

growth.

Trade unions may also, of course, counteract the process of perestroika by opposing closures of unprofitable enterprises. Nevertheless, they are strongest in the big, heavy industry plants – and I do not believe in this primitive class vision: that if someone works in the Lenin Steelmill he can see no further than his own job. Experience – in particular the Solidarity experience – shows that this is not true. He is also a consumer, a citizen, a Pole. That is why we can overcome resistance against changes.

Our problem is whether the process of transforming totalitarianism into democracy can be a peaceful one. People have said to me that in four years' time Solidarity will win the election and the communists will lose. This notion pre-supposes that the present situation will be the same in four years' time. We hope, however, that in the meantime a completely new political map will emerge, favourable to the stabilisation of a democratic system; that in four years' time it will not be a contest between Solidarity and the PZPR (Polish United Workers' Party). I believe that both the PZPR and the opposition will split.

Besides, we must not think of the elections in terms of a revolution. If a political force loses in a revolution it cannot re-emerge, unless the revolution itself collapses. In elections, however, if a party loses, it can win in four – or eight – years' time.

What is happening in Poland – and it must happen with Gorbachov's acceptance – is an experiment decisive for the whole of the Soviet bloc. Gorbachov has the same problem in Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Armenia, in Russia itself: whether agreement with the opponents of totalitarianism is possible.

The question is what will happen in Moscow. Nobody knows. If the Soviet programme of perestroika collapses, yet we in the meantime manage to build a viable political system, then there will be various setbacks. We will, however, have something to preserve and defend. As we know, it is not possible to turn back...

Another possible scenario is the collapse of the Soviet Union. If that were to happen, we would be able to build independence and democracy from scratch. In a system where a fundamental chasm between the rulers and the ruled exists, all revolutions and global changes bring to power, to the government of the state and economy, totally unprepared people. If through the Round Table we manage to bridge that chasm in some places, then the collapse of the system will be less dangerous, for we shall have managers, directors, officials and judges who are more prudent. The more we achieve in this sense – i.e., the more we can trust a certain judge, director, or Minister – the easier the transition to the new system will be.

Only yesterday we were standing in the trenches as two enemy armies, firing at each other and destroying everything in front of us. Today a completely new social, political and psychological situation is being created.

## REQUIESCAT IN PACE!<sup>1</sup>

*On 16th June 1989, when the bodies of Imre Nagy and his executed colleagues were reburied, the last speaker to address the hundreds of thousands who attended the moving ceremony was Victor Orban, a representative of FIDESZ.*

### Citizens!

In the 40 years since the Soviet occupation and a communist dictatorship were ensconced in Hungary, our nation has had a single chance and enough strength and courage to attempt to reach the aims laid down in 1848: the establishment of national independence and political liberty. Our aims have not changed; the demands made in 1848, and indeed in 1956, are just as pertinent today.

Young people in Hungary who fight for democracy in Europe now honour the Communist Imre Nagy and his companions for two reasons.

We honour these statesmen who, by desiring an end to sacred communist taboos, so to speak, to the blind obedience to the Soviet Empire and the dictatorship of a single party, identified themselves with the wishes of the Hungarian nation.

In fact, it was in 1956 when the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party took a grip on our future. Thus, buried in the sixth coffin there is not merely the body of one murdered youngster but also our next 20 – or perhaps more – years.

We young people fail to understand a lot of things that are obvious to the older generation. It is beyond our comprehension that those who were eager to slander the revolution and the prime minister until recently have suddenly become great supporters and followers of Imre Nagy's policies. Nor can we conceive how those Party leaders and statesmen, who ensured that we were taught from books which falsified the revolution, can now rush to touch the coffins as if they were good luck charms. We do not believe that we are beholden to [them] for the burial of our martyrs after 31 years; nor, in our opinion, should we have to feel so indebted for the fact that our political organisations are now allowed to function. It is not to the credit of the Hungarian political leadership that, although its strength of arms would permit it, it does not act against those demanding democracy and free elections in a manner similar to that of Li Peng, Pol Pot, Jaruzelski and Rakosi.

Now, 33 years after the Hungarian revolution was crushed and 31 years after the execution of our last legitimate prime minister, we may at last have the opportunity of peacefully achieving the aims that the revolutionaries attained for a few days in bloody struggles. If we trust our souls and our strength, we can put an end to this communist dictatorship; if we are determined enough, we can force the ruling party to submit to demands for free elections; and if we do not lose sight of the ideals of 1956, we will be able to elect a government that will open up immediate negotiations on the prompt withdrawal of Soviet troops. If, but only if, we have enough courage, we can fulfil the will of the revolution. Nobody can trust the idea that the party-state

will change of its own accord. For we should not forget that on the 6 October 1956, on the very day that Laszlo Rajk was buried, the Party daily declared in capital letters: "NEVER AGAIN!" Three weeks later, the Communist Party ordered its security forces to fire on peaceful and defenceless people.

Scarcely had two years passed when the Socialist Workers Party had hundreds of innocent people, among them its own comrades, sentenced to death on trumped-up charges just as Rajk had been. We will never accept the empty promises of communist leaders. It is our aim that the ruling party, even if it so desires, should never again be able to use force against us, for it is the only way to avoid burials such as today's. Imre Nagy, Miklos Gimes, Geza Losonczy, Pal Maleter, and Jozsef Szilagyí gave their lives for Hungarian independence and liberty. For the Hungarian youth, these values still rank among the highest.

We bow our heads to your memory.

*Requiescat in pace!*

## THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN; A SPECTRE IS HAUNTING EUROPE

*Adam Michnik<sup>1</sup>*

A spectre is haunting Europe and other continents: a spectre of the end of the totalitarian system, a spectre of the end of a military form of communism.

Yes, it looks like the end. There is probably nothing capable of reviving a system which promised a bright future but which has instead brought terror and poverty, lies and corruption, denationalisation and the rape of people's consciousness.

We look around with distrust and uncertainty. Is this possible? Are we not mistaking our own wishful thinking for reality? Is this not simply another cunning device of the ruling team? Will we not be cheated once again as we have been so many times before?

Let us think: what counts in politics are facts. The most crucial facts of this spring have been the Round Table debates and Solidarity's return to the legal arena. What is the meaning inherent in these two facts?

The Round Table was an act of consent to transform the policy of police monologue to one of political dialogue; it was also an act of practical denouncement of the whole philosophy and practice of martial law which had allowed people to speak only from the underground, the jail or the dock. Such re-orientation, which after all aroused considerable resistance within the power camp, was not easy since it was preceded by years of propaganda campaigns slandering Solidarity supporters. We had been offered capitulation, emigration or re-socialisation in prison; we had been assured that political dialogue with Walesa and Solidarity would never take place.

However, matters have taken a different course. What drove the authorities to take it?

First of all, the bankruptcy of the policies of martial law. Had the military action, taken on that notorious December night, resulted in fat wallets and full shop shelves, the people in power would have had no need for any Round Table talks. But political changes became the condition for positive changes in the economy. Society, whose aspirations had been blocked, turned its back on the people in power.

Secondly, there was the international situation. In the face of similar threats, the Soviet Party leadership and top authorities chose glasnost, offering a great political opening, and the widening campaign to expose Stalinism added further pressure. A marked change took place.

Until then, during every crisis in Poland, we were always told the same thing: that the Polish national character, Polish sloth and brawling, and the Polish inclination towards anarchy was to blame. The political volte-face in the Soviet Union and the acute diagnosis of the crisis gnawing away in that country made the traditional arguments nonsensical. The crisis in Poland appeared to be one element in the intense

<sup>1</sup> Published in 1989. Adam Michnik, himself a Solidarity candidate (later elected) in the elections, is editor of "the only independent daily between the Elbe and the Pacific", the *Gazeta Wyborcza* (Election Daily).