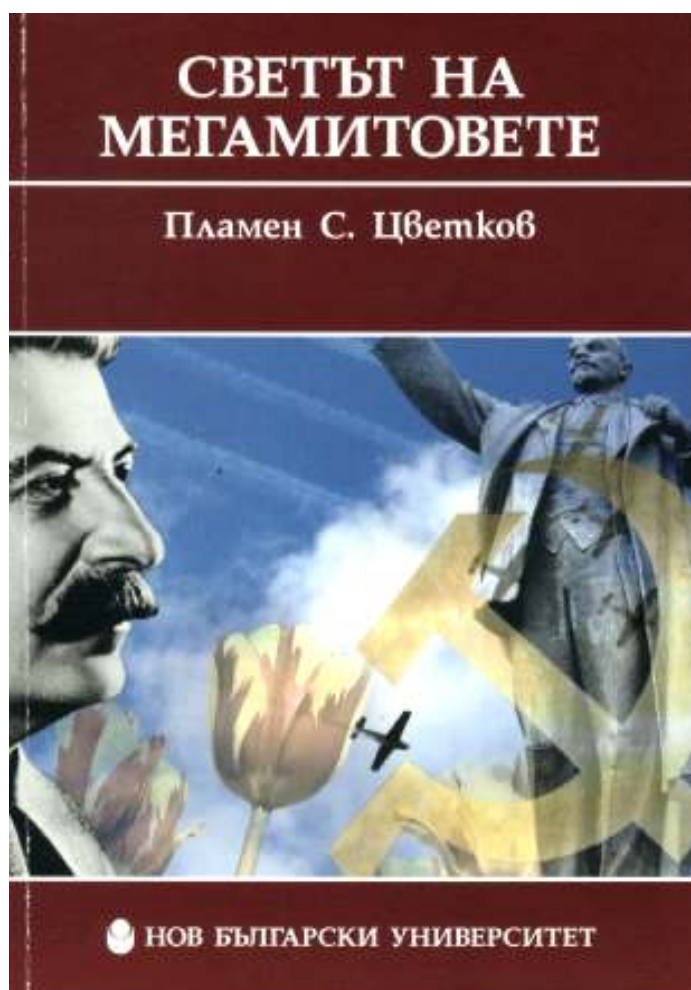


# СВЕТЪТ НА МЕГАМИТОВЕТЕ

## (Някои политически и историографски митове на XX век)

проф. Пламен С. Цветков, д.н.  
НБУ, 2008 г.

Проектът е реализиран с подкрепата на  
Централния фонд за стратегическо развитие към настоятелството на НБУ



### ***УВОДНИ ДУМИ***

Според шегобийците няма българин, който да не разбира поне от три неща – от футбол, от медицина и от история. И наистина разговорите в една компания неизбежно се въртят около поредния футболен мач или около нечии болезки, като веднага се намират услужливи “знахари”, предписващи и съответната терапия. Историята пък се засяга задължително, когато се сблъскаме с някоя неуредица. Без оглед на това дали става дума за дупките и мърсотията по улиците или за закъсняващия трамвай, автобус

или влак ние твърде често хвърляме вината за нашата изостаналост и мърлявщина върху “поборителите”, което нерядко се придружава и от откровена завист към напредналите народи. Често може да се чуе в тази връзка и следната “дълбокомъдрена” сентенция: *“И на робство не случихме – я ги виж норвежците колко са си били добре под шведско робство, а ние?”*

Късата или направо липсваща историческа памет лесно може обаче да доведе до безотговорност. Твърде широки среди у нас например изпитват носталгия по близкото комунистическо минало и тази носталгия намира израз в “крилатата” фраза: *“При Тошо не беше лошо!”* Няма никакво значение, че “евтино мляко” просто го нямаше по магазините, че за “евтина кола” се чакаше 10-15 години, а за да се сдобиеш с “евтино жилище”, често пъти не стигаше и цял живот.

Някои заинтересувани политически кръгове придават на тази безотговорност направо зловещи измерения. Например според идеолозите на “Атака” в СССР не е имало масови репресии *“и не би могло да има – подобно на лъжата за избитите 6 милиона евреи от нацистите”*. Напълно логично подобни твърдения се придружават от истерично отхвърляне на евроатлантическата ориентация на България и от не по-малко истерични нападки срещу напредналите и демократични държави: *“Крайната цел на англосаксонския свят е ликвидация на руското етнокултурно пространство чрез неговата атомизация, разпокъсване и обособяване на отделни етноконфесионални зони с незначителна мощ... Първата и най-важна част от задачата е да бъде превърната Русия в либерално-демократична държава, където западните обществени механизми, родени от протестантството, трябва да сменят съборния модел на православие.”*<sup>1</sup>

Разбира се, преднамерено погрешната историческа митология не е монопол единствено на българите, нито пък политическите митове са присъщи само на комунизма, националсоциализма и фашизма. Притеснителното е, че и в началото на третото хилядолетие след Христа твърде много хора продължават да се намират на равнището на праисторическото суеверие.

Предлаганата книга е посветена на някои основни политически митове, както и на някои митове на историческата памет. Такива са идеите за “съвършено общество”, за “справедливите войни” и за “освободителната мисия” на дадена велика сила – на първо място Русия. Специално място се отделя на отделните тоталитарни митове – комунистическия, националсоциалистическия и фашисткия. Във втората част се анализират онези изкривявания на историческата памет, които са присъщи на българите. Това са митовете за “турското робство”, за “тиранията” на Стефан Стамболов, за “най-светлата дата” в българската история – 3 март 1878 г., за “личния режим” на Фердинанд, за “националните катастрофи” и т.н. Панславизмът и догмата за славянското потекло на българите не се разглеждат тук, тъй като на тях са посветени други публикации от същия автор.

Без опознаването на тези митове е невъзможно да се разбере не само историята на XX в., но и редица специфични черти в поведението на различните национални

---

<sup>1</sup>В-к “Нова зора”, 27 май 1997 г.

общности и държави в края на ХХ и началото на ХХІ в. Липсата на елементарна историческа култура несъмнено ни прави безпомощни и пред манипулациите, към които прибегват твърде много медии и политически сили у нас.

## **СЪДЪРЖАНИЕ**

### **I.МИТОВЕ НА ТОТАЛИТАРИЗМА**

#### **Глава първа**

##### **МИТ, ИСТОРИЯ И ПОЛИТИКА**

- 1.Мит и митология.
- 2.Някои национални митове.
- 3.Славянският мит.
- 4.“Изгубеният рай” или пътят към ада.
- 5.Утопията на Томас Мор.
- 6.Комунистическият манифест.

#### **Глава втора**

##### **КОМУНИСТИЧЕСКИЯТ МИТ**

- 1.Ленин като личност.
- 2.Марксизмът на Ленин.
- 3.Великоруският шовинизъм на Ленин.
- 4.Схематизацията на Сталин.
- 5.Комунистическият “рай” на Хрущов и “развитото социалистическо общество” на Брежнев.
- 6.Предизвикателството на Китай.

#### **Глава трета**

##### **НАЦИОНАЛСОЦИАЛИСТИЧЕСКИЯТ МИТ**

- 1.“Нормалният” комунизъм и “налудничавият” националсоциализъм.
- 2.Адолф Хитлер като личност.
- 3.Националсоциалистическата германска работническа партия.
- 4.“Моята борба” и “Митът на ХХ век”.
- 5.Третият райх.
- 6.Антикомунизмът на Хитлер и “антифашизмът” на Сталин.
- 7.“Крайното решение” и катастрофата на националсоциалистическа Германия.

#### **Глава четвърта**

##### **ФАШИСТКИЯТ МИТ**

- 1.Мусолини като социалист.
- 2.Мусолини и Ленин.
- 3.Фашистката революция.
- 4.“Учението на фашизма”.
- 5.Мусолини и Хитлер.
- 6.“Италианската социална република”.

## **Глава пета**

### **ТОТАЛИТАРИЗМЪТ КАТО ТЕОРИЯ И ПРАКТИКА**

1. Лявата основа на тоталитаризма.
2. Тоталитаризъм и консерватизъм.
3. Тоталитарният антииндивидуализъм.
4. Тоталитарният милитаризъм.
5. Тоталитарният антидемократизъм и антипарламентаризъм.
6. Тоталитарният вождизъм.
7. Тоталитарният антикапитализъм.
8. Антисоциализъм и антисоциалдемократизъм.
9. Стремешът към увековечаване и еднопартийният монопол.
10. Човекоядството като политическо изкуство.
11. Тоталитарният антисемитизъм.

## **Глава шеста**

### **МИТЪТ ЗА “ОСВОБОДИТЕЛНАТА БОРБА” И ТОТАЛИТАРНАТА АГРЕСИЯ**

1. Стратегичната цел на съветската държава.
2. Руският експанзионизъм в сталински вариант.
3. ”Мирното съвместно съществуване” и доктрината Брежнев.
4. Войната на Мао срещу “световния град”.
5. Руският експанзионизъм преди и след падането на Берлинската стена.
6. Националсоциалистическият експанзионизъм.
7. Амбициите на фашистка Италия.
8. Тоталитарната агресивност в някои малки европейски страни.
9. Джихадът на аятолах Хомейни.

## **II. МИТОВЕ НА ИСТОРИЧЕСКАТА ПАМЕТ**

### **Глава седма**

#### **МИТЪТ ЗА “СПРАВЕДЛИВИТЕ” И “НЕСПРАВЕДЛИВИТЕ” ВОЙНИ**

1. ”Справедливите” и “несправедливите” войни в стари времена.
2. Победители и победени във войната срещу Турция през 1877-1878 г.
3. Балканската и Междусъюзническата война.
4. Първата световна война - борбата срещу руския деспотизъм и срещу германския империализъм до 1917 г.
5. Първата световна война – борбата на демокрацията срещу абсолютизма, втора част (1917-1918 г.)
6. Втората световна война – “народът без жизнено пространство” и борбата срещу “западните плутокрации” (1937-1941 г.).
7. Втората световна война – борбата срещу “фашистката агресия” (1941-1945 г.).
8. Израело-арабската непримиримост.
9. Корейската война и вьетнамският синдром.
10. Войните срещу диктаторите и тероризма в края на XX и началото на XXI в.

### **Глава осма**

#### **КОЙ РАЗПАЛИ ВТОРАТА СВЕТОВНА ВОЙНА?**

1. Неудобните истини за Втората световна война.
2. Дипломатическата стратегия на Ленин.
3. Тактиката на Сталин.

- 4.Целите и средствата на хитлеристката дипломация.
- 5.Преговорите през пролетта и лятото на 1939 г.
- 6.Съветско-нацистският съюз.
- 7.Изпреварващият удар на Хитлер.

## **Глава девета**

### **МИТЪТ ЗА “ТУРСКОТО РОБСТВО” И ЗА “ОСВОБОДИТЕЛНАТА МИСИЯ” НА РУСИЯ**

- 1.Османското владичество в историческата съдба на българите.
- 2.Корените на легендата за “турското робство” и на русофилския мит.
- 3.Руският панславизъм.
- 4.Русия и Голямата източна криза от 1875-1878 г.
- 5.Русофилският мит от края на XIX в. до болшевишкия преврат в Русия.
- 6.Русофилство и панславизъм в комунистически вариант.
- 7.Опити за освобождаване от “освободителите”.

## **Глава десета**

### **САНСТЕФАНСКИЯТ И БЕРЛИНСКИЯТ ДОГОВОР**

- 1.Санстефанският мит и началото на съвременната българска държава.
- 2.Априлското въстание от 1876 г. и Русия.
- 3.Райхщатското споразумение и Будапещенската конвенция.
- 4.Войната от 1877-1878 г.
- 5.Санстефанският договор.
- 6.България под руска окупация.
- 7.Споразумението Шувалов-Солзбъри.
- 8.Берлинският договор.
- 9.Руският окупационен режим в България след Берлинския конгрес.

## **Глава единадесета**

### **МИТЪТ ЗА “ДИКТАТОРА СТАМБОЛОВ”**

- 1.”Тиранинът Стамболов” като термин на руската и русофилската пропаганда.
- 2.Българският парламентаризъм до 1885 г.
- 3.Съединението, превратът и контрапревратът.
- 4.Заговорите на руската агентура срещу регентството начело със Стефан Стамболов.
- 5.Руските конспирации срещу княз Фердинанд и срещу правителството на Стефан Стамболов.
- 6.Заговорът на Коста Паница и убийството на Христо Белчев и Георги Вълкович.
- 7.Падането на Стефан Стамболов.

## **Глава дванадесета**

### **МИТЪТ ЗА “ЛИЧНИЯ РЕЖИМ” НА ФЕРДИНАНД**

- 1.Теорията за “личния режим”.
- 2.Владетелят и изпълнителната власт според Търновската конституция.
- 3.Правителства и парламентарни мнозинства при царуването на Фердинанд.
- 4.Правителства и парламентарни мнозинства на Балканите и в Европа.
- 5.Премиери и министри, налагани от Фердинанд.
- 6.Премиери и министри, налагани от белгийските и британските Кобурги.
- 7.Петото велико народно събрание.

## **Глава тринадесета**

### **МИТЪТ ЗА “ДВЕТЕ НАЦИОНАЛНИ КАТАСТРОФИ” НА БЪЛГАРИЯ**

1. Законът за съдене на виновниците за “народната катастрофа”.
2. България в балканската стратегия на Русия при Николай II.
3. Балканската и Междусъюзническата война.
4. Първата световна война – балканските цели на Русия.
5. Първата световна война – изборът на България.
6. Победата на България срещу Русия.
7. Равносметката.

### **НЯКОИ ОБОБЩЕНИЯ И ПОУКИ**

#### **ПРИТУРКИ**

1. Санстефански договор, сключен между Русия и Турция на 19 февруари (3 март) 1878 г.
2. Берлински договор.
3. Владимир Улянов-Ленин. Какво да се прави? (откъс).
4. Владимир Улянов-Ленин. Предстоящите задачи на съветската власт (откъси).
5. Владимир Улянов-Ленин. За държавата (откъс).
6. Владимир Улянов-Ленин. Пролетарската революция и ренегатът Кауцки (откъс).
7. Владимир Улянов-Ленин. “Левичарството” – детска болест на комунизма (откъс).
8. Владимир Улянов-Ленин. Реч на събранието на актива на московската организация на РКП(б), 6 декември 1920 г. (откъс).
9. Йосиф Джугашвили-Сталин. Поздравително писмо до столицата-герой – Москва, по случай 800-годишнината ѝ (откъси).
10. Адолф Хитлер. Моята борба (откъси).

#### **ПОКАЗАЛЕЦ**

#### **ИЗВОРИ И КНИЖНИНА**

#### **РЕЗЮМЕ НА АНГЛИЙСКИ ЕЗИК**

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

### **FOREWORD**

## **I. TOTALITARIAN MYTHS**

### **Chapter One**

#### **MYTH, HISTORY, AND POLITICS**

1. Myth and Mythology
2. Some National Myths
3. The Slavic Myth
4. “Paradise Lost” or the Road to Hell
5. Thomas More’s Utopia
6. The Communist Manifesto

### **Chapter Two**

#### **THE COMMUNIST MYTH**

1. Lenin as a Personality
2. Lenin’s Marxism
3. Lenin’s Great Russian Jingoism
4. Stalin’s Schematization

5. Khrushchev's Communist "Paradise" and Brezhnev's "Developed Socialist Society"
6. The Challenge of China

### **Chapter Three**

#### THE NATIONAL SOCIALIST MYTH

1. The "Normal" Communism and the "Crazy" National Socialism
2. Adolf Hitler as a Personality
3. The National Socialist German Workers' Party
4. "My Struggle" and "The Myth of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century"
5. The Third Reich
6. Hitler's Anti-Communism and Stalin's "Anti-Fascism"
7. The "Final Solution" and the Catastrophe of National Socialist Germany

### **Chapter Four**

#### THE FASCIST MYTH

1. Mussolini as a Socialist
2. Mussolini and Lenin
3. The Fascist Revolution
4. "The Doctrine of Fascism"
5. Mussolini and Hitler
6. "The Italian Social Republic"

### **Chapter Five**

#### TOTALITARIANISM AS THEORY AND PRACTICE

1. The Leftist Basis of Totalitarianism
2. Totalitarianism and Conservatism
3. Totalitarian Anti-Individualism
4. Totalitarian Militarism
5. Totalitarianism as a Denial of Democracy and Parliamentary Rule
6. The Totalitarian Leader
7. Totalitarian Anti-Capitalism
8. Anti-Socialism and the Denial of Social Democracy
9. The Eternity Endeavor and the One Party Monopoly
10. Cannibalism as a Political Art
11. Totalitarian Anti-Semitism

### **Chapter Six**

#### THE "LIBERATION STRUGGLE" MYTH AND TOTALITARIAN AGGRESSION

1. The Strategic Goal of the Soviet State
2. Russian Expansionism in Stalin's Way
3. "Peaceful Coexistence" and the Brezhnev Doctrine
4. Mao's War against the "Global City"
5. Russian Expansionism before and after the Fall of the Berlin Wall
6. The National Socialist Expansionism
7. The Ambitions of Fascist Italy
8. Totalitarian Aggressiveness in Some Small European Countries
9. Ayatollah Khomeini's Jihad

## **II.MYTHS OF THE HISTORICAL MEMORY**

### **Chapter Seven**

#### THE MYTH ABOUT “JUST” AND “UNJUST” WARS

- 1.“Just” and “Unjust” Wars in Ancient Times
- 2.The Winners and the Losers in the 1877-1878 War against Turkey
- 3.The Two Balkan Wars
- 4.The First World War: The Struggle against Russian Despotism and German Imperialism until 1917
- 5.The First World War: The Struggle of Democracy against Absolutism, Part Two (1917-1918)
- 6.The Second World War: The “Nation with no Living Space” and the Struggle against the “Western Plutocracies” (1937-1941)
- 7.The Second World War: The Struggle against “Fascist Aggression” (1941-1945)
- 8.The Israeli-Arab Antagonism
- 9.The Korean War and the Vietnamese Syndrome
- 10.The Wars against Dictators and Terrorism at the End of the 20<sup>th</sup> and the Beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

### **Chapter Eight**

#### WHO SET THE FIRE TO THE SECOND WORLD WAR?

- 1.Uncomfortable Truths about the Second World War
- 2.Lenin’s Diplomatic Strategy
- 3.Stalin’s Tactics
- 4.Goals and Means of Hitler’s Diplomacy
- 5.The Negotiations in the Spring and Summer of 1939
- 6.The Soviet-Nazi Alliance
- 7.Hitler’s Preemptive Strike

### **Chapter Nine**

#### THE MYTH ABOUT THE “TURKISH SERVITUDE” AND ABOUT RUSSIA’S “LIBERATION MISSION”

- 1.Ottoman Rule in the Historical Fate of the Bulgarians
- 2.The Roots of the “Turkish Servitude” Legend and of the Russophile Myth
- 3.Russian Pan-Slavism
- 4.Russia and the 1875-1878 Great Eastern Crisis
- 5.The Russophile Myth from the End of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century to the Bolshevik Coup in Russia
- 6.Russophilia and Pan-Slavism the Communist Way
- 7.Attempts of Liberation from the “Liberators”

### **Chapter Ten**

#### THE SAN STEFANO AND THE BERLIN TREATY

- 1.The San Stefano Myth and the Beginnings of the Modern Bulgarian State
- 2.The 1876 April Uprising and Russia
- 3.The Reichstadt Agreement and the Budapest Convention
- 4.The 1877-1878 War
- 5.The San Stefano Treaty
- 6.Bulgaria under Russian Occupation
- 7.The Shuvalov-Salisbury Agreement



8. The Berlin Treaty
9. The Russian Occupation Regime in Bulgaria after the Berlin Congress

## **Chapter Eleven**

### THE MYTH ABOUT STAMBOLOV AS A “DICTATOR”

1. “The Tyrant Stambolov” as a Term of the Russian and Russophile Propaganda
2. The Bulgarian Parliamentary System until 1885
3. The Union, the Coup, and the Countercoup
4. The Plots of Russian Agents against Stefan Stambolov’s Regency
5. Russian Conspiracies against Prince Ferdinand and against Stefan Stambolov’s Government
6. Kosta Panitsa’s Plot and the Assassination of Khristo Belchev and Georgi Vulkovich
7. The Fall of Stefan Stambolov

## **Chapter Twelve**

### THE MYTH ABOUT FERDINAND’S “PERSONAL REGIME”

1. The Theory about the “Personal regime”
2. The Monarch and the Executive according to the Turnovo Constitution
3. Cabinets and Parliamentary Majorities under Ferdinand’s Reign
4. Cabinets and Parliamentary Majorities in the Balkans and in Europe
5. Prime Ministers and Ministers, Imposed by Ferdinand
6. Prime Ministers and Ministers, Imposed by the Belgian and British Coburgs
7. The Fifth Grand National Assembly

## **Chapter Thirteen**

### THE MYTH ABOUT BULGARIA’S “TWO NATIONAL CATASTROPHES”

1. The Act for the Trial of Those Guilty of the “National Catastrophe”
2. Bulgaria in the Balkan Strategy of Russia under Nicholas II
3. The Two Balkan Wars
4. The First World War: The Balkan Aims of Russia
5. The First World War: Bulgaria’s Choice
6. Bulgaria’s Victory against Russia
7. Assets and Liabilities

### SOME CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS

### APPENDIXES

1. San Stefano Treaty, Concluded by Russia and Turkey on February 19 (March 3) 1878
2. Berlin Treaty
3. Vladimir Ulyanov-Lenin. What to Do? (an excerpt)
4. Vladimir Ulyanov-Lenin. The Forthcoming Tasks of Soviet Power (excerpts)
5. Vladimir Ulyanov-Lenin. On the State (an excerpt)
6. Vladimir Ulyanov-Lenin. The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky (an excerpt)
7. Vladimir Ulyanov-Lenin. “Leftism”: A Child Disease of Communism (an excerpt)
8. Vladimir Ulyanov-Lenin. Speech at a Meeting of Activists of the Russian Communist Party’s Moscow Organization, December 6, 1920 (an excerpt)
9. Joseph Dzugashvili-Stalin. A Greetings Letter to the Heroic Capital Moscow on the Occasion of Her 800<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (excerpts)
10. Adolf Hitler. My Struggle (excerpts)

### INDEX

### PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES

### SUMMARY IN ENGLISH

**Plamen S.Tzvetkov**  
**THE WORLD OF MEGAMYTHS: SOME POLITICAL AND HISTORIOGRAPHY**  
**MYTHS OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY**  
**(summary)**

Myth and mythology may be defined as an attempt of the human being to put some order in the way of perceiving the surrounding world that appears as chaos. However, those who want to justify their absolute power by a simple and self-evident explanation can easily manipulate this longing for myths, the more so as myth is also a kind of fairy tale. On the other hand, a lie is never hundred percent untrue: it is a combination of obvious facts with half-truths and with sheer untruths.

Myths are also present in the very foundation of almost each national identity. For most people national identity is inseparable from their own ego, which can be confirmed only by finding a contrast with the others. The distinction between “We” and “They” easily leads to assigning our own characteristics to the others. At the same time, national myths result from the search for unique features. Thus many Americans believe that they are the descendants of people on a quest for freedom. They also believe that the United States is the first representative democracy and that the Americans are the first modern nation in the world. Too many French people consider themselves an entirely political nation or nation of citizens, although the French ethnicity and its language is clearly at the basis of the modern French nation. Finally the Mexicans, as well as most of the Balkan nations try to prove that they and their ancestors have been living in their respective territories from time immemorial.

A particular national myth is the Slavic one. There are no such things as Slavic mentality or Slavic national consciousness nowadays, but too many people, including serious scholars keep on insisting that there is a common Slavic soul. In fact Slavic nations have only a certain common element in their ethnic origin, but they are more different from each other than, let’s say, the Americans from the British or the British from the Australians, despite their common English language. By the way, too many Americans have also a Slavic element in their origin. For their part the Bulgarians, who have nothing to do with the Slavs from an ethnical viewpoint, readily accept the Slavic myth about their descent with the only purpose to deny any kinship with the Turks, who have been their masters for more than four centuries. Eventually, the Slavic myth became the core of Russian Pan-Slavism, claiming that all Slavs were mere tribes of one and the same nation that was to be united under the scepter of Muscovy’s autocrats.

Many myths are based on archetypes. One of the most powerful archetypes is that about the lost paradise, which makes particularly attractive all theories and plans for a “perfect society”. However, all attempts to carry out such a “perfect society” led to unlimited terror. That was the case of the Zealots in Thessalonica in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Terror was the only visible result of the 15<sup>th</sup> century movement under Bedreddin-i Simavni in the Ottoman Empire, while the 19<sup>th</sup> century T’ai P’ing Rebellion caused the death of 100 million human beings.

A “perfect society” is possible only if there are no individual differences, if all human beings are alike. For this reason each “perfect society” plan inevitably proposes a perfectly organized concentration camp. The same applies to Thomas More’s *Utopia*, which may be defined as a premonition of Communist Russia with its uniforms, servitude, mandatory domicile and forced labor camps. On the other hand, though, Thomas More advocated religious tolerance and a republican form of government, as if he had a presentiment of the future birth of the United States of America.

In this regard Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels went much further by depriving More’s ideas of their spirituality. The *Communist Manifesto*, published by Marx and Engels in 1848,

was to serve as a rigid framework of all their future works. It promised to put the whole human race in a huge concentration camp on the completely false assumption that private property was concentrating in ever fewer hands and that the majority would lose, sooner or later, all ownership. Once the proletariat, i.e. the have-nots became more than half of the population, they would make a revolution in order to abolish private property altogether. Marx and Engels firmly believed in the existence of antagonistic and impenetrable classes that were to be destroyed by the “proletarian revolution”. In their opinion everyone’s self was entirely determined by the social and material position. However, they never took pains to explain how a “proletarian” in charge of the huge concentration camp they proposed would keep his proletarian class-consciousness.

Neither Marx, nor Engels had anything to do with the “proletariat”. Karl Marx belonged to Germany’s upper middle classes and married a girl from one of the most outstanding German aristocratic families, namely the House of Westphalia. Friedrich Engels was the son of a wealthy German manufacturer who possessed a factory in Manchester as well. The Russian Vladimir Ulyanov, whose nickname Lenin is inseparable from the theory and practice of Communism, descended also from an aristocratic family. He apparently had a happy childhood until the moment his brother Alexander Ulyanov was arrested, sentenced to death and hanged for an attempt upon the life of the Russian tsar Alexander III (1881-1894). Vladimir took his revenge in 1918, when he ordered the execution of Alexander III’s son and successor Nicholas II and his whole family. Incomparably more gruesome was Lenin’s zeal in exterminating all “reactionary classes”, which caused the death of about 25 million human beings.

Lenin rightly assumed that if industrial workers were left to themselves, they would never come to the idea of a “proletarian revolution” and of the abolition of private ownership. Marx and Engels seem to have also suggested that someone else had to bring a “proletarian consciousness” into the working class but Lenin went much further by claiming that he and his followers would look for that “proletarian consciousness” not only among the industrial workers, but in all classes of society. Thus Lenin’s interpretation of the term “proletariat” became synonymous to the bunch of his own most fanatical followers no matter of their social origin. In 1903 Lenin began to create an organization of his own, which was not a political party in the traditional meaning, but a disciplined structure, a state within the state, for the conquest of political power. In 1912 the Bolshevik Party severed even formally all relationship with Russian Social Democracy, although it went on claiming to be a social democratic party as well.

Lenin pretended to be a disciple of Marx and Engels but, contrary to the two Germans, he firmly believed that Russia was also fit for a “proletarian revolution”. He gratefully accepted the view of the German social democrat Karl Kautsky that Russia and the Slavs were to become the next center of world revolution. As a matter of fact, this was a “class” version of the old dogma about Moscow as the “Third Rome”, bound to conquer the world in order to impose the “true faith” on the entire human race. The ironic thing is that later, when Kautsky was horrified by the Bolshevik terror, Lenin started to despise him as a “renegade”.

Stalin, who won the struggle for Lenin’s succession, tried to carry out his teacher’s scheme in a most careful and meticulous way. The only thing Stalin did was to put some order in Lenin’s somewhat chaotic views to make them more understandable for the not very well educated party apparatchiks. Stalin’s belief in the possibility of “building socialism” in only one country meant by no means that he had given up the ultimate goal of imposing Communism on the whole planet. The main purpose of the 1929-1933 collectivization and of the 1936-1938 *Great Terror* was to transform Russia into an infallible machine for the conquest of the world.

However, during the Second World War Stalin failed to conquer Europe to the Atlantic, as he had initially planned, while his system of death camps and mass terror became an ever-heavier burden on Russia's economy as a whole. The very survival of the Soviet regime forced his successors to soften their grip on society and to abandon the practice of large-scale extermination purges. True enough, Khrushchev was also fond of the future communist concentration camp but he imagined it with well-fed inmates. He promised to build Communism and to make the Soviet Union the most developed country in the world by 1980, but the overcentralized Russian economy was incapable of technological innovation. By the late 1960s and early 1970s it became clear that Communism as a system of complete abundance of goods would not come true in the foreseeable future. Brezhnev, who ousted Khrushchev by a coup d'état in 1964, tacitly admitted the failure of Khrushchev's vision by launching the theory about the "developed socialist society" as a practically endless transition from "socialism" to "communism".

Moreover, Brezhnev had to face the challenge of another pretender for world domination, namely the communist dictator of China Mao Tse-tung. As most of the other communist leaders Mao had started his career as a Soviet apparatchik but thanks to his armed struggle against the national Chinese government and, much less, against the Japanese invaders, he created armed forces and repression services of his own. However, it was only after Stalin's death and Khrushchev's highly limited de-Stalinization that Mao proclaimed himself a faithful follower of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, rejecting Soviet communism as a form of "revisionism" and of "capitalist restoration". In order to prove that, Mao decided to abolish immediately all forms of individual ownership by proclaiming a "Great Leap Forward" and to eliminate all forms of possible dissent by a "Cultural Proletarian Revolution". After Mao's death in 1976 his successors proclaimed a coexistence of "capitalism" and "socialism" in one and the same country. As a result private initiative in the economy was restored but the Communist Party preserved its political and ideological monopoly.

China is the largest, but by no means the only country in the world that is still in the grip of Communism. Vietnam and Laos follow more or less the Chinese path, while the communist system remains practically intact in Cuba, North Korea and Belarus. On the other hand, leading Western countries, and the United States in the first place, keep on finding themselves under the strong impact of a feeling of guilt toward Central and Eastern Europe, whose people had to pay with their freedom for the liberation of the West from National Socialism. Moreover, Communism is considered to be more or less fit for Russia's despotic and collectivist tradition, while National Socialism appears as a short-lived aberration in the history of Germany. Communism in Russia and Eastern Europe fell apart by itself, while National Socialism was defeated in a war. Thus the crimes against humanity, committed by Russian Communism, were never put to trial in the way this had happened to the practices of German National Socialism after the end of World War II. Too many people in the West refuse to admit that Western civilization is not more immune to totalitarianism than the Orthodox, Islamic or Buddhist part of the world. Last but not least, influential circles in Russia keep on supporting financially a large-scale propaganda of denying the crimes of Communism.

Similarly to Lenin and Communism, the name of Adolf Hitler is inseparable from National Socialism. Unlike Lenin, though, Hitler had a hard childhood almost from the very beginning. His father died when he was only thirteen. He failed to pass an admission exam to the Vienna Arts Academy and assigned his failure to the presence of Jews in the examination committee. Very painful for him was also the fact that the introduction of universal suffrage in Austria inevitable reduced the importance of the German element in the Hapsburg Empire. On the eve of World War II Adolf Hitler already hated all foreigners and especially the Jews.

After the outbreak of the war he volunteered for the German army and seemed to have enjoyed fighting on the Western front.

After Germany's surrender in November 1918 Hitler managed to remain in the service as a military intelligence informer about extremist activities in Munich. At a meeting of a tiny political group, which called itself the "German Workers' Party", Hitler made a frenetic speech and the audience was pleased to the point of inviting him to join the organization. Soon after that Hitler assumed the leadership and gave the structure a new name, i.e. the *National Socialist German Workers' Party*.

Hitler's Socialism consisted mainly in claims for the nationalization of all war profits and of all trusts, as well as for the confiscation of big stores, which were to be redistributed to small retailers. Unearned incomes and "usury slavery" had to be abolished, while Jews were to be treated as foreigners. All Germans had to be united in a "Great Germany". Hence the Versailles and Saint-Germain treaties were to be rejected because, among other things, they forbade the union of Austria with Germany.

On November 8, 1923, Hitler and his National Socialists arrested the local Bavarian executive in a Munich beer hall and tried to follow Mussolini's example by staging a "March on Berlin" but the putsch failed miserably. Hitler was sentenced to five years of imprisonment but he spent only eight months in jail. There he dictated his first and only book, "*My Struggle*", which was later defined as the Bible of National Socialism. In fact Hitler replaced Marx's dogma about class struggle as the only factor of human behavior by the dogma about the struggle between "superior" and "inferior races" as the very basis of human civilization. The "Aryans" were proclaimed a superior race, while the Jews belonged to the inferior races, although neither the "Aryans" nor the Jews are "races" at all. In Hitler's view the Jews were planning the conquest of the world and the Germans, as the purest representatives of the superior "Aryan" race, had the historic mission of saving mankind from the "Jewish plot".

In the 1920s these simplistic ideas didn't seem to attract too many Germans, but after the outbreak of the Great Depression in 1929 Hitler gained momentum and his party became the most powerful political force. The despair of the Germans was so deep that more than half of those who took part in the parliamentary elections, held on July 31, 1932, supported either the National Socialists or the local Communists. Nevertheless, the Nazis were far from an absolute majority but the traditional political parties were unable to overcome the mistrust of each other in order to unite for the defense of democracy against the National Socialist and the Communist threat. The Social Democrats remained isolated, while some right-wing parties were even ready to cooperate with the National Socialists against Bolshevik aggression, although it was clear that Hitler fought Communism by using Communist methods.

As a result of the 1932 elections Hitler became the leader of the most numerous group in parliament and on January 30, 1933, in perfect conformity with the rules of parliamentary democracy and constitutional government, he was entrusted with the formation of the next cabinet. It took him only three months to eliminate all political parties except the Nazi one and to impose a totalitarian regime in the very heart of Europe.

The Communist threat was, therefore, an excuse rather than the only real enemy. In a similar way, "Fascism" was for Stalin only a pretext for his own intention to conquer the world. In the eyes of Hitler there was no substantial difference between Communism and democracy because both were considered a product of the "world Jewish plot". In the eyes of Stalin there was no substantial difference between "Fascism" and democracy because both were considered forms of "bourgeois dictatorship" and "imperialism" whose aim was the destruction of the first and only "proletarian" state. In practical terms this meant that provisional alliances were possible with any power in the world no matter of its political and ideological system. As early as in 1930 Hitler admitted that, if necessary, there might be

peace even with Stalin, but Soviet Russia could not afford a war against the entire world either. The Soviet-Nazi alliance, formed by the *Non-Aggression Pact* of August 23, 1939, and reaffirmed by the *Treaty for Friendship and for the Border* of September 28 of the same year, was accompanied by a mutual praise of the two totalitarian powers as the only peacekeepers on the planet. Accordingly, Britain and France were accused of bloodthirsty aggressiveness for their refusal to agree with the destruction of Poland by National Socialist Germany and by Communist Russia.

Of course, the Soviet-Nazi alliance could not last for a long time, since Stalin and Hitler wanted to conquer the Earth and there was, and still is, only one planet named Earth. The fact is that after launching his preemptive strike against Stalin Hitler was quick enough not only to adopt but also to go beyond the murderous practices of Russian Communism. By applying the so-called “final solution” German National Socialism exterminated more than 20 million human beings in only less than four years. For Hitler the war was nothing but a race struggle in the same way as for Stalin the war was nothing but a class struggle. Similarly to World War I, the outcome of World War II was predetermined by the United States. Victory came to those who had been joined by the USA.

Both German National Socialism and Russian Communism are often referred to as a kind of Fascism, although Fascism, as a theory and practice of Mussolini’s Italy, was much more modest both in aggressiveness and in exterminating innocent human lives. Similarly to Lenin, Mussolini started his political career as a Socialist. Initially Mussolini shared Anarchistic views, but later, during his stay in Switzerland, he became a Marxist, being particularly interested in the revolutionary elite theory.

While in Geneva, Mussolini apparently attended the same Socialist meeting as Lenin, but neither seems to have made a lasting impression on the other. In any case, from that moment on Mussolini’s ideas were quite close to those of Lenin. Both Mussolini and Lenin were eager to transform the forthcoming world war into a civil war. Both Mussolini and Lenin were enthusiastic about revolutionary violence. Both Mussolini and Lenin despised deeply the working class, although they claimed that they acted on its behalf. Both Mussolini and Lenin were striving for absolute power no matter how this ambition was explained in ideological terms.

At the outbreak of the First World War Mussolini realized that the Italian Socialist Party, and especially its passive pacifist attitude in favor of absolute neutrality, would never bring him to power. In November 1914 Mussolini started to publish a newspaper of his own, advocating the entrance of Italy in the war against the Central Powers, headed by Germany. He was expelled from the Socialist Party for his militarism, but he gained more fame by volunteering to the front, where he was wounded. To some extent his expectations were fulfilled by the disastrous social unrest that broke out in Italy after the end of World War I but, similarly to Lenin, Mussolini apparently decided to force up events. On March 23, 1919, he gathered in Milan about 120 former Socialists, Anarchists and Futurists and thus he founded the Fascist movement. In the following year or two he abandoned a lot of his radical leftist ideas and succeeded in forming an electoral coalition with some right-wing circles of the Liberal Party. Curiously enough, the same coalition was joined by another group of the radical Left, called the “*Italian Nationalist Association*”, founded back in 1910. Thanks to this move to the right the Fascists won 35 parliamentary seats at the May 1921 elections.

Similarly to Germany on the eve of Hitler’s takeover, Italy’s main political forces were attached to representative democracy and to the state of law, but they were incapable of overcoming their deep mistrust toward each other. To make things even worse, the Italian Socialist Party had the suicidal idea of joining the Communist International, created by Lenin in early 1919 as a Soviet party and state body for the Sovietization of the Earth by a series of merciless mutinies and large-scale terrorist acts. The Socialists were quick enough

to realize that Lenin expected from them to become a mere ramification of his highly disciplined terrorist network and they left the Communist International in 1921, but it was too late. Mussolini's Fascists availed themselves of the opportunity to launch a series of violent assaults not only on the Communists, but on the Socialists as well. The Communists fired back and too many Italians, including King Victor Emmanuel III and the military, started to have the feeling that Mussolini and his followers were the only ones capable of saving Italy from the Bolshevik threat.

In the night of October 28 to 29, after a series of occupations of local authorities' buildings by Mussolini's followers, armed Fascists undertook a "March on Rome" and forced the King to entrust Mussolini with the formation of the next cabinet after the resignation of the Liberal Prime Minister Facta. That was the beginning of the Fascist Revolution but it took Mussolini six years to abolish all political parties except the Fascist one. Moreover, until 1943 Mussolini never managed to put under his complete control the King, the Senate and, most important of all, the Church.

Mussolini was the first one to claim that his aim was to transform Italy into a "Totalitarian State" but he never achieved that. His article about the Fascist Doctrine, published in 1932, was a justification of his own ideological ups and downs rather than a consistent totalitarian theory. The basic idea was that human beings are entirely conditioned by the state, that nations are created by the state and not the other way around and that the individual should be wholly submitted to the state.

Mussolini hailed the seizure of power by the National Socialists in Germany as evidence that the 20<sup>th</sup> century was going to be the century of Fascism, but the differences between Fascism and National Socialism were even deeper than those between National Socialism and Communism. Back in the 1920s Hitler admitted that Mussolini fought "unconsciously" against "world Jewry", while Mussolini rejected the race dogma and had Jews among his followers. In the summer of 1934 Fascist Italy was on the verge of an armed assault on Germany because of a Nazi coup attempt in Austria and in 1935 Mussolini tried to create a Fascist International, directed against German National Socialism rather than against Russian Communism. It was only in the second half of the 1930s that the Italian dictator became fully aware that he could not achieve his dream about a "New Roman Empire" without the assistance of the Third Reich. This resulted in an increasing submission of Italy to Nazi Germany to the point that Mussolini introduced anti-Semite legislation and made himself entirely dependent on Hitler's will.

The collapse of Fascist Italy preceded the collapse of National Socialist Germany by two years. In the summer of 1943, while American, British and Canadian forces were landing in Sicily, Mussolini was ousted from power and put under arrest. The Nazis occupied most of continental Italy and a special commando liberated Mussolini from jail in order to place him as leader of a puppet regime under German occupation. Under Hitler's protection Mussolini proclaimed an "*Italian Social Republic*" and returned to the left radicalism of early Fascism. Mines, raw materials, and electric power plants were nationalized, while the rest of the industry was "socialized", i.e. put under the control of the Fascist party and state apparatus. Mussolini promised also an expansion of cooperative lands but he had no time to carry out this threat: by the spring of 1945 the Allies reached the Alps and on April 28 the Duce was captured by a partisan unit and immediately shot together with his mistress Clara Petacci.

The basic ideas not only of Fascism, but also of each totalitarian doctrine originate predominantly from the Left. Both Mussolini and Lenin started their political careers as Socialists. The leader of the Norwegian "National Union" Vidkun Quisling had been deeply impressed by the 1917 Bolshevik coup d'état and had spent some time in the ranks of the local Communist Party. Russian Communism, German National Socialism, Italian Fascism,

the Norwegian “National Union”, the Romanian Legionnaires of Corneliu Codreanu, the Hungarian “Crossed Arrows” of Ferenc Szallasi and the Islamic fundamentalists of Ayatollah Khomeini were and are distinguished by their revolutionary discourse and by their intention to achieve a radical change of society which is also typical, no doubt, of the Left. True enough, Hitler, Codreanu and Szallasi never took part in any leftist organizations or movements, but the bulk of their followers had a left background. Hitler, in particular, borrowed the swastika as a symbol of his National Socialist German Workers’ Party from an Austrian organization of the same name, founded by the former social democrat Walter Riehl in 1918.

The predominantly leftist character of the various totalitarian doctrines doesn’t preclude the existence of some conservative elements as well. Lenin’s idea about Moscow as the center of world revolution is a “class” interpretation of the ancient dogma of pre-Revolutionary Russia about Moscow as the Third Rome. Hitler, in his turn, wanted to direct Germany’s foreign policy back to the expansion to the East, as in the Middle Ages. Mussolini endeavored to restore the ancient Roman Empire, whereas Codreanu’s Christian Orthodox fundamentalism and Ayatollah Khomeini’s Islamic fundamentalism seem to be in conformity with such a conservative value as the belief in God. However, after the collapse of the Third Reich some surviving Nazis founded a *Socialist Imperial Party*, which vigorously rejected western civilization. After the Fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 most communist parties were rapidly transformed into parties of the Socialist Left, but in Croatia the Communists under Franjo Tudjman decided to found the strongly nationalist and right wing Croatian Democratic Union. By the same token in the countries, occupied by the Red Army at the end of World War II, Stalin imposed the participation of a number of conservative parties in apparent multiparty coalitions. Of course, these coalitions were entirely controlled by the communists and, above all, by the KGB network, but nevertheless, they succeeded in creating a false impression of moderation, at least to some extent. Finally, despite Mussolini’s left radicalism, his followers moved to the right after the end of World War II and took part in various conservative alliances.

As a matter of fact, each totalitarian doctrine is based on an oversimplification of the human phenomenon. According to Lenin individuality is entirely predetermined by class affiliation. In Hitler’s view man is a racial and nothing else but a racial being, and Quisling was ready to accept a similar formula. Mussolini proclaimed that man is unthinkable outside the state. Ferenc Szallasi defined his “*hungarism*” as the nation’s only “*biological physique*”. By deliberately ignoring those chapters of the *Koran*, where religious tolerance is recommended, Ayatollah Khomeini divided the whole human race into two parties: the Party of God and the Party of Satan. These oversimplifications are the product of an uncompromising anti-individualism, with Lenin denying, along Marx’s lines, the very existence of a unique ego in each human being.

Human beings are defined as a monolithic mass, whose entire existence is motivated by a single will. This easily leads to an overall militarism, where each individual is to be submitted to a rigid discipline. Such an understanding is obviously incompatible with democracy and parliamentary rule. However, democracy is denied not as such, but as a kind of “bourgeois” or “Jewish” dictatorship, while Mussolini, Hitler, Lenin and his successors claim that their own systems are a genuine and supreme form of democracy. Within this framework parliament is not abolished, at least formally, but reduced to an acclamation body with members, carefully selected among the most fanatical supporters of the regime.

It goes without saying that if human masses have a single will they need just someone to express and interpret that will for them. Hence the dictator is glorified and even deified as the only authentic interpreter of the mass will and of the eternal and unchangeable laws of history. The hysterical cult of the leader is, therefore, a logical consequence of totalitarian anti-individualism.



Capitalism is rejected precisely for its individualistic character. The weak presence of private ownership in pre-Revolutionary Russia enabled Lenin to nationalize directly the industry, the banks, and the land. Thus he liquidated all the three functions of private ownership: holding, use, and disposal. The traditions of western civilization in Germany prevented Hitler from doing the same but he subordinated a formerly private economy to a strictest and overbureaucratic regulation, thus abolishing two out of the three functions of private ownership, namely, use and disposal. By forcefully uniting employers and employees into corporations, Mussolini tried to achieve similar results in Italy, but it was only under the 1943-1945 “*Social Republic*” that he initiated large-scale nationalizations and “socializations”. In Romania Codreanu and his followers advocated a “romanianization” of Jewish property and wanted to provide the state with all the levers of economic and social activity. Quisling was ready to introduce Mussolini’s system of corporations in Norway, while Szallasi threatened to push the Hungarian peasants into cooperative farms. Finally, Ayatollah Khomeini’s anti-capitalism is seemingly based on the *Koran*, where money lending is condemned as a sin.

Totalitarian anti-capitalism is inseparable from anti-socialism. Indeed, Socialists and Social Democrats also reject capitalism, but they intend to achieve their goals by democratic and parliamentary means. Moreover, they apparently look for those social strata that are most likely to give supporters to the totalitarian leaders as well. Both Social Democracy and totalitarian movements address those who long for a perfectly just society. The fact is that the Socialists and the Social Democrats are the first victims of Communist, National Socialist, Fascist, or fundamentalist terror.

Totalitarian leaders do not share their power and their revolution inevitably implies the liquidation not only of the Socialist and Social Democratic, but also of all political parties except their own. Thus the totalitarian party is placed above the state and this political and ideological monopoly may be considered a natural result of the claim to eternity. The more totalitarian a regime is, the longer is the period in which this regime thinks it will last. For Lenin Communism is nothing less than the eternal future of the human race. Hitler declared that his coming to power marked the beginning of a Reich that was to last one thousand years. Mussolini “modestly” proclaimed that the 20<sup>th</sup> century was going to be the “Age of Fascism”.

It goes without saying that this kind of “eternity” can be achieved only by way of mass murders and overall terror. By killing millions – not “only” opponents, but also perfectly innocent people – Lenin and Stalin put the entire population of Russia in permanent and paralyzing fear. A close watch by agents of the secret police on every critical remark and on every lack of discipline did the rest. The hidden ears and eyes of police informers remained a highly efficient instrument of control even after Stalin’s death, although Khrushchev and Brezhnev abandoned the practice of mass exterminations. From November 7, 1917, when Lenin seized power, to March 5, 1953, when Stalin died, about 85 to 90 million people were killed in Russia only, victims of World War II not included. The victims of Mao Tse-tung in Communist China from 1949 to 1976 are estimated to 65 million people. Hitler managed to exterminate 25 million human beings and this figure doesn’t include victims of war operations either.

Under a totalitarian rule diversity, which is quite natural in human societies, is not only highly undesirable, but something that should be destroyed at any price. By their peculiar religion and by their social position, the Jews are particularly vulnerable in this regard. Up to the modern times in most countries Jews did not have the right to hold land, which made them earn their living in small businesses in the cities. Thanks to a long technology of survival, often in extremely hostile surroundings, a tiny part of the Jews succeeded in gaining a dominant position in banking. Thus, after Lenin took power in 1917, many Russian Jews were liquidated for the unpardonable sin of belonging to the “exploiting classes” as capitalists or

simply as private owners of small businesses. Under Stalin the remaining Jews became a special target of repression as Jews. In the 1930s a special “Jewish Autonomous Region” was created in the Far East, close to the coldest area on Earth, and nobody knows how many Jews died out of the hard conditions there. In the late 1940s and early 1950s Stalin launched a campaign against the “rootless cosmopolitans”, intending to destroy the whole Jewish community in European Russia. Eventually the Jews were saved thanks to Stalin’s death in March 1953.

Hitler’s anti-Semitism derived from the central dogma of his doctrine, reducing history and the whole human condition to a black-and-white struggle between “superior” and “inferior races”, the Jews being labeled as an “inferior race”. In the ghettos, created under German occupation in the beginning of World War II, the Nazis killed many Jews by starvation long before the start of the gruesome “Final Solution” program. It was only after Hitler’s preemptive assault on the Soviet Union that the Nazis began to build up their network of death factories and threw millions of European Jews in the gas chambers.

Initially Mussolini rightly pointed out that there are no “pure races” and even admitted Jews to the Fascist Party. However, his ever more complete submission to National Socialist Germany from 1938 on was accompanied by an ever more drastic anti-Semite legislation and, eventually, about 40% of the tiny Italian Jewish community perished in the Nazi death camps. The leader of the Romanian Legionnaires Codreanu did not share Hitler’s racial theories either, but he considered that both capitalism and Communism, which, in his opinion, were destroying the Romanian peasants as the authentic Romanian class, was the product of Jewish activity. The fundamentalist anti-Semitism of Ayatollah Khomeini is, to a great extent, similar to the Christian Orthodox anti-Semitism of Codreanu.

Totalitarianism is neither left, nor right, because the Left and the Right belong to the political space of democracy, whereas totalitarianism is absolutely incompatible with democracy. Despite the revolutionary discourse totalitarianism is extremely reactionary. By his nationalizations Lenin pushed Russia back to Muscovite times, when everything belonged to the Tsar. Communism in general aimed at restoring the prehistoric age, when there was no private ownership and no human personalities. Hitler wanted to resume the expansionist practices of the medieval Holy Roman Empire, while the peasants were attached to the soil as in the Middle Ages. Mussolini dreamed about the Roman Empire, which was dead for centuries. Ayatollah Khomeini’s ideal is the Caliphate of the 7<sup>th</sup> century and his religious zeal is also characteristic of the Middle Ages.

The everyday terror, as well as the frequent economic failures of the regime, has to be justified by the threat of an imaginary foreign enemy and this enemy’s subversive agents. Moreover, a totalitarian dictator can never be completely sure of his absolute power, as long as his subjects know that there is another way of life beyond the state border. The dictator has no other choice but to destroy that alternative and the only way to do it is to conquer the whole planet. No perpetrator of an aggression names it an aggression: it is always presented as a “liberation” or, at least, as a “unification”. Communist Russia loudly and constantly proclaimed that its aim was to free the “proletariat” from “capitalist exploitation”, while National Socialist Germany posed as a “liberator” of the human race from the “Jewish threat”.

In March 1919 Lenin founded the Communist International (the Comintern) as an “*organization of the communist parties from the different countries into a united world communist party*” that was to achieve, by all available means and mostly by terrorist actions and mutinies, a “*World Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics*”. The nucleus of that “World Union” was Russia herself, transformed by Lenin in December 1922 into a “*Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics*”.

Unlike Lenin, Stalin put the emphasis on classical warfare and assigned the Comintern an auxiliary role of propaganda, subversion and of preparing low-level cadres for the

forthcoming Sovietization. After the outbreak of World War II a high Russian official frankly admitted to the Lithuanian Prime Minister that this war was going to give Moscow the whole of Europe, while the Third World War would end with Russia's victory over the entire planet.

However, the Communization of Earth turned out to be not as easy as Lenin had imagined. True enough, the Red Army reached the very heart of Europe and cut Germany into two, but under Mao Tse-tung Communist China rose up as an ever more powerful rival for world conquest. Moreover, in the age of nuclear armaments, any large-scale aggression is bound to threaten the human race with self-destruction and there won't be neither conquerors, nor conquered. These developments made Khrushchev, who succeeded Stalin as the new master of Russia, adopt a more flexible behavior, by proclaiming a doctrine of "peaceful coexistence". The idea was to go on with the expansion of Communist Russia without risking a general confrontation. To that effect Khrushchev and, later, Brezhnev, relied on the world communist network, as well as on those dictators, who took power in a number of countries after their liberation from colonial rule and who were distinguished by their deep hostility toward the West. Nonetheless, by declaring in 1968 that no country would be allowed to return to "capitalism" once it had been Sovietized, Brezhnev accepted in fact some defensive elements in his expansion scheme.

Moscow had hardly any other choice because at that moment Mao had already started his preparations for a war of the "global village", headed by China, against the "global city", which included not "only" the United States and its allies, but also the Soviet Empire, considered an equally "reactionary" power. Beijing tried to find some footholds even in Europe and succeeded in winning over Albania, as well as in controlling Cambodia for a while. In the 1970s practically all the puppet regimes, imposed by agents of Moscow in Angola, Mozambique, and Ethiopia, had to face armed guerrilla movements, sponsored by the Chinese. It is quite significant, that Russian Communism collapsed right after its first failure to conquer a country, namely Afghanistan. The problem is, though, that even the leaders of post-Communist Russia abandoned by no means the aggressive habits of their predecessors.

The Russian-Chinese rivalry of the 1960s and 1970s was predetermined by the fact that there two candidates for world power and there was, and still is, only one planet. The same applies to the inevitability of the war between Communist Russia and National Socialist Germany in the 1930s and 1940s. As far back as the early 1920s Hitler explicitly stated in *"My Struggle"* that the so-called Aryans were the "superior race" and that, as the "purest" representatives of that "race", the Germans had the responsibility to fulfill the "historical mission" of stopping the "Jewish threat". What is more, *"a state which, in the epoch of race poisoning, dedicates itself to the cherishing of its best racial elements, must some day be the master of the world."* That state was to be National Socialist Germany.

Hitler was aware that, in order to achieve world domination, Germany needed allies. One of them was to be Fascist Italy. Indeed, Mussolini's ambitions were much more modest and his dream about a new Roman Empire apparently did not impede Hitler's plan. Both Hitler and Mussolini wanted to carry out their expansion through war but neither of them imagined it as a world war. The same applies to Szallasi, who endeavored to create a Danubian-Carpathian federation under Hungarian hegemony without bothering too much about whether the non-Hungarians would like to be incorporated into such a federation. More interesting is the attitude of Corneliu Codreanu, since Romania was entirely satisfied by the post-World War I peace settlements and her only concern was how to preserve the territorial gains from the revisionist demands of Bulgaria, Hungary and, incomparably more threatening of all, of Communist Russia. To that effect Romania relied mostly on the alliance with France, but Codreanu condemned the democratic ideology of that alliance and eventually came to the firm conclusion that only Hitler and Mussolini were able to guarantee Romania's

territorial integrity. Vidkun Quisling was also willing to involve Norway in the National Socialist expansion on behalf of the “Nordic race”.

World domination is no doubt the aim of Fundamentalist Iran as well. It derives from a deliberately one-sided interpretation of Jihad not as a struggle for internal purification but as a ruthless war for conquering the Earth for Allah. The problem is that, according to Islamic tradition, the World Muslim Power or the Caliphate should have for Caliph an Arab as representative of Mohammad’s nation, but the Iranians are not Arabs. Moreover, the Iranians are not Sunnites but Shiites, and the Shiites amount only to about 10% of the entire Muslim community. Nevertheless, more than 80% of the terrorist assaults, perpetrated all over the world in the 1980s and 1990s, were sponsored by Iran.

Totalitarian bloodshed is often justified by the myth about a “just war”, although this myth apparently has been existing since the first war ever to happen. In each war there are at least two participants, which means that there are at least two irreconcilable viewpoints. Thus the Bulgarian historians always depict the fall of Bulgaria under Byzantine rule in 1018 as a great national tragedy, but what the Byzantines did at this moment was simply to regain the territories they had lost as a result of the Bulgarian invasion in 680-681. No doubt one of the most tragic catastrophes of Christian civilization was the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks in 1453, but from a Turkish viewpoint this event marked the first great step of the Turks toward Westernization.

The 1877-1878 war that marked the end of the Great Eastern Crisis was waged mainly as a response to the massacres, committed by Muslims on Christians as a result of the April 1876 Bulgarian uprising. It was a war of Russia, Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro against Turkey and it is often referred to as the “Liberation War”. In fact, though, the Turks defended their homeland, the Montenegrins tried to wipe out as many Albanians as they could, the Serbs conquered the region of Niš, inhabited in those times mostly by Bulgarians, while the aim of the Russians was to annex the rest of Bulgaria. Romania, which was until then a vassal principality of the Ottoman Empire, fought for her independence and eventually got it, but under Russia’s diktat Bucharest had to cede Southern Bessarabia to the Russians in exchange for Northern Dobruja, a region that was populated at the time mostly by Turks and Bulgarians, but by a very limited number of Romanians.

In brief, the 1877-1878 war created more national and ethnic problems than it solved. The 1912-1913 Balkan Wars were a natural consequence of the 1878 Berlin Treaty. The aggressors were, no doubt, Bulgaria, Serbia, Montenegro and Greece, although their proclaimed objective was the liberation of those Bulgarians, Serbs and Greeks who were still under Ottoman rule. The advancing Christian armies and especially the volunteers committed a number of atrocities on the civilian Muslim population, while Bulgaria’s attempt to conquer Thessalonica made the Greeks conclude an anti-Bulgarian alliance with the Serbs, who wanted to compensate the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary by invading Macedonia, inhabited at the time mostly by people of Bulgarian descent. The Second Balkan War of 1913 resulted from a Bulgarian attack on Serb and Greek positions, but Sofia had hardly another choice, since the Serbs and the Greeks were about to launch a joint assault on Bulgaria. This time victims of the atrocities were mainly Bulgarians.

In the Balkans the First World War was to a great extent a continuation of the Balkan ones. Usually the blame is put on Austria-Hungary for attacking Serbia in response to the assassination of the heir to the throne Archduke Francis Ferdinand by Serb nationalists, as well as on Germany for violating Belgium’s neutrality in order to eliminate France before the Russians have the time to mobilize their army. The Germans simply could not afford to wage a war on their own small territory, whereas the Russian autocrat Nicholas II saw in the conflict an excellent opportunity for realizing the centuries-old dream about the conquest of Constantinople and he encouraged the Serbs to be intransigent toward Austria-Hungary.

Therefore, Russia was by no means less aggressive than Germany or Austria-Hungary. Nor was the war a struggle of democracy against tyranny, as the French hastily proclaimed, since their Russian ally was obviously not democratic at all. The Germans, the Austrians and the Hungarians pretended to fight against Russian despotism, but their Turkish ally was hardly less despotic.

The claim of Great Britain and France that it was a war of democracy against despotism got some credibility only after the March 1917 Russian revolution with the new revolutionary government earnestly endeavoring to make out of Russia the most advanced democracy in the world, and especially after the entrance of the United States into the war in April of the same year. However, in November 1917 the Bolsheviki under Lenin put a brutal end to the short-lived democratic experiment and by the fall of 1918 the victorious French and British showed no intention whatsoever to follow the guidelines for a fair peace, as exposed by US President Woodrow Wilson in 14 points in early 1918. True enough, the Poles, the Czechs, the Finns, the Estonians, the Latvians, and the Lithuanians finally got their independence, but France and Britain preserved and even extended their colonial empires and, not without pressure of their small European allies, they imposed extremely harsh peace terms on Germany, Austria, Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria. Under these circumstances a lasting international peace could be barely secured.

One may say that the Second World War started by the 1937 Japanese assault on China insofar as this conflict became later part of the world conflagration. Japan's economy suffered from the high customs barriers, imposed not only by Britain and France, but also by the United States. Under such difficulties a growing number of leading Japanese military, who imposed their control on the government in the 1930s, came to the idea that their country had to create a living space, i.e. a colonial empire of its own in the Far East. The "living space" theory was an essential element of Hitler's doctrine as well. He intended to achieve Germany's expansion at the expense of Russia, but this was to be preceded by the elimination of France and Britain. Thus common hatred of the western "plutocracies" made possible a provisional alliance between the Third Reich and the Soviet Union, which lasted from August 23, 1939, to June 22, 1941.

After Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the United States had to choose between two evils: either to allow the Japanese to conquer the whole Pacific area and Hitler to control Europe's Atlantic coast, or to side with Stalin against Germany and Japan, by abandoning Eastern Europe to the Russian dictator's mercy. From the viewpoint of American interests the second option was by all means an incomparably lesser evil. Nevertheless, the war against National Socialist Germany and against Japan was presented as a struggle for democracy against "Fascist Aggression". The Eastern Europeans had to pay for the freedom of the West by changing one form of totalitarian occupation, that of the Nazis, by another, that of the Soviets.

The following fifty years were marked by the efforts of the United States and its allies to stop Communist aggression, but the Israeli-Arab conflict was not a part of that struggle, even though both the US and Russia were involved in the Middle East drama. The situation is by all means unique, since two nations, the Israelis and the Palestinians, have one and the same territory as their homeland. Initially, the State of Israel was supported both by Washington and Moscow, which was due to the two superpowers' strong anti-colonial feelings. By the end of the 1940s, though, Stalin began to see Israel as a dangerous weapon of international Jewry and his anti-Semitism was shared also by his successors, although in a somewhat milder form. From Khrushchev on the Soviet Union constantly backed the Arabs against the Israelis, while the United States became Israel's most powerful and faithful ally.

Unlike the Israeli-Arab antagonism, the 1950-1953 Korean War was a direct conflict between Communism and the West. The aggression of the Communist North was at the

initiative of Mao rather than Stalin, but the two dictators acted more or less jointly. The war ended with a truce that gave more territorial gains to the South than to the North, but although the United States had waged the war on behalf of freedom and of the United Nations, the South had to go through a long series of authoritarian regimes. The Republic of Korea became a developed and working democracy only in the 1980s, while the North remained under probably the most extreme and murderous form of Communism that exists nowadays on Earth.

The Vietnam War, which lasted from 1961 to 1975, ended with a disaster for the United States and for democracy altogether. The conflict cost 55,000 American lives and the US air forces dropped more bombs on Vietnam than during the whole period of World War II both in Europe and Asia. The very idea of assisting a corrupt undemocratic regime against Communist aggression caused an ever more widespread discontent in the United States itself. The war ended with the Communization not only of Vietnam, but also of the entire peninsula of Indochina.

The United States often acted, therefore, along the formula that the enemies of our enemies are our friends. Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan were probably the first presidents who tried to change that vicious pattern. The Reagan administration, in particular, not only provided assistance to anti-Communist guerrilla forces in Nicaragua and not only smashed an attempt of the Cuban dictator Fidel Castro to impose his control on the tiny island state of Grenada, but it also encouraged discreetly a process of democratization in countries like Chile and El Salvador. On the other hand, though, the mujaheddins who fought against the Soviet invaders in Afghanistan and who enjoyed a large-scale American support, formed later the very basis of the world most horrible terrorist organization, Al Qaeda, which perpetrated the assault on the World Trade Center in New York and on the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. Last but not least, the two wars against the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein ended with victory, but they didn't bring peace, not to mention about the significant and ever-growing number of civilian casualties due to the continuing terrorist attacks.

The fight against world terrorism replaced the defense of democracy against Communist aggression, but more than a decade after the Fall of the Berlin Wall doesn't seem to be enough for a reassessment of the origins of the Second World War. Most historians and observers still believe that the blame for this war is to be put almost entirely on Hitler's Germany. As a matter of fact, from Lenin on all tactical moves of Soviet diplomacy aimed at instigating a new world war between the winners and the losers of the first one. To that effect Stalin concluded in 1935 an alliance with France and Czechoslovakia and ordered the Comintern to create "popular fronts" for the struggle against "Fascism". In 1936 such a "popular front", supported by the local Communists, won the parliamentary elections in France and the premiership went to Leon Blum, who was a Socialist and a Jew, which precluded any chance of a possible understanding between France and Hitler's Germany. In the fall of 1938 Stalin realized that Britain and France were not ready to wage a war against the Third Reich for the sake of Czechoslovakia and he decided to gamble on Hitler.

Similarly to Lenin and Stalin, Hitler wanted to conquer the world but, unlike Lenin and Stalin, he didn't want a new world war. He intended to achieve his aims gradually, by imposing his will on one country at a time and then proceed to the next country after isolating it from all its real or potential allies. Thus in March 1938 the Third Reich engulfed Austria, after Mussolini reassured Hitler that Italy would not intervene in Austria's favor, while Britain and France made it clear that they would limit themselves to verbal protests only. In a similar way National Socialist Germany could annex the Sudetenland and to impose her hegemony on the rest of Czechoslovakia only after the two western European democracies surrendered completely to Hitler's ultimatum.

On March 10, 1939, Stalin denounced in fact his alliance treaties with France and Czechoslovakia, by declaring publicly that the Soviet Union endeavored for peace with all countries and should not allow decoys to involve it in a conflict for the sake of others. Thus the Russian dictator directly encouraged Hitler to finish with Czechoslovakia, by annexing the Czech lands to Germany and by proclaiming the independence of Slovakia, but under German occupation. The British and the French became finally aware that Hitler's ambitions went far beyond Germany's traditional demands for revision of the Versailles Treaty and that the very existence of the two western European democracies was at stake. It became also clear that the next victim of the Third Reich was going to be Poland. Britain gave unilateral guarantees to Poland in case of a German attack and both the United Kingdom and France started negotiations with Communist Russia for a triple anti-German alliance. However, in early May 1939 Stalin replaced his foreign minister M. Litvinov, who was a Jew, with V. Molotov who was an ethnic Russian and held a much more important position in the Soviet party and state apparatus. In the weeks that followed the Russians negotiated simultaneously with the British and the French, on the one hand, and with the Germans, on the other. From the very beginning, though, Molotov bombarded the British and the French representatives with unacceptable demands, such as agreeing in advance to the occupation of Poland and other eastern European countries by the Red Army whenever Stalin deemed it necessary. Britain and France could by no means doom the eastern Europeans to Sovietization, while Hitler was eager to make a deal with the Russians as soon as possible because he feared that bad weather conditions in late 1939 would delay the planned assault on Poland.

Eventually, on August 23, 1939, the German foreign minister Joachim von Ribbentrop arrived in Moscow to sign with Molotov a Non-Aggression Pact, which marked the beginning of the provisional Soviet-Nazi alliance. Poland was invaded jointly by the Wehrmacht and by the Red Army and partitioned between the two totalitarian powers. In a Treaty for Friendship and for the Border, concluded after the end of the Polish campaign on September 28, 1939, the Third Reich and the Soviet Union partitioned not only Poland, but also the whole of Eastern Europe: Hitler agreed to abandon to Stalin Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland, Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina.

As a good German Hitler would never have risked a two-front war and he would have by no means attacked Poland if a British-French-Russian alliance had come into being. The German dictator intended to eliminate in the first place France and Britain and to engage in a war against the Russians not earlier than in 1943-1945. Stalin did what he could to provoke a conflict between the western European democracies and the Third Reich and to wait until the two sides were exhausted enough and incapable of opposing any significant resistance to the Red Army. The Wehrmacht was ready only for blitzkrieg operations on a relatively small scale, while the Soviet armed forces were prepared for a new world war, which was demonstrated as early as in August and September of 1939, when the Russians annihilated an entire Japanese army in the Far East. This catastrophe made the Japanese give up all plans for a war against the Soviet Union and they oriented their efforts to the conquest of South-East Asia and of the Pacific.

Stalin faced an unexpected resistance by the Finns, but he succeeded in annexing Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, while Hitler was invading Denmark, Norway, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and France. When the Red Army occupied also parts of Romania, namely Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, Hitler suddenly realized that he could oppose no resistance if the Russians decided to take possession of Romania's oil fields as well. Moscow flatly refused to give up its centuries-long ambitions to conquer the Balkans and, above all, Constantinople and the Straits, which was absolutely unacceptable for Hitler. By the fall of 1940 Stalin started to concentrate an enormous military force on the Finnish, German, Hungarian and Romanian borders and there is abundant documentary evidence that a

Soviet attack was imminent at that time. Hitler had no other choice but to strike first, before eliminating Britain, and thus Germany was once again trapped in a two-front war.

There are too many powers that can be blamed for the Second World War. The intransigence of the winners of the First World War played a crucial role in favor of Hitler. The interwar isolationism of the United States deprived Europe and the world of a reliable defense against totalitarian aggression. However, there can be little doubt that the key to the outbreak of the Second World War in Europe was in the hands of Stalin, without whose encouragement and complicity Hitler would never have started his first little blitzkrieg in September 1939.

Political and historiography myths are particularly strong in the Balkans. One of the most powerful among them is that about Ottoman rule as the main, if not the only reason for the region's backwardness. It goes without saying that there is no good foreign rule and the Ottoman one was no exception. However, the Ottoman Turks did not change the existing social and political system, which was more or less the same as their own traditional structure. Not only in Ottoman Turkey, but also in the Byzantine Empire and in medieval Bulgaria land was under the supreme ownership of the state while religious institutions were an integral part of the state and administrative system. After the invasion of the Balkans by the Turks this situation was even changed for the better, since the Sultan, as a Muslim, did not share the religion of his Christian subjects and, therefore, he did not intervene as directly in the internal affairs of the Church, as had been the custom of the Byzantine emperors and of the Bulgarian tsars. In other words, under the Turkish sultans the Church got a degree of autonomy that it had never had before and that remained unthinkable up to nowadays in Russia.

The "Turkish Servitude" myth is based on an archetype, according to which there is a "Golden Age" in the past, followed by a traumatic event and ending with an unfortunate present. Back in the times of Ottoman rule the "Golden Age" was represented by medieval Bulgaria and the traumatic event was the conquest of the Balkans by the Turks. The main protagonists in this archetype are the *Founder*, the *Baptizer*, and the *Liberator*. The tragedy of the Bulgarians is that some of their most outstanding and influential writers and poets assigned the role of Liberator to Russia. As a matter of fact, Russophilia was imported in Bulgaria from Russia together with Pan-Slavism, which inevitably included also anti-Semitism. To a great extent it was a brainwash, abundantly paid and meticulously organized by the Russian autocrats.

Russophilia and Pan-Slavism are inseparable from the dogma about Moscow as the "Third Rome", predestined to conquer the world for the "true" Orthodox faith. A particular emphasis was put on Constantinople, which became even more attractive in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries thanks to its important strategic position. Pan-Slavism deliberately ignores the deep cultural and civilizational differences between the various nations of predominantly Slavic descent. Moreover, some nations that had the misfortune to stay on Russia's way to Constantinople were promptly declared Slavic, although they did not have significant Slavic elements in their origin. That was the case of the Romanians, of the Albanians, and of the Bulgarians, but only the Bulgarians accepted it readily in order to conceal their kinship with the Turks even from themselves. According to Russian Pan-Slavism all Slavic peoples were mere tribes of the Slavic nation, which had no other future but to be united under the scepter of the Russian tsars.

From the mid 1700s on Russia saw a real chance of fulfilling her Constantinople dream and started a series of wars to that effect. The Great Eastern Crisis that resulted from the 1875 Bosnian uprising and from the April 1876 revolt in Bulgaria seemed to offer an excellent opportunity. On that occasion the prominent Russian diplomat Count N. Ignatiev, for whom the Serbs and the Bulgarians were by no means nations, but just two Slavic tribes, explicitly stated that Russia's historical mission in the Balkans consisted in "*conquering the*



*Straits, in establishing her presence in Constantinople, and in liberating and uniting the Slavs under Russia's leadership on the ruins of Turkey and Austria."*

The Balkan strategy of Russia was therefore incompatible with the very existence of a Bulgarian state. The Berlin Treaty, concluded on July 13, 1878, frustrated to a great extent Russia's endeavors in this regard, but Alexander II (1855-1881) and Alexander III (1881-1894) did not give up their efforts to subdue Bulgaria in one form or another. In 1886 the first Bulgarian prince Alexander of Battenberg was dethroned by a coup d'état in order to be replaced by no one else than the Russian Emperor himself. Under the leadership of Stefan Stambolov the Bulgarian national forces succeeded in saving the country from Russian rule, but in the years that followed Alexander III spared no efforts in bribing generously influential Bulgarian politicians and journalists. These tactics had an effect insofar as the Russophiles succeeded in winning the parliamentary elections in 1903, when monuments to the glory of the Russian "liberators" covered Bulgaria all over and in 1911, which proved to be fatal for Bulgaria: the Russophile government of Geshov and Danev followed subserviently Russia's instructions, but this did not prevent Emperor Nicholas II from inciting Serbia, Greece, and Romania to attack Bulgaria in 1913.

The very fact that right after the 1917 Bolshevik coup many Russophobe socialists became quickly ardent Russophiles, while the former Russophiles turned against Soviet Russia, is an evidence by itself that Bulgarian Russophilia was and still is a foreign product. After the occupation of Bulgaria by the Red Army in September 1944 the ensuing Communist terror was accompanied by such a brainwash that the Bulgarians became probably the only nation in the world that takes its own invaders for "liberators". Communist Bulgaria's subservience to Moscow was secured by the local ramification of the KGB, since the leaders of the Soviet Union could not loosen their grip on a country, bordering on two NATO members, Greece and Turkey, with Turkey having at that the most powerful NATO military force after the US army.

However, Russophilia had its opponents in Bulgaria as early as the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The revolutionary Gheorgi Rakovski rejected the Slavic myth about the origin of the Bulgarians by looking for links between Bulgarian and the most ancient Indo-European languages and he warned his countrymen against Russia's murderous strategy for the Bulgarians. Unlike Rakovski Stoyan Chomakov, who was one of the leaders of the movement for an independent national Church, accepted the theory about the Slavic descent of the Bulgarians but he saw the Slavs as an integral part of European civilization and claimed that the Russians were not Slavs at all. Russophilia may become an obstacle to the European integration of Bulgaria. On the other hand, more than a century after the end of Ottoman rule it is high time the Bulgarians had a more balanced approach to that period of their history.

A serious impediment to such an approach is the San Stefano myth. It is a product of Russian propaganda too, but the legend that the San Stefano Treaty of March 3, 1878, marked the beginning of modern Bulgaria's independence, is widespread among scholars even nowadays. As a matter of fact, though, the liberation of Bulgaria from Ottoman rule was a long and gradual process. The first step was the establishment of an independent Orthodox Church under the name of Bulgarian Exarchate, since according to Ottoman law an independent church was also a form of political autonomy.

The problem was that this limited autonomy had no international guarantees and depended entirely on the will of the Sultan. Moreover, modernization of the Ottoman Empire was inseparable from its centralization, which was a direct threat to the newly acquired autonomy. To make things worse, Ottoman authorities had neither the will, nor the power to implement the reforms, proclaimed by the Sultan. Under these circumstances a group of radicals decided to organize an armed uprising in order to provoke the intervention of the leading European powers, which meant, above all, the intervention of Russia. The revolt of

April 1876 gave a new dimension to the Great Eastern Crisis that had broken out with the 1875 uprising in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Amid the uproar, caused by Muslim atrocities on the insurgents, the Russian emperor Alexander II thought the time ripe for resuming aggression against Turkey. Austria-Hungary also intended to intervene in order to occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina. In June 1876 Serbia and Montenegro declared war on Turkey, but the Serbs were defeated and Russia and Austria-Hungary concluded two agreements, providing for the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austro-Hungarian troops and for the occupation of Bulgaria by the Russian army. None of the two powers was interested in the emergence of a strong and unified Christian state in the Balkans.

In April 1877 Russia and Romania declared war on Turkey and their troops were joined by about 35,000 Bulgarian volunteers. In December 1877 Serbia resumed hostilities. In early 1878, after losing 37,014 soldiers, killed or wounded, the Russian army reached the suburbs of Constantinople and the Ottoman Empire surrendered. The preliminary peace treaty was signed in the village of San Stefano near Constantinople. It provided for an autonomous Bulgarian principality, including Moesia, Thrace and most of Macedonia with wide outlets to the Black and to the Aegean Seas, but the country was placed under Russian administration with no international control. Besides, there were no provisions whatsoever about the time when the Russian army had to evacuate Bulgaria. The San Stefano Treaty was, therefore, a treaty for the unlimited occupation of Bulgaria by Russia.

As it might be expected, the Russians behaved in Bulgaria as in an occupied territory. The structures of the Bulgarian Exarchate were totally subordinated to the Russian administration. Abuses of all sorts were so drastic that the first Bulgarian Exarch Antim told a Russian friend of his that the Bulgarians were thankful to the Russians for liberating them from the Turks, but who was going to free the Bulgarians from the Russians. A growing number of Bulgarians started to prefer "*Turkish rule to the mighty protection of the Tsar-Liberator*".

However, Alexander II was aware that the other European powers would not allow the annexation of Bulgaria by Russia at this stage and he decided to cut the territory of the future Bulgarian Principality as much as possible. Austria-Hungary insisted upon the split of Bulgaria into two autonomous states, but together with Germany the Hapsburg monarchy was ready to provide South Bulgaria with an outlet to the Aegean and to place Bulgaria's southeastern border on the Vardar River in the middle of Macedonia. Moreover, Vienna and Berlin were prepared to agree to an internationally guaranteed autonomy for the lands to the west of Vardar as well. For Russia, though, that was too much. Hence Alexander II and his government made a rapprochement with Britain and in late May 1878 the Russian Ambassador to London Shuvalov and the British Foreign Secretary Salisbury signed an agreement, providing for the split of Bulgaria into an autonomous principality between the Balkan and the Danube, but without Northern Dobruja, and an autonomous province under the name of Eastern Rumelia between the Balkan and the Rhodope Mountains. The whole of Macedonia, as well as Aegean Thrace and the region of Adrianople had to remain under direct Ottoman rule.

These territorial provisions were proposed by Britain and Russia to the rest of the European Powers at the Berlin Congress. It was decided at the last minute that Sofia and its region would be given to the Principality of Bulgaria, while the region of Niš, until then a part of the Bulgarian Exarchate, was ceded to Serbia. However, the Berlin Treaty, signed by Russia, Britain, Germany, Austria-Hungary, France, Italy and Turkey, reduced the term of Russian occupation to nine months, placed the Russian administration in Bulgaria under international control, and explicitly stated that Russia had to withdraw all her troops from Bulgaria within three months after the expiration of the nine-month occupation period. Thus Bulgaria was severely dismembered but she was saved as an independent country.

Initially Bulgaria's sovereignty was limited by a suzerainty of the Sultan, but this suzerainty was theoretical rather than real. In fact Bulgaria depended incomparably more on Russia than on Turkey. True enough, the Berlin Treaty forced the Russian administration to hold elections for a Constituent Assembly and thus the Bulgarians got back the authority over their own country. However, even after the withdrawal of the Russian troops the would-be Bulgarian army was put entirely under the command of Russian officers, the war minister was inevitably a Russian general and no Bulgarian government had the courage to take any important steps without consulting in advance Russia's representatives. The liberation from Russian hegemony was still to come but the fact remains that the San Stefano Treaty was nothing else than an attempt to replace Ottoman supremacy by Russian rule.

Russian hegemony was definitively rejected only from 1885 on and the Bulgarian revolutionary, politician and statesman Stefan Stambolov played a crucial part in the struggle for genuine national independence. Significantly enough, the Russian propaganda hastened to represent Stambolov as a bloodthirsty dictator, as if in sign of "gratitude". The sad thing is that, similarly to the San Stefano myth, the legend about Stambolov's dictatorship is deeply rooted even in the post-Communist historiography.

The ways and manners of Stambolov as Prime Minister can be understood and assessed only within the framework of the birth and initial development of the Bulgarian parliamentary system. In 1845, thanks to the reforms, undertaken by the Sublime Porte under the pressure of Britain and France, the Bulgarians and the Turks elected a Judicial Council. Although this council had only advisory powers it was the first instance of a sort of parliamentary elections in the history of Turkey and Bulgaria. The example was encouraging enough to make the Bulgarians convene their own national assemblies in the 1850s and 1860s, even though they didn't yet have a state of their own. That experience predetermined the parliamentary and democratic character of the Bulgarian Exarchate, established in 1870. By the constitution, approved in the ancient Bulgarian capital Turnovo by a Constituent Assembly in 1879, Bulgaria became the fifth parliamentary democracy after the United States, France, Switzerland and Greece, based on universal male suffrage and on the accountability of the executive to the legislature. Bulgaria also had one of the most advanced school systems with compulsory primary education, but in a predominantly peasant country the educated strata had very limited job opportunities. The economy was distinguished by a strong presence of the state and the bulk of educated and undertaking people could earn their money only as state or administration officials or thanks to government orders. To make things worse the economy was quite sluggish with a yearly growth of only 1.05 per cent. This could only enhance further the old collectivist tradition of Byzantine and Ottoman times, when power was regarded not as a form of responsibility but as a source of income and survival. Being member or supporter of an opposition party often meant misery and hunger. Too many outstanding politicians were ready to sell themselves to whomever showed an interest and Russia was the foreign power that was most eager to buy politicians and statesmen in order to subdue Bulgaria by relatively peaceful means.

The political party that won the parliamentary elections often transformed its rule into a dictatorship of the majority. This was particularly true of the Liberals who got most of the seats in the National Assembly that was elected in 1880. The opposition Conservative Party saw no other way of coming back to power but with the intervention of Russia and her generals. However, the 1881 coup d'état led to a dictatorship of the Russian generals who treated Bulgaria as a helpless colony. Eventually, encouraged by Prince Alexander of Battenberg, the Conservatives united with some moderate Liberals in order to get rid of the Russian generals. The restoration of parliamentary rule frustrated Russia's plans to use democracy as a tool of destabilization and under these circumstances the Russians decided to dethrone the prince and to replace him with Tsar Alexander III himself.

In September 1885 the Bulgarians staged a revolution in Plovdiv and proclaimed the union of Eastern Rumelia with the Principality of Bulgaria. In his fury the Russian tsar summoned all his officers to quit the young Bulgarian army and incited the Serb King Milan to attack the Bulgarians, hoping that the Bulgarian forces would be in complete disarray. However, under the command of Prince Alexander the Bulgarians defeated the Serbs and in August 1886 a group of officers, organized and financed by the Russian diplomatic representative to Sofia, arrested the Prince and took him out of the country. The putsch failed miserably since Stefan Stambolov, who was at that moment in Turnovo, organized a counter coup in his capacity of Speaker of the National Assembly. Under the brutal pressure of the Russian autocrat Prince Alexander eventually had to abdicate, but the parliament approved all his acts, including the nomination of regency headed by Stefan Stambolov, and confirmed a new cabinet.

Until that moment most governments had been declaring a state of emergency for one reason or another. It included a preliminary censorship on the press, but all restrictions in this regard had to be lifted during electoral campaigns. Thus the Liberal cabinet of Petko Karavelov declared a state of emergency immediately after the union of Eastern Rumelia to Bulgaria, but the restrictions were lifted for the partial elections, held after the union for securing a representation for Eastern Rumelia as well. It is a miracle indeed that the Regency, headed by Stefan Stambolov, did not infringe upon the basic freedoms and rights more than the previous governments, despite a series of mutinies and terrorist acts, staged by Russia's agents in Bulgaria.

Russian envoys intervened directly in the electoral campaign for a new Grand National Assembly that had to choose the next Prince of Bulgaria. Nevertheless, the government succeeded in organizing the elections with as little incidents and clashes as it was possible under the circumstances and the national forces, opposed to Russian rule, won a convenient majority. In October 1886 the Russophiles offered to Russia their services for staging a coup d'état that would bring to the Bulgarian throne a head of state according to the will of Alexander III. In February 1887 a mutiny broke out in the army, organized once again by the Asian Department of the Russian Foreign Ministry. The Russian autocrat refrained from occupying directly Bulgaria because he feared international isolation, while European public opinion was openly hostile to his endeavors to annex Bulgaria.

On July 7, 1887 the Grand National Assembly chose for Prince of Bulgaria the German Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha. In conformity with the Constitution the newly elected prince entrusted Stefan Stambolov with the formation of the next cabinet, which had to hold the elections for a new national assembly. This government had to face another series of assassinations, mutinies and large-scale terrorist acts. The Russian foreign minister declared that all perpetrators of terrorist acts and coup attempts against Prince Ferdinand and his cabinet were pardoned in advance. This made the parliament approve highly restrictive measures with regards to the freedom of press. Too many oppositionists kept on soliciting money from Russia, but this precluded by no means the presence of a significant number of opposition representatives in parliament.

In 1890 a leading army officer, Kosta Panitsa, who had distinguished himself by his cruelty in the repression of a number of anti-Bulgarian plots, but later on took the side of the Russians, made an attempt to arrange the assassination of Ferdinand in the very royal palace. In March 1891 two assassins, hired by Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, tried to shoot down Prime Minister Stefan Stambolov, but they missed him and killed Finance Minister Khristo Belchev who was in Stambolov's company. In February 1892 the Russians sent another two assassins in Constantinople, where they managed to kill the Bulgarian diplomatic representative there.

There were certainly overreactions on the part of the government. For instance, in 1892 a court sentenced to death a Russophile, named Svetoslav Milarov, only for the intention to kill, while the former Prime Minister Petko Karavelov was sentenced to 9 years of jail for instigation. Milarov was executed but, nevertheless, he had been for a long time an active member of a terrorist group, formed and financed by the Asian Department of Russia's Foreign Ministry, while Petko Karabelov had solicited and received not negligible amounts of money from Russia in order to conduct his Russophile propaganda.

It is quite significant that in 1891 a bunch of leftist teachers and state clerks proclaimed the foundation of the Bulgarian Workers. Social Democratic Party at a time when social democracy was prohibited altogether in countries like Germany. True enough, the Bulgarian socialists were quite hostile to Russia and one of their leaders, Dimitar Blagoev, was son-in-law of one of the most outstanding supporters of Stefan Stambolov, but it is nonetheless obvious that there was more freedom under Stambolov in Bulgaria than under Otto von Bismarck in Germany.

Not less meaningful is the fact that the moment Russia loosened her pressure on Bulgaria because of Japan's expansion in the Far East Stambolov did not hesitate in initiating a cancellation of the media restrictions, voted by the National Assembly in 1887. By 1894 the situation was much calmer and in May of the same year Stambolov simply gave his resignation, which is by no means the usual way of ending a dictatorship. In fact, Stefan Stambolov was not an exemplary democrat, but he was not a dictator either.

The myth about Stefan Stambolov as a "tyrant" originates mainly from Russian propaganda. To a great extent the same applies to the so-called Ferdinand's "personal regime". From his very election as Prince of Bulgaria the Russians proclaimed that Ferdinand was a usurper. Rather contagious seems to be also the typically Russian idea that democracy is inapplicable to Orthodox and Slavic nations. In other words, the Bulgarians could not have a working democracy and after the fall of Stambolov they were bound to submit themselves to Ferdinand's personal regime. According to this theory Ferdinand presumably changed the cabinets at his will, by using his, would-be quite extensive constitutional powers, and by taking advantage of the weakness of the political parties. Once a new cabinet was formed, it held elections for the next national assembly and these elections usually resulted in the victory of the government party, whose ruling position was thus predetermined by the Monarch.

As a matter of fact, the 1879 Turnovo Constitution was modeled to a great extent after the 1831 Belgian Constitution, which in its turn summarized the English parliamentary experience. According to the Bulgarian Constitution the Monarch appointed and dismissed the Cabinet, had veto powers, had the right to pardon and was commander in chief of the armed forces. Moreover he could dissolve the National Assembly but within three months he had to carry out new parliamentary elections. Most important of all was Article 18 of the Constitution, which provided that no act of the Monarch could be put into effect unless the ministers countersigned it. It meant, among other things, that a Cabinet could be dismissed only by its own agreement. In other words, the only way to change a cabinet was through the resignation of that same cabinet. The Prime Minister and his colleagues were accountable to the National Assembly and they depended, therefore on the will of the parliamentary majority. On the other hand, the first Bulgarian monarch, as well as each new monarch, in case the previous one had passed away without leaving an heir, had to be elected by a Grand National Assembly. As to the heir to the throne, he could assume his royal responsibilities after the death of the previous monarch only by pledging allegiance to the Constitution in the presence of a Grand National Assembly, which, at least in theory, was entitled to decline his confirmation to the throne. Significantly enough, many conservative circles in Europe regarded the 1879 Turnovo Constitution as semi-republican.

True enough, until the 1890s elections in Bulgaria were neither fair, nor entirely free. Polling stations were formed in the day of elections by open voting, which often led to violent clashes between rivaling factions and, by fear of losing their jobs as state officials, the police usually intervened in favor of the government candidates. Under such circumstances participation was low, not exceeding 15-16% of those entitled to vote. However, from 1894 on the cabinet of the People's Party under Konstantin Stoilov introduced new regulations, concerning the formation of the polling stations and took a series of measures to guarantee a fair vote. Thus, by the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century participation in the vote rose to 55%-65% of those entitled to vote and clashes in election days became a thing of the past. One of the weaknesses of Bulgarian parliamentary democracy that remained unchanged until the very end of Ferdinand's reign was the frequent recurrence to caretaker governments whose only task was to carry out the next parliamentary elections. Moreover, only three national assemblies out of thirteen succeeded in having a full constitutional term: all the others were elected before schedule and dissolved before the end of their term. Nevertheless, from 1887 to 1918 opposition forces replaced the ruling parties or coalitions seven times. On the other hand, contrary to a widespread and erroneous view, the political forces, included in a caretaker government, succeeded in winning the parliamentary elections they had organized only four times, and in at least three of these instances, namely in late 1901, in 1908 and in 1911, even the losers appreciated the elections as being among the freest and fairest in the history of Bulgarian parliamentary democracy.

From 1887 to 1918 there was not a single coup d'état in Bulgaria, while in most of the southern European countries the violent change of government was a rule rather than an exception. During the same period there were at least six revolutions and coups d'état in Portugal, four in Turkey, two in Serbia and two in Greece. By the stability of her parliamentary institutions Bulgaria appeared to be closer to Britain, Belgium and the Netherlands, than to Southern and Eastern Europe. At least in two parliamentary elections (in 1901 and in 1913) the majority of the seats went to political parties that had no representatives at all in the cabinet. In Belgium the whole period from 1884 to 1940 was marked by the rule of the Clericals who formed either one-party cabinets or coalitions with other political forces. In Britain from 1892 to 1918 the opposition won the elections only three times.

There can be no doubt that Ferdinand intervened frequently and actively in the government of the country, but he was by no means an exception in this regard. In 1899, in 1901 and in 1903 he imposed his own candidate for Prime Minister, but when he tried to do it again in 1907 there was such an indignation against his "personal regime" that he had to give up the idea and the Cabinet was headed by a representative of the parliamentary majority. In Britain Ramsay MacDonald in August 1931 and Winston Churchill in May 1940 became prime ministers in a similar way, i.e. they were to a great extent the choice of King George V and of King George VI respectively. Prime ministers or particular ministers were imposed several times by King Leopold II, by King Albert I and by King Leopold III in Belgium as well. The only difference was that in Britain and Belgium these interventions of the Crown remained concealed from the public, whereas they caused animated debates in Bulgaria, which might be seen as an asset of Bulgarian democracy because, among other things, democracy means also transparency.

Unlike his Belgian relatives Leopold II (1865-1909), Albert I (1909-1934) and Leopold III (1934-1951), Ferdinand of Bulgaria even avoided to preside at the sessions of the Cabinet, although it was one of his constitutional prerogatives. Unlike Albert I Ferdinand never took personal command of the army and preferred appointing some general as deputy commander in chief. In any case, as commander in chief he took all his decisions only with the consent of the General Staff.

The proclamation of Bulgaria's independence in 1908 necessitated some constitutional amendments, which were approved by the 1911 Grand National Assembly. Ferdinand's name was explicitly inserted in the text as founder of the national dynasty but the other provisions even limited further the prerogatives of the Crown concerning the right to conclude secret alliance treaties and to the appointment of regents. In brief, after the end of the 1881-1883 constitutional crisis Bulgaria's parliamentary democracy turned out to be strong enough not only for rejecting Russia's attempts to subdue the country, but also for frustrating Ferdinand's ambitions.

The myth about Ferdinand's "personal regime" is due to a great extent to the Act for Trial of Those Guilty of the National Catastrophes, voted by the parliament in 1919. Most of the accused tried to justify themselves by putting all the blame on the King who lived safely in exile after his abdication in October 1918. The very term "*national catastrophes*" is the basis of another historiography myth, namely that the Second Balkan War and the First World War brought only disasters to Bulgaria.

A typically Pan-Slavist theme in this regard is the claim that Bulgaria was punished for siding with such enemies of the Slavs as Germany and Turkey. It goes without saying that this oversimplifying approach conceals the strategic aims of Russia in the Balkans. As stated above, under the pressure of Japan's expansion in the Far East Russia had to postpone the conquest of Constantinople and the Straits for "better times". While waiting for that moment Emperor Nicholas II (1894-1917) spared no money for maintaining a relatively influential Russophile lobby in Bulgaria and supported entirely Serbia's endeavors to annex Macedonia despite that region's predominantly Bulgarian population. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Russian consuls in Macedonia tried to convince the local Orthodox Christians, that they were neither Bulgarians, nor Serbs, but Macedonians. In this way the Russian diplomats tried to implement the theories of the Serb statesman Stojan Novaković, who recommended "Macedonianization" as a first step toward the assimilation of the Macedonians of Bulgarian descent by the Serbs.

Nicholas II was outraged by the fact that after the proclamation of Bulgaria's independence in 1908 Ferdinand was crowned in Turnovo as Tsar. The Russian autocrat didn't know and didn't want to know that in the Middle Ages the Russians accepted this title from the Bulgarians. Nonetheless, his agents succeeded in convincing too many Bulgarians that they could achieve their national union only with the assistance of Russia. In fact, Nicholas II's diplomats could not go further than to plan an annexation of the Thessalonica region to Bulgaria in exchange for the annexation of the Bulgarian Black Sea coast to Russia.

The tragedy of the Bulgarians came at the 1911 parliamentary elections when the majority of the seats went to two political parties that were distinguished by their subservience to Russia. Under the strong impact of suicidal Pan-Slavist illusions the new cabinet concluded in 1912 an alliance with Serbia and agreed to the partition of Macedonia and to the arbitration of the Russian Tsar, but it rejected the offer for a delimitation of territories with Greece, although the Greeks were prepared to cede to the Bulgarians most of Macedonia, as well as an outlet to the Aegean, but without Thessalonica.

The spectacular victories of the Bulgarian army against the Turks in 1912-1913 caused such a widespread enthusiasm that too many Bulgarians saw how their troops were about to enter not only Thessalonica, but also Constantinople. The attempt to seize Thessalonica failed, while the ambitions about Constantinople only increased further Russia's hostility to Bulgaria. On May 31, 1913, Greece and Serbia concluded an alliance, directed against Bulgaria. The Bulgarians responded by attacking the Serb and Greek positions, while Russia encouraged the Romanians to assault Bulgaria from the north. The Turks in their turn availed themselves of the opportunity to regain the hinterland of Constantinople and in the course of the operation they massacred more than 15,000 Bulgarians in the region of Adrianople. The

remarkable thing is that nobody in Sofia took these developments for a national catastrophe. The Bulgarians simply furled their banners for better times. The only visible result was the fall of the Russophile cabinet, which was replaced by a coalition of the Liberal, the Young Liberal and the People's Liberal Party under the premiership of Vasil Radoslavov.

For Nicholas II the outbreak of World War I in the summer of 1914 just offered the long awaited occasion to make the Constantinople dream true, the more so as his chief European allies, Britain and France, were ready to abandon completely their strategy of defending the Balkans against Russian aggression. In March 1915 the British and French Ambassadors to Saint Petersburg agreed to the cession of Constantinople, of the Bosphorus, of the Dardanelles and of a number of adjacent islands and territories to Russia. Moreover, the United Kingdom and France undertook to convince Romania and Bulgaria that the conquest of all these lands by Russia was not contrary to their interests. In other words, the Romanians and the Bulgarians had to accept almost benevolently the loss of their own national independence!

In the meantime, though, the Bulgarians were much more concerned about Macedonia than about their sovereignty. Even the supporters of an alliance with Russia, France and Britain warned the respective diplomats that Bulgaria would side with those who were able to promise her Macedonia. It was only on August 30, 1915, that Prime Minister Radoslavov informed his colleagues in the Cabinet about a secret alliance treaty between Russia and Serbia, providing for the partition of Bulgaria.

On September 6, 1915, Bulgaria concluded an alliance with Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey and on October 14 Sofia declared war on Serbia. In the following days Britain, Montenegro, France, Russia and Italy responded by declaring war on Bulgaria. It is quite symptomatic that when the United States entered the war in April 1917, the Woodrow Wilson administration declared war on Germany, Austria-Hungary and Turkey, but not on Bulgaria, because Bulgaria's war aims were not considered contrary to the American interests.

In 1916 the Bulgarians took part in the assault on Romania after her decision to side with Britain, France and Russia. In a series of brilliant victories the Germans, the Austrians, the Hungarians, the Turks and the Bulgarians succeeded in pushing back the Russian army to the northeast of the Prut River. It is worth mentioning that the Bulgarians fought even more enthusiastically against the Russians, than the Turks, the Hungarians or the Germans.

On March 3, 1918, the Bolshevik regime under Lenin had no other choice but to conclude a peace treaty with Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria, providing for the independence of Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Finland, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. Later on Lenin succeeded in conquering again Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, while the agreement itself was annulled by the 1919 Versailles Peace Treaty. The Neuilly Treaty deprived Bulgaria of Macedonia, of Southern Dobruja and of the Aegean region, reduced the Bulgarian armed forces to 33,000 men and imposed heavy reparations, but much more important was the fact that Bulgaria saved her sovereignty. Moreover, the two Balkan wars and the First World War gave Bulgaria more territorial acquisitions than losses. In 1910 Bulgaria had a territory of 96,346 square kilometers and a population of 4,337,513 people, while in 1920 her territory was increased by 6,800 to 103,146 square kilometers and the population amounted to 4,846,971 people. Last but not least, from 1908 and even from 1878 on Bulgaria constantly increased her territory by Eastern Rumelia in 1885, by the regions of Pirin and Stranja in 1912-1918, and by Southern Dobruja in 1940.

The totalitarian and historiography myths of the 20<sup>th</sup> century result, above all, from a well planned propaganda. The approach is quite efficient because too many people do not want to bother themselves with too much thinking. It is always easier to have a black-and-



white explanation of an extremely complex world. Oversimplification is therefore a product not only of fear and helplessness, but also of sloth.