

Abstract

Although Japan is not a state which would often be associated with terrorist attacks, several extremist and terrorist groups formed in the country in the second half of the 20th century. One of them was the ultraleft terrorist organization called Japanese Red Army, which was founded in the 1960s as a part of the student leftist movement, and the second was Aum Shinrikyo, a religious millenarian organization founded in the economically prosperous 1980s as one of the so-called new new religious groups. Both these groups, circumstances of their establishment and the way they chose targets of their terrorist attacks are the studied subjects of this work. The first part of this study focuses on the theoretical description of terrorism. In the following chapters, I focus on both groups, specifically on two selected terrorist attacks, in which I examine the influence of the following factors on the choice of their targets: ideology, quality of leadership, quantity and quality of members, weapons available and financial base. Concerning the Japanese Red Army, the thesis focuses on the terrorist attack on the Lod airport (1972) and the attack on the U.S. and Swedish Embassy in Kuala Lumpur (1975), regarding Aum Shinrikyo, it is the attack on the Sakamoto family (1989) and the Tokyo subway sarin attack (1995). In the final chapter, I compare whether the two groups have some common features and what factors had the most influence on the choice of the targets of their attacks.