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**HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE  
OF COUNTERING YOUTH POLITICAL TERRORISM  
BY THE POLICE OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC  
OF GERMANY AND CONCLUSIONS  
FOR PRESENT-DAY RUSSIA  
(TERROR GROUP ‘RED ARMY FRACTION’  
TAKEN AS AN EXAMPLE)**

*Morozov I.L.*

*‘Red Army Fraction’ is a youth extremist left-wing terror group that was active in the 1970–1980s on the territory of the Federal Republic of Germany. The terror group and its ideology originated mostly in Western German university circles. Most representatives of the group were descendants from wealthy families of high social standing.*

*The ideology of the group included a mix of concepts related to social equity, preventing autocratic tendencies in the government machinery and interventions of Western countries against developing ‘third world’ countries and peoples. State security system of West Germany was unable to suppress the terror group for over two decades.*

*The group finally announced its voluntary dissolution in 1998 due to a dramatic change in socio-political climate and general crisis of the left-wing political ideology. The growth of oppositional sentiments among present-day Russian young people is partially similar to the students’ unrest that had place in Western Europe in the 1960s and gave rise to terrorist groups.*

*This makes the study of West Germany’s experience in countering the threat important.*

**Keywords:** *Red Army Fraction; RAF; youth; protest; extremism; terrorism; social justice.*

**ИСТОРИЧЕСКИЙ ОПЫТ ПОЛИЦИИ ФРГ  
ПО ПРОТИВОДЕЙСТВИЮ МОЛОДЕЖНОМУ  
ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОМУ ТЕРРОРИЗМУ  
И ВЫВОДЫ ДЛЯ СОВРЕМЕННОЙ РОССИИ  
(НА ПРИМЕРЕ ТЕРРОРИСТИЧЕСКОЙ ГРУППИРОВКИ  
«ФРАКЦИЯ КРАСНОЙ АРМИИ»)**

*Морозов И.Л.*

*«Фракция Красной Армии» – молодежная террористическая группировка левоэкстремистской направленности, проявлявшая активность в 70–80-х годах XX века на территории Федеративной Республики Западной Германии. Генезис состава группировки и идеологического обоснования ее деятельности произошел преимущественно в студенческой среде западногерманской молодежи, большинство представителей группировки были выходцами из материально обеспеченных семей с высоким социальным статусом.*

*Идеология группировки представляла собой конгломерат требований социальной справедливости, противодействия росту авторитарных тенденций в государственном аппарате, прекращения интервенции стран западной цивилизации в отношении развивающихся народов «третьего мира». Система государственной безопасности Западной Германии больше двух десятилетий не могла подавить данную террористическую группировку, которая в итоге заявила о самороспуске в 1998 году ввиду кардинального изменения социально-политической обстановки и общего кризиса левой политической идеологии. Рост оппозиционных настроений в среде современной российской молодежи по ряду параметров частично демонстрирует схожесть с процессами студенческих волнений в Западной Европе 60-х годов XX века, ставших катализатором формирования террористических группировок, что актуализирует изучение западногерманского опыта по противодействию данной опасности.*

**Ключевые слова:** Фракция Красной Армии, RAF, молодежь, протест, экстремизм, терроризм, социальная справедливость.

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In the 1960s relatively successful Western Europe that had overcome the destructive economic, social and political ramifications of WWII and was gradually implementing a so-called ‘social state’ model aimed to introduce social support for low-income citizens and thus relieve social tension, faced large-scale student riots that took place under far-left protesting slogans. The phenomenon of ‘student revolution’ of 1968 (the peak of protests) has been of interest for Russian and overseas specialists researching protest movements for several decades and has evoked a large number of theories, whose authors saw the initial cause of the unrest either in economic, social or purely psychological factors or the combination of those [2, p. 30–54]. However, the spontaneity and chaotic character of student riots suggest that one of the core reasons for them might also lie in the ‘intergenerational conflict’ that overlapped with the existential crisis of emerging ‘consumer society’ [pp. 246–247].

It would not be reasonable to equate social and political development processes of the Western Europe and those of Russia, but European student riots of the 1960s and present-day Russian youth protests share certain characteristics in common:

- they are self-organized and follow ‘social networks’ principle;
- most claims against state machinery are rather of moral and ethical character than of economic one (corruption, autocracy, the government being far from people in present-day Russia; fascization and sliding towards dictatorship in Western Europe; however, in both cases the claims are about restraining vertical social mobility of young people);
- most protesters are students;
- the movement has inarticulate program or completely lacks it, populist leaders originate spontaneously.

Inevitable crisis and recession of youth protests in Western Europe by late 1960s towards its end gave rise to a dangerous phenomenon – the most radical and relatively few adepts became illegal and formed terror groups. The best known groups of such kind were closely connected with educational institutions (Table 1), where would-be militants took primary ‘protest course’ – ‘Red Army Fraction’ (Rote Armee Fraktion – RAF) in Western Germany and ‘Red Bridages’ [9, S. 18–21; 10, S. 43].

Table 1.

**Social origin of the members of left-wing terror groups in Western European countries in the 1960-1980s – percentage ratio [5, p. 60]**

Social Origin	FRG	FRANCE	ITALY	SPAIN
Students and intellectuals	54.6	55.8	52.4	53.5
Professional criminals	18.6	16.4	20.2	15.6
Small and medium entrepreneurs	10.1	9.9	11.2	14.3
Higher class ('bourgeoisie')	9.5	7.9	7.2	6.3
Public civil servants	6.3	5.5	7.9	4.2
Workers	0.9	3.6	1.1	1.2

On April 2, 1968 the first terrorist attack was made by the group that included A. Baader, G. Ensslin, T. Proll, H. Zenlein, would-be leaders of a so-called 'Baader-Meinhof Group' [1, p. 14–18]. On June 5, 1970 the terrorists made their first official statement about creating Red Army Fraction and its tasks.

Emergence of terror groups was an attempt of the 'new left-wing movement' with their street protest-actions of the 'student revolution', that had exhausted its protest potential, to overcome a deep crisis. The reason for the transition to extremism was that intellectuals among Western German young people were irrationally displeased with the life around because of the systemic crisis in all layers of the industrial society – economic (loss of privileged economic status on the labour market), cultural (lack of ideological concept of spiritual bonds in life – philosophical phenomenon of the 'loss of way'), political (governing elite of the FRG having become less legitimate; aggressive international policy of Western countries).

Of special note is that every terror group had to invent ideological grounding for their terrorist activities [8, p. 49]. U. Meinhoff, the main ideologist of RAF, perceived FRG in the form it existed in the 1960s as a direct successor of Hitler's Reich, with the same content under the guise of formal democratic procedures. The basis of state machinery and its staff remained unchanged and had been connected with the Nazis in the past: *'...office holders – nolens volens – have taken the Federal Republic over from the fascists, Bundeswehr was headed by the officers who by their age and health had all marched in front of Hitler; they kept the teachers who*

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*started their lessons with a Nazi greeting. For their own financial benefit, they allowed to integrate industrial concerns, which had been disintegrated for previously supporting fascism...* [3, p. 192]. There might be at least a grain of truth in this statement as many of surviving anti-fascist Germans were in one or other way connected with the communist movement and were not allowed into the state machinery of FRG.

RAF and such terror groups were difficult to counter by standard methods of state authorities. Agents and informers penetrated into terror groups to detect, arrest or liquidate their leaders, however this only led to the 'succession of generations' of political terrorists. The decline of RAF and the whole left-wing youth terrorist movement happened no sooner social and political situation changed, the trust of the citizens to state bodies increased and social aid programs were introduced, which finally led to general loss of interest in protest ideologies. This conclusion can also be applied to present-day Russia with its religious radical terrorism, which has become the forefront threat like left-wing radical terrorism in FRG of 1960s [7, pp. 61–70]. However, the change in the ideological grounding of terrorist movements still makes the search for the solution on how to counter those through implementing appropriate social policies critically important [6, pp. 111–117]. General recommendations could include the following:

1. The most efficient way to combat any kind of sustainable (self-replicating) terrorist movements is to detect and eliminate underlying intrastate economic, social and psychological reasons.
2. It is crucial to cooperate with the political opposition, but not ignore it as suppressing it can only have negative effects and could make oppositional groups more radical. For example, during the time period in question the communist party was banned in West Germany, so German social democrats formed a coalition with the right-wing parties of Christian democrats and socialists. Such political move, although justified tactically, made young people believe that legitimate parliamentary opposition had merged with state authorities and became unable to protect the interests of protesting layers of the society, which eroded the trust of young protesters to the parliamentary opposition.

3. Present-day Russia needs a national idea based on the principles of social equality with a positive image of the future. A number of negative criminal phenomena like the popularity of Russian criminal youth subculture (a so-called AUE) suggests that there exists the threat of losing spiritual control over the growing generation of the Russian people.

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### **DATA ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

**Morozov Ilya Leonidovich**, Doctor of Political Sciences, Associate Professor, Professor

*Volgograd Institute of management of the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration*

*8, Gagarin Str., Volgograd, 400131, Russian Federation*

*politkon@mail.ru*

*ORCID: 0000-0001-8241-5880*

#### **ДАННЫЕ ОБ АВТОРЕ**

**Морозов Илья Леонидович**, доктор политических наук, доцент, про-

фессор кафедры государственного управления и политологии

*Волгоградский институт управления – филиал ФГБОУ ВО*

*«Российская академия народного хозяйства и государствен-*  
*ной службы при Президенте Российской Федерации»*

*ул. Гагарина 8, г. Волгоград, 400131, Российская Федерация*

*politkon@mail.ru*

*ORCID: 0000-0001-8241-5880*