p. 9.

[4] A. Potoczek, *Problematyka bezpieczeństwa w perspektywie zarzadzania zintegrowanego*, [in:] *Bezpieczeństwo w Polsce i Europie. Wybrane aspekty,* eds. G. Górski, K. Garczewski, A. Garczewska, A. Potoczek, Toruń 2019, p. 42.

[5] M. Joks, *Zagrożenia bezpieczeństwa Europy w aspekcie europejskiej strategii bezpieczeństwa*, „Zeszyty Naukowe ASzWoj" 2017, no. 4, p. 9.; See also: B. Panek, *Bezpieczeństwo Europy w II i III dekadzie XXI wieku. Zagrożenia i wyzwania*, Warszawa 2022.

[6] Z. Ślusarczyk, *Bezpieczeństwo wewnętrzne państw członkowskich w kontekście polityki bezpieczeństwa Unii Europejskiej*, „Zarzadzanie innowacyjne w gospodarce i biznesie", 2019, No 1, p.70.

[7] *Europejska strategia bezpieczeństwa,* Bruksela 12.12.2003 r., p. 31; as quoted in: M. Joks, *Zagrożenia ….* op. cit., p. 10 [own translation].

European integration and the abolition of certain natural barriers influence the development of organized crime. Threats from terrorists have been an additional reason for the creation of special working groups dealing with combating organised crime, the so-called TREVI groups, from the second half of the 20th century. In the case of terrorism, the TREVI I group established in 1975 played an important role. The 1992 EU Treaty introduced the so-called Third Pillar, which was to organize and formalize cooperation between member states in the field of internal security. The Schengen Agreement of 1985 was also to be a step enabling combating terrorism. The 1997 Amsterdam Treaty on Justice and Home Affairs included guidelines for combating terrorism. The EU Counter-Terrorism Strategy adopted in 2005 obliges the organisation to combat terrorism globally. This strategy includes actions such as protection, prevention, response and prosecution. The EU's significant steps in combating terrorism have a specific collegial significance, because the fight against terrorism is the domain of the Member States and their national authorities, which have specific legal and organizational instruments to combat this threat.[8]

Recent years have seen a certain regression in the area of security in Europe, which is caused by new and unprecedented challenges that are difficult to neutralize by the EU as a whole or individual states. One of them is terrorism, in addition to classic threats in defense. Threats to the security of contemporary Europe are an element of relations in an increasingly complex and interconnected world. In reality, the EU should aspire to play a more important role in guaranteeing security through its legal and organizational instruments.[9] Therefore, the EU is forced to take joint, determined actions within the framework of the Member States with full political will, aiming at the vision of being able to "ensure our own security" regardless of difficult and controversial decisions.[10]

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[8] P. Bryksa, M. Adamczyk, *Polityka bezpieczeństwa wewnętrznego UE – wybrane zagadnienia – obecny stan uregulowań prawnych i organizacyjnych*, [in:] *Wybrane zagadnienia polityki bezpieczeństwa wewnętrznego Unii Europejskiej. Szanse i zagrożenia dla Polski,* ed. P. Bryksa, Warszawa 2008, passim.
See also: *Komisja Europejska, Komunikat Komisji do Parlamentu Europejskiego, Rady europejskiej i Rady. Dwunaste sprawozdanie z postępu prac nad stworzeniem rzeczywistej i skutecznej unii bezpieczeństwa z dnia 12 grudnia 2017,COM (2017)779 final, Strasburg 2017; Komunikat Komisji Unii Europejskiej w zakresie bezpieczeństwa.* 2020. Luksemburg*; Oświadczenie przywódców UE o walce z terroryzmem.* 2015. Luksemburg*; Wspólne oświadczenie unijnych ministrów spraw wewnętrznych w sprawie ostatnich ataków terrorystycznych w Europie z 13 listopada 2020r*., https://www.consilium.europa.eu/pl/press/press-releases/2020/11/13/joint-statement-by-the-eu-home-affairs-ministers-on-the-recent-terrorist-attacks-in-europe/, [date of access: 27.07.2024];
Jak zatrzymać terroryzm: przegląd działań Unii Europejskiej, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/pl/article/20180316STO99922/jak-zatrzymac-terroryzm-przeglad-dzialan-unii-europejskiej [date of access: :7.07.2024].

[9] Z. Czachór, *Aktywność Unii Europejskiej na rzecz bezpieczeństwa i obrony. Analiza w świetle teorii instytucjonalizmu historycznego,* „Studia Bezpieczeństwa i Administracji" 2018, no. 4, p. 121.

[10] R. Willa, *Kilka uwag o europejskim bezpieczeństwie w kontekście nakładów państw członkowskich Unii Europejskiej na obronność*, „Atheneum. Polskie Studia Politologiczne" 2016, vol. 50, p. 100.

The attacks in New York on September 11, 2001, significantly contributed to the intensification of activities in the field of ensuring European security. In 2011, at the summit of heads of state and government in Brussels, the so-called Action Plan for Combating Terrorism was adopted. In addition, many types of crimes that are part of terrorist activities were defined at that time. As a result, the EU decided to introduce the so-called European Arrest Warrant throughout its EU territory. This has significantly improved the prosecution of terrorists, as well as other criminals, and their extradition. EU Member States have their own legal systems to effectively combat criminal activities such as terrorism.[11]

The new legal and organizational instruments introduced by European countries are to be a response to the existing threats to this continent in the internal dimension. The emerging challenges include civilization threats of the globalization era (e.g. the development of extreme ideologies, terrorism), political and military threats (e.g. the emergence of unexpected armed conflicts, terrorism), socio-economic threats (e.g. growing disparities in economic development), or ethnic and national conflicts. In the external dimension, the problems for the security of Europe are and will continue to be military and paramilitary threats (e.g. local wars and conflicts, threats in cyberspace), the economic effects of globalization (e.g. rivalry between world economic powers), the enormous polarization of political models (e.g. the eruption of various ideologies), large illegal and legal migrations from backward countries and regions (e.g. the emergence of multicultural societies, problems with integration), the progressive degradation of the natural environment (e.g. climatic anomalies), the successive marginalization of Europe's economic position (economic domination of Asian countries).[12]

Currently, the EU is trying to conduct cooperation in the area of internal security which would go beyond the borders of nation states and whose scope would be based on a network of connections between specific entities within the framework of joint ventures or entire policies. The EU clearly indicates that the fundamental planes should be: combating illegal immigration, neutralizing terrorism and other forms of organized crime or counteracting financial crime and corruption. Other elements contributing to EU security include police and judicial cooperation, civil protection and crisis management, energy security, asylum policy, intelligence cooperation and protection of classified information.[13]

[11] J. Karwat, *Problemy bezpieczeństwa Unii Europejskiej*, „Przegląd Strategiczny" 2011, no, 1, p.78; see also: T. R. Aleksandrowicz, *Bezpieczeństwo w Unii Europejskiej*, Warszawa 2018; G. Cesnakas, J. Jouzaitis, *European Strategic Autonomy and the Security of Small States,* London 2024.

[12] Z. Sabak, *Polityka i strategia bezpieczeństwa Unii Europejskiej,* Biała Podlaska 2018, p. 113.

[13] Ibid., p.136.

Important issues related to the EU's internal security have been addressed since the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009. Article 3(2) of the Treaty guarantees that one of the objectives of EU action is to provide European citizens with an area of freedom, justice and security while maintaining the free movement of persons, while taking into account specific measures relating to external border controls, crime prevention, as well as migration and asylum issues. This gives the EU the opportunity to act collegially in the event of cross-border and global threats.[14]

On 28 June 2016, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, presented the Global Strategy for the EU's Foreign and Security Policy to the European Council. The Council approved the Strategy, which replaced the EU External Security Strategy of 12 December 2003. The new strategy sets out five priorities for the Common Security and Defence Policy: EU security, resilience of states and societies in the EU's Eastern and Southern Neighbourhood, integrated EU approach to conflict situations, EU support for cooperation within regional orders, EU strengthening of global governance in the 21st century.[15]

The current EU strategic guidelines in the field of security are a significant step forward compared to its previous priority documents. It is significant that the current EU doctrinal assumptions in the aspect of the Russia-Ukraine war also speak of terrorism as one of the elements of the European security landscape.[16] The EU has now adopted the concept of an independent security system "turned inwards" to overcome crises. It is therefore necessary to organize the internal system and accept the adopted operating standards. An internal EU security system designed to combat threats through a process of efficient.[17]

Left-wing terrorism in Europe during the "neo-left wave" according to David C. Rapoport

The history of terrorism should be analyzed through the prism of the concept created by David C. Rapoport, who in 2002, in the text entitled "The Four Waves of Rebel Terror and September 11", concerning waves of terrorism, presented the assumptions that organize the history of this phenomenon.[18]

[14] Z. Ślusarczyk, *Bezpieczeństwo wewnętrzne…*, op. cit., p. 70.

[15] J. J. Węc, *Perspektywy reformy wspólnej polityki bezpieczeństwa i obrony Unii Europejskiej do 2025 roku. Autonomia strategiczna UE?*, „Politeja" 2022, no. 3, p. 213.

[16] K. Miszczak, *„Strategiczny kompas Unii Europejskiej. Większe bezpieczeństwo i obrona Unii Europejskiej do 2030 roku,* „Politeja" 2024, no. 1, p. 151.

[17] A. Drzewicki, *Unia Europejska a przyszłość europejskiego systemu bezpieczeństwa. Polski punkt widzenia*, „Dyplomacja i Bezpieczeństwo" 2014, no. 1, p. 113.

[18] P. Piasecka, *Narracja terroryzmu: ewolucja komunikatu przemocy,* „Civitas: studia z filozofii polityki" 2015, no. 17, p. 122.

The third wave of terrorism defined by Rapoport is left-wing terrorism, referred to in English as new left terrorism, which developed in the last four decades of the 20th century. The terrorism of the new left aspired to democratize social life. At its origins, as a movement of "social justice" and "pacifism", the left and terrorism were a specific form of symbiotic action.[19] Its prototypes can be seen in the rule of the Jacobins in France during the Great Bourgeois Revolution and the activities of the Committee of Public Safety, which used mass repression against political opponents, and in the activities of anarchists in the second half of the 19th century, who used acts of violence to combat what they believed to be state tyranny.[20]

Marta Zwolan believes that the subject trend includes "revolutionary terrorism – its goal in this case is revolution or at least achieving tactical victories in revolutionary struggle. Acts of violence are committed by groups with leaders and an ideology or program. These are usually special, secret paramilitary groups created within the revolutionary movement. At the same time, alongside the armed struggle, a political struggle is waged."[21] Jakob Guhl of the Institute for Strategic Dialogue proposes that left-wing terrorism should be viewed as "a belief system that dogmatically asserts that communist or socialist political values have absolute moral superiority. This accordingly divides political actors into binary moral categories and seeks to achieve a monopoly on control of society. Left-wing extremists commonly reject key principles of liberal democracies, including the separation of powers, universal human rights, and political pluralism. They often express sympathy for authoritarian regimes and the conspiracy theories they promote."[22]

Since the 1960s, left-wing terrorism has become an exceptionally media-friendly method of political struggle in Europe and beyond. Specific streams of left-wing terrorism from that period, both from Latin America, Europe, and the Middle East (in this case, the Palestinian secular stream associated with the bloody Israeli-Arab conflict in that region), differed significantly in the goals of their actions. However, they used a similar modus operandi, characterized by a significant intensity of violence.[23]

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[19] Ibid., pp. 123-124.

[20] T. Wałek, *Pojęcie, geneza i klasyfikacja zjawisk terrorystycznych*, „Securitologia" 2018, no. 2, pp. 116-117.

[21] M. Zwolan, *Współczesny terroryzm międzynarodowy – metody i sposoby zwalczania*, „Facta Simonidis" 2015, no, ?, p. 190.

[22] J. Guhl, *Left Wing Extremism,* https://www.isdglobal.org/explainers/left-wing-extremism/ [date of access: 16.04.2024]

[23] R. M. Michnikowski, *Zabójcze idee. Co próbują przekazać nam terroryści?*, Łódź 2020, p. 14; See also: B. Bolechów, *Terroryzm – trendy, ekstrapolacje, próby prognozy,* [in:] *EURO 2012. Mistrzostwa w cieniu terroryzmu,* ed. K. L i e d e l, Warszawa 2007, p. 7*;* M. Sedgwick*, Inspiration and the origins of global waves of terrorism*, „Studies in Conflict & Terrorism" 2007, vol. 30, no. 2, pp. 97-112.

Left-wing terrorism is not currently considered the dominant trend of global terrorism. However, it is reasonable to perceive the role in history and the scope that left-wing terrorism has achieved and can achieve, in specific times and regions. Certain arguments of a political, social, economic and cultural nature are the driving force for leftist ideologies, the substantive justification for their existence and the sanctioning of aggressive attempts to evolve a situation perceived as socially unjust.[24]

The left-wing terrorism that emerged in the 1960s was represented in Europe by organizations such as the Red Army Faction in Germany (RAF), the Red Brigades in Italy, and Direct Action (AD) in France. The global bipolar balance of power against which these organizations operated began to destabilize in the 1980s.[25]

Left-wing terrorism was inspired by doctrines such as Marxism, Maoism, Trotskyism, Guevaraism and anarchism. Due to the fact that the forms of revolutionary struggle in Europe in the second half of the 20th century could not be a faithful reflection of these patterns, left-wing terrorists were forced to seek new methods of action. This was also influenced by slightly different situations in individual European countries, related to political, social and economic conditions. This influenced the formation of certain methods of action, such as street fights and building barricades.[26]

The RAF was an extreme left-wing terrorist organization that emerged in West Germany in the wake of protests caused by the police killing of student Benno Ohnesorg on June 2, 1967. Its activities were a unique phenomenon of a bloody and cruel rebellion of an ideologized minority that saw itself as oppressed against the dominant political power of the Federal Republic of Germany.[27] The RAF was an organization that originated from the student community and operated in a highly dispersed manner. The RAF terrorists were inspired by Vladimir Lenin's views on the theory of imperialism, his existential interpretation, and elements of philosophy and Jean-Paul Sartre, i.e. actions against and against alienation. On the other hand, the Red Brigades in Italy enjoyed considerable support from workers' circles.[28]

In Italy in 1970 the Red Brigades were founded, the most famous Italian left-wing terrorist organization in Europe. For the first four years the Red Brigades

[24] J. Piwowarski, P. Pajorski, *Terroryzm lewacki. Wybrane zagadnienia*, Kraków 2014, pp. 7-8.
[25] Ibid., p. 9.
[26] Ibid., p. 40.
[27] E. Fiuk, *Od „Niemiec jesienią" do «Niemiec 09». Historia Frakcji Czerwonej Armii i jej filmowe multiplikacje"*, „Kwartalnik Filmowy" 2010, no. 69, pp. 165-166.
[28] P. Lipold, *Antropologia rewolucji w RFN i Polsce w latach 1970-1070 w perspektywie porównawczej i historycznej*, „Rocznik Polsko-Niemiecki" 2014, no. 22, pp. 103-104.

were active in criminal attacks on industrialists' properties and kidnappings, but they did not organize political murders. In 1974, the Red Brigades declared open war on the Italian state, in which they began to use assassinations of politicians, an example of which was the kidnapping and then murder of Italian Prime Minister Aldo Moro in 1978. The end of the Red Brigades' activity is considered to be 1984.[29]

In France, unlike in Germany or Italy, left-wing terrorism emerged somewhat later. In 1973, the first organizational units of the left-wing trend appeared, such as the Group of Internationalist Revolutionary Action (GARI), whose founders were Spaniards residing in France. The International Brigades, Armed Cells for Proletarian Autonomy, and Direct Action were also established successively. Spanish terrorism, which had a fundamental ethnic-nationalist and separatist background, also had strong leftist implications. This movement began in the late 19th century in the Spanish province of Basque Country, where the Basque Nationalist Party was founded, later renamed the Basque Country and Independence (ETA). The organization's goal was to fight for the independence of the Basque Country and to establish a Marxist people's republic.[30]

In 1985, the RAF unsuccessfully planned to merge with Action Directe and the Red Brigades and Communist Combatant Cells from Belgium to create an "anti-imperialist front of Western European partisans."[31]

Left-wing terrorism in contemporary Europe

The economic crisis in Europe was one of the reasons for the reactivation and activity of leftist organizations. In Greece alone, there are currently about 380 terrorist groups of a leftist-anarchist nature. An example is the organization Conspiracy of Fire Cells, also called the Conspiracy of Fire Cells or the Conspiracy of Fire Cells. In 2010, this organization organized several terrorist attacks. One of them was the attacks on diplomatic missions in Athens, where packages with hidden bombs were sent. In this way, the package was directed to, among others, the Chilean embassy. In addition, parcels with bombs were sent to the then French President Nicolas Sarkozy and to the then German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Another parcel with a bomb was addressed to the former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi.[32]

[29] J. Szumski, *Międzynarodowy terroryzm w polskiej literaturze i prasie lat siedemdziesiątych XX wieku (wybrane przykłady*, „Polska 1944/45-1989. Studia i Materiały" 2016, no. XIV, p. 177.

[30] B. Kucharczyk, *O niektórych aspektach walki z terroryzmem*, „PRACE NAUKOWE Akademii im. Jana Długosza w Częstochowie. Seria: Res Politicae" 2009, vol. 3, p. 228.

[31] M. Jaworski, *Ewolucja ugrupowań terrorystycznych*, „Bezpieczeństwo. Teoria i Praktyka" 2009, no. 3-4, p. 40.

[32] M. Kijewska, *Lewicowy terroryzm w Europie Zachodniej w drugiej połowie XX i na początku XXI wieku. Podstawowe informacje i kierunki rozwoju,* „Radzyński Rocznik Humanistyczny" 2018, no. 1, p. 209-210.

The form of observation of contemporary reality carried out by extreme left organizations can be illustrated by the words of leftist activist Eldridge Cleaver, leader of the Black Panthers, an African-American leftist extremist political organization from the 1960s, which are relevant to them: "For centuries and generations we have been looking at and examining shit from all sides. I am convinced that most things, (...) do not need to be analyzed any longer."[33]

In Germany, there is also a visible leftist trend, active especially in large urban areas. In cities such as Hamburg and Berlin, the extreme left manifests so-called "anti-fascism", which for them means right-wing attitudes, capitalism, consumerism, and alleged control of citizens by the state. Those perceived as modern left-wing terrorists typically operate individually and commit criminal acts such as vandalizing luxury cars in affluent neighborhoods. The Free German Youth, seen as supporting this trend, set fire to construction equipment in Brandenburg prepared for the dismantling of a monument to pre-war communist Ernst Thälmann. Private companies, including Siemens, as well as transport and energy concerns, banks and telecommunications companies, also became targets of attacks by leftist cells.[34]

The activity of left-wing and anarchist extremists focused on, among other things, dismantling 5G antennas, destroying power grids and private apartments in urban agglomerations. Left-wing and anarchist extremists actively engaged against their alleged political opponents and led to numerous clashes with the police. In 2019, 1 person was arrested in Austria on charges of left-wing terrorism, 4 in Greece, 98 in Italy and 8 in Spain. In 2020, 52 people were arrested on charges of activity in leftist and anarchist organizations, the most in Italy, 24 people, 14 in Greece, 11 in France, 1 in Portugal and 3 in Spain. In 2021, 19 people suspected of links to leftist and anarchist terrorism were arrested in the EU, including 6 people in Belgium, 3 in France, 1 in Greece, 6 in Italy and 3 in Spain.[35]

In 2022, a total of 19 people were arrested in EU countries on charges of leftist and anarchist terrorism, of which 1 person in Belgium, 3 people in Germany and Greece, 12 people in Italy. In 2023, 1 person was arrested in Germany, 2 people in Greece, 10 people in Greece and 1 person in Spain. Attacks carried out by leftist and anarchist terrorists were directed against state institutions and in protest against the capitalist system. Leftist terrorists used attacks using Molotov cocktails, which were thrown at uniformed services officers, planted improvised explosive

[33] J. Piwowarski, P. Pajorski, *Terroryzm lewacki…* op. cit., p. 88 [own translation].
[34] M. Kijewska, *Lewicowy terroryzm …* op. cit., p. 210.
[35] *Raport Europolu z 2022 roku o sytuacji i trendach w zakresie terroryzmu w Unii Europejskiej,* https://www.europol.europa.eu/publication-events/main-reports/european-union-terrorism-situation-and-trend-report-2022-te-sat,s.61-62 [date of access:24.04.2025].

devices, so-called IEDs, on state infrastructure and commercial companies, e.g. in the telecommunications, gas and energy industries. The targets of the attacks were entities representing or linked to state authorities, such as the police, army, judiciary, prisons, etc. In Italy, left-wing militias also organised riots as a sign of protest related to the arrest in that country of an activist of the Informal Anarchist Federation. A similar attack in solidarity with the aforementioned organization was carried out by left-wing terrorists in Spain. Most of the attacks carried out by anarchists and leftists included acts such as arson, property damage, or bombing. These last forms of attacks have mostly ended in failure for terrorists. In 2021-2023, Europol recorded 4 cases of left-wing attacks using bladed weapons. According to Europol, the goals of left-wing and anarchist terrorists reflect the anti-capitalist ideology of the perpetrators. According to Europol, attacks on police institutions during demonstrations and riots are not necessarily related to the ideology of these organizations but are also an example of the method of action.[36]

The leftist movement enjoys the support of various autonomous organizations with profiles such as ecological or anarchist, which support leftist circles in organizing actions that disrupt order. Examples of such activity were blocking transports of radioactive materials or organizing protests during NATO summits. Left-wing radicalism in recent years in Europe has been tolerated by politicians and society, despite acts of violence, which could have influenced their activity and, consequently, the growing trend of this threat. It cannot be ruled out that left-wing terrorism may become a significant problem for the security of Europe in the coming years.[37]

The political and social changes taking place in the contemporary world influence the evolution of methods and possibilities of left-wing terrorist groups and others. Local armed conflicts and other determinants give terrorists the opportunity to acquire new types of battlefield means, which makes the circumstances of combating this threat increasingly difficult.[38]

In recent years, the level of security in Europe and its neighbourhood has deteriorated significantly, which is associated with unprecedented threats that no country or organisation is able to cope with individually. Europe is grappling with challenges at home that are extremely difficult to neutralize. In addition to the classic defense threats, there are challenges such as terrorism, organized

[36] *Raport Europolu z 2024 roku o sytuacji i trendach w zakresie terroryzmu w Unii Europejskiej*, https://www.europol.europa.eu/publication-events/main-reports/european-union-terrorism-situation-and-trend-report-2024-eu-te-sat#downloads, pp. 43-45 [date of access: 24.04.2025].

[37] M. Kijewska, *Lewicowy terroryzm …* op. cit., p. 211.

[38] J. Piwowarski, P. Pajorski, *Terroryzm lewacki…* op. cit., p. 114.

crime, hybrid threats, economic instability, cyber threats, and energy insecurity and climate change. They are further threats to security in an extremely complex and interconnected world, in which Europe should make every effort and take an active role to guarantee security and ensure stability and democracy.[39]

Summary

The fundamental foundations of left-wing terrorism, its determinants, forms and goals in Europe, despite certain constant features, e.g. ideological assumptions, have changed over the years in the context of political, socio-economic changes. However, it still shares elements common to other trends of terrorism. These elements include violence, threat, fear psychosis, and ruthlessness in achieving the assumed goals without any reservations about the number of victims. As a result, this phenomenon remains a huge challenge for the security of contemporary Europe.

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