

extremes that took shape in fascism and bolshevism.<sup>2</sup> In both cases we may find extremism, which did not remain a marginal phenomenon, but developed into a political system, starting from usurping the apparatus of the state and, further on, secured a high degree of mass loyalty. Therefore, fascism and bolshevism, each in its own way, gave a historical example of the ultimate possibility for an extremist ideology to become constitutive for a whole society. Although based on different particular ideas, so-called religious extremism – as a sectarian Christian and Islamic terrorism – is structurally very similar to the secular kinds of extremism. Both extreme ideologies remain to be paradigms of a materialisation of both main currents within political ideologies: particularism and universalism, reflecting the binary logic of Western thought – and Eastern too for that matter. Since these extreme ideologies took shape – for not just a short while – of a “normal society”, their “being-a-fact-of-history” represents an instance for any critical reflection on the potential of supposedly marginal extremist ideologies and movements of today. I do not speak of a fear concerning the possibility of their simple re-emergence, but about a fear that we might be(come) unable to recognize and define the distinctive attributes of a *process*, which is already at work; or, even more frightening, that we might recognize them, but we are unable to influence the process itself. Once extremism takes over the society, its institutions, and the public life and so on, there is very little that can be done against it. Speaking in global terms that is what already happened in at least some former socialist countries, notably in Serbia, as an example of a prolonged bolshevism, stripped off of its universalized shape, modified and adapted to new realities and supported by populism and nationalism.<sup>3</sup>

The long essay by the French historian François Furet exposed the above-mentioned liabilities, derived from a retrospective of the gruesome historical experience of this century. As Furet points out “bolshevism and fascism entered almost jointly the theatre of history as the latest items on the European political repertoire” (Furet, 1995: p. 38). In Furet’s view of history, it seems difficult to imagine that these ideologies, now looking “absurd,

2 I find the use of term “bolshevism” here more appropriate than “communism” since it may be argued that communism represents a number of different forms of ideology and organisations, like movements, ideas, views, parties as well as some political systems, that could not be simply defined as extremist.

3 The most recent phenomena in 21<sup>st</sup> Century in Europe, such as a number of extremist parties in “new democracies” of Hungary and Poland, where they even ascended to power, demonstrate that the extremism in power can co-exist and extend its influence within the EU, which was supposed to be based on pluralism and democracy.