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**TERRORISM PROBLEM IN LATIN AMERICA: SOCIAL CLASS
SPECIFICITY OF REGION**

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Abstract

This article focuses on analysis of terrorist group influence and counter-terrorism methods in Latin America region. Several research consider the problem of the existence of such issue with its social basis and driving forces in Central and South American countries, and evaluation with regard to the current situation is given.

More than 500 terrorist groups and organizations exist in the world nowadays. These organizations pursue different goals and use various means and methods to achieve them. The proportion of using means and methods of terrorist's activity vary in different countries and in different periods of history, because of ideologies, traditions, culture, geographical aspects, etc., which constitutes such striking regional differences of modern political terrorism.

The main feature of Latin American terrorism, widely known since 1960, is its political conditionality, reflected in the fact that political regimes of this region remain class structure of society, left by colonizers. Such structure led the majority of society to poverty, encouraging the fight for exportable resources of middle and high classes.

Social uncertainty in the region, inadequate "political culture", social and ethnic discord had just worsened political instability and defined the prevalence of violence ("violencia") in political life.

According to the authors, several factors have influenced on remaining status and role of terroristic groups in this region. They are the problem of coexistence on the same territory of different cultures, social instability, provided by actions of transnational corporations, and political relations nature, influenced by local oligarchic groups.

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1. Introduction

Terrorism is one of the most dangerous social problems, which has objective in its origin and development. Contemporary manifestations of this issue are sufficiently broad in scope and have political, confessional and religious specifics. Latin America, being a combination of ethnic, social, confessional and economic problems, has become the one of the regions with a long lasting history political terrorism.

Residents of the region tend to temperamental and emotional expression of life. This reflects on social and political life, especially when there are considerable social and political conflicts, and ranks of disadvantaged people, ready for markedly different actions – from total inactivity towards authorities to rebellion upsurge and revolutionary actions, where terroristic methods of waging a political struggle are frequently used.

Political and cultural underdevelopment of indigenous population was an important problem of region development for the long period, hence the most of social movements centered on influential figures. Republican and constitutional structure proclaimed by authoritarian regimes was just a cover for the operations of highly corrupted elites and oligarchic “democracies”. In this scheme the bulk of population was manipulated by local politicians. Consequently, with the growing youth unemployment in Latin America during the second half of the twentieth century, leftist ideas of various kinds became extremely popular. These ideas remain popular till the beginning of 1990’s. Their political tactics, which sometimes has no chance to legality, was reduced to terroristic acts, faced negative attitude from the public’s majority.

Left-wing terrorism (to a much lesser extent than counter right-wing terrorism in the form of “death squads”) found recruits among desperate fringe elements, unsettled, enthusiastic about revolution romanticism youth representatives and very young adolescents, whose ranks proliferated because of negative social consequences of the ruling quarters policy.

2. Problem Statement

The problem of social and political situation in Latin American countries, despite certain recess in recent decades of violent activity in internal policy, had not been fully resolved. Any economic crisis or important political campaign (election of the President or parliament) often results in outbreak of “violencia” in the region. This became a major factor to the rebirth of terrorism in some countries as well as in the whole region. That is why the identification of the social basis of this kind political violence is an important issue.

3. Research Questions

The subject of this article is the specificity of political terrorism manifestation in Latin America at the end of the twentieth century.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this article is to distinguish terrorism manifestation specificities in Latin American Region on the basis of scholar’s studies of terrorism, as social and political event.

5. Research Methods

The following methods have been used when writing the article: historical, logical and analytical. Multidisciplinary approach was applied for analyze political theory, sociological, historical, and regional prospective. Study of terrorism development within Latin America required analyzing terrorism as social and political aspect; this is possible when using the concept of historicism and logical methodology. Analytical method considers different factors, which were subdivided into principal and secondary, temporary and sustainable, profound and latent, controlled and uncontrolled. This allows making an objective evaluation of the phenomenon under study.

6. Findings

In Western Europe and USA right-wing and left-wing terrorist groups were established on the common basis, and aimed to seize power by force and to destroy existing regime. They had the same goals, except these goals were right or left. In Latin America right-wing (punitive) forces and left-wing groups fundamentally differs. Right-wing (punitive) forces, basically, is a new wing of terrorism, as they struggle for the maintaining the existing regime and not for overthrowing the government.

Right-wing (punitive) forces, so-called «death squads», were established in Latin America when the authorities, consisting of middle and high-class representatives, felt that their positions were jeopardized, and that government was unable to protect them. The first punitive forces appeared in Brazil in 1960's and were formed from the local police agents. They were working on recruiting representatives of military forces, and over the time many countries of Latin America got used to them.

The left-wing terrorist movement mainly consisted from people aged between 18 and 25-30 years old, the majority of them were intellectuals: engineers, doctors, teachers, bank clerks and students. In right-wing sector people aged between 40-45 and 50 years old prevailed, and the majority of them – former military employees and retired soldiers. As to gender composition, women dominated in the left wing, while in «death squads», they almost were not presented.

All punitive forces of Latin America had a solid economic and theoretical foundation. Members of these squads studied the works of Ernesto Che Guevara (“Guerilla war”) and Juan Carlos Mariella (“For the liberation of Brasil”, “Minimanual of the Urban Guerilla”), and they had found that terrorist opposition can exists due to obedience and inactivity of government structures.

The key role of punitive squads was physical annihilation of opposition forces, while government couldn't provide this. The practice of annihilation of political opponents was soon supplemented by range of innovation. “Death squads” members concluded that permanent fear atmosphere has the same level of impact, if not more, as the physical destruction of opponent. This violence became an emblematic, and murders were compounded by victim tortures. In the counter-revolutionaries view tortures were the most effective way to meet the opposition. It was “more profitable” than ordinary killing, because potential victims had already knew what was expecting them, if they end up in the punitive squads hands. Thus, the use of abductions and following torturing had become the favorite device of “death squads”.

For example, the faction “Order”, operating on the territory of Salvador (the Republic of El Salvador) was composed of National Guard representatives, policemen and civilians sharing the right-wing ideology. The main tactics, used by the faction, involved abductions of suspicious individuals, identified as

being involved in revolutionary activity or sharing leftist ideas. Faction victims were tortured and then murdered or given to the police with far-fetched accusations. Factions left their victims somewhere outside the capital. Usually the forehead or the chest of the dead were carved with letters EM, which is the initial letters of Spanish words “death squads” (escuadrón de la muerte). Group was involved in planning and carrying out the assassination of San Salvador Catholic Archbishop Óscar Arnulfo Romero in march 1980. He had special concern for social justice and advocated the organization of assistance for low-income people.

Punishing squads’ activity in the region resulted in mass murders and “disappearance” of people. Thus, in the late 1970s, on the peak of Argentina punitive squads activity, thousands of people had been disappeared without a trace.

“Death squads” constitute a special form of Latin American terrorism, and must be considered in conjunction with other forms of Latin American violence. These squads coexist with governmental authorities and, therefore, separated from governmental terror, which on its turn is the constant problem of Latin America Region (Kudimov, 1991).

According to E.Duffs and J.McCamants, Latin American violence is the result of constant political instability of the region. Most of the political violence (violencia), including terrorism, was the result of specific internal situation of the country (Duff & McCamant, 1976).

In order to provide peaceful life for the Nation, as they said, more stable economic, developed social institutions, and governmental policy, which should stand for the welfare for the majority, are required. After quantitative analysis of the major variety of sources, Duff and McCamant concluded that in socially cohesive societies governments are fewer oriented on a political violence. They believe that the main Latin American problem is based on the factor that the policy of the majority of Latin American governments weren’t aim the inner cohesion of the Nation, but increases instability and split.

This was also stated in works of Uruguayan politician, writer and journalist Eduardo Galeano. (Galeano, 1997)

According to the concept of the well-known social philosopher and terrorism ideologist Franz Omar Fanon, left-wing terrorism in Latin America and in the most of the, so called, “third world” countries, acts as a mean of decolonization. This idea was expressed in two of his the most famous works: “The wretched of the earth” and “A dying colonialism”.

Western authorities, F.Fanon thought, dehumanize non-western people, destroying their traditional cultures. Ethnic values were viewed insignificant and were replaced by western values. To achieve these goals West creates local middle class, who is western ideals carrier, and who brings these ideas to general population. Middle class forgot its own (native) culture, intellectuals, who’d got an education in Western universities, orients on western traditions. Sooner or later general population understands the severe crisis of their country and, in order to succeed, begins to fight back their traditions.

When the nationalist idea emerges, the rebellions begin, but first these ideas were spread throughout the “third world”. According to Fanon, Africa’s, Asia’s and Latin America’s exploitation demonstrates the importance of joining forces to overthrow colonialism. Fanon emphasized that anti-colonialism forces need to stand united for one purpose and against common enemy – the West (Woodis, 1975).

F.Fanon claimed that decolonization was predetermined to be violent, because it includes the process of replacing one powerful group of people by another. No group would willingly give their power away, so, as F.Fanon states, the rebellions could be called national liberation or state reinstate, but anyway it would be a violent process.

F.Fanon wrote that rebellions are violent because the colonization was violent too, and also because the low-income people had no other guide except for violence. In this case only violence could fight violence. Government overthrow couldn't lie in abstract nationalism forms, it should be pragmatic, and so violence was and remains a pragmatic act. Political acts and peace efforts became useless, as being repeatedly used and were found wasteful. Only when the suppressed nation realizes that the violence is the only possible way, the nation wins. (Fanon, 1982).

F. Fanon was sure that guerilla warfare and individual terroristic acts are the instrument of revolution. Guerilla warfare is the initial phase, because revolutionaries couldn't afford full-scale military actions at the beginning of their power struggle. Guerilla warfare usually emerges in remote rural areas and slowly spreads into big cities, terrorism, in its turn, is just a specific act, supporting warfare activity.

F.Fanon claimed that terrorism should not be used against local people. Just as Mao Tse-Tung he believes that terrorism won't benefit in fight against the enemy, but scale down the number of supporters. Fanon defined two goals for the terrorist attack: white settlers and local middle class. Both of them has already "attached" to colonial power, therefore terrorism (as the institute) couldn't accept them; in fact, it tries to subjugate them through violence. Individual murders, terrorists' acts and punitive forces response made white settlers left the country and frightened the middle class in such a way, that they would be forced to abandon former colonial patrons. Thus, violence became the pattern of behavior. It's commonly used by government and emerges in a series of repressions, which is stirring up popular resentment and as the result even more people adjoins guerrilla squads.

Other equally famous revolutionary reorganization of society ideologist, Brazil communist and the author of famous "Minimanual of the Urban Guerilla" is Juan Carlos Marigella. He thought that revolutionists should initiate fighting in the cities, "as they are now the heart of the system" and at the same time they are the weakest part, because it is the cities where the most pressing class conflicts appears in the most striking form. Following the principal that "a handful of fighters could ruin an avalanche"; Marigella believes that 10 fighters is enough to start a struggle, so there's no point in making the whole guerilla army. Revolutionaries can push a public spontaneous rebellion, by means of terrorism. Marigella and his followers almost completely denied Fanon's ideas and believed that terrorism is unable to combine people and instill them with the spirit of revolution.

E. Halperin in his study "Terrorism in Latin America" claims that "display of terrorism in Latin America related to the intense competition for the extremely limited financial recourses" (Halperin, 1976). This researcher believes: to understand this statement you should analyze historic experience of Latin America political regimes. Having achieved the power in any Latin American country, new leaders reward their followers and share the best positions between those, who supported the regime.

E. Halperin emphasizes that scheme has evolved from the class relations of the XIX century. Modern revolutionaries use Marxist or any other ideologies, but the real problem of Latin America is the never-ending struggle for limited recourses.

To prove these E. Halperin had studied class relations and the role of education in the region. According to him, Latin America still has two-level class system in 1970's. This system consisted of higher classes and the rest of the population. Except for Argentina, as this researcher believe, working class representatives and those from rural areas had extremely limited access to political power, so authorities could easily ignore their wishes and demands.

Thus, Latin American authorities had usurped power and learnt how to neglect lower classes interests, so they take care only of higher classes interests. This is why high class and almost non-existent educated middle class remain loyalty to Latin American authorities. Consequently, all governmental policy was aimed to appease these particular classes, which primarily was accomplished through providing economic opportunities.

According to E. Halperin, high and middle classes hold their positions due to education, which was greatly respected in Latin America (symbol of belonging to the top of the society), as it allowed to ensure the functioning of the government. The problem of the region developments is that the economy couldn't integrate all graduates quickly enough. This resulted in unemployment in middle and high classes, which is possible, because economic resources of Latin America are extremely limited. So the intense competition for the recourses among elite and middle class begins.

The particular importance of Latin American studentship must be noted. Most of the time, it stands for ideas of freedom and equal justice. However, these ideas have never really been achieved, because the real student activism goal is to achieve the power to their group and, in a consequence, to achieve personal power and prestige. That doesn't mean that students ignores ideas of justice, they just couldn't reach the goals, no matter how hard they tried, and the blame is on limited resources and poverty of the population.

The left-wing Latin American terrorists' majority are students with no social connections, but striving to success. That's why local terrorist groups were rarely supported by working class. One of the most famous Latin American terrorists' organizations is Uruguayan "National Liberation Movement – Tupamaros". This organization was the first in the World, who begin to use urban guerilla tactics. During the peak of its popularity, organization had 5 thousand members, and only 12 of them were workers.

It must be pointed out that in due course, when the key players' positions appears to be equal, so called "fatigue with conflict" may come. And then a part of guerilla groups, as well as some government representatives and over the time entrepreneur and military elites, middle class members may come to the understanding of impossibility of further armed violence continuation and necessity of finding a way out of the conflict by political means.

7. Conclusion

Therefore, Latin America is a peculiar variant of terrorism development, which is hard to understand without considering culture, traditions and the specificity of the region. From our point of view, these problems might include such issues as:

- The problem of poverty, caused by the social class structure, where the majority of region society lives in an extreme poverty. That provides the revolutionary situation, as J. LeFeber claimed (LeFeber, 1983).

- Multiculturalism. Latin America is an intertwining of different cultural models: the Iberian heritage and cultures of different local Indian groups.
- Neocolonialism: constant willingness of the USA to interfere with the affairs of the region, based on own interests, both political and economic. Any regime with anti-communist ideology regardless of its domestic policy would be supported by the powerful “northern neighbor”. (Jonas, 1991, 2012) (Oborotova, 1989)
- Constant political instability in most of the region countries, endless competition for the resources among high and middle class members and repressive State apparatus application in order to maintain power (Epshteyn, 1998).

It can be assumed that the struggle for economic benefits among higher classes would never stop, which provides the basis for political violence in Latin America. This is where the reasons of terrorism and guerilla war lies, they are simply a reflection of the high classes struggle for limited resources.

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