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Adrian C. Brooks III   April 10, 2018

In Search of a Phenomenological Model of Radicalization

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Abstract

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The field of phenomenology is primarily concerned with understanding the limitations and values of individual perspectives. Radicalization is a process which is largely dependent upon individuals. Therefore, a phenomenological analysis of the radicalization process may be an effective method for understanding how to hinder radicalization. This could prove particularly valuable considering the recent increase in political violence within the United States. This work develops and proposes a phenomenological model of radicalization based upon accounts from the Italian Years of Lead, a period of increased political violence committed by far-right and far-left militants between the late 1960's and early 1980's, under the assumption that the general political landscape of Italy at this time and contemporary America are sufficiently similar.

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<p align="center">Preface</p>

In consideration of recent events within the United States, such as the Unite the Right rally and the 2017 Berkeley protests, it seems that it has become prudent to analyze the circumstances which culminate in acts of political violence. Though it is tempting, perhaps irresistibly for some, to blame groups for the actions of the individuals within them, this does not seem to accurately represent culpability, particularly in the case of political movements. Indeed, by assigning collective responsibility, one both dismisses the gravity of the guilt of the individual perpetrator and allows the collective to strengthen its influence through evoking images of solidarity in the face of persecution. Thus, it seems like a more individualistic perspective is necessary to fully understand the processes through which each individual of any particular group is led into justifying and committing acts of political violence. This work serves to present a model of this process through the individual perspectives of radicalization towards violent extremism, and is decidedly phenomenological in this fashion. Such a model would be justly deemed to be a phenomenological model of radicalization.

In order to both test and develop such a model, it is preferable to choose a particular historical context through which radicalization could be assessed. An ideal context for this model would be one which had been sufficiently well documented, both in terms of events themselves as well as individual perspectives on these events, which is relatively remote to current American politics, and which provides examples of violent extremism on both ends of the political spectrum. The first consideration is a practical one; a more well-documented historical period allows for a greater degree of certainty in the veracity or falsity of individual claims and also provides clarity as to whether certain individual sentiments and accounts are aligned with or contrary to the predominant narrative of events. The second is a matter of both limiting bias, as it is less likely to provoke particularly strong feelings in either author or reader towards particular accounts, and decreases the probability of a direct influence between the events through which the model is originally developed and the one to which it applied, as such an influence could serve as a confounding factor towards any future analytical pursuit or prediction. The final concern serves as a means of assessing any key differences in the actual radicalization process between extreme right-wing and extreme left-wing politics. If a significant difference existed on opposite ends of the political spectrum, it would likely be made clear through first-hand accounts; whereas similarities could be considered to be aspects of radicalization that are independent of political position.

The Italian "Years of Lead", a period of widespread political violence beginning in 1968 and ending in 1982, is a nearly ideal context for the development of this model. Both individual acts of political violence during the Years of Lead, as well as individual perspectives on this violence are fairly well documented. Furthermore, the Years of Lead are relatively remote to current events within American politics; despite the death of American diplomat Leamon Hunt and the capture of General Dozier at the hands of the Red Brigades, neither figure could be said to have widespread recognition, let alone significant influence upon contemporary American politics. Finally, during the Years of Lead, acts of political violence were frequently performed by members of both the far right and far left fringes of Italian politics, and thus differences and similarities between the perspectives and actions of each can be adequately examined. Thus, it seems that the Years of Lead provide a sufficient context to develop this phenomenological model of radicalization.

However, some ambiguities must be resolved before proceeding with the construction of this model. The first, and perhaps most prescient example concerns the distinctions between "violence", "political violence", and "terrorism". Violence is generally held to refer to the use of physical force with the intent to harm, though frequently also includes a credible threat to cause intentional harm as well. Throughout this work, the term "violence" will be used in the wider sense, including both actual applications of physical force as well as reasonable threats to use this force. "Political violence", on the

other hand, is slightly more contentious. This phrase will be used throughout the following essays to express violence, as defined above, that is used in order to promote the interests of a particular group. Thus, while certain laws promoting the interests of one group against another could be considered to be political violence committed against the oppressed group under a more abstract definition, this would not serve as an example of political violence within the following essays. Finally, and perhaps most controversially, is the definition of "terrorism". The term "terrorism", when used, will refer to a instance in which violence is used in order to inspire fear, which will presumably lead to a political outcome desirable for the perpetrator. Thus, since terrorism is inherently violent, and has a political justification, any act of terrorism can be accurately considered an act of political violence, using the definitions as previously presented. However, not all acts of political violence are necessarily terrorism. Revolutionary wars, for example, are acts of political violence that attain their ends through violence directly; fear, when it arises in such a situation, is not the aim of revolutionary violence, but simply a by-product.

As a consequence of these definitions, determining an event to be an example of political violence is significantly more lenient than asserting that it is an act of terrorism. This is intentional. Terrorism, particularly in the current political landscape, is an increasingly controversial term. This is perhaps exemplified by the recent mass shooting in Las Vegas, which has been argued to be an example of terrorism, despite the ambiguity of

the motivation behind the incident. Thus, defining terrorism explicitly, and in a relatively limited sense, serves to circumvent such controversies entirely.

One other potential source for misunderstanding remains, namely the usage of "radicalization". Within the context of this paper, radicalization refers to the process through which an individual comes to identify as a member of a political group identified as extremist, eventually justifying or committing acts of political violence for this group. Though one possible objection to this notion is that it is too limited, and fails to account for ideological or religious radicalization, it is often quite difficult to distinguish between ideology and politics in practice, and a similar claim can be raised for ideology and religion. Furthermore, particularly in the case of ideology, which is perhaps best understood as a framework of the ideas of any particular person regardless of whether these ideas are shared publically or privately, one individual might become radicalized without demonstrating any particular allegiance to any identifiable group, whereas it is relatively easy to determine whether or not an individual is a member of a political group. Another objection which may be raised is that extremism, itself, is culturally relative to the mainstream which it opposes. While this is a generally valid assessment, in both Italian politics during the Years of Lead, as well as contemporary American politics, it would be difficult to claim that individual acts of violence committed by citizens were not generally condemned, and the only political violence which is met with general approval is the violence of law enforcement in reaction to the violence of citizens. Therefore,

radicalization, when used in this sense, is sufficiently similar between the context in which

this model is to be developed and the one to which it is intended to be applied.

Chapter One

The Phenomenology of Violence

Upon a cursory reflection, violence serves as a demonstration of the power of the

perpetrator over the victim, a more detailed analysis reveals that this is not the case. It is

first necessary to draw a distinction between power and force. To borrow a definition

from Hannah Arendt: "the essence of power is the effectiveness of command" (Arendt, *On

Violence,* 37). Since this definition does not mention "force", it follows that power may be

either coincidental to or entirely separate from force. For example, in a car accident,

though an unsuspecting individual may have a great deal of force exerted upon them by a

vehicle, it would be incorrect to say that the offending automobile has power over the

person it has injured. Similarly, legislators do not display their command through

demonstrations of physical force, though they are powerful. By extension, since violence

is a subcategory of the implementation of force, it is also true that power must be distinct

from violence. Violence, then, cannot fundamentally be a method of exerting power.

Furthermore, there is little purpose for those who possess power to commit violence. If

an individual possesses power, they are able to have others act according to their desires.

In this case, compulsion by violence is counterproductive. The extent and range of the

power of an individual committing violence are quite limited in comparison to the power

held by a leader of a political regime. States are not powerful by virtue of their capacity to

inflict violence, but rather through the submission of individuals to their authority. Though

some may claim that it is this capacity for violence that coerces the submission of the individual, this is still distinct from immediate violence in two important aspects: that it is both ideologically accepted and has a degree of leniency. Suppose a man is jaywalking in view of a police officer. While it would be considered appropriate for the officer to ticket the pedestrian, if the officer were to shoot the man, this would be considered grounds for public concern. In this example, while the former response is justified by both pragmatism, since the degree of danger of the jaywalker to both society and its individual constituents is very low, and the ideological background of a society in which the authority to enforce the law is not accepted to be solely held by its immediate executors; the latter case instead presents an image of disobedience met with violence directly, thus reducing the rule of law to the eternally conditional rule of the strong.

The application of this notion can also be seen in individual relations. A hypothetical bank robber, for instance, only has as much power over the teller as the teller believes the robber has over him. Further, this power is eroded as soon as the threat the robber poses is diminished or eliminated, whether through the actions of law enforcement or a realization that his weapon is fake, while it may be slightly improved if he were to fire a shot into the air or into a hostage. In contrast, it would significantly diminish the power of the government if law enforcement officials routinely responded to jaywalking with gunshots, as a great deal of governmental power does not derive from credible threats of physical harm, but from the belief of its citizens that the power wielded by the state is

legitimate. This contrast permits a distinctly phenomenological view of the distinction between power and violence.

From a phenomenological perspective, power, from the perspective of its possessor, can be effectively described as the capacity of a subjective will to be exerted upon objects. Fundamentally, whether the object in question is also perceived as a potential subject is irrelevant. The power held by the aforementioned robber to lift a weight is not distinct from the power he has to command the teller, as in both cases the subjectivity is affecting its surroundings. The same cannot be said for those subjected to this power, however. From the perspective of the commanded, power serves as a rejection of the ability of the subject to affect its surroundings. The teller, unlike the robber, does not have the ability to impose his will on his surroundings, and his capacity to act out of his own will is limited by the extent to which he is willing to submit to the will of the robber. Thus, through the perception of being controlled by another, rather than oneself, robs the subjectivity of its independence from the other; its transcendence is negated and the being-as-subject recognizes itself as an object for the other. In this sense, by being coerced, the very subjectivity of the subjugated is violated; it is a state of phenomenological oppression.

Despite this violation, however, the subjectivity cannot be fully objectified. The subject is condemned to remain subjective even under oppression; even the recognition of an individual's state of oppression is dependent upon the transcendent aspect of subjectivity, which remains unable to be truly objectified or oppressed due to its very transcendence.

Therefore, under oppression a tension between the individual's transcendent being-as-subject and the impotence of their being-as-object. Neither the being-as-subject, isolated from phenomenological reality, not the being-as object, defined by it, are capable of genuinely denying the other; the transcendence cannot deny its perception of its subjugation by the other, nor can the objectivity deny its subjective freedom to act as it wills. This tension is released through individual acts of violence; and the catharsis it provides later becomes a retrospective phenomenological justification for these acts.

It is this catharsis that Sartre dubs freedom when he writes of the Algerians, "For in the first days of the revolt you must kill: to shoot down a European is to kill two birds with one stone, to destroy an oppressor and the man he oppresses at the same time: there remain a dead man, and a free man" (Sartre, "Preface to Frantx Fanon's ' The Wretched of the Earth'). Setting aside the political context of the Algerian War, this provides a clear example of this notion of oppression and the role that violence plays in its termination. Through violence, the oppressor is abolished, and along with them the oppression, or at least so it seems. However, this is not always the case. Oppression, in the phenomenological sense, is defined by the perception of the lack of control of one's being when compared to the control of an other. While violence is a relatively simple means of liberation when the other in question responds to such force in a favorable manner, it also sets a somewhat dangerous precedent, in that it proposes a new power structure whose fundamental justification lies in the ability of those in power to utilize violence effectively.

Naturally, this ability is ephemeral, since it disappears as soon as a interested group with a greater capacity for violence usurps this role, whether this group arises within or outside of such a state. Furthermore, there is no phenomenological reason for the now-oppressed to not violently object to the then-oppressed, since the success of the precedent has been made immediately apparent. Thus, violence is not only futile for those who possess power, but also a relatively ineffective means of attaining power. This conclusion is reinforced when the relation between groups and individuals with respect to power and violence is analyzed.

In the words of Arendt, "The extreme form of power is All against One, the extreme form of violence is One against All" (Arendt, 42). Power in its extreme, then, involves the collective "All" confronting and subjugating the individual "One". Even those individuals who would be conventionally considered to possess power in such a context, such as heads of state do not hold this power as individuals, but only in the context of the group which they lead, and only inasmuch as they are the head of the group. A dictator ousted by a junta, for instance, loses power as soon as their legitimacy and support vanishes, though they are the same individual. Therefore, power, at least in its most extreme presentation, is not a property of an individual, but rather vested in an individual by the group which holds this power to be legitimate. Violence, however, is the inverse of this relation, at least in principle. Violence serves as a means through which the individual can enact their will upon others, without any sort of justification dependent upon others; it is

itself a form of compulsion. Indeed, the absence of violence within an established power structure serves as one of the primary justifications for the existence of social power, and thus a state's restraint from using violence in order to control its subjects serves to enhance the legitimacy of their power.

Perhaps the clearest example of violence failing to establish power can be seen in the case of the Stalinist purges. During this period, compliance with governmental policies was reinforced by an implicit threat of violent retribution for opposition or an appearance of disloyalty. This violence was made omnipresent through the atomization of society; relations which had traditionally been immediate could no longer be assumed to be so, thus creating the appearance, if not the reality, of an omniscient "big brother". Naturally, such conditions do not promulgate obedience towards, but rather fear of the governmental systems responsible for these conditions. Inspiring fear can be used to inspire a limited form of power, in that while the cause of this fear is perceived to be firmly established and rational (in the sense that if its demands are met satisfactorily it will not cause harm to the compliant), its commands will be followed unquestioningly. However, if either of these conditions were to change, all former power would be immediately disestablished, as all benefits of compliance become uncertain as a consequence. Thus, in order for such a fear-based power to remain effective, it must also remain absolute and unassailable, at least in terms of the public consciousness. If it fails to present itself as such, insurrection becomes a preferable alternative to obedience, and the

power of the state immediately collapses. On the other hand, the conditions necessary to

achieve this image of rational omnipotence, however, are both undesirable and ultimately

unsustainable.

In order to promote the conception of the fear of the state as absolute, the potential

for violence on behalf of the state must also affect the very agents of this violence as well.

None can seem to be safe from the iron fist of the state, lest the perception of the state

be shifted from an absolute power to that of an abusive bureaucracy. Yet, to refuse

protection to its effective executioners poses a potential dilemma to those perpetuating

violence on behalf of the state. The state must be held to be absolute, but the very

existence of dissidents to be punished serves as evidence of the contrary. Since the

purpose of these governmental agents is to suppress such dissidents, the simplest way to

reinforce the image of the state-as-absolute, necessary for effective rule through fear, is

to eventually portray such agents as the *true* dissidents. By acting in such a manner, the

state is able to maintain the legitimacy of their power-via-violence, but in doing so will

inevitably surrender all *de facto* capacity for this violence. Arendt, describing this

phenomenon, states, "The climax of terror is reached when the police state begins to

devour its own children, when yesterday's executioner becomes today's victim" (55).

Simply put, the power behind the potential violence of the state evaporates at this stage

because this violence is perpetually being utilized against functionaries of the state by

functionaries of the state. Unless the state restructures itself and begins to search for

power that is not fundamentally derived from violence, it is condemned to become a

perpetually self-consuming Ouroboros, and is effectively incapable of escaping from the

vicious cycle it has created.

Violence, since it lacks any inherent justification, requires external conditions in order

to be justified (even the notion of "counter-violence" finds its justification in prior acts of

violence), and this justification is typically found in its inherent opposition to power. To

borrow once more from Arendt, "out of the barrel of a gun grows the most effective

command, resulting in the most instant and perfect obedience" (53). The immediate

relations created by violence, namely those between inflictors and inflicted, supersede,

due to their very immediacy, all pre-existing and more distant demands enforced by

power. This shift serves to weaken the perception of power by those who observe it, and

since the extent of power is defined primarily by the extent to which it is perceived to be

legitimate, this effectively undermines the established power itself. Moreover, though the

established power may be capable of swift and overwhelming retaliation in response to

the perpetrators, this is often inadvisable. To do so also serves to undermine their

authority, since this very authority is based, at least in part, upon the ability to limit the

amount of violence present in normal social relations. In a popular revolution against a

state viewed as tyrannical, for instance, a massacre of rebels is likely to reinforce the

notion that the legitimacy of the state is primarily derived from its supremacy in force,

rather than any sort of rule of law. This reinforces the notion of said government as

tyrannical, while legitimizing the rebels' claim to be a form of legitimate opposition. Even

if this particular rebellion were to fall, another could rise along the same grounds so long

as the memory of this demonstration of violence by the state remains in the public

memory, just as Bloody Sunday remained in the minds of revolutionaries in 1917. Thus,

violence serves as an effective means to overthrow established power, particularly when

the greater public is ambivalent or sympathetic to the group utilizing violence.

However, this is not satisfactory to explain the root causes of violence, only its effects.

It has been previously stated that the experience of inability to realize one's will,

phenomenological oppression serves as a justification for an individual to use violence.

Yet, justification does not necessarily correspond to causation. In practice, individuals tend

to act violently when they are enraged. As Hannah Arendt writes, "Only where there is

reason to suspect that [undesirable] conditions could be changed and are not does rage

arise. Only when our sense of justice is offended do we react with rage" (63). This is true,

to an extent. But it is important to note that just as the phenomenon of oppression is

dependent upon it being perceived as such, so too is the distinction between mutable and

immutable ultimately phenomenological in nature. Xerxes, if Herodotus is to be believed,

famously had the Hellespont whipped in order to compel the strait's obedience to his

army. Despite the apocryphal nature of the story, it is not difficult to imagine more

realistic scenarios where, by Arendt's argument, irrational rage arises, such as a young

child throwing a fit after being confronted with an undesirable circumstance beyond their

comprehension or control, or an individual who has resigned himself to suffer unjustly out of pessimism.

It follows, then, that perhaps the most effective means of decreasing the prevalence of violence within an established society is to reinforce the already established power structure, or at least legitimize it within public opinion. In contrast, violence can be made more likely or prevalent through the disparagement of this structure, whether authentic or fabricated. Naturally, propaganda, whether foreign or domestic in origin, is capable of influencing the amount of violence within any society. Since increasing the prevalence of violence serves to weaken the power of a state, it follows that encouraging violent insurrection, whether directly or indirectly, is an effective means of destabilizing enemy states. A clear attempt, revealed by Mitrokhin, a prominent defector from the KGB, occurred when Service A, a division of the USSR, despite previously "dismissing [Martin Luther] King [Jr.] as an Uncle Tom," following his assassination, "portrayed him as a martyr of the black liberation movement and spread conspiracy theories alleging that his murder hand been planned by white racists with the connivance of the authorities" (Andrew & Mitrokhin, *The Sword and the Shield,* 238). One of the main policies of the KGB towards the USA was to exploit racial tensions for the sake of delegitimizing the authority of the government, with a desired consequence of weakening the domestic power of the state. After initial attempts to subvert and later discredit MLK in favor of more radically aligned activists, notably Stokely Carmichael, whom they believed would be more likely to support

the usage of violence against the state. After the assassination of MLK, however, they immediately changed their tactics along with the situation, and began to support a narrative which they considered to be more likely to lead to the promulgation of violent rioting. This course of action demonstrates that, rather than appealing to a specific, developed narrative of the civil rights movement, the KGB instead was willing to adapt their tactics and narratives in an attempt to promote violent uprisings based upon racial tensions; the pragmatic goal of weakening an enemy state was prioritized above ideological concerns. Thus, violence can, at least in certain contexts, be considered a political tool for the sake of destabilizing an enemy.

In this sense, political violence is somewhat contradictory. While violence within a state is ultimately detrimental to its power and stability, and its incitement has a history of weaponization by foreign enemies, nevertheless various groups vying for political power have used, and will most likely continue to use violence as a means of attaining it. This is ultimately a consequence of violence being an effective means for an individual to circumvent existing power. Political violence is, at its root, still individualistic; it serves as a means by which the individual can gain command of the multitude, even if temporarily. The complication arises not from the group in whose interests the violence is committed, but rather in the self-identification of the individual not simply as an isolated being-as-subject, but also as a member of the group. Thus, though violence is committed by and for

the individual, it is also committed on behalf of the group with which the perpetrator identifies.

Thus, political violence, though immediately committed by the individual, is also mediated through the group for which the act is committed. This permits a sort of sleight of hand with respect to guilt and advantage. Guilt fundamentally requires "intentional transgression of prohibition" (Feinberg, *Doing & Deserving*, 231). Intention, being a property inherent to the subjectivity, is not a property of collectives, but rather one of individuals. Although there has been some discussion of the notion of collective consciousness, particularly concerning social classes, this is distinct from a true subjectivity. Though the urban poor may benefit collectively from certain policies or reforms, do not share subjective experience; the aspect of consciousness is referred to as a metaphor for awareness of shared interests. Since the subjectivity of an individual is incapable of being truly collectivized, it is incorrect to speak of "collective guilt" in this sense. However, though guilt is a type of responsibility, it is far from exhaustive.

Liability, unlike guilt, does not necessarily refer to a property exclusive to the subjectivity, and therefore is capable of being justly distributed among members of a group, though this process itself would be more or less just depending upon the method and extent of this distribution. For example, suppose a car was made at a factory with a defective air bag, which, later, due to its inability to properly deploy, resulted in the death of a passenger after an accident. In this case, though the company itself would have no

particular guilt (they did not intend to produce an airbag which would fail to deploy), it would have some degree of liability for the failure to meet its supposed standard quality. This liability, though directly due to a failure of the inspector's responsibility to produce adequate airbags, would also be distributed to the supervisor and employer of this inspector, which would then be further distributed to their supervisor, eventually reaching the logical conclusion that the corporation, as a whole, would be liable for this failure. As a consequence, the organization may face legal and social consequences for their inability to meet expectations, and therefore be held collectively responsible for the actions of a single individual. Thus, this is a form of collective responsibility.

By extension, political groups are also capable of being liable for incidents resulting from their membership, whereas ideologies and religions are not. This is due to a structural difference between political groups and religions or ideologies: while the former is centered around individuals, the latter is defined by a set of common ideas, which may or may not have an associated political component. For example, while the Catholic Church might be considered liable for the cases of sexual abuse committed by members of its clergy, Catholicism as a religion is incapable of being considered liable, especially since this abuse is contrary to its central tenants. However, political bodies do have the ability to disavow individuals within its structure who are known to engage in practices or hold beliefs that are against their supposed principles, and failure of such groups to do so is rightly met with suspicion. In the case of the church, this would certainly apply towards

individual officials authorized as employees. This collective responsibility is particularly

enpanded when this disavowal is only publicized after a related incident receives notably

attention, and especially when there is evidence suggesting that there was knowledge of

these practices or beliefs within the group itself prior to the public as a whole. If such acts

are revealed to be encouraged behind closed doors while condemned before the public

eye, the hypocrisy of the group in question should not only provoke mere suspicion, but

indignation. Thus, though it is technically correct that a political group is not guilty for the

violent actions of its members, it is also correct that they may, at least in certain

circumstances, be justly held responsible for these actions.

While the group itself is free, at least to some degree, from the blame for any particular

instance of violence, and thereby escapes its associated delegitimization, it still manages

to weaken political opponents. This is typically done through distancing the actor from the

group after the violent act has occurred, in an attempt to diffuse the sense of collective

responsibility that would normally be applied to the group. Rather than a devoted

member, the perpetrator can be easily depicted as a member of a dangerous fringe to a

peaceful majority; though this varies greatly depending upon the internal politics and the

desired image of a group. If a group seeks to portray itself as violent, such as ISIL, the

reverse may occur, in which violent acts with no apparent relation to the group can be

claimed as successful attacks. Groups that seek to usurp power subtly, rather than

through explicit use of violence, however, are much more likely to retroactively distance

themselves from the violence performed to further their interests. Moreover, if these groups are accused of condoning or supporting these violent acts, there is an opportunity to present these accusations as a form of attack, building unity within the group, particularly among those who legitimately had no prior knowledge of the occasion, as well as promoting sympathy from outsiders. This, in short, creates a dynamic where it is possible and desirable for a group attempting to gain power to present itself as victimized by the existing power structure, while actively attempting to undermine it. For this to be an effective stratagem, however, a certain level of disillusionment with the existing power structure must already exist within the populace as a whole. If the government was generally trusted more than the group benefiting from political violence, it would be difficult for this group to present its narrative as a valid explanation for further political ambitions, particularly when under state-sanctioned censure. It is also expected that this method is more effective at building support among other groups or individuals who have interests contrary to the existing power structure or a previously established reason to distrust the state.

The strength of such a tactic is clearly seen when viewed from a phenomenological lens. Perhaps the surest way for an individual to come to identify with a certain group is to face persecution, either real or perceived, as a member of this group. Sartre poses group identity as something inherent to the objectivity. He writes, in his work *Anti-Semite and Jew,* "The Jew is one whom other men consider a Jew" (Sartre, 49). Sartre argues that,

from his perspective, since there is no inherent prescriptive characteristic unique and common to Jews, Jewishness must be something that is determined and labelled by others before being applied to any individual. In this sense, "Jew" has no inherent meaning to the subjectivity. While identification by others is a method of establishing a categorization of various groups in an objective sense, what one is this does not hold a great deal of weight with regards to self-perception. What does allow the subjectivity to experience group identification, however, is phenomenological oppression. Consider the case of Rita Hoefling, a woman who, living in South Africa under Apartheid, suddenly experienced a significant darkening of skin tone due to the onset of Nelson's syndrome after receiving surgical treatment of Cushing's disease (*Mutants*, Leroi). Despite having initially lived while being recognized as a white woman, and being officially recognized as such by the government, her family and neighbors gradually withdrew from her due to social concerns and was routinely affected by racial discrimination. However, she was met with open arms by the black community and became fluent in Xhosa during the five years she was afflicted with hyperpigmentation. Describing her situation with her own words, she stated, "I can scream … I'm finding out what apartheid is like" ("Jet", Feb. 9, 1978). Though she had been born white, due to the discrimination Mrs. Hoefling had faced as a result of her skin color, she came to self-identify with the African population, despite sharing little to nothing in common with them prior to her experience of oppression. Thus, common experience of oppression can be a strong enough conatus to significantly change one's own identification between groups, even with an absence of other motivating

factors. It is easy to extrapolate, then, how effectively the perception of oppression can be used to enhance an already existing or developing state of self-identification with any particular group.

It is equally important to mention, however, that the narrative of presenting justified censure as unjust victimization may also be presented by an established power structure as a means of destroying or weakening potential political opponents. Occasionally, this has been proved to be an extremely effective "counter"measure, such as the propagandization of the Reichstag fire by the Nazi party. Indeed, there is historical precedent for the political weaponization of this method even in absence of a prior incidence of political violence. Prior to the 1953 Iranian coup, the OPC, which would later become a division of the CIA, was working in order to undermine the Iranian communist party through false flag attacks on mosques (Callanan, *Covert Action in the Cold War,* 109). The final consequence of these operations was the overthrow of Mosaddegh, the democratically elected prime minister, and the strengthening of the thenceforth short-lived monarchy: a remarkable success in the short-term which led to later undesirable consequences. The phenomenological affects of this tactic is fundamentally similar to that of a group actually benefitting from acts of political violence, except with respect to power and oppression. In the former case, where power is perceived to be oppressive, individuals are likely to identify with groups opposing the apparently abusive power. In the latter case, however, the relation between power and oppression is reversed:

individuals perceived the established power as a legitimate protector against the oppressive violence of the intended usurpers.

It is also worth considering that while political affiliation in terms of alignment with the existent political structure may differ between groups using violence (i.e. one may be attempting to more or less preserve the policies of the political structure using violent means to gain power, while another may attempt to overthrow these policies), these groups ultimately have a common interest in delegitimizing the state power in order to usurp it. Thus, violent conflicts between radical groups of various alignment ultimately serve to strengthen the positions of these groups by demonstrating the weakness of the current power structure as well as promoting the narrative of each group involved as both a victim of abuse by their opposition. If this is utilized effectively, individuals within such a scenario become more likely to sympathize with one radical group or another, not only out of allegiance to that particular group, but out of a distaste for their opposition and a recognition of the inability of the state to effectively secure its citizenry.

   From the perspective of individuals living within such a dynamic, the primary motivation remain the avoidance of oppression and the secondary motivation consists of actualization of their will. If these two interests were to come into conflict, one would typically expect individuals to choose security from coercion above fulfilling any particular desire, leading to the development of systems based upon limiting freedom to ensure security to some extent (i.e. penalizing the act killing of another in order to decrease the

likelihood of being killed oneself). Curiously, however, this model fails to explain the realities of political violence. Under such a model, the only reason for rebellion against such a power structure would be the failure of the established power to provide security sufficient enough to justify individuals sacrificing a degree of freedom in exchange. Yet, in reality, groups are willing to surrender this security in exchange for political power. If all members of a group fundamentally sought security, provoking or utilizing violence would be counterintuitive. Therefore, assuming that the existing power structure provides adequate security there must be some motivation for attaining power through the use of violence superseding the desire for self-preservation. This motivation can be explained through a further phenomenological analysis of group identity.

When considering the subordination of self-preservation to the interests of a group one aligns themselves with, the perception of the individual as a member of this group must be considered. While conventional security protects the well-being of the individual-as-individual, it does not offer anything to the individual-as-constituent. Clearly, this does not apply to situations in which an individual receives a material benefit for committing acts which are violent in nature and serve to benefit the group offering compensation, such as the aforementioned Iranian false flag attacks. While still technically an example of political violence, in such a scenario the actors are not the progenitor of this violence, but simply the means of execution. Phenomenologically, this might be better explained as warfare by other means rather than violence, as the decision to carry out this operation was made by

a bureau rather than an individual. Phenomenological political violence, when used

effectively, can benefit the group, but is incapable of benefiting the individual actor. Thus,

the actor, assuming they are acting logically, must identify as a member of the benefitting

group before they identify with themselves. If this is not the case, and the issue is simply a

matter of high group affinity rather than a decreased self-identity, it is reasonable to think

that violence would be limited by a risk-reward analysis between the consequences for

the group and the individual. However, the reward for the group for whom the act of

political violence is committed is indeterminate both in scope and benefit or harm, while

the consequences for the individual actor is more certain to be harmful. Thus, a kind of

deindividuation, or radicalization, must occur in order to justify phenomenological political

violence, and a model for this will be proposed in the following chapter.

Chapter Two

Radicalization and Political Violence of the Far-Left

Deindividuation can be described phenomenologically as a diminished sense of being-as-subject, especially in contrast with an increased importance placed upon membership of an external group as an aspect of identity. Traditionally, the phenomenon of deindividuation has been studied from an empirical perspective as an aspect of social psychology, an attempt to explain the increased tendency of individuals to act against social norms in the context of crowds. While models developed from this approach are extremely effective and capable of explaining incidents of mass violence in contexts such as black blocs, they fail to explain acts comparable in intent, influence and means committed outside the context of crowds. In such cases, a process which, to the actor, is sufficiently similar enough to deindividuation must occur, but factors that would typically be considered functions of the sheer size of a crowd, such as anonymity leading to diffusion of responsibility, or confusion and disorientation leading to the development of an irrational crowd-mind, must either be unnecessary or internalized. While it is presupposed, for the sake of analysis, that perpetrators of the individual, unlike individuals deindividuated within a crowd are rational, at least insofar as they do not act violently without a pre-formulated reason for doing so, one central factor, the loss or the diminishment of individual identity, must occur by means other than a simple mental recognition of the existence of an external crowd. Instead, the essential aspects of

deindividuation within the context of crowds which promote acts of violence must, in the case of individuals who perform acts of political violence, become internalized. This process of internalization serves as a necessary component of understanding political radicalization phenomenologically.

It is perhaps convenient, if rather unsettling, that the general narrative concerning the *anni di piombo*, or Years of Lead, has been defined by the perpetrators of political violence, to an extent where "former terrorists have been reconstructed in the public domain as expert witnesses and cultural authorities capable of providing a privileged understanding of the events, culture and legacy of the *anni di piombo*" (Glynn, 2013). While there is some virtue in expanding the scope of perspectives considered in the historical analysis of political violence, this primarily lies in the effects of victimization upon the general populace, especially when this victimization encourages further incidents of violence. To draw a simple comparison, if someone is robbed outside of a grocery store, if one attempts to discourage robbery, it is more effective to investigate why the robber committed the act than to investigate the particular circumstances that brought the unsuspecting victim to the grocery store. Political violence, as previously described, can inspire further retaliatory acts of political violence. Thus, in this case, particularly, the perspective of victims remains an important aspect of analysis, phenomenological or otherwise.

One simple benefit of such an approach is that the distinction between victim and perpetrator is not always clearly defined. This, while obvious in cases of sympathizers gained through narratives of group victimization, also paints the direct testimony of victims in a lens that could just as easily have served as a justification for acts of violence. This is perhaps best expressed by Fausto Cuocolo, a victim of an attack by the Red Brigades wrote "As a victim, I have always registered a troublesome understanding, a dangerous justification, of the terrorists. The State has failed to provide justice in full or to impose adequate punishment, proportionate to the crimes committed" (Glynn, 2013). In such cases, the actions of radicals serves not only to strike against their victims directly, but also to demonstrate to these victims the inefficacy of the state. Not only is the state shown to be pragmatically powerless to protect its civilians against the acts of the radicals, in this case through its failure to deliver what would be considered appropriate retribution, it also demonstrates its moral feebleness through its apparent abandonment of justice for the victims. Since the state is perceived as incapable of appropriately dealing with instances of political violence by the very fact that such violence has occurred within its jurisdiction, it is logical that individuals who had suffered from these acts of violence would turn to alternative groups whether seeking protection, justice, or simple vengeance. Therefore, acts of political violence themselves can serve as contributive factors towards the radicalization of individuals in oppositional groups.

In such cases, the fundamental mechanism behind radicalization is relatively simple to analyze, and can be considered rational, at least in the sense that it seems to the radicalized to be in their own best interest. From the perspective of the individual, this process can be modeled fairly easily. First, the individual suffers from violence committed by a group which has been performed to further some political agenda. The individual, now a victim of political violence, had presumably had relatively little concern, at least consciously, for the political issues for which they had been subjected to this violence, causing a kind of ideological disorientation. After all, issues which had once been distant and far off suddenly became exceedingly and uncomfortably immediate, and such sudden shifts are liable to cause confusion to some extent. This disorientation is further amplified by the role, or lack thereof, of the state in its inability to respond in an effective manner to these incidents. This is not necessarily the fault of the state, it has been forced into a dilemma (or more precisely a trilemma), between inaction, in which case the state is capable of claiming the moral victory in exchange for the security of its citizens; inadequate action, in which the individual actors are punished according to the law, but the group more broadly responsible is capable of presenting them as martyrs; and finally adequate action, in which the responsible group is explicitly condemned and repressed as a consequence of the actions which they have encouraged, permitted or benefitted from, but the legitimacy of the state in the eyes of the public can become easily tarnished through allusion to tyranny, an image which future radical groups are easily capable of capitalizing upon.

Of the three responses, the former two provide a capacity for the opposition to benefit from this disorientation. In these cases, groups either already politically radicalized, but with an opposing agenda to the group responsible for victimizing the hypothetical individual, or groups who have developed as a reaction to the political violence of this initial group, serve as a replacement for the state. The legitimacy of the state, having been destroyed from the perspective of the individual, becomes usurped by whatever group appears to be the closest approximation to a capable government. Ideally, from the perspective of this individual, this would lead to the suppression of political violence and a return to peace and order. Unfortunately, however, this is not always the case.

From the perspective of the group, or the leadership of the group benefitting from the existence of victims of political violence, this is certainly not the case. While the goals of its individual members may be primarily to return to a stable political status quo, the group itself is faced with the temptation of seeking to prolong instability in an attempt to prolong or increase the extent of its ascendency. Even if it was not the initial intention of this group or its leadership, there nonetheless remains a strong temptation to maintain a situation which, despite being generally against the direct interests of the individual constituents, has proven beneficial to the influence of a group. Moreover, particularly ambitious and unscrupulous members have the opportunity to benefit individually through portraying themselves as and aligning themselves with more radical segments of a political group and provoking political violence from either within or without the group

in which they seek to rise into prominence. Though this runs the risk of being uncovered, and subsequently being rightfully disavowed by the established leadership of the group, if successful such a method can be used to both usurp popular support from the established leadership and radicalize the political positions of the group itself. In this way, the group effectively functions as a microcosm of the broader political situation of the state in its entirety.

Yet, another perspective is offered by Mario Calabresi, son of a police commissioner, Luigi Calabresi, killed during the Years of Lead as a retribution for the death of Giuseppi Pinelli, an anarchist interrogated for an early bombing in the Years of Lead, who died in police custody after falling from a window on the fourth floor of the station. This was exacerbated by the refusal of the police to thoroughly investigate and clearly report the details of this matter to the public, which was, expectedly, met with suspicions and accusations of murder. According to his son, Luigi Calabresi became a public face for the Milanese police force due to his views. Calabresi writes of his father, "believed that the police should focus their dialogue with the protestors, not repression. He used to visit the home of the publisher and militant Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, argue with the protestors, and march alongside the marchers" (Calabresi, *Pushing Past the Night*, 39). While it is true that the police force had a vested interest in gaining information on political radicals, including Feltrinelli (who, at least officially, later died in an attempt to destroy an electrical pylon), it is also true that the police officers, themselves, have individual perspectives and beliefs

separate from those of the department and government, and it is quite possible that the sentiments of Luigi Calabresi were indeed genuine. In a similar fashion, it is quite possible to explain, if not fully justify, the actions of his killers, or, through a less charitable analysis, to dehumanize them. The murderers of Luigi Calabresi were, in all probability, only fully aware of his status as a police officer, and knew that he was relatively well known due to his close relations with reporters, and thus was a suitable target to avenge Pinelli. However, it is also plausible that Luigi Calabrese was targeted not for his reputation, but for his views.

As previously demonstrated, it is desirable for radical groups to face persecution, since it allows them to benefit from the sympathy of the public, even if this persecution is justified. The best defense for an establishment against such a tactic would be to openly engage with such groups, and to suggest compromise or conciliation. If this approach is taken, the radical group must either concede, losing the fervor of its constituency as a consequence of acknowledging the legitimacy of the established power while making modest progress towards its goals, or refuse the offer of peaceful conciliation, in which case it is easy to portray the radicals as power-hungry ideologues who have little to nothing in common with the wider public. In the former case, the radical group has effectively become more deradicalized and faces absorption into the political structure they had initially sought to destroy, in the latter the group distances themselves from the public by revealing their prioritization of the ideals they seek over the interests of the

people who, in other circumstances, could have been potential supporters. There is one simple and brutal solution to this conundrum: to target those within the political establishment who seek compromise with acts of political violence. The effect of such a maneuver is three-fold. First, the immediate threat of being forced into an undesirable position within the political climate is minimized by the direct removal of individuals who desire a peaceful resolution. Secondly, a repeated trend of those willing to perform public outreach receiving violent retaliation from such groups makes individual members of the establishment less inclined to communicate or advocate for increased communication with these groups. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the reaction of the establishment, and individuals representing this establishment, is much less likely to be peaceful or entirely rational than a comparable reaction towards a seemingly random and distant, but otherwise identical act of political violence. This, too, can be explained through a phenomenological approach.

There exists a very great, though perhaps unfortunate, correlation between shared personal experience and empathy, even in children (Strayer, 1997). Individuals, generally are more likely to relate and be affected by events happening to those close to them or similar in some respect than they are to those who seem to be entirely different. There are certain external logical explanations for why the death of a police officer might resound more strongly within the political establishment, such as the harm done to society as a whole, or the disrespect and implicit threat towards the state underlying the

action of killing a representative of the state. However, there also exists a more basic, instinctual inclination towards responding to violence against a co-worker as a consequence of their position with some sort of swift retribution. If such a response is anticipated, it can be used to further promote a narrativization of events. In this particular case, Luigi Calabresi was accused of having murdered Pinelli by throwing him out of a window. This narrative promotes an image of the Milanese police force as a brutal, uncaring agent of the state eager to destroy those who stand against it by whatever means are necessary. This narrative would have been significantly undermined if the police force had been undergoing a significant investigation into the circumstances of the death and regularly released information to the public. However, since this did not happen, the public rightfully viewed the police involvement with Pinelli's death with suspicion.

It is worth noting, that there was still an ongoing investigation of this death, as well as the bombing leading to his interrogation at the time of Luigi Calabresi's murder, which concluded that Pinelli had fallen from the window due to illness, exacerbated by the negligence of the police force in making sure that Pinelli had been appropriately cared for during his three-day detainment (Calabresi, 49). The police actions towards Pinelli were more indicative of a bumbling incompetence rather than murderous intent. If the evidence revealed by this investigation were to be publicized, the narrative of police preference towards the brutal oppression people of their jurisdiction in order to preserve

the political status quo would be discredited, and the radical group would incur a significant loss of reputation. This loss could be mitigated, however, through provoking another example of police brutality, offering support of the general narrative even if a prior supposed incident had been discredited. Thus, by murdering Luigi Calabresi, it is possible that these radicals sought to manipulate the police into further crackdowns on themselves and other radical groups in order to regain public trust and sympathy. This, unfortunately for these radials, did not occur.

As before, it should not be assumed that such tactics can only be performed in the interests of groups attempting to usurp power from the political establishment. It is also theoretically possible, if perhaps somewhat of a stretch of the imagination, to propose that the state attempted to use a similar method to benefit from the Piazza Fontana bombing. While a later investigation revealed that the perpetrators of the bombing were, in fact, Neo-fascists, the police detained anarchists for continued interrogation while releasing the true bombers (49-50). This serves as reasonable evidence that the police already had a significant anti-anarchist bias prior to the bombing itself. Furthermore, if Pinelli had been intentionally murdered by the police force during interrogation to incite more acts of political violence for the sake of discrediting anarchists and other like-minded radical groups, they were successful at doing so, as evidenced by the murder of Luigi Calabresi.

It is important to note, however, that these theories have, at best, tenuous evidence supporting them. It was acknowledged in court that Luigi Calabresi had been outside of the interrogation room when Pinelli fell from the window, with the only witness testifying against this fact being a fellow anarchist who could only have seen the office through a small window (49). This having been said, it is also true that the conditions in which Pinelli had been detained for three days, with little food or sleep, played a role in his fall (48). Furthermore, the police were prosecuted for detaining Pinelli for a prolonged period of time, but received amnesty (49). Clearly, the police had been far from perfect in their investigation of the bombing and the subsequent detainment and investigation of suspects, and their negligence and consequent pardoning had ultimately been to the detriment of anarchist groups and to the benefit of fascist groups. However, the very existence of a further investigation of this case serves as strong evidence against a state-supported conspiracy to specifically persecute anarchists for the crimes of fascists. Thus, it is much more reasonable to conclude that the anti-anarchist bias of police actions following the bombing reflected the difference in the views of these groups with respect to the authority of the law: since anarchists wanted to disestablish the police force, the fascists, at least in theory, supported the existence of a functional police force. Since the development of an anarchist leadership of the state would lead to the dissolution of their positions, while a fascist regime would leave them relatively unaffected, it is perhaps unsurprising that the former would receive more attention by the police.

Though a great deal of discussion thus far has focused on the victims of political violence, little has been said of the perpetrators as individuals. Mario Calabresi, though somewhat reluctant to recount the broader political implications of events surrounding the bombing and murder of his father, does detail some information about those who were later charged for the killing. Sixteen years after the murder of Luigi Calabresi, Leonardo Marino, a former member of Lotta Continua, turned himself in as the driver involved in the assassination, and named three others, including Adriano Sofri, who had been the leader of the movement (94). While this alone provides little information as to the actual motivations of these militants, some analysis can be made through their writings in their own journal, also called *Lotta Continua*. They wrote, in their October 1, 1970 issue, "[Luigi Calabresi] gets to keep living peacefully, to keep doing his job as a policeman, to keep persecuting our comrades. But he needs to know that everyone knows his face, including the militants who despise him" (7). While dismissible as an example of radical propaganda, this diatribe offers a certain degree of insight into the perspectives of the members of Lotta Continua, as at least the readers, if not necessarily the writers, subscribed to the beliefs therein. These radicals, or militants, seemed to have little personal enmity towards Calabresi, at least in principle. Calabresi simply had the poor fortune of being a recognizable figure within the police force. Rather, the members of Lotta Continua seem to "despise" him as a police officer, rather than as an individual.

Yet, there is still a personal element to this vendetta. There is an explicit conflation of the duties of a policeman and the persecution of fellow militants. While this is literally true, as police officers are tasked with handling civil disturbances, this also serves to dehumanize the police officers while honoring and idolizing fellow radicals. The police are portrayed as simple servants of the state, hindering the activities of the radicals for the sake of their paycheck, rather than any personal views of their own. In contrast, the radicals are portrayed as valiant rebels, willing to suffer persecution for the sake of promoting their ideologies. In effect, the incarcerated and the executed are made into martyrs for their causes. This, in turn, encourages other radicals to perform acts of political violence for the sake of recognition. Furthermore, each case of militants receiving punishment for committing these acts can be used to promote the narrative of state persecution, increasing group cohesion and potentially winning the sympathy of the public.

However, the diatribe does not end there. It continues, "[T]he proletariat has issued its sentence: Calabresi is responsible for the murder of Pinelli and he will have to pay for it dearly" (7). This has several implications as to the mindset of the radicals involved in the murder of Calabresi. First and foremost, they distance themselves from the actual condemnation and instead defer to the judgement of the proletariat. This, in turn, reflects a reluctance, either genuine or merely for the sake of appearances, to be viewed as despotic. It also suggests that the typical Lotta Continua militant was not necessarily a

member of the proletariat class themselves, but instead took it upon themselves to act on their behalf. This draws some parallel to the Russian revolution, which, somewhat to Lenin's chagrin in terms of political theory[1], was largely spearheaded by members of the intelligentsia rather than the workers. This also suggests some degree of confirmation bias within the workings of Lotta Continua itself. According to their polemic, the proletariats, collectively, must support the notion that Pinelli had been murdered by Calabresi, and thus already sympathize with the anarchists and other left-wing radicals, such as Lotta Continua itself, rather than the state, police, or radical right-wing groups. In reality, however, the situation was undoubtedly more complicated, as implicitly acknowledged in their own diatribe. If Lotta Continua had been entirely confident in the public preference for their own political agenda rather than that of the government, the publication of accusatory articles would be redundant. If this were indeed the case, the public would disapprove of the detainment of like-minded radicals regardless of guilt or justification of the detained. Simply put, if the public at large, particularly the proletarians, supported revolutionary groups, they would view any state-run suppression of revolutionary activities as inherently serving an already illegitimate political establishment. If the public had held such views, the particular incident involving Pinelli and Calabresi would be irrelevant in a broader sense; there is no reason to single out a particular murderer when all policemen are complicit in actively perpetuating the oppression of the working class.

There also seems to be some internal contention within Lotta Continua as to their role within the political process, marked by a somewhat, perhaps intentionally, confused notion of the role that Lotta Continua should play with regards to the will of the proletariat. At face-value, their claims seem to suggest that the militants of Lotta Continua should simply be to serve as executors of the will of the proletarians at large. However, this does not entirely explain their knowledge of the collective will of the proletarian class. Rather, it seems as though the militants of Lotta Continua themselves have taken it upon themselves to serve as arbiters and executors of the will of the proletariat, based upon Marxist notions of class and class struggle. Therefore, it seems that Lotta Continua, though tyrannical in practice, finds external theoretical justification through appeals to a preexistent ideological framework at least amongst its leadership. This underlying ideological framework governs the actions and motivation of these particular radicals, and thus can be viewed as the ultimate source of the radicalization process, even to the point of pervading propaganda in the form of veneration of nameless, collectivized "comrades" who had been the victims of persecution by the state.

It is at this point that the deindividuation inherent to radicalization can be considered complete. Not only does the individual themselves identify primarily as a constituent of their political group, but they also view other members within their group, or even vaguely aligned with their group in the same fashion. Pinelli, to Lotta Continua, was one such individual. Although Pinelli himself had not been a member of Lotta Continua, he was

nonetheless associated with their comrades, the nameless martyrs victimized by the state. Just as others before him had undoubted vanished as individuals into the greater narrative of collective police persecution as their particularly cases gradually faded from the public memory, so too did the particular aspects of Pinelli's unfortunate demise. Mario Calabresi recalls reading a flyer in 2004, which declared his father to have been "trained by the CIA … one of the most cold-blooded killers in Italian history. Murdering him was an act of justice" (37). Facts, such as the results of an investigation which led to both raising charges against the police force and the exoneration of the anarchists for the Piazza Fontana bombing and incriminating their neo-fascist enemies, are overlooked in favor of a prevailing narrative. Pinelli was made into more than himself, he had become a symbol of the victims of political suppression at the hands of law enforcement, just as Calabresi had become a symbol of police brutality against left-wing militants, and as he had previously been made into a scapegoat for Pinelli's death by the leadership of Lotta Continua.

Though the supporters of such groups may be motivated by external factors, such as the desire for security from or justice for sufferings that had been inflicted by their opposition, and thus rationalized, the leadership of these groups are under no such delusion. They view this centralizing ideology as a goal worth sacrificing themselves for, and ultimately strive to attain it regardless of consequences, and by whatever means are available to them. Fortunately for their opponents, both within and without the state, this serves as something of weakness capable of being manipulated, as their claims of

justification are vulnerable to criticism from within their own ideological framework. For example, if the public at large are being misled by the state into believing that the political left has a tendency towards achieving their goals through violence, to murder a police officer for an unconfirmed role in the death of an anarchist can hardly be considered an effective response. If these criticisms are successful, it serves to demoralize followers of this particular group from engaging in further acts of political violence in order to avoid further distrust of their true intention, further discontent within the membership of the group itself, and swaying public opinion away from their desired goals.

In contrast to left-wing radicals, the political history of far-right extremism, as well as the public attitude towards this extremism, is slightly more complex. This is, undoubtedly, a consequence of the fascist regime; though institutions reformed could be justifiably reformed once more, other, relatively unchanged institutions, including the standard police force were stained, somewhat paradoxically, by their seamless transition from the monarchy to the republic. As a consequence, it is somewhat unsurprising that individuals within these institutions were more likely to be sympathetic with neo-fascist groups, particularly in lieu of the apparent deterioration of social order and the tendency of their political opponents, the left-wing radicals, to target police officers themselves. Thus, to some extent, the accusations of a right-wing bias within the Italian police force were self-fulfilling. Due to the historical differences in positions of the political far-right and far-left in Italy, certain tactics were more likely to be effective by one fringe than another. For

example, while a communist or anarchist could reasonably expect to benefit from

portraying law enforcement as oppressors serving the political establishment, particularly

by evoking imagery from Mussolini's regime, this narrative would prove counter-

productive for a neo-fascist. The far-right, on the other hand, could appeal more directly

to the increased frequency of political violence and terrorism since the fall of the fascist

regime. As a consequence, false-flag attacks intended to incriminate their left-wing

political opponents, including the Piazza Fontana bombing, served as effective means of

reinforcing these appeals. Additionally, such methods would be undermined by drawing

comparisons of the two regimes that favored the republic to the fascist state, such as the

fruitless military campaigns which had previously turned the populace against the

ideology.

These differences in the effectiveness of tactics, however, are not necessarily inherent

to the political views of their users. For example, suppose that a similarly major shift in

political alignment of a state had occurred from state communism to a republic, in a

manner entirely analogous to the referendum of 1946. In such a case, one would expect

the tactics and outcomes of the groups outlined to be reversed accordingly. Thus, the

primary factors associated with differences in approaches to political violence would

appear to be derived situationally, rather than ideologically. Though there have been

claims that left-wing political violence is more likely to target property, whereas right-wing

political violence tends to target individuals, and, from an ideological perspective, such an

assumption is coherent, this seems to be somewhat at odds with the murders and kidnappings committed by the Red Brigades, as well as the murder of Luigi Calabresi at the hands of Lotta Continua, and the bombings committed by Ordine Nuovo. This inconsistency might be more accurately explained as a product of tactics rather than a reflection of some inner aspect of ideology as different tactics are likely to produce different results when utilized. One would not expect, for example, the same ratio of personal injuries and deaths to property damage costs to result from a black bloc as a mass-shooting, and there is a clear difference in the prevalence of the former among the far-left and the latter among the far-right. Consequently, assumptions that equate targets of political violence with some inherent differentiation in the underlying ideologies of perpetrators should be met with a healthy amount of skepticism.

To summarize, radical left-wing radicalization during the Years of Lead, as well as the political violence it produced, was primarily ideologically motivated. Those who were already indoctrinated into Marxist ideology, such as the leadership of Lotta Continua, sought to win public support through depicting the political establishment as agents of the state with a vested interest in suppressing their political agenda. This, judging by the eagerness of the police force to detain and interrogate anarchists for prolonged periods of time without substantial evidence, particularly in contrast with their comparatively lenient treatment of the responsible neo-fascists, was not an entirely unjustified depiction. Nonetheless, the left, too, participated in acts of political violence, including the murder of

Luigi Calabresi as retribution for the death of Pinelli. Though the desire to right perceived

wrongs, particularly the wrongs committed against those with a shared cause, is

understandable on a personal level, it ultimately proved counterproductive for those who

participated in the supposedly retaliatory murder of Calabresi; not only did Lotta Continua

alienate the common man, for the sake of whom they wished to overthrow the state, but

they also played directly into the interests of their political enemies, the neo-fascists. A

phenomenological analysis of these right-wing radicals who orchestrated the bombing

that indirectly led to the deaths of both Pinelli and Calabresi, as well as a more thorough

comparison of the workings and motivations of right-wing and left-wing radicals both

within and beyond the context of the Years of Lead, will be undertaken in the following

chapter.

Chapter Three

Radicalization and Political Violence of the Far-Right

Since it seems that the primary motivation of political violence on the far-left is

ideological in nature, it follows that a similar phenomenon might be the primary cause of

the political violence of their opponents. Fortuitously, there is strong evidence suggesting

that this is the case, even within the context of the aforementioned Piazza Fontana

bombing. Clemente Graziani, a leader of the Ordine Nuovo, a radical far-right group

responsible for the bombing, wrote, "Our work since 1952 has been to transpose Evola's

teachings into direct political action" (Ferraresi, "The Radical Right in Postwar Italy").

Thus, it is safe to assume that, much like the militant leaders of Lotta Continua, the

leadership of Ordine Nuovo were primarily motivated by a desire to realize ideological

goals rather than material ones. However, unlike the philosophy of Marx and his

followers, the philosophical framework of Evola and his followers has been given relatively

little attention. This is, perhaps, an error rooted in the discomfort of the average academic

to thoroughly investigate the motivations of groups which they vehemently and

reflectively oppose.

Before continuing, I would like to disclaim any accusation against myself and others

within this field, I would first like to disavow any claims of willful ignorance or support of

neo-fascist ideologies which draw inspiration from Evola's corpus. It is quite

understandable, both within the modern political framework and the framework of his

contemporaries, why the works of a man who left fascist Italy for Nazi Germany due to political concerns about the moderation of Mussolini's regime would be sentenced to a form of modern *damnatio memoriae* in an ideal world. Inconveniently, however, the notion that sticking one's head in the sand, like a Plinian ostrich, will cause this issue to dissolve naturally is woefully misguided. Indeed, if chants of "Jews will not replace us" are to be taken as anything more than a self-gratifying rhetorical repetend, then it follows that the tendency to rewrite and monopolize narratives concerning far-right ideologies, attempted by society-at-large, has had a counter-intuitive effect upon the public support of the radical, including the "alt-", right. Moreover, the ideas abandoned by academia at large are central to the motivations of these groups; to ignore this factor in favor of placing the blame on solely, or even primarily, on popularized notions of systematic oppression is not only intellectually lazy or disingenuous (depending, of course, upon the motivations of the particular individuals making such claims), but dangerous. If the ideas at the core of far-right groups remain suppressed instead of questioned and criticized, the multitude of sympathizers will inevitably grow to a point where such ideas can no longer be suppressed, and the suppressed of yesterday will become the suppressors of tomorrow.

Returning to the ideology of Evola, it is perhaps unsurprising that there exist certain parallels between Marxist theory and those of the neo-fascists, given their comparable proclivities of their followers towards political violence. As Marx wrote in response to the

changing conditions associated with industrialism, so too did Evola write in response to

modernism. Class struggle, for instance, is paralleled by Evola's notion of "Tradition". This

notion, in turn, is dependent upon the manifestation of a constant, unchanging spiritual

Absolute, which, in accordance with his esotericist influences, is held to be a metaphysical

existence from which everything else was derived. Tradition, in this sense, is best

understood as any knowledge derived directly from the constancy of the Absolute,

without conflict. Its particular contents are generally those which promote order, such as

unquestioned obedience and rigid hierarchy. Furlong describes Evola's notion of history is

fundamentally centered upon this metaphysical concept, writing, "History is the unfolding

in time and space of the cyclical struggle between tradition and the forces of disorder,

disintegration contingency and lack of differentiation, which are inherent in the processes

of becoming" (Furlong, *Social and Political Thought of Julius Evola*, 9). Evola views history,

then, as a struggle between Tradition and its absence. A distinction cannot be made

between the spiritual and the political structures of this conflict, as the state, by the

necessity of its development from the Absolute, only serves as a material representation

of Tradition. However, this notion is somewhat complicated by the rise of modernism,

which he considers "the culmination of the temporary success of the forces of disorder,

the Age of Darkness, a prelude to the return to the Golden Age and the re-emergence of

the forces of [T]radition" (9). Thus, while certain aspects of a particular political structure

may reflect Tradition, other aspects may reflect chaos and disorder. Consequently, the

spiritual struggle can and should be used not only to subdue those who seek to destroy

Tradition for the sake of disorder, such as left-wing radicals, but to also subvert or reform

the state into a form more aligned with Tradition in order to restrict its impurities. This, in

turn, permits actions against an established political order for the sake of enforcing a

more rigid form of order within the political sphere. At least from Evola's ideological

framework, actions intending to destabilize the government are permissible so long as the

intention behind this action is to bring the state more towards a sort of natural order. In

this sense, it is possible to imagine the leaders of Ordine Nuovo as traditionalist

revolutionaries, determined to fight against a system they perceive as a sacrilegious

perversion of a natural, sacred order.

There is an important distinction that must be made between the general intentions of

the far-left and far-right under this model, however. Notably, while communists and

anarchists seek, fundamentally, to abolish pre-existent institutions due to opposition of

their functions, neo-fascists, at least those working under the ideology of Evola, instead

seek to "purify", or subvert these same institutions into supporting their ends. To cause an

explosion in a bank, as in the case of the Piazza Fontana bombing, serves no direct

purpose for the neo-fascists, as they have no interest in attacking financial institutions.

Rather, the members of Ordine Nuovo sought to harm the image of their ideological

adversaries, and ultimately succeeded in manipulation of the police force as well as

provoking their enemies into reactionary political violence. The immediate target of this

violence then, was not chosen due to a desire to harm, but instead considered an

acceptable victim of collateral damage for their political ends. This is perhaps indicative of

the tendency of the leadership of Ordine Nuovo to calculate the public response to

incidents of political violence and choose individual targets and incidents that would prove

most beneficial to their goals rather than striving for strict adherence to their ideology.

With regards to the bombing and its aftermath, this paints a stark contrast between the

hot-blooded and reactionary leadership of Lotta Continua and the cruelly calculating

leaders of Ordine Nuovo. This difference in activity is most likely a reflection of the

positions that these groups had found themselves in with regards to their own ideology.

Phenomenologically, the leadership of Ordine Nuovo had little reason to worry about

either their involvement in the bombing or its effects. If, as Celemente Graziani had

claimed, their actions had been based upon the ideological framework founded by Evola,

the concern of the material consequences of their actions would be, at most, secondary to

the greater concern of their spiritual and historical effects. Rather than seeking a direct

shift in governmental policy or function, such individuals would instead seek to primarily

alter the structure of government into one which reflects the greater metaphysical order

in accordance with their notion of Tradition. Thus, any general movement towards rigid

enforcement of order would be considered a victory, even at their own material expense.

For example, suppose that the members of Ordine Nuovo had been discovered and

incarcerated in their attempt to carry out the bombing, and their intention of framing the

far-left was revealed and widely publicized. The state, or more directly the executive and

judicial authorities of the state, would have no other choice but to punish them. However, the function of the state as an instrument of penalizing political dissent would be reinforced, thereby bringing the state closer to what the neo-fascists had initially desired. The would-be bombers, though suffering from the legal action of the state, would effectively have become martyrs for the sake of increasing the degree of order within the state.

Moreover, their anti-authoritarian opponents would have great difficulty in finding an effective response to the attempts of their opponents. On the one hand, the state would have demonstrated its willingness to suppress dissidence, which disadvantages the radical left as much as the radical right; on the other to oppose this imposition would serve only to weaken their opposition to their political nemeses and, by extension, lessen the zeal of their own constituency. At best, such groups could attempt to divert these narratives into grand conspiracies of collusion between the state and their opponents, which, considering the then-demonstrated ability of the state to persecute them equally, would seem quite far-fetched to any remotely impartial observer. Alternatively, these radical groups could attempt to focus the narrative on the intended false-flagging of their group by others in order to gain sympathy, but this would raise the question of how and why the punishment provided by the state would be insufficient to satisfy these groups, and potentially incline some members or sympathizers to align themselves more closely with the state than the targeted group. Indeed, such a scenario could prove quite beneficial to a state suffering

from frequent political violence, so long as the state is willing to capitalize on the opportunity provided to reinforce the security of its populace at the expense of potentially justifying future accusations of injustice.

However, this model does have one unresolved issue; namely that if the primary motivation of Ordine Nuovo is indeed derived from a metaphysical notion of restoring order, it seems rather bizarre to use violent methods for the sake of causing changes in material conditions. After all, if Tradition is indeed held to be a direct descendant from the Absolute, and the material world in its entirety is simply a shadow of the Absolute, the conditions of this matter should be insignificant. This contradiction is present even in the writings of Evola, who eventually settled upon developing a framework in which both detachment from the material world and active interference in order to promote the restoration of Tradition within it were promoted. However, Evola did not consider these two approaches to be equal according to Furlong, who writes, "[Evola] treats the choice of paths as a personal matter; but the superiority of the warrior role is not in question" (93). Thus, for Evola, there is either no recognition or interest in the apparent contradiction between the metaphysical framework that serves as the basis of his ideology and actions which seem to discard ideological purity for the sake of achieving political influence. It is worth noting that this could potentially serve as a weakness despite its apparent strength in its efficacy in encouraging acts of political violence without any direct provocation. By drawing attention to this inconsistency, as well as subsequent inconsistencies, such as the

willingness to destabilize for the sake of order being effectively equivalent to popular

notions of "bombing for peace", it may be possible to discourage further radicalization of

sympathizers, if not lead to the disillusionment of the leaders of such groups as to the

actual ideological benefits of their actions.

Though the differences and similarities between the ideologies of the far-right has been

analyzed, there remains a question of how those subscribing to these ideologies viewed

each other within their own phenomenological frameworks, and the extent to which this

influenced the relations between these opposing radical groups. This also results in some

contention among those who proclaimed themselves to be followers of Evola's

philosophy. Evola, personally, viewed the radical left as a subset of the general protestors

against the state, whose objections "originated in the decadence of modernity, and could

be acknowledged as a sign of the times, an understandable rejection of the suffocating

oppression of Western conformism, but [the movement] lacked genuine values with

which to counter [consumerism]" (110). Thus, Evola considered his opponents criticisms

to be largely valid, but generally insufficient to either genuinely benefit the existing or to

effectively usurp it. While Evola himself did not view such individuals as particularly worth

manipulating, which is perhaps a reflection of his broader notions of predetermined

classes of individuals, the same cannot be said for his intellectual successors.

Franco Freda, a neo-Nazi intellectual and founder of the 1990-1995 Fronte Nazionale,

who himself had been suspected of participation in the Piazza Fontana bombing, "thought

that the coming Fourth State, the state dominated by the proletariat, could be used as a

base for inspiring a genuine social revolt [opposing] the bourgeoisie, within which

traditional values and traditionalist activists could reassert themselves" (111). This line of

thought essentially views the far-left as a tool to be used to further the political agenda of

the far-right. However, in contrast to Evola's assessment, which viewed the rise of the far-

left as impossible, Freda viewed the empowerment of the proletariat, sought by the far-

left as probable, if not inevitable. This perspective is not only more useful than a direct

reading of Evola for assessment of the motivations of far-right militants but is in itself

based upon aspects of Evola's philosophy.

De Benoist, a supporter of the more esoteric elements present in Evola's work, and

himself a right-wing philosopher, writes, "It has been possible for the phrase 'ride the

tiger' to be interpreted in some activist political circles as legitimizing not a desire to alter

the course of events but on the contrary to accelerate them" (111). This reading is likely

an underappreciated motivation for political violence, and its effectiveness is largely due

to its immediate obscurity. For example, a reflective reaction of a standard political

structure towards an incident of political violence would be to crackdown on the

individuals or groups responsible, either formally, through legislation, or more discreetly

through the encouragement of increased vigilance and decreased scrutiny in dealing with

future incidents at the level of law enforcement. However, this very reaction presents an

opportunity for those who expect this change to criticize these changes as an attack on

the liberties of civilians and to use this premise as a basis for encouraging further attacks

against the political structure, violent or otherwise.

Suppose, for example, a state finds itself in a political crisis akin to the Years of Lead;

political violence is frequently perpetrated by extremists of both left-wing and right-wing

political groups, and each incident serves as a motivation for the next. The leaders of

these groups are well aware of this trend, and so seek to decry governmental inaction as

silent support of their opponents, rather than coming into conflict with their opponents

directly. This permits further polarization of the political views of the populace. While

normally, the risk of radicals of opposing viewpoints using this opportunity to gain political

influence would serve as a deterrent against the use of political violence, under the idea of

accelerationism this is no longer the case. If these leaders believe that the victory of their

enemies will ultimately serve to hasten their own ends, it follows that tacit cooperation of

radical groups, even between those with entirely opposing goals and beliefs is ultimately

preferable to maintaining the status quo. However, this also creates a tension within the

radical groups between those subscribing to accelerationism and those who oppose it.

The choice of accepting accelerationism, even disregarding questions of its

effectiveness, involves what is effectively a compromise on the ideals of the radical group

in favor of promoting long-term goals. Instead of directly attempting to bring about

change considered favorable to adherents of the group, this approach would generally

favor acting against these interests, at least to an extent where more of the populace

becomes sympathetic to their goals in contrast to those of their opponents. Thus, three

opposing factions can be expected to arise from the introduction of accelerationism into a

radical group. The first faction believes accelerationism will be an effective means of

achieving their political agenda, and either actively supports the interests of opposing

groups or does not oppose others within the group from doing the same. It is reasonable

to assume that such individuals may attempt to integrate themselves into groups as

Manchurian candidates or sleeper agents to subvert these groups if they manage to

successfully overthrow the existent political establishment. Alternatively, some supporters

of accelerationism may be, in effect "double agents", already embedded in a radical group

which is opposed to their own interests for the sake of subverting these groups to serve

their own purposes. A second faction is not necessarily opposed to accelerationist

methods in principle but remains skeptical of its effectiveness in practice. Members of this

group would be predictably in favor of these methods if early attempts suggest potential

success or support a change in methods if these efforts prove unsuccessful. The existence

of such a faction would provide a sort of political momentum within the policies of a

radical group depending upon their circumstances. The third and final faction represents

those who would oppose accelerationism in principle. Such individuals are predicted to be

wholly devoted to the ideology their radical group represents, and do not wish to

compromise their position through any form of cooperation between their group and

others who oppose them in an ideological sense.

A method of exploiting this factionalism is made obvious through phenomenological analysis. Fundamentally, a large number of supporters of any radical political group are likely either wholly disinterested in or only moderately concerned with the ideological basis of a particular radical group. Rather, they view this political group as a *de facto* state-within-a-state, as the group has presented itself as willing to fulfill the governmental functions that the broader political establishment is either unwilling or incapable of performing. The conflict among the leadership introduced by accelerationism, depending upon its vigor, is either immediately viewed as irrelevant or serves as a mild cause for concern about the stability of the structure of the radical group, at worst resulting in a schism and significant weakening of this group's ability to function. However, this is not yet the worst-case scenario for a radical group faced with this conundrum. The instigation of paranoia can serve as an extremely effective weapon in such cases.

Suppose those among the leadership of a radical group who advocate for assisting opposing groups to gradually win public support was to be revealed, either through true evidence or sufficiently convincing, but fabricated evidence. Such a revelation would both significantly damage the legitimacy of the leaders of this group in the eyes of its membership and foster an element of distrust among them. Though such distrust can lead to solidification and a ideological reunification in some groups through the advocation of internal purges, and may even be artificially developed for this purpose, perhaps most famously exemplified in the Night of the Long Knives, such an attitude could easily prove

fatal to a still fledging radical group attempting to portray itself as an effective alternative

to the political establishment. While it is true that the majority of sympathizers are not

primarily concerned with the purity of the ideology central to the motivations of a radical

group, the practical concerns resulting from intra-group ideological conflicts may prove to

be significant disincentives towards further radicalization and integration into this radical

group. For example, sympathizers motivated by the inability of the political establishment

to function effectively compared to the rising radical group will be significantly

disillusioned by the formation of large conflicts within the group. These conflicts will not

only serve to demonstrate the differences in the motivations of themselves and the

leadership of the group in question, but will also promote the functional paralysis of the

group with respect to achieving its ends. Similarly, those interested in the group for its

apparent ability to instate order while the state seems to be incapable of doing so will

likely be discouraged by the inability of the radicals to clearly enforce order within their

own ranks. Moreover, attempts to mitigate these issues by the leadership are liable to

backfire and further divide their own membership.

   Leaders may attempt to solve the problem of apparent disloyalty by either discounting

it or embracing it. If the former approach is favored, it may be subject to continued

suspicion by its membership, some of whom may themselves be targeted as subversive

elements should a shift to the latter approach occurs later. Furthermore, this approach

risks initiating a war in propaganda, with opposing elements, either within or outside of

the group's membership and sympathizers seeking to popularize their viewpoint.

Ultimately, this outcome, regardless of which side, if any, proves victorious, only serves as

a potential cause for future suspicion and distrust of information provided by those

initially involved, and inevitably involves the usage of resources that could have otherwise

been used to further the agenda of the group as a whole. The other approach forsakes this

potential conflict, but requires unfavorable actions which could easily culminate in the

complete disintegration of the radical group as a political entity.

Much like a state falling into terror due to the substitution of violence for power, a

radical political group may experience the same basic phenomenon of political terror. As

the fear of infiltration by enemies into their own organizational hierarchy grows, so too

does the likelihood of individuals suspecting and denouncing their fellow radicals as

subversive elements. However, this trend is much more dangerous to radical groups than

established power structures for a simple reason: while in an established state terror, the

resultant atomization discourages association between individuals within and without the

state in fear of drawing suspicion, the opposite is true of radical groups. In these cases,

not only is the radical group largely defined by its opposition to the mainstream society,

but also by its relatively small jurisdiction compared to the state as a whole. If individuals

fear potential retribution for the desertion of the particular group, not only is there a well

established alternative to which one could escape, but this also provides a direct

motivation to weaken the group itself. Accusations of disloyalty within these groups,

particularly when reinforced with violent consequences, may very well become self-fulfilling prophecies.

The preceding analysis of the motivations and theories behind the political violence of the far-right in the Years of Lead has been based largely upon the actions of the leaders of radical groups and largely theoretical in nature. A slight shift in focus towards known individuals involved with the political violence of the far-right may prove extremely useful in assessing the relation between the theories behind and the practice of political violence, and it is for this purpose that the narrative will now shift to the experiences of a perpetrator of such violence, one Pierluigi Concutelli.

Concutelli himself as others of the first generation of far-right militants of the first generation in the Years of Lead were motivated by a desire to avenge the Fascist veterans, whose values and stories of "'boys gone off to seek death'-from Africa to Russia, all the way home, in the north, at the hands of Communist *partigiani*, Italians like themselves," reinforced and refined their pre-existing illiberal and anti-bourgeois inclinations. (Preparata, "'The Bogeyman': The Story of a Political Soldier and Elements for the Sociology of Terrorism, 111). Thus, this desire for revenge was, at least initially, not directed against the communists and anarchists directly, but against the perceived injustices of the political establishment itself. This motivation, as well as their preceding biases were undoubtedly shared between the first wave of left-wing and right-wing militants, and it is likely that this commonality is a root cause for many of the later

similarities between the tactics and ideologies of far-left and far-right radicals throughout this period. It is also possible that the narratives of the partisans themselves had played a similar role to the stories of the fascists, and that their discontent with the liberal politics of the republic were similarly seen by their spiritual successors as a betrayal to be avenged. In any case, these latent sources of political discontent required a further impetus to erupt into violence.

This impetus would be provided largely in the form of the student protests. While these protests were initially inspired by "[s]ocial protest and, above all, nationwide revulsion for the universities' decrepitude and limited admissions policy", these quickly degenerated into trilateral conflicts between the far-right, far-left and the police (112). Such conflicts and their individual escalations provided ample opportunities for those so inclined to commit acts of political violence, both against representatives of the state and their ideologically-distant counterparts. For Concutelli, such an opportunity was provided by the 1966 protest at the University of Palermo, which provided "'the spark'" to his powder keg (112). Following this incident, Concutelli became fiercely opposed to the communists, and readily resorted to violence in efforts to defeat his political enemies. There were others, however, who were willing to cooperate with the far-left in order to achieve their political ends, including the leaders of Concutelli's own organization, who attempted to join the failed 1968 Battle of Valle Giulia (113). Having been thus disillusioned, he disassociated from his prior squad.

Despite this setback and his own skepticism of their plans to overthrow the government when, in his view "a coup would have only strengthened the regime", Concutelli joined the 1967 Fronte Nazionale but was soon arrested in 1969, before their unsuccessful attempt at a coup d'etat in 1970 (113-4). Upon his release, Concutelli soon joined Ordine Nuovo, which despite its espoused condemnation of political violence, fostered a clear tendency towards political violence within its membership (115). Clearly, his two-year stint in prison had failed to significantly influence either his politics or methods. Moreover, despite the apparent strategic advantage of the far-right radicals in the early days of the Years of Lead compared to their opposites, Concutelli recalled himself and his allies being easily provoked towards violence by the far-left, by his own description, "'like dipshits'" (116). Thus, the personal experience of militants did not necessarily seem to match what would be expected from a large-scale analysis of the situation. The establishment, capitalizing upon this tendency towards reactionary violence and its unpopularity with the greater public proceeded to formally disestablish Ordine Nuovo in 1973 (117). In response to this ruling, Concutelli was predictably outraged against a system which had, in his perspective, criminalized his political outlook. Rather than submitting to the authorities, Concutelli fled into obscurity "to lead a terror cell until his arrest in February 1977" (117).

The case of Concutelli clarifies certain aspects of models presented previously while complicating others. His primary motivation for engaging in political violence seems to

have been an almost innate proclivity towards violence and antisocial attitudes, and this

was exacerbated by a desire for vengeance against those who had opposed his childhood

heroes. The student protests were not themselves a cause of his career of political

violence, but merely served as an opportunity to express these desires. Perhaps

unsurprisingly, Concutelli, who had distanced himself from the state for their refusal to

cater to his political agenda, Concutelli did not hesitate to disassociate from radical groups

that failed to meet his expectations. More generally, while he was certainly a militant, he

does not seem to fit the particular role of a political strategist. Rather then being guided

by pre-determined goals, either ideological or political in nature, Concutelli instead seems

to have indulged in political violence solely due to emotional attachment to the broader

neo-Fascist movement. Such tendencies were easily exploited by the far-left, and

ultimately served to significantly weaken the position of the far-right in public opinion.

This shift would prove fatal to Ordine Nuovo, and it is not unreasonable to assume that his

consequent choice to become a terrorist was as much a product of his despair as his

radicalism.

   It is difficult to understand Concutelli as a single individual, as there is an immediate

desire to separate his actions into a duality. On the one hand, he was a hardened neo-

Fascist militant, eager to physically harm anyone who stood against his political agenda,

but on the other he was a victim of circumstance and exploitative manipulation by his

more politically-minded allies and enemies alike. Had he found another outlet for his

frustrations, it is quite possible he never would have engaged in political violence at all, and in this sense, he is most certainly a product of his environment. Undoubtedly, there were many others, who, like Concutelli, turned to political violence as a result of their distaste for the relentless pace of change in the status quo associated with the post-war era. Perhaps as a result of this complexity, there is a natural tendency to place the blame for political violence primarily on those who used it to their advantage rather than the perpetrators themselves.

Certainly, this tendency is compounded by the fact that some of those once imprisoned for political violence and terrorism have turned to more legitimate politics with some degree of success. Others, undoubtedly influenced by ubiquitous Cold War propaganda, have claimed that such acts of political violence were encouraged by foreign actors, despite tenuous chains of evidence and often verifiably fabricated sources, such as the infamous U.S. Army Field Manual 30-31B[2]. Such narratives are politically convenient, and the benefits of promoting them are obvious; they permit a simple explanation of undesirable phenomena without requiring any degree of blame on any individual or group represented among the populace. As a consequence of this desirability, however, such claims must be assessed with a degree of critical analysis well beyond the scope of this work.

In conclusion, there are many phenomenological similarities between the radicalization process on the far-right and far-left, with some key distinctions. Both sides have a

tendency to exploit sympathy for grievances, both against wider society and their

opponents, in order to gain support. However, a distinction must be made with regards to

the internal structure of these radical organizations. Judging from the account of Pierluigi

Concutelli and the rhetoric of Clemente Graziani, there is a clear disconnect between the

leadership and membership of far-right political groups. This disconnect is probably

intentional, given the importance of hierarchy within the ideological framework of the far-

right. The far-left, however, does not seem to have such a severe difference between its

leaders and militants. Adriano Sofri, for example, was both a militant responsible for

planning the murder of Luigi Calabresi and an intellectual and journalist. This less

hierarchical system of political violence, like the rigid order of Ordine Nuovo, seems to

also reflect the underlying ideology of its leaders. The evidence, as it has been analyzed to

this point, suggests that the fundamental experience of the radical, though not initially

influenced by their particular political persuasion, gradually becomes a significant factor in

determining both the proclivities and actions of its militants, largely in an indirect fashion.

Thus, while political ideology is the driving force behind the leadership of radical

organizations, the same cannot be said for the majority of radicals. The exceptions to this

trend occur primarily as a consequence of the influence this ideology has upon the

decisions and designs of its leaders. In such cases, political ideology is both secondhand

and secondary.

Modern Applications: Looking Forward

There are some clear similarities between the political situation faced by Italians during the Years of Lead and the context in which Americans find themselves today. The legitimacy of governmental institutions is similarly under public scrutiny, and there has been a recent tendency towards violence within student organizations. Social tensions have been aggravated by policy changes, real and perceived, explicitly and implicitly, by both public and private organizations. There has been a general tendency towards the distrust of political opponents. These factors, based on the prior assessment, seem to be factors likely to promote radicalization. However, there are some key differences. The most obvious of these being that the United States has never been under the control of a fascist regime which was overthrown by a predominantly communist resistance movement. The far-right and far-left, though not lacking in general sympathizers among United States citizens, may therefore be expected to lack some of the idolization of their defeated predecessors. Consequently, the relative presence of emotional investment and zeal towards extremist political ideology that encourages reactive acts of political violence is predicted to be somewhat lacking in American radicals as opposed to their Italian equivalents, though some key issues, such as abortion and gun rights, have previously inspired incidents of single-issue terrorism. More broadly, racial tensions may complicate matters within the American political context, though related sympathies and biases are likely to be exploited as a part of the radicalization process and are analogous to

narratives of nostalgia for and oppression under the fascist regime. The assessment of this claim, however, should be left to future inquiry.

The general phenomenological model of radicalization, as previously presented, can be applied to the contemporary rising political tensions within the United States and may be utilized to predict the priorities and tactics of individuals within radical political organizations. Perhaps the most pertinent use of such a model is to limit the influence and stifle the growth of such groups. For example, if the average perpetrator of political violence is motivated by governmental inaction on certain issues, the simplest means of discouraging political violence would be for the government to address such issues directly through either new legislation or a shift in enforcement of existing laws in order to satisfy the populace. These particular problems, and their unresolved status, encourage individuals to align themselves with radical groups willing to address them. If these concerns, the driving force behind both radicalization and support for radical groups are adequately addressed, the growth and legitimacy of these organizations is severely limited, thus serving to decrease the prevalence and likelihood of future acts of political violence. Therefore, the most certain means of discouraging political violence is to appease the citizenry, particularly those who sympathize with radical groups.

In practical terms, however, this is not always a viable option. For example, to meet or resolve some of the demands of radicals may prove significantly disadvantageous for the state, particularly if such demands are unambiguously associated with an already

prominent radical group or are generally unfeasible for the continuation of the government as a whole. For example, the complete disestablishment of the prison system, as advocated by certain far-left organizations, is more likely to be viewed as capitulation than genuine concern for the abuses of the criminal justice system. Alternatives, such as cracking down on police brutality or more intensive training requirements for law enforcement agents, are much more likely to re-establish public support for the state and restore the image of state legitimacy. The decisive factor as to whether compromise is an effective means of discouraging political violence, however, is the public perception of this compromise. If compromise is seen as an example of genuine concern for the interests of citizens, then it can be extremely effective in discouraging citizens from radicalizing and radicals from attempting to violently resist the state. If, however, this compromise is viewed as an act of necessity by a government unable to continue to resist the demands of radical groups, the perception of the state as a legitimate authority will be greatly diminished. Regardless of the true intentions of individuals within government, it is distinctly the perception of these intentions that is responsible for the variable efficacy of this method, reinforcing the importance of phenomenology within the field of political philosophy.

However, there are other options based upon the political implications of phenomenology through which a state can decrease the capability of radicals to commit acts of political violence. The simplest, if not the most ethical tactic, is to exaggerate the

threat of a radical group within the public opinion. This end can be achieved through two distinct methods. First, the state may propagandize the public image of a radical group as hyperviolent. Like other forms of propaganda, this may be achieved through the intentional spread of verified information or false but believable information. The latter method further incentivizes actions of the state against their own immediate interests, such as perpetrating or supporting false-flag attacks and then accusing a targeted group of the particular incident. Naturally, these methods pose a significant risk to the public image of government should they be revealed or if the accusations are examined with scrutiny, and thus they should only be used when more preferable options are exhausted. The second method is to directly incite legitimate radicals into acts of political violence. This tactic, occasionally dubbed "the strategy of tension", is based upon the desire to portray radicals as willing to use violence to further their own agenda. While, in theory, this may be effective in certain circumstances, particularly when the supposed execution of this strategy remains suspect, if it is confirmed, it risks an unplanned escalation in political violence against the government. This is primarily due to the immense hypocrisy inherent to the strategy, which seeks to encourage political violence within the realm of intrigue, but publicly must crusade against it. If such plans were to be publicly revealed, they would undoubtedly prove devastating to the public opinion of the state, perhaps irreparably so.

A final, least desirable method to discourage political violence is simply for the state to respond in kind to attacks against their legitimacy. While defending the state in this

manner ultimately serves to substantially reduce its power over its citizens, there are situations in which it may prove to be the only viable option. However, what this method lacks in desirability is compensated to some extent by its flexibility. For example, the loss of public support generally associated with violent state suppression of political dissidents may be somewhat mitigated by inflating the public perception of the danger posed by radicals to society as a whole. In this case, widespread retaliatory violence on the part of the state is excusable as a means of preserving order on the part of the citizens, even at the cost of an immediate escalation. Effectively, this course of action involves surrendering any inequality in legitimacy and authority between the radical organization and the state in favor of using political violence in order to force the radicals into submission. More bluntly, this can be considered the initiation of a civil war on the part of the state. Due to obvious concerns, this method is only worth attempting if there is still an obvious advantage in the potential force of the state and the targeted radical group, while there is a significant chance that political control may indeed fall into the hands of such radicals.

Some, however, may argue that the utilization of political violence in itself cannot be assessed as desirable or undesirable regardless of circumstance. While this may be true from a moral perspective, the practical costs of political violence seem to generally outweigh their benefits, at least within cultures in which political violence is considered to be unacceptable behavior. Although exceptions to this generalization do exist, the

benefits are typically associated with distancing oneself from a committed act of political violence in hopes that the groups believed to support their interests will benefit by either blaming or inciting further retribution against them. In any case, the position that benefits from political violence is not the perpetrator, but the victim of these acts. Thus, as has been stated previously, the initiation of political violence, though phenomenologically appealing in an immediate sense, is ultimately an ineffectual and unreliable means of promoting any specific political agenda. It is the perception of strength, rather than brute force, that moves the body politic.

Notes

1. See "Letter from Lenin to Gorky" concerning Lenin's evaluation of the intelligentsia.

2. See Peer Henrik Hansen's "A Review of: 'Falling Flat on the Stay-Behinds'" for a detailed explanation of this forgery.

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