



TOTAL PEACE

Are we resistant to totalitarian ideologies?

Totalitarian ideologies are a virus that mutates insidiously in time and space

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Nazism

Adolf Hitler was not the first theoretician of Nazism, but certainly its most famous practitioner. He summarized the Nazi ideology in his "masterpiece" *Mein Kampf*.

Nazism is a totalitarian ideology based on intense nationalism, racism, early socialism, militarism, and anti-Semitism (Ott's encyclopedia).

Hitler ruled Germany through the National Socialist German Workers' Party from 1933-1945. Nazism, despite the name of this party, did not have a traditional left-wing concept. He adopted certain elements from Marxism (abolition of so-called unemployed income, a certain form of nationalization, confiscation of land for public purposes, planned economy, etc.). Nazism has the next ingredients. It is the ideology of a national ethos, based on ancient and ancient Germanic symbols, which leads to the final victory of the Aryan man

Private ownership of the means of production prevailed. Both industrial and agricultural enterprises remained in private ownership. However, the owners only disposed of the means of production in accordance with the central economic plans. Monopolization of individual industries prevailed, and large private owners could develop their companies well and profitably without competitive pressures. Of course, they had to support the Nazism ideology and its representatives.

Private economic organizations and public organizations have become closely connected to each other. The power of the state and the leader became absolute. Nazism became the only state ideology as the highest stage of development.

The regime was characterized by strongly expansionist aggressive militaristic elements. Hitler himself coined the slogan that the races are unequal, the equality of the liberal style is a Jewish invention, and the equality of the Germans lies "in the form in which the individual fulfills his duty" (*Mein Kampf*). The ideological reasons for expansion into the surrounding world are based on the necessity of living space for Germans and the creation of a thousand-year German empire.

Communism

The ideology of communism is very simple. The main idea is common ownership and a classless society. We find the roots of this ideology already in antiquity. The religious ideals of early Christianity were interpreted by some communist ideologists as the roots of communism. Religious communities, practicing "Christian communism" were established in the Middle Ages and the early modern period in the European territory, i.e., sharing property. The best-known example in the Czech territory is the handing

over of property into common vats upon arrival in the town of Tabor during the Hussite movement in the first half of the 15th century.

In the 19th century, Karel Marx and Bedrich Engels gave these terms significant ideological and economic content. Marx's work *Capital* introduces the concept of surplus value created by the working class. This surplus value is wrongfully appropriated by the owners of the means of production - the capitalists at the expense of the working class. The *Communist Manifesto*, as a joint work of Marx and Engels, assumes that, after the achievement and completion of communism, the state will gradually die, and humanity will achieve freedom and equality as a return to the initial classless society at a qualitatively higher level. This state will arise based on a joint revolution of the exploited class in the most developed countries of Europe. Marx and Engels wanted to use the built existing state structure for this goal. A different opinion was held by anarchists, represented for example by Mikhail Bakunin. They proclaimed a direct struggle against the capitalist state and all its structures - among other things, against private property and the monetary system.

However, the further development of the left-wing movement at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century was directed more towards the defense of workers' rights, the improvement of living standards, the enactment of universal suffrage than a world revolution. Moderate social democracy gained the upper hand in the international left-wing movement.

The First World War changed everything. At the end of the First World War, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, paradoxically a German agent, was transported by freight train from Germany to Russia. Today, thanks to written materials found in Denmark, it is completely confirmed. His "managing persons" assumed the establishment of instability in Russia, possibly a revolution, the overthrow of the Tsar and the end of the eastern war front for Germany. Lenin completely fulfilled these goals. The next development completely changed the world order. After the short tenure of Kerensky's Provisional Government, the Russian Bolsheviks gained absolute power in a bloody civil war. Lenin was a major ideologue as well as a hard revolutionary practitioner. The term "dictatorship of the proletariat" was brutally fulfilled. Communism was established in one of the most backward countries of Europe, completely contrary to what Marx and Engels had predicted.

Communism became the only state ideology in Russia, just as Nazism later became in Germany. However, unlike the Nazi regime in Germany, the Soviet regime completely expropriated private property, and everything became the property of the state. The connection of state power, industry, agriculture and all institutions has become absolute. Like Nazism in Germany, Communism in Russia was "the highest stage of human development."

After the death of Lenin, Stalin gained power, who gradually got rid of all possible political competitors. A general social terror masked by revolutionary enthusiasm reigned in the country.

Russia forcibly annexed several states despite the great resistance of the local population. Ukraine was also among them. Russia became the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

The industrial development of backward, primarily agrarian countries was also ensured by millions of political prisoners in labor camps called gulags. In 1932 and 1933, a famine arose in rebellious Ukraine. Ukraine still refused forcible collectivization. It was necessary to punish it. How many people died then is difficult to determine today. According to the most modest estimates, it was about a million inhabitants, of which a

third were children. The total number of human victims caused by repression during the existence of the USSR is also difficult to determine precisely, qualified estimates indicate up to 60 million inhabitants.

The union and clash of totalitarian ideologies

The Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 sparked a brutal civil war. A heterogeneous group of monarchists, liberals and moderate socialists united against the Bolsheviks. They were defeated in 1920. However, even at this time, the Russian Bolsheviks tried to put the "world revolution" into practice. There was an excellent breeding ground for this ideology in the exhausted countries after the First World War. Soviet-style republics were established in Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Slovakia, Bavaria, Alsace-Lorraine, Iran and Galicia. However, these formations did not last long anywhere. In 1924, Mongolia became the first country after the USSR to permanently establish a communist system of government.

There was little information about the communist regime and its totalitarian practices. Soviet propaganda created the appearance of a completely new and successful state of a completely new type. The totalitarian atrocities committed in the USSR at that time remained largely hidden from the outside world. Well-known personalities such as the writer George Bernard Shaw and the French Prime Minister Édouard Herriot visited the USSR at the time of the famine in Ukraine. However, the journey was planned in detail by Stalin's regime. After returning home, both enthusiastically talked about Soviet successes, about satisfied and well-fed country people.

The USSR is a country inhabited by happy people, "a country where tomorrow already means yesterday", wrote communist journalist Julius Fučík.

The period before World War II temporarily brought the Nazi dictatorship in Germany and the communist dictatorship in the USSR closer together. Germany and the USSR signed the infamous convention called after the foreign ministers of both countries the "Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact". Both states divided Poland in 1939. The USSR forcibly annexed all the Baltic republics to its territory and tried to occupy Finland.

The political expansion of Nazi Germany was already completely obvious in that time. Ideological genocide against the Jews, concentration camps, occupation of Austria, annexation of the border territories of Czechoslovakia. At that time, many world politicians were completely disappointed. Till the it was possible to hear and read the statements of many politicians who naively believed that by constantly dealing with Hitler they would save the peace in Europe

"After all, I can negotiate with that Mr. Hitler. I will save the peace in Europe." Finally, Mr. Hitler even has his undeniable charisma. However, they soon became bitterly aware of how wrong the policy of appeasement and giving in to Hitler was.

Germany started the war and gradually occupied large areas in Europe and Africa. The allies from Japan and Italy were not left behind, and the largest armed conflict in human history, World War II, arose.

It was clearly only a matter of time before the two totalitarian ideologies collided on the battlefield. It happened in 1941. Germany invaded the USSR first. Stalin did not expect this attack at all and did not appear in public for almost three weeks. His decision-making instructions were then either confused or non-existent. According to some historians, he may also have been preparing for his own expansive military campaign.

At the time of World War II, the USA and other countries began massively helping the Soviet Union in the war against fascist Germany. A pragmatic alliance of 40 countries

was formed against the most visible overt aggressor - Germany and its allies Japan and Italy. The war ended and the whole world rested.

Cold War

The cold war began very soon, instead of a hot war. Zones of influence were created based on agreements between the victorious powers. Stalin achieved much of what he had consistently contemplated in his imperial plans. Soviet troops reached Berlin, Germany. Sooner or later, states arose in the "liberated" territories, entirely dependent on the political will of Stalin and his successors in Moscow. Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Romania and part of the former Germany came under the new official name of the German Democratic Republic within the USSR's sphere of influence. The then multi-ethnic Yugoslavia was also under partial political influence. There was a bipolar division of the world, massive armaments and the drawing of the "iron curtain".

Further developments on both sides of the "iron curtain" were quite different. The Euro-Atlantic Western world was developing economically, the standard of living of the population was rising. The system of parliamentary democracy ensured pluralism of opinion. In West Germany itself, called the Federal Republic of Germany, denazification's was taking place. Bans on the deployment of the army abroad and on the use of the army against its own population were enshrined in the constitution.

On the other side of the Iron Curtain, the political system in all countries was based on the dominance of a single political party. Although these parties were called by different names, it was always a communist-type party. In all countries a totalitarian system was established using tried and tested political instruments such as so-called "democratic centralism" and the "dictatorship of the proletariat". Private property was completely minimized, and all eastern bloc countries had centrally planned economies. Travel to countries behind the Iron Curtain was very limited and subject to complex bureaucratic government approval processes.

Some relaxation occurred in the 1960s. After the death of Stalin, the Soviet regime under Nikita Khrushchev was somewhat more relaxed, although its fundamental nature did not change. Certain free-thinking currents of opinion made their way behind the "iron curtain" and began to influence the younger generation. In the Soviet-dominated satellite countries, people became aware of personal unfreedom, persecution and economic backwardness. In 1956, the Hungarian Revolution broke out and the Communists were briefly removed from power. However, Khrushchev used brute military force to suppress the revolution. In 1968, a non-violent "Prague Spring" took place in Czechoslovakia. The reformist communists came to power and wanted to run the country in the spirit of left-wing socialism, but independently in their own way, not on the Soviet model. At that time, the USSR was already ruled by Leonid Brezhnev, a hardline bureaucratic party apparatchik. The Prague Spring was violently suppressed by Soviet tanks. The Soviet 'liberation' tanks of World War II have now become a symbol of aggression against independent states.

The pragmatist Gustáv Husák took power with the help of the USSR in Czechoslovakia, He was himself a former political prisoner from the 1950s, so he knew well how to break the nation's back. He didn't need much repression to do it. A nationwide personal screening of all adults for their views on the Soviet occupation was enough. Most people formally approved of the occupation in this way, even though they were deep down convinced otherwise. Until the Velvet Revolution, these occupation troops were referred to by the Husák regime as "temporarily stationed on our territory". The occupation became "international aid."

On the other side of the "iron curtain", though, there were large protests both the occupation of Hungary and the occupation of Czechoslovakia. But the officials of the Western countries did

virtually nothing. These events took place behind the Iron Curtain in the sphere of influence of the USSR.

The Soviet leader Brezhnev was strengthened in this way. And this was immediately reflected in the ideological sphere. The so-called Brezhnev Doctrine was formulated, i.e., "the leading role of the Communist Party of the USSR in the international communist and workers' movement". In other words, it meant the possibility of intervention in any country of the Eastern bloc. In November 1968 Brezhnev himself put it this way:

"When forces hostile to socialism try to turn the development of a socialist country towards capitalism, this will become not only a problem of the country concerned, but a common problem and concern of all socialist countries." When the "reversal of the development of a given to capitalism" begins is, of course, decided by the USSR. This is also how Brezhnev ideologically justified the occupation of Czechoslovakia.

The influential Western communist parties, especially in Italy and France, could not accept this doctrine. They supported the revival process in Czechoslovakia. Recognition of leading role for the Communist Party of the Soviet Union would certainly not have helped them in their political engagement in their own countries. Brezhnev and the USSR did indeed have their way and stifled the revival process in Czechoslovakia. However, in the end, the slow gradual disintegration of the great communist empire began.

The Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in 1977 was to lead to a reduction of Cold War tensions. It recognized definitively the territorial and political gains resulting from the Second World War (in particular, the recognition of the existence of the GDR, the recognition of the borders on the Oder and Neisse rivers, and Soviet territorial gains in the former East Prussia and the territory of present-day Lithuania). In exchange for this formal recognition of territorial gains, human rights obligations were enshrined. The USSR considered this conference a great diplomatic victory since it never intended to keep its human rights commitments anyway. In the USSR itself, not much really changed politically. In the satellite countries of Soviet influence, however, the results of this conference sowed the seeds of defiance. Charter 77 was born in Czechoslovakia. The manifesto was widely published in Western countries. It called, among other things, for respect for the human rights to which all the signatories of the 'Helsinki Conference' had committed themselves. The Solidarity trade union movement was founded in 1980 and soon became a social and political platform for the struggle against the communist government in Poland.

In the 1980s, the USSR and the entire socialist bloc began to lag far behind the Western countries economically. The centrally planned economy had hit its limits. There were no financial resources for new technologies in computer technology and automation of production. Long neglected investments in ecology caused devastation of the landscape. Deteriorating air quality had an impact on the health of the population. Energy-intensive heavy industry and the export of primary raw materials prevailed. Massive military production of ever new weapon systems drained large amounts of funds, and the standard of living of the people was significantly lower than in Western countries. The population was able to travel, albeit with complications, to Western countries from time to time from Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary and other Soviet bloc countries, The information that came from there was quite different from the official sources of information. In this year, 1979, the USSR started a devastating war in Afghanistan. In 1980, a new president, Ronald Reagan, took office in the USA. He quite unambiguously, without diplomatic prevarication, called the USSR the "evil empire". The US invested massively in new, mainly defensive weapons systems. To this the Soviet was no longer able to respond technologically and financially. In 1982, Leonid Brezhnev died. In 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev was elected Soviet leader. He was a revelation in the grey inaccessible world of the old rigid structures of the Soviet Politburo. Relatively young, educated and energetic. Accompanied by a wife who

was presentable, unlike the wives of earlier Soviet leaders whom no one knew. Mikhail Gorbachev genuinely wanted to change the Soviet Union towards prosperity and some democratization. He was aware of the enormous economic and social problems. Words like 'glasnost' and 'perestroika' entered the international lexicon. Moreover, he left all the communist leaders of the Eastern bloc to govern in their own way. But they were not used to that at all. They always had key political decisions approved in Moscow. The collapse of the Soviet communist empire was imminent. The fall of the iron curtain was also imminent. It was just a question of when and how. Cosmetic personnel changes in the leadership of the Soviet satellite countries could no longer make any difference. The old pragmatist of power Gustav Husák in Czechoslovakia knew well what would happen. He always maintained that every stone block in the pyramid of power had its place. If one block is pulled out of the pyramid, sooner or later the pyramid will collapse.

The world after 1999

After the end of the Cold War, the world breathed once again. Liberal democracy, developed in the Euro-Atlantic countries, had triumphed. The military grouping of the USSR and Eastern European countries broke up. All political changes took place peacefully and non-violently. The future never looked rosier. Much was indeed going well. Business opportunities opened up in the former Eastern Bloc countries, it was possible to travel everywhere, study abroad and gain new experiences. Long-standing environmental problems began to be addressed. A window opened. The Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland joined NATO. Soon, other Eastern Bloc countries came on board. Almost the entire former Eastern Bloc was then admitted to the European Union.

It seemed that now the world could get along even within different ideologies and religions. In 1990, Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein occupied the small and wealthy state of Kuwait. Immediately, however, an UN-mandated coalition of 28 nations led by the US was formed and within a few months managed to liberate Kuwait and destroy almost the entire Iraqi army. Arab countries were also active in the coalition.

New opportunities also opened up in Russia as the successor state of the USSR. However, economic power was seized by often very strange business structures. These were mainly people with extensive contacts from the communist era, former employees of the communist apparatus, the KGB and people from various grey to black criminal circles. They took possession of vast assets of former state-owned enterprises and gained control over the distribution of oil, gas and minerals. A new wealthy and influential layer of Russian oligarchs has been established. It is fair to say that representatives of Western companies have often dealt with these people in the knowledge of their own profits and have thus helped them to gain economic power in Russia. The ubiquitous corruption at all levels has become a cancer on Russian society and the country has begun to decline significantly economically. However, the first big conflict after the Cold War took place in a completely different place, on the territory of the former Yugoslavia. The origins of this ethnic, religious, and political one date back to before World War II. The authoritarian leader of the whole of Yugoslavia, the former anti-fascist partisan commander J.B. Tito, managed to preserve this conflict during the Cold War. It only flared up during the splitting of Yugoslavia into individual republics. It should be added that the greatest war criminals of this conflict were sentenced by the International Court of Justice in The Hague for genocide to long prison terms. Today, this problem is closed.

The armed conflict still smoulders between Armenians and Azerbaijanis in Nagorno-Karabakh. Fortunately, however, it has never flared up massively to major military proportions. Neither have the conflicts in Georgia and Moldova. Asian countries like Kazakhstan, Tajikistan,

Turkmenistan, etc. have also gained independence, but they are completely dependent on Russia economically and, above all, politically.

Ukraine gained independence immediately after the collapse of the USSR. In 1994, the so-called Budapest Memorandum was signed, providing guarantees of security and territorial integrity to Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine in exchange for joining the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of nuclear weapons. Now, Russian Federation as the only country in the former Soviet Union possessing nuclear weapons. In the case of Ukraine, it was signed by Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma, Russian President Boris Yeltsin, US President Bill Clinton and British Prime Minister John Major. The Memorandum refers in its provisions to the legally binding 'Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe'. This was signed by all the signatories to the Memorandum.

However, the bloodiest and most politically significant conflict on the territory of the former USSR took place somewhat outside the main European angle of vision in Chechnya. The Chechen Republic is an autonomous republic in the territory of the North Caucasus. The first war there took place between 1994 and 1996. This was due to the declaration of independence of Chechnya and Ingushetia from 1991. In 1994, Russia sent its troops to this republic. There was a very strong attack, supported by the air force and artillery, but it was not successful. The unpopular war was ended by a ceasefire in 1996. The new Russian President Boris Yeltsin then signed a ceasefire with Chechen President Aslam Maskhadov. This first war had already caused tens of thousands of casualties, mainly among the civilian population, and considerable material damage. The second Chechen war is already linked to the new Russian President, Vladimir Putin. After the first Chechen war, the state began to radicalize Islamically.

In 1999, the new presidential candidate in Russia, Vladimir Putin, declared his readiness to solve the Chechen problem once and for all. One of the pretexts for the second Chechen war was the so-called attack by Chechen terrorists on residential buildings in Moscow and Volgograd, killing over 300 people. The attack was probably staged by the Russian secret service the FSB (Anna Politkovskaya, Boris Berezovsky, Masha Gessen, etc., have described it in detail). The Russian army has acted very brutally in the Chechen war. The capital Grozny was practically razed to the ground. In the opinion of many political analysts, it is Vladimir Putin who bears direct political responsibility for the controversial indiscriminate carpet bombing of civilian settlements. It is estimated that up to 200 000 civilians died in the Russian-Chechen war. In 2007, the highly controversial Ramzan Kadyrov, a staunch ally of Vladimir Putin who still rules the country today, became president of Chechnya. However, Vladimir Putin has won sympathy in Russia for this victory over the Chechen separatists.

Totalitarian ideology in a new guise

The new millennium has not started well at all. The terrorist attacks by Islamic radicals in the USA in 2001 triggered new long-term wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The "Arab Spring" in 2010 started promisingly. Some long-standing problematic rulers passed into history. The bitter end of Libya's indestructible dictator Muammar Gaddafi raised false hopes that even in these rigid countries there would be at least some movement towards democracy. Unfortunately, it has not happened. A various armed groups are still fighting each other in many Arab countries, and the standard of living of the population has often deteriorated even further.

In 2014, another radical Islamic group originating in Iraq made a significant impact on the world political scene. In 2014, it declared a self-proclaimed 'Islamic State' on conquered territory in Iraq and Syria. It has not been recognized internationally by any other state. Its supporters declared this territory a caliphate, which began to claim religious authority over all Muslims in the world and began to seek to rule over any territory inhabited by Muslims. The military

conflict, particularly in Syria, Iraq and Yemen, was very brutal and often incomprehensible to much of the rest of the world. There have been some pragmatic temporary military alliances. Various countries gradually became involved in the conflict and felt there was an opportunity to exert their influence here, for example Russia and Turkey. Western countries gradually withdrew from the area as later in Afghanistan, the geographical political and military map of the territories under their control is very complex and its explanation is completely beyond the scope of this paper. The Islamic State may have been formally defeated militarily, but the consequences of this conflict persist to this day and will continue to do so for a long time to come. The Euro-Atlantic world was hit by a major financial and economic crisis in 2008. It took several years to overcome the consequences of this crisis. The Western world was therefore preoccupied internally with itself.

There has also been a new wave of terrorist attacks on the countries of the Western world. It was no longer just sophisticated airplane attacks on major buildings or carefully prepared massive bombings. Indeed, the Western world learned its lesson after the terrorist attacks in New York and elsewhere. Terrorist groups are now more closely mapped, and it is no longer so easy to obtain automatic weapons and explosives. Public space is better protected. Terrorist attacks have begun to be perpetrated by individuals and small groups of people who have lived in the areas for a long time. What is happening is that aggressive Islamists have trained and radicalized a lot of ordinary people who are committing evil in the name of Islam wherever they reach. With firearms, with crude bombs, by driving cars into groups of people, or perhaps also by attacks with ordinary knives. Unfortunately, these attacks are very difficult to defend against.

However, no sooner had the world recovered from the economic crisis and recovery arrived than the migration crisis began. People from war-affected countries came to the countries of the European Union by various routes, but also economic migrants who left in search of better living conditions. The migration crisis began in 2009 and peaked in 2015. The European Union has failed to find a common solution to this crisis. Disagreements have arisen within the European Union not only on how to resolve the migration crisis, but also on how to proceed with further unification of the EU. A view on the country's withdrawal from EU structures have once again intensified in the UK. The traditional pattern of pushing for a right-left political orientation or a clash between conservative and liberal views is beginning to unravel. As a result of all the above-mentioned influences, nationalist thinking or populism in its many different varieties begins to assert itself in Europe and the USA at that time. The average person is thus confronted with many problems at once, which he cannot fully navigate. At that moment, the all-loving nationalists come up with the need to protect 'our people', 'we are here at home!' and "we are being preyed upon". The various populists then start promising to solve all the problems for the ordinary people, take it firmly in hand and finally get things in order. Because up to now, everything has been wrong. And of course, our nation will be strong again.

In this context, it is worth recalling a quote by Václav Havel: "I ask you to please not support those who promise to solve everything for you. Such people want you to just keep quiet, listen and keep up. I would ask you to make sure that you do not support those who are dictatorial, who change their minds too often, who are unable to get along with others, who offer adventurous, ill-considered, and irresponsible solutions, and who would prefer to return to centralist management of all our common affairs.'

After 2010, information is beginning to spread dramatically faster to a wider group of people, thanks to the development of IT, mobile technology and the emergence of social networks. A flood of information flows continuously online 24/7. The information environment thus allows for massive manipulation. Targeted and easily accessible information gushes through social networks, chain mails and various other media. Information massage can do a lot.

The European Union is based on common values. Everyone should have the ability to receive and give. Suddenly, there are those who are only able to take and are admired for it.

Such a breeding ground is prone to give room for extreme views that have already been here before. Totalitarian ideologies are a virus that can permanently mutate. If a society has the immunity provided by the rule of law, education, and good governance, it can resist this contagion. If the social organism is weakened, there is a problem.

Donald Trump represents incompetent populism in the US. He precisely targets all those who feel left out. The highlight of this period of Donald Trump's rule is the mobilization of his supporters after he himself lost the election. They then come to seek 'justice' by violence in the Congress building.

Brexit supporters lie publicly about the benefits of the UK leaving the EU. The goal is achieved, and the UK leaves the EU. Pragmatic politicians who see the EU as a very good cash cow that provides them with money and thus power is getting in other countries like the Czech Republic and Hungary. Conservative nationalists are deliberately weakening their own justice system in Poland.

The EU's common values are often called into question. Further integration of the EU towards a common solution to migration, defense or resilience to any external threat is stalling.

An ideal breeding ground for the emergence of new totalitarian threats.

Twenty years of riding the bear

Vladimir Putin has replaced the ageing, Boris Yeltsin. No one in the world knew him much then. It was known that he was born in Leningrad, that he was a former KGB agent who had worked in the GDR before 1989. He then made a career in the successor organization to the KGB, which is now called the FSB. Working in the secret services is a complicated business. A senior KGB officer, Vasily Mitrokhin, managed, at the cost of incredible courage, to smuggle out KGB and FSB archival material that he had been secretly carrying out for 12 years. From them we can learn that none of the former collaborators or agents of the Soviet intelligence services can be sure what will happen in the future. Whether sooner or later he will die strangely and whether sooner or later he will not be prosecuted. It is possible to learn from these materials wherever the Russian secret services had their "fingers". In addition to the completely expected historical information, there is also information that is shocking, which was not known before. The KGB and FSB have such a history that when all the archives are opened, we will not be surprised.

Vladimir Putin was chosen to replace Boris Yeltsin. He was Prime Minister for a short time to be introduced to his own public, to whom he was not well known until then. It is not entirely clear how and why Vladimir Putin was chosen as the future President of Russia at that time. Why did Boris Yeltsin in particular point the finger at him? Perhaps indeed for the promise of future guaranteed lifetime impunity. The subsequent presidential election was then well prepared by the media and formal.

Russia was in a desperate economic situation at the turn of the millennium. Moreover, Russia was the clear loser in the Cold War. Conceptual economic transformation is a complex and long-term affair. Putin needed quick and clear successes. The first "success" was the brutal second war in Chechnya.

Putin is increasingly presenting himself by declaring that "the collapse of the USSR was the biggest geopolitical mistake of the 20th century". Something to the effect of: "There was also an economic emergency in the USSR, but at least the whole world was afraid of us".

At this point, all Western politicians should have paid a lot of attention. And recall, for example, Putin's childhood and youth. He was a normal street brawler who didn't like to lose. He was small and skinny, so he learned judo and other martial arts to win. His ambition was known in the KGB, in the FSB and in the St. Petersburg magistrate's office. He pragmatically recruited and

later abandoned his political allies. It might be useful to hear in more detail from those who first cooperated with him and then perhaps did not. Putin has partly taken under his influence the group of oligarchs who formerly surrounded Yeltsin. New oligarchs have also emerged under him who have won fierce battles for control of former state enterprises, particularly in the manufacturing industry. A group of oligarchs exercised their power in the state apparatus, regional structures and wherever it was useful for their business. So once again, even stronger state power is being linked to private business. Putin does not interfere significantly in the actions of the oligarchs. The only rule is that none of the oligarchs can in any way outgrow the influence and power of Vladimir Putin. If this happens, punishment follows. A clear example of this is the fall of the successful Yukos company and the imprisonment of its owner, Mikhail Khodorkovsky. Russia's economy is built primarily on the exploitation of its abundant natural resources (natural gas, oil, coal, non-ferrous metals, etc.) and a large arms industry. Vladimir Putin was lucky. In 2000-2007, the price of raw materials rose significantly, and this was immediately directly reflected in a partial improvement in living standards. By that time, a kind of "middle class" had already emerged in Russia, which could now travel the world and enjoy the consumer achievements of the Western world. The Russian oligarchs enjoy of unbridled luxury around the world. They buy beautiful villas and yachts and invest their capital everywhere. In Forbes magazine, they rank higher and higher in the list of the richest people. Most of society in Russia may live in squalid conditions, but so what. We have always lived like this and now we are finally making a difference in the world like we did back in the Soviet era.

However, the resource economy is very fragile. This is reflected in the fluctuations and often deep falls in the prices of raw materials. This is what happened in the economic and financial crisis of 2008. The price of raw materials then rose again, but never reached the previous level. In Russia, any economic transformation came to a complete halt. And it is hard for the average citizen to think of any consumer or industrial product being imported from Russia anymore. The fluctuating prices of raw materials are, of course, unpleasant for Western countries as well. This has led to energy projects consisting of direct supplies, mainly of natural gas, directly from sources in Russia (Nord Stream I, Nord Stream II, etc.). Individual countries are racing to secure the most cost-effective supplies of natural gas and oil, thus deepening their energy dependence on Russia.

Putin is conceptually working on his media image. He presents himself calmly, deliberately as if with detachment. For the domestic audience, he rides a horse or a "bear" halfway. He plays exhibition hockey and former and current national hockey players have to "try hard" to get the player with the number 11 to score as many goals as possible in a game. On the first dive, they fish an ancient amphora out of the sea.

Putin is invited as a prominent politician to all Western countries. The leaders of the western world are courting him in various ways. He is honorary president of the International Judo Federation. He is the guest of honor at the wedding of the Austrian minister Karin Kneissl. It is as if everyone is vying to see who the opportunity will have to speak more intimately with Putin. Vladimir Putin has gradually consolidated his political power in Russia. First, he was president twice, then once he was replaced by Medvedev, then by Putin again. A new change to the constitution has allowed Putin to rule virtually indefinitely and he no longer needs a replacement. His power is absolute. The Russian "Duma" is just such a ridiculous grouping. All the hallmarks of a fascist-type totalitarian regime have been fulfilled. The combined power of the state, the power of the economy and the power of the Church in the form of the faithful servant of the Orthodox Patriarch Kirill. Russia has become a wronged aggressive state with a poorly structured economy, but with extensive arms production and, above all, a huge arsenal of nuclear weapons.

Meanwhile, Vladimir Putin is only testing the limits of his reach. First a small war in Georgia and then, in 2014, the seizure of the whole of Crimea, the sovereign territory of Ukraine, whose territorial integrity is contractually guaranteed by a 1994 treaty that Russia itself signed.

The reaction of Western countries has been very shallow. Some formal sanctions that did not hurt Russia much. Czech President Milos Zeman considers the annexation of Crimea "a fait accompli". Soon there will be Brexit, the rise of Donald Trump, who does not understand many things in foreign policy and cares very little about foreign policy events in Europe. Donald Trump is a great winner of the presidential election for Putin and he hopes that the disunity in the Euro-Atlantic area will deepen thanks to him. And this is succeeding. Many European leaders have still dealt with Putin in a fairly friendly spirit. They have exaggerated that one or the other can speak more intimately with Putin and can achieve more than the other. The only result of these negotiations is, again, cheaper gas supplies for a given country in a given limited time.

At this point, Putin has long since decided to carry out his grand plan. Moreover, he is convinced that the unity of Western countries is at an all-time low. For him, the West is corrupt, decadent and, above all, disunited. He therefore does not hesitate to persecute his opponents cruelly and ruthlessly. The demonstrations against Putin are getting bigger and bigger, but most ordinary Russians have sided with Putin for more than twenty years of media massage. Finally, who else should lead Russia. It can't be done without him. History is repeating itself again.

Russia has yet to test its military mettle in Syria and the stage is set for war. It is Russia's neighbor Ukraine that has the audacity to go its own way. But Ukraine has also had its own difficult journey after the collapse of the USSR, it has also had its corrupt governments, its oligarchs and generally massive corruption across the board. And the problems did not just go away.

Now, however, it could work out. The fear of a big Russian bear in the immediate neighborhood unites Ukrainians. Ukraine could very well become another EU country in a few years, and maybe even a NATO country. Ukraine could end up being a country where people are better off than in Russia and where values lean towards Western countries. This would be difficult for Putin to explain to his Russians. Russia is launching a massive disinformation war on social media and throughout the information space on the internet. This war is always still much cheaper than a war with traditional weapons. In an age of rapid information dissemination, it can be a successful war. Many people are not only accepting this information with understanding but are developing it further. The unity of the EU is beginning to crumble. 'Evil and bureaucratic Brussels' is increasingly being cited as the cause of some economic and relationship problems in Europe. Many people in the eastern European countries seem to have forgotten how, just a few years ago, they were pleadingly 'knocking on the EU's door', saying that their countries belonged to 'Europe'.

Many populist politicians have based their political careers on opposition to the EU. Many of them try EU subsidy money very creatively transfer to themselves or to their "loved ones". The EU, and Europe in general, shows significant signs of incoherence and indecision. Putin, a veteran KGB and FSB agent, has assessed that now is the right moment to fulfil his big idea. Vladimir Putin has a fixed idea of a unifier of all Russia. Specifically, that is, Greater Russia, Belarus and Ukraine.

Now all that is left is a concrete basic idea and a concrete pretext. How simple. After all, Ukraine needs to be protected. To carry out denazification. Fascism and Nazism is a theme well-nourished in Russia continuously since the Great Patriotic war. Ukraine needs to be rid of a rotten government riddled with rotten western ideology. And this before the evil fascist Ukraine attacks Russia. And it's up to Russia again to stand up to Nazism. It works on an uninformed public.

And the outside world? Even 170,000 troops and heavy military equipment in the border with Ukraine will not convince some European leaders of Russia's war intentions. Germany's new

chancellor, Olaf Scholz, is going to Russia with the naive notion that he will somehow be the one to work something out with Putin. The prominent Czech Russophiles Václav Klaus and Milos Zeman "wisely" presume that it is not at all advantageous for Vladimir Putin to attack Ukraine.

It has happened, and many are staring in disbelief at the brutal atrocities the Russian military is carrying out in Ukraine. Cities shot up, dead bodies in the streets, women and children crying. Perhaps even more brutal scenes than during the Second World War can be seen in Ukrainian towns and villages. Only instead of a sophisticated swastika, we have a simple capital letter Z. You still find that strange guy half-dressed riding a bear funny and amusing?

Are we resistant to totalitarian regimes?

The current situation in Ukraine gives a clear answer, "Not yet!"

We are now witnessing a modified version of the totalitarian Nazi dictatorship and its expansion into Ukraine in the guise of so-called "de-Nazification" and "special operations." The paradoxical, but not hilarious, part of this is that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky is Jewish and three members of his family died at the hands of the German Nazis in the Holocaust.

What similarities this Russian action bears to Hitler's expansionism in 1938 and 1939.

Putin was determined long ago to carry out a barbaric invasion of Ukraine. Putin's expansion was created by a weak disunited Europe and the US.

Instead of addressing fundamental issues, world leaders focused on gaining short-sighted material benefits from cheaper gas or oil. Europe's dependence on Russian energy resources has been created. It is abundantly clear that the intelligence services must have had Putin mapped out long ago. There is certainly a psychological profile of him. Until the last moment, politicians blindly believed that something would change and that nothing terrible would happen.

The deaths of former Russian agents by novichok, the liquidation of political competitors (Boris Nemtsov, Alexei Navalny, etc.), the suspicious deaths of a number of journalists who did not write according to the Kremlin's wishes, and, in fact, the total dismantling of democracy in Russia were not enough of a warning. The last-minute explosions in Vrbětice in the Czech Republic, prepared by the Russian GRU, prevented the completion of the Dukovany nuclear power plant by Russia's Rosatom.

What do we have to do now?

It would be terribly nice if everything went as it did at the end of the Cold War. When the countries of Central and Eastern Europe found a peaceful path to freedom and prosperity, when the USSR itself disintegrated without any violence. There have been situations where dictatorship, unfreedom and colonialism have been ended through patient negotiation and the action of strong leaders (India, South Africa, Spain, Portugal). But that path was not easy either and was above all a long-term, prepared one, and the result had to "ripen".

Today's situation in Russia and Ukraine is quite different.

It is sad, but the only thing that applies to rulers like Hitler, Stalin, Putin and others is the strength and unity of resistance. They do not understand anything else. All the well-intentioned but very naive ideas of permanent negotiation with a Putin-type dictator are meaningless. If we want to negotiate effectively with dictators, it is only when we have the appropriate trump cards in our hands. Of course, we need to look for all ways, especially to try to negotiate on the evacuation of civilians, humanitarian corridors, the supply of basic necessities of life, etc. Unfortunately, the firing by the Russian occupiers on evacuation buses, medical facilities and people queuing for basic foodstuffs is not very encouraging.

One can also hear opinions that if there is overwhelming superiority of the attacker against the attacked, there is no point in defending oneself. It will save the lives of many women and

children. It is delusional. The aggressor never has enough and will continue his aggression if he has the opportunity. The aggressors can name it as world revolution, special operation, denazification, historical justice or the right to a living space. One can always find so many reasons to "liberate" and "denationalize".

It is at this point that we might recall a significant figure in Polish history, Marek Edelman, who co-founded a Jewish fighting organization in the Warsaw Ghetto in 1943. When the Germans entered the ghetto to deport the Jews to the extermination camps, the Jews began to fight back. They were poorly armed. They had only hand grenades, rifles, Molotov cocktails and a few revolvers. Only later did they get some weapons from captured Germans. But they fought very bravely, they knew the ghetto, its alleys, passages and underground bunkers. Their greatest strength came from the fact that they knew they had nothing to lose. They had already lost everything, except their courage and will, their dignity. The Germans managed to put down the uprising only in mid-May, using heavy weapons and overwhelming odds. Marek Edelman became commander of the uprising after the death of the previous commander, Mordechai Anielewicz. Towards the end of the uprising, he and other fighters managed to escape from the ghetto through a network of canals. In 1944 he took part in the Warsaw Uprising. Marek Edelman himself denied that the resistance of the Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto could be called the term "uprising". The word "uprising" suggests at least some possibility of victory. And there was no such possibility then. He declared that history belongs to everyone, and history at every moment in history contains a universal call to fight for equality, democracy, human rights and the dignity of man wherever these values are threatened. He repeatedly stressed that it is everyone's duty to defend the weak and vulnerable. Marek Edelman has always insisted that we all share responsibility for the fate of the world and therefore must constantly engage in complex and dangerous issues. You must stand up for those who are vulnerable and excluded. "I don't know what heroism is. Everyone does what they can," said Marek Edelman. "You ask me what is the most important thing in life? The most important thing is life itself. And once you have life, the most important thing is freedom," he said in an interview. With his life, he proved what a free man can do. It is this kind of thinking that makes history and will go down positively in the future and in the consciousness of the dignity of man and nation. Returning to the current Russia-Ukraine issue, in more than twenty years of Putin's rule in Russia and the associated heavy media message, at least 80% of the population supports Putin in his war efforts. But in addition, according to some polls, at least 40% of the population wants Putin to send his troops even further into Europe. The target is mainly the countries of the former USSR and the former Warsaw Pact countries. It is impossible not to comply with such a popular wish.

Even more reason to appreciate all those in Russia who have not succumbed to this message and are actively opposed to it. Putin's actions will ensure that, in addition to the huge economic decline of Russia, most people will spit on the "Russians" in the next twenty years. So that the spittle doesn't hit the real and courageous Russians.

There is good news, however. Ukraine is defending itself very effectively, and it turns out that the Russian military is in much worse shape than Putin himself thought. Moreover, Ukraine has completely pulled itself together. No one is welcoming Russian troops except a few desperate people in the east. What is more, the Russian bear now appears to be a big but weak one. Poor military strategy, little motivation, confusion, utterly tragic logistical support, poor state of combat equipment, corruption throughout. Ukraine needs to be supported in everything. Unfortunately, this will not be possible without massive arms deliveries.

The good news is that even the Euro-Atlantic world has now united. Putin is also betting on the "rotten and decadent West" being unable to agree on anything concrete. This has happened perhaps because many politicians have realised how badly they have misjudged the situation in

the past and what "butter on their heads" they have. Suddenly, we have a coalition of many countries that are effectively helping Ukraine with everything.

This is hope. It is necessary for Western countries to cut themselves off from Russia completely economically and not contribute by buying raw materials to finance the war. Above all, it is never again possible to talk to Putin and the prominent members of the Russian regime as before. If Putin has spoken many times about thin red lines that cannot be crossed, then it is he who has crossed this thin red line.

It is difficult to predict how this will all end. What will happen in Russia itself. Whether Putin will be replaced by someone more pragmatic.

Hitler, unlike Putin, had only 12 years of his rule. However, in Germany, after 12 years of rule in 1945, he was certainly no longer trusted by 80% of the population. We don't poll Hitler's popularity in 1945 anymore. In general, however, we can say that polls can also change quickly. They can also change quickly in Russia when the truth is transferred from Ukraine to Russia. For now, everything is secret and ordinary Russians will not know anything. But the truth will come out. Russian mothers must be wondering by now where their sons are who left to "save" Russia in Ukraine many months ago. They will be returning wounded and survivors and they will not keep their horrific experiences to themselves.

Many political scientists, security analysts, military strategists and experts therefore assume that only now will the monstrous Bolshevik ideology of 1917 collapse. Russia is not made up of Russians alone. There are still many other republics and autonomous regions. And these populations will certainly not want to die for Russia and suffer under economic sanctions. So, we can expect the "unraveling" of the great imperial Russian Empire as we knew it. But caution is necessary. Any "break-up", although perfectly just and logical, may have its risks, as we have experienced many times in the past.

What to make of it?

Ukraine is rightly resisting the Russian aggressor and history is being made in Ukraine for many years to come. The Euro-Atlantic world should persevere in its unity and do everything possible to ensure that Ukraine's borders remain as they were guaranteed in 1994. This requires solidarity and patience. Problems are bound to come. The images of the shot-up apartment blocks that many of us associate with our homes were shocking. Dead bodies, mass graves and incredible human pain. This hasn't been seen here since World War II. We must not allow ourselves to be numbed by indifference over time. We must realize that the migration wave from Ukraine will, of course, bring with it various problems of coexistence with the newcomers in our countries. We must address these and not be influenced by populists. After all, a single picture of the current war in Ukraine shows that our problems are nothing more than trivial. Restoring a free Ukraine after this war will be a major challenge, especially for the whole of Europe.

And the real conclusion? Perhaps the word of an expert. And who exactly are the experts in this case? Politicians, economists, historians or military experts, peace activists...

I have chosen the opinion of a man who can combine his opinion from many points of view. Marek Orko Vácha, Czech Roman Catholic priest, theologian, natural scientist, teacher, writer and scout, head of the Institute of Ethics and Humanities at the 3rd Medical Faculty of Charles University: "We have no choice but to appeal to the leaders of Europe and NATO to stand up to this evil, because Putin can only be stopped by force, it is not enough to condemn and be frightened, because we live in a time that will one day be remembered, and we must stand up to it. We are responsible for what is happening in Ukraine, in the sense that we must not be indifferent to it. Faith is supposed to provoke a person that if a person is suffering somewhere, it should be me who gets up and goes to help him."