

Petya Dimitrova

**THE RED ARMY – “D LIBERATION ARMY” OR OCCUPATOR: A
VIEW OF TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY**

(Summary)

The article is dedicated to some issues related to the memory of one of the most important events of the 20th century – World War II. The author traces the debate on the role of the Red Army in the war as part of the total revision of its history picking up momentum after the collapse of the communist system and the self-dissolution of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The analysis of the changes over the past three decades in the view of its greatest clash in the history of mankind, respectively, the role of the Soviet army in it, rests on several basic postulates. The first of them is the view that history is an endless process of self-knowledge and is related to the need of each generation to make sense of the past in terms of the issues and problems of its present, i.e. the rethinking of what happened during the Second World War is not an exclusive priority of the post-communist era. Secondly, this is a process that affects, at one time or another, each of the states participating in the war, not just the countries of Eastern Europe, from the so-called “socialist camp”, which for many years were forced to adhere to the Soviet version about the war. Thirdly, the history of the World War II, taken as a collective historical memory, demonstrates clearly the “multivoicedness” of the historical narrative, the principle inability to build an adequate account of the past from a single point of view within an unmistakable history. On the contrary, we are witnessing a kind of “war of memories”, not only between national discourses but also between the “memories” of different groups of society within one country.

It is undisputed, however, that the great rewriting of the history of World War II is in the post-communist era and is mainly related to the participation of the USSR in the war. And the great “battle” of the memories here is led between today’s Russia on the one hand and the former members of the “socialist camp” and of the Soviet Union itself, on the other. This is why the debate about World War II and the role of the Red Army is traced in the article through the prism of the development of the historical policy of the participants in the war. The zigzags in the Russian interpretation of the historical events are compared to the new narratives of Poland, Ukraine and the three Baltic states – Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, the countries located in a special region of Eastern Europe, designated by the Yale University Professor Timothy Snyder as the geographical, moral and political center of the mass murders in the old continent.