

the “iron law” is self-propelled as it is reinforced by theories such as Gaetano Mosca’s.

Bolshevism and fascism were both very much aware of the paradoxes of democracy and both took advantage of its weakness – very much exposed in the times after the World War I and the economic crisis – using the persuasive powers of their ideology. Joseph Stalin clearly explained the strategy of bolshevism, saying: “When Lenin fought for the victory of bourgeois revolution and for a democratic republic, he didn’t intend to be stuck in the democratic phase, and so to limit the wide-spreading of revolutionary movement by accomplishing bourgeois democratic goals” (“History”, 1946: 74). As the story goes, Stalin says that what Lenin really had in mind was the success of socialist revolution brought about by the exploited masses. On the other hand, Nazis justified their upsurge on power in structurally similar terms: “The state is no longer an entity which, be it close to the party and the movement, or be it a mechanical apparatus is a ruling instrument; rather it is an instrument of the National Socialist *Weltanschauung*” (Rosenberg, 1970: p. 191).

A quite visible structural similarity between both types of discourse should not be disregarded. In both cases democracy is perceived as a wheel to power and at the same time as an insufficient instrument for the accomplishment of goals, set by the respective ideologies: the rule of the proletariat in the first case, and the fulfilment of the German *Volk* in the other one. In both cases the ideology representing the “content” – people’s needs and will – otherwise alienated from the state, serves as a persuasive reason for the eradication of democracy. As simple as this may seem, it is apparent that the ideology brought to the extreme enabled both movements to institutionalise extremism in the shape of the totalitarian state. Both ideologies – as also Furet pointed out quite frequently in his book – could be classified as ideologies of the emancipation, apparently aiming at liberation of working masses, but with differing accents concerning especially the notion of nationhood. So fascism and bolshevism, each in its own way, remain to be a historical proof that the extremist ideology stands a chance to acquire and even keep for a prolonged period the power of the state. Historic facts prove beyond any doubt that a development of the extreme ideology does not dwindle after the conquering of power. On the contrary, it actually increases out of proportions.

One may argue that both successes of the extreme ideologies happened in rather special situations, in the circumstances of weak democracies, or