

# EXTREMIST SCENE IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC AND ITALY

Jan Fuka <sup>a)</sup>, Alfredo D'Ascoli Graziano <sup>b)</sup>

<sup>a)</sup>University of Pardubice, Faculty of Economics and Administration, Institute of Economy and Management <sup>b)</sup>Centre for advanced studies on terrorism and political violence, University Campus of Pomezia

**Abstract:** *Extremism issue is becoming an important part of state policy in European Union. There should be also distinguished basic forms of extremism and its threats for different states of European Union. The Czech Republic extremism is characterized mostly by extreme right - wing and left - wing groups or parties and there can be expected its growing. This paper also aims at identifying and analysing the sources of terrorism threats posed to Italy, either international and national sources of threat. Italy's military presence in critical areas, such as Lebanon and Afghanistan, references to Italy made by Al Qaeda on the media, and the presence of Jihadist elements in the national territory are some of the sources of terrorism threat identified in this paper. In terms of "domestic" terrorism, this paper examines a recent phenomenon that recalls the late 1970s Red Brigades terrorism. Finally, this study analyzes the threat of individuality or anarcho-insurrectionist groups and concludes that it is still of high relevance. The aim of this paper is to describe The Czech Republic and Italian extremist scene.*

**Keywords:** *Extremism, Terrorism, the Czech Republic, Italy, Scene, Comparison, Threat.*

**JEL Classification:** *H56.*

## 1. Introduction

Extremism and terrorism have become part of modern European history. If this issue in some countries regarded as marginal, since 11th September fight against these phenomena has become an important part of domestic and foreign policy. Although the extremism and terrorism tend to generalize, EU countries have in this area its unique features.

This article was created as a part of The International University Network and the aim is to describe and compare extremist scenes in the Czech Republic and Italy. This work shows an example of the Czech Republic and Italy in order to describe diversity of extremism and terrorism in EU.

## 2. Extremism in the Czech Republic

Extremist scene in the Czech Republic shortly before and after the fall of the communist system in 1989 is characterized by closeness, low severity of extremist acts and small dangerousness for the society. Extremists, who at that time were mainly members of the skinhead movement, had very limited linkage with foreign countries. This led to the scene in the Czech Republic was almost exclusive presence of the typical right-wing extremism which was particularly apparent racist attitudes against Roma and foreigners. During nineties, extremist scene in the Czech Republic began to

diversify, radicalized, becoming more dangerous and there was an adoption of certain formulas from abroad, trend which is typical for the present. *"A significant feature of violent attacks is increasing of brutality manifested as attacks against physical integrity, and private property of citizen."* [1] Despite the fact that in today's Czech Republic can be identified extreme left-wing and religious extremism, extreme right wing remains the majority.

## **2.1 Right-Wing Extremism in the CR**

As I mentioned in introduction, extremist scene in the Czech Republic can be divided into:

- Extreme right wing
- Extreme left wing
- Religious extremism

### **Extreme Right Wing**

Development of the extreme right wing in the Czech Republic is characterized by the progressive radicalization and increasing level of violence during the 90th years. Despite racially motivated crimes did not become mass matter, it is necessary to treat such acts with a high dose of attention. *"The total number of crime committed in the Czech Republic as a crime with an extremist subtext, including racially motivated crimes is statistically insignificant number. Notwithstanding this fact, it is necessary to extremist attacks treated as a very serious and socially dangerous phenomenon, which in itself carries a certain degree of latency"*[1] Since 2000, extreme-right wing scene split with greater vigor to open and hidden racist parts. This happened for two basic reasons. The first is that law enforcement pressure, have begun to monitor extremists and racist activity has become more successful. The second is an effort to gain broad public support and the opportunity to enter politics. Hidden racist scene begins to dominate in 2003. The proof are election results of extreme - right Workers' Party of social justice (DSSS) below and the indirect evidence is the declining number of crimes with an extremist subtext. Covertly racist parties can balance on the edge of the law and do not cross it.

Both groups are typical of racist attacks. J. Chmelik in his book [1] defines three basic forms of racially motivated attacks, namely:

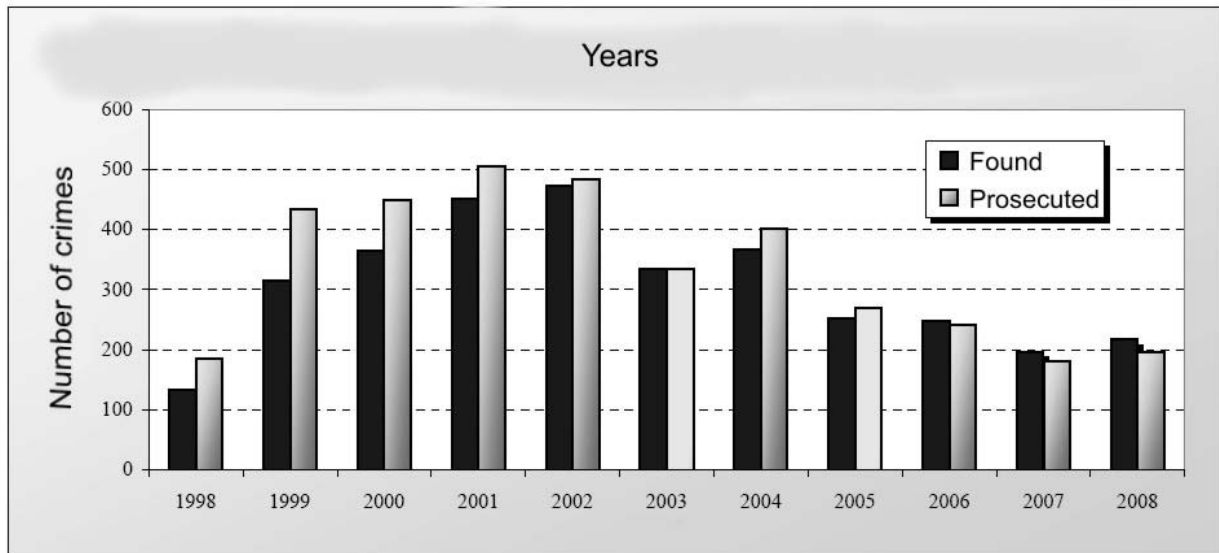
- Verbal abuse (verbal).
- Attacks against the physical integrity (brachial).
- Graphic (media).

Czech extremist scene is represented by all the above three forms. Frequency of each is different due to the fact that group or individual are openly or hidden racist. Open racism is typified by all forms of attacks but brachial attacks dominate. Hidden racism distances itself from physical attacks and mostly use verbal and graphic forms.

Typical feature of far-right extremism in the Czech Republic is "Roma racism". Coexistence of Roma and the majority in the Czech Republic is generally problematic. *"(The experience with Roma and possibility of a good coexistence with them.) - As regards the coexistence of Roma, 73 % of the respondents who had with them everyday experience (less than half of total number of those interviewed), they*

regarded the experience as bad.” [5] Although racially motivated crimes are also aimed against immigrants and anti-Semitic, Roma are the most frequent victims, which is due to the position of Czech society towards Roma logical. Along with economic globalization and the increasing number of foreigners in the Czech Republic there can be expected that there will increase attacks also against other minorities

**Fig 1: Detected crimes with an extremist subtext and their perpetrators - Czech Republic in years 1998-2008**



Source: (Strategy to combat extremism: <http://www.mvcr.cz/soubor/strategie-extrem-2009-pdf.aspx>)

### Open Racism in the Czech Republic

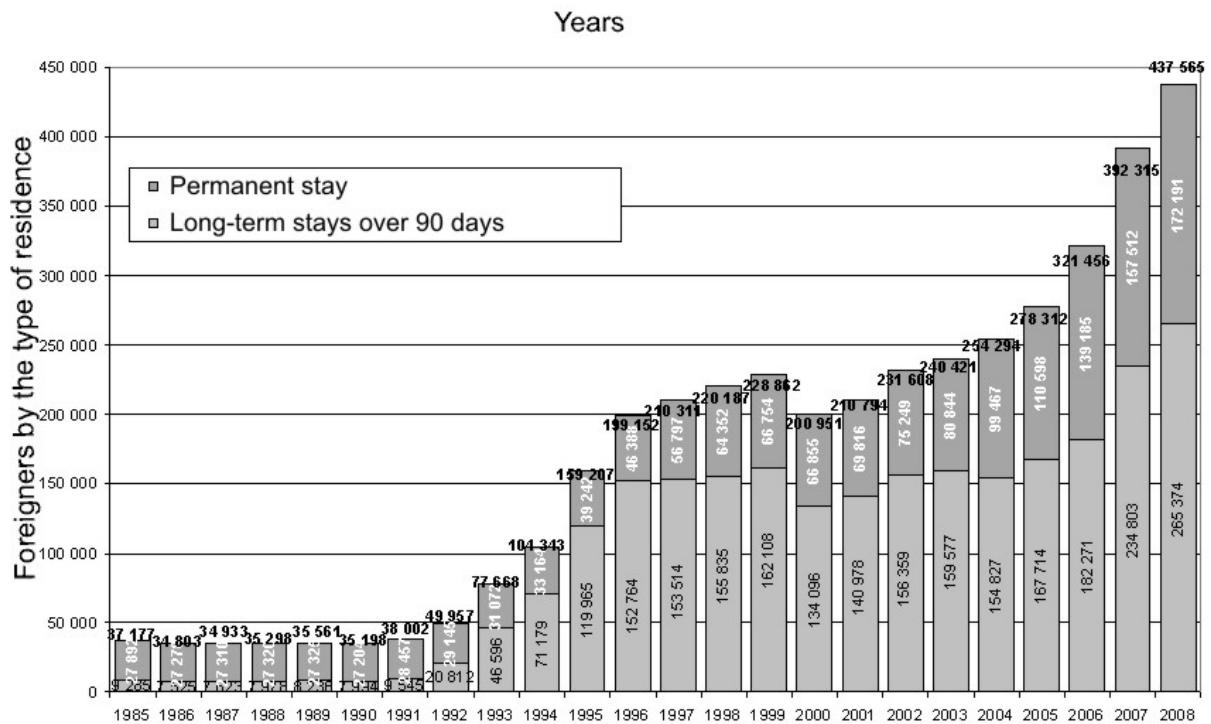
Openly racist attitudes are represented especially by members of right-wing part of skinhead movement. Skinheads are not homogeneous group, which originated in Great Britain in late sixties of subculture known as Mods. They were young people who had shared often not very good social status. Over time, this subculture led to establishment skinhead movement, which in its pure form was not racist or xenophobic, but rather it was a protest against former conservative British society.

The crisis in the seventies and wave of immigration in the UK has meant that part of the movement became to be radical. Immigrants were accused of socio - economic problems. It led to the foundation of political party - British National Front. It was extremist party, which made no secret of nationalism, racism and its base were mainly right-minded members of the skinhead movement. Because there were still strong movement of traditional skinheads, who distanced themselves from political ambitions of the British National Party, racist skinheads were renamed to boneheads who have openly proclaimed German fascism.

In the Czech Republic territory skinhead movement started to in larger scale after 1989 but without similar genesis, which passed the Skinheads in Western Europe. In the Czech Republic, the development was skipped and in the early nineties, the skinhead movement has formed as racist. In the Czech Republic was founded a number of openly racist associations and movements, some with national and European importance. *"Organizations with national importance were Bohemia Hammerskins (especially in the years 1993 - 1996), Blood & Honor Division Bohemia*

(from 1996 to 1999), the National Resistance (since 1990) and more recently the Anti - antifa." [2]

**Fig. 2: Foreigners in the Czech Republic**



Source: (Czech Statistical Office <http://www.czso.cz/csu/cizinci.nsf/tab/B900334F9B>)

### Hidden Racism in the Czech Republic

Ambition of hidden racist associations is to operate on current Czech political scene. Such parties distance itself from open expressions of racism, xenophobia, nationalism or homophony. Extreme right - wing movements in Europe have similar ideology and the Czech Republic is not exception. Although intellectual roots are similar, they differ in details. Common themes are resistance to the European Union, globalization and NATO. The differences are due to national specifics. *"It Causes Slovak and Romanian nationalists against the Hungarian minority in the Slovak and Romanian, Hungarian demands for revision of the Trianon Treaty, or anti- Germany sentiment linked to Czech and Polish right - wing extremist."* [3]

At this time, these parties in the Czech Republic are mainly represented by Workers' Party of social justice (DSSS). DSSS was founded in 2003. Chairman is Tomas Vandas. The aim is to get as much public support. From a macroeconomic perspective, official priority is to tackle unemployment and to change foreign policy. Partial agenda is reinstating the death penalty, health care reform, education, the abolition of the Senate. Party is openly against minorities, particularly Roma and homosexuals. Preferences increasing demonstrate election results. Overall, DSSS won in 2010 elections to the Chamber of Deputies of Parliament 59,888 votes, in percentage.

## 2.2 Left-Wing Extremism in the CR

Extremist left - wing in the Czech Republic is represented primarily by orthodox anarchists, communists, and eco-terrorists. In general, left side contains more diverse spectrum of opinion than the right side and in number of cases it is rather radical groups or individuals. This applies especially to anarchist and anarcho autonomous ideological currents. *" So called left - wing extremist scene brings, rather political radicals than extremists, their criticism leads to correct the errors in the existing system, but the means for correcting errors are unusual due to the promotion of alternative lifestyles based on various social values."* [4]

Among left-wing radicals can be sorted also eco-terrorists. Eco-terrorism in the Czech Republic is since its inception in 1989 strongly linked with the anarchist movement. Their activity is uncoordinated and lies in the protest blockades, demonstrations and media spreading of their views. Perhaps the most significant events in the CR, was an attack against Biotest Ltd. This company is engaged in research and development in the field of toxicology and pharmaceuticals. This company breeds laboratory animals, which was the main reason for the attack, during which the property damage was over 200 000 CZK (80 000 EUR).

## 3. Terrorism in Italy

Although the complete retreat of Italian military contingent from Iraq represented an undoubted element of terroristic threat decrease, caused by international Jihadist weaving factories, the level of risk whose our Country expose itself is high. This, first of all, due to Italian military's commitment in several critical areas, such as Lebanon and Afghanistan, where a fresh outbreak of Islamic violent events has been noticed for some months.

Concerns also result from the latest US military action in Somalia, against Al Qaeda battle stations, all that to avoid the real risk that further "military front" in Islamic land represent a new call-up to "holy war" for old and young jihadists.

Moreover, in the same framework, we cannot neglect references to our Country, and especially to Rome, noticed in media sorties of Al Qaeda underworld, on the occasion of invectives periodically directed against Catholic Church and its Pope. The results of intelligence and investigative police activities, on the other hand, keep on underlining a persistent practicality of elements having reference to radical structures, potentially dangerous for the security, on our territory.

As mentioned above, in fact, the investigations allowed to identify some North Africans which, among their embryonic terroristic projects, had included targets of high symbolic value, such as the Basilica of San Petronio in Bologna, that houses the famous fresco of Mohammed in hell.

The investigative outcomes have shown that Italy is considered an operationally viable option, according to the Jihadist strategy, with the aim of ending hostile actions, inspired not only by the will in influencing its political-military choices, but also by mere retaliatory dynamics. Jointly with this, it is possible to understand how concrete is the risk of terroristic attack in Italy, considering the offensive ability showed by the

attacks' authors in Madrid on March 2004 and in London on July 2005, or those ones foiled by the Britannic1 and German police in summer 2006<sup>2</sup>. Concerning the investigations on the attacks, that have been foiled by the Britannic authorities, data resulting from these researches have not made out specific threat elements concerning Italy, but they have pointed out another preoccupation, based on the involvement of young people- the most part from Pakistan, who were born in England or have been living there since long time- who recently have started a path of radicalization. This circumstance lead to a deeper examination of the monitoring of all the aggregation environments whose radical inspiration is sure, in which a process of Islamic fundamentalist indoctrination finds a possible realization. In this domain, it is impossible to ignore the phenomenon related to mujahedeen groups: after their participation in the religious and interethnic conflicts, they went to Italy and to other European countries where they spread jihadist ideologies, tanks to their charisma. The attention is currently for those mujahedeen groups who came back to Europe and to Italy after the conclusion of conflicts that were already ended (Bosnia, Chechnya and Algeria), also with the aim of preventing a dangerous connection with the possible future veterans of the Iraqi and Afghan conflict. Beside the threat of the Islamic fundamentalist terrorism, it should be collocated, also, the threat coming from the possible repercussions in Italy of the conflicts that take place in other nations. The possible entry of Turkey in the European Union, indeed, is contributing to elevation of the risk connected to the possible "exportation", also in the old continent, of terroristic actions both from the most violent parts in the Kurdish separatism, which are not so disposed to accept the unilateral ceasefire, established by the separatist movement for a political solution of the conflict, and from Marxist-Leninist groups, as DHKP/C, that are well-known opponent of the Turkey integration in Europe<sup>3</sup>.

### **Red Brigades For the Construction of the Fighting Communist Party**

In terms of "domestic" Terroristic, in recent years in Italy there has been a phenomenon that recalls the late 1970s Red Brigades terrorism. This phenomenon is almost entirely ended in 2006, with the imprisonment of the RB-FCP leaders (Red Brigades for the construction of the Fighting Communist Party- militarist wing) and with the dissolution of the organization. The general probative framework emerging from the investigations and the suits, that have been carried out so far, has confirmed that the successes obtained against the RB-FCP allow to consider the subversive group as disjointed. It can be said that only some lower-ranking militants "have shunned" the identification, and before October 2003 they were already out of the organization. A short-medium turn revival of RB-FCP armed struggle strategy did not seem to be likely. From investigations it emerged a correspondence exchange that dated back to a period after D'Antona's murder, between the RB-FCP and another group named "Red Brigades fighting revolutionary organisms for the constitution of the fighting Communist Party". This group had never appeared before and its aim was the development of a possible communication relationship between the two unities.

Although this contact seems to be interrupted, it is not possible to deny that the absence of terroristic acts from this group could be connected to a "freeze" of the political and military activity, after the RB-FCP annihilation. Noteworthy is the role of "address" played by the militants in the "circuit prison" – that is the "irreducible" prisoners- who have always given ideological support to the external "militants" and

recently have addressed their own documental production also against the prison regime, regulated by the law 41bis in the Code of Civil Procedure. An extensive campaign against the application of the law to the “political” prisoners, that involve different parts of the most radical antagonism is ongoing. In this domain the activism of association is distinguishable.

### **The Second Position (Movimentist Wing)**

From a different point of view, the perspective of the so called RB4 “second position” has to be considered. This position supports the construction of a party in a strong relationship with the masses’ necessities and a not necessarily violent praxis, using an useful army intervention for the political project. The turmoil, that seems to characterize the movimentist range, appears to be confirmed by the large diffusion of propagandistic material, through both official channels and clandestine publications, only for the restricted environment in the revolutionary area. This is the case of “L’Aurora” review, whose first three editions have been acquired. In the three issues the starting of a revolutionary project is postulated. The final goal of the project is the armed rising, but it is nowadays based on violence, “with the aim of making politics and not yet the war”, that is on the necessity of taking roots in some environments of extremist antagonism, which are inclined to “take action”, so that they can give vent to their revolutionary impatience through the armed propaganda instrument. The pamphlets revive the strategy that during 1980s claimed itself in open contrast with the RB-FCP militarists wing line, the RB “second position”. Correspondingly, the attacks against “Vannucci” barracks in Livorno, “Galileo Avionica” firm in Milan and the Journalist Renato Farina, appear to belong to the activity of the terroristic formations, that have been noticed in the RB movimentist wing positions. These attacks are part of a significant propaganda activity, within a project of radical fight, which is potentially subversive-terroristic.

Concerning the present political situation in Italy, a concrete danger of “domestic” terrorism coming from right extra-parliamentary group, is not found.

### **The Anarcho – Insurrectionist Movement**

The threat of individuality or anarcho-insurrectionist groups is, in a perspective view, still of high relevance. In fact, if on the one hand, we can say that police actions, in latest years, as well as a significant importance in judicial response, have achieved an undoubted precautionary effect, on the other hand, it is obvious that fragmentation of groups and horizontal and informal diffusion of the anarchical “galaxy”, form a consistent organizational system.

The acronym AIF – Anarchical Informal Federation– particularly, since its first appearance in December 2003, as its compilers intent, means to represent an open “cartel”, in which all the individualities or groups can identify themselves, regardless of their direct mutual acquaintance, on the only basis of fight campaign sharing, all in general aimed at attacking, through direct action to State, its authorities and capital. This informal view of social structure attack opens up to every violent counter system instinct that– out of Marxist Leninist organizations “Party plan” –can identify itself on the basis of selected aims. However, the latest documental production about this field, underlines the wish “to break with” attitudes considered waiting, by an increase of actions level against traditional insurrectionist targets, and, especially, “counter-

repressive” (having reference to judiciary-prison system, political control of illegal immigration and temporary stay centres) “anti-imperialist” and “ecologist” campaigns.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Extremist scene in the Czech Republic and in Italy may have different characteristics and dynamics nevertheless they all pose serious challenges for both societies and states.

Nowadays, in the Czech Republic, extreme right wing and extreme left wing are the most represented forms of extremism. Yet, the extreme right wing is still the majority. In the recent decade, the extreme right wing scene developed with greater vigor into open and hidden racist parts. A typical feature of far-right extremism in the Czech Republic is the "Roma racism", although it is expected its hatred and attacks to be increasingly directed at foreigners and minorities.

In terms of covertly racism, election's results conveying a strengthening of the extreme right wing political party Workers' Party of social justice (DSSS) witnesses the development of such trend. Covertly racist associations aim at operating inside the Czech political scene. Usually such parties do not use open expressions of racism, xenophobia, nationalism, or homophobia, nevertheless DSSS is openly against minorities, particularly Roma and homosexuals. The fact that such parties are increasingly conquering more people's votes should be source of concern.

On the opposite side of political spectrum, extremist left-wing in the Czech Republic is mainly represented by orthodox anarchists, communists and eco-terrorists. In general, in Czech Republic, extreme left wing contains more diverse spectrum of opinion than the extreme right wing and in number of cases it is rather radical groups or individuals.

As to the extremist scene in Italy, there are mainly two sources of extremism: the Islamist terrorist threat and the anarcho–insurrectionist movement.

Concerning the Islamist terrorist threat posed to Italy, there are some elements of concern. Firstly Italian military presence in several critical areas. It is true that the complete retreat of Italian military contingent from Iraq represented an decisively element of terrorist threat decrease however the Italian military presence in other theatres such as Lebanon and Afghanistan keeps the level of risk high. Secondly, explicit references to Italy, and especially to Rome, made by Jihadist terrorist groups in the media is an unsettling piece of information. Thirdly, Italian authorities have detected in the country the presence of Jihadist elements, suspected of belonging to terrorist cells and of preparing embryonic terrorist attacks against Italian targets. Moreover, the arrival in Europe and in Italy of mujahedeen groups after the conclusion of conflicts in places like Bosnia, Chechnya and Algeria is another element that should be under the authorities attention.

As to “domestic” extremist scene, Italy had witnessed in the recent years a phenomenon that recalls the late 1970s Red Brigades terrorism. However, this phenomenon was almost entirely ended by 2006, with the imprisonment of the RB-FCP leaders (Red Brigades for the construction of the Fighting Communist Party-militarist wing) and with the dissolution of the organization.



Nevertheless, the RB “second position” (movimentist wing) is still very active and diffusing its propaganda and ideas, through both official and clandestine channels. Although initially its position supported the construction of a party in a strong relationship with the masses’ necessities and a not necessarily violent praxis using an useful army intervention for the political project, the truth is that nowadays its final goal is based on violence. Recent attacks taking place in Italy proved to integrate a significant propaganda activity, within a project of radical fight, which is potentially subversive-terroristic.

Finally, the threat posed by individuality or anarcho-insurrectionist groups is, in a perspective view, still very relevant. Although police actions and judicial response have achieved an indisputable precautionary effect, we currently assist to a fragmentation of groups and horizontal and informal diffusion of the anarchical “galaxy” that is forming a consistent organizational system. For instance, AIF (Anarchical Informal Federation) aims at being an open “cartel”, in which individualities or groups can identify themselves with, on the basis of fight campaign sharing, aimed at attacking the state, its authorities and capital.

Extremist scenes in the the Czech Republic and Italy has its typical features and also similar ones. One of the them is criminalization of their activities. Although extremist scene may only be responsible for a statistically small number of crimes both in Czech Republic and in Italy, it does not mean that it is a less threatening or dangerous phenomenon. Rather the opposite. By describing the extremist scene in Czech Republic and in Italy, this study shows that extremist scene and attacks are a socially dangerous phenomenon, posing serious challenges to our societies nowadays.

<sup>1</sup> The attacks (foiled by the Britannic police on August 2006) should have happened contemporaneously with the explosion of devices in different airplanes, presumably belonging to English and American airlines and leaving from stopovers in United Kingdom for United States, with the involvement of several suicide attackers.

<sup>2</sup> On the 31st of July and on the 1st of August 2006 at Dortmund and Koblenz stations respectively, two explosive devices have been founded in regional trains. The first one did not explode because of a flaw in the mechanism of activation, while the second one was defused by the experts. The German police’s investigation was directly addressed to the Islamic extremism environments and in the following days it allowed to arrest five Lebanese citizens, two of them taken in Lebanon. Recently, the Court of Assizes of Perugia has condemned a Turkish citizen to 7 years imprisonment for international terrorism, for his assessed central role in the Turkish terrorist group DHKP/C and his role of European “collector” for fugitives of organization or for units, operating in their native country.

<sup>3</sup> Recently the Court of Assizes of Perugia has condemned a Turkish citizen to 7 years imprisonment for international terrorism, for his assessed central role in the terroristic group of DHKP/C, and of his role of European “collector” for fugitives of organization and for units, operating in their native country.

<sup>4</sup> Between 2001 and 2003 two terroristic groups emerged in the Lombard area. They were referable to the RB movimentist wing, that is the “Revolutionary Front for the Communism” and the “Revolutionary Communist Nuclei”, which had claimed responsibility for a series of attacks against union offices, temporary agencies and other political targets. These groups were in a perfect harmony with the ideological line, that had historically characterized the 2<sup>nd</sup>

position, and they acknowledged the RB-FCP historical experience as a fundamental part of their heritage. Nevertheless, they wandered from the “militaristic drift” of the new RB, by proposing a new “alternative” way, consisting of the “armed propaganda” tactical instrument that is the realization of lower grade terroristic actions, characterized by a high symbolic content. In a few words, the “armed propaganda” should be essentially useful for the diffusion of the party line among the masses, and so for the gradual growth of the revolutionary forces in the perspective of the takeover.

## References

- [1] CHMELÍK, J. *Extremismus jeho právní a sociologické aspekty*, 1. vydání, Praha: Linde, 2001, 172 s., ISBN: 80-7201-265-7
- [2] MAREŠ, M. *Pravicový extremismus a radikalismus v ČR*, 1. vydání, Barrister & Principál a Centrum strategických studií, 2003, 661s., ISBN: 80-86598-45-4
- [3] TEJCHMANOVÁ, L. Projevy extremismu v České republice v evropském kontextu, In *Extremismus jeho kořeny, projevy a východiska řešení*, Policejní akademie České republiky, Praha 2001, ISBN 80-7251-088-6, s. 217-229
- [4] DANICS, Š. *Extremismus: hrozba demokracie*, 1. vydání, Praha: Police History, 2002, 128 s., ISBN 80-86477-07-X
- [5] MAREŠOVÁ, A. *Kriminologické a právní aspekty extremismu* [online], [cit. 2010 – 11 – 10]. Available at www: < <http://www.ok.cz/iksp/docs/233.pdf> >
- [6] GOVERNO WEB SERVER [online]. Available at www: <<http://www.governo.it>>

## Contact Address

### **Ing. Jan Fuka, DiS.**

University of Pardubice, Faculty of Economics and Administration, Institute of Economy and Management  
Studentská 84, 532 10 Pardubice, Czech Republic  
E-mail: [jfuka@seznam.cz](mailto:jfuka@seznam.cz)  
Phone number: +420 466 03 6480

### **Alfredo D'Ascoli Graziano, Ph.D.**

Head of Terrorism & Security Unit, Ce.A.S., Centre for advanced studies on terrorism and political violence, University Campus of Pomezia “Selva dei Pini”, Italy  
E-mail: [a.dascoli@unipomezia.it](mailto:a.dascoli@unipomezia.it)  
Phone number: 00390691255522