



JÓZSEF ANTALL

Prime Minister of Hungary

SELECTED SPEECHES AND INTERVIEWS
(1989–1993)

A HISTORIAN IN WORLD POLITICS

JÓZSEF ANTALL

PRIME MINISTER OF HUNGARY

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Selected Speeches and Interviews

Edited by Géza Jeszenszky



ANTALL JÓZSEF ALAPÍTVÁNY
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Dániel Tóth, Márton Vajda and Tünde Vajda

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IN MEMORIAM

We celebrated the 75th anniversary of late Prime Minister József Antall's birth in 2007, evoking the memory of the first freely elected Prime Minister of Hungary after the Iron Curtain came down in 1989. His political programme was to establish a well functioning democracy on the basis of reality and human dignity and to create a social market economy integrated into world markets.

Antall's aim was to realise the Euro-Atlantic integration to which he had managed to win the vast majority of Hungarian people over, and to engage the sympathy and help of Europe and the free world. Although he died young, his life's work is very much alive, and it is our responsibility in an integrated Europe to understand the forward-looking ideas of Antall's legacy.

This English publication of József Antall's speeches and interviews allows a broader European audience and young generations to become acquainted with the thoughts of this outstanding player in the political changes of the Central-European region.

József Antall's generation witnessed the painful conclusions of the partially democratic or outright totalitarian regimes which were in place between the world wars (including Franco, Mussolini, Hitler, Stalin, Tiso, Antonescu). They recognised that the time had come for a humanistic political era which would exclude all kinds of inhumanity, injustice and features of dictatorship which differed so widely from democracy.

This can be imagined principally as a conservative social policy concept based on Christian Democracy which is able to recognise its own faults and the frailties of human nature, promotes organic development of the world, and calls for change without radical turns. Antall considered it essential to return to Christian traditions at a fundamental level which he believed to be the basis of Western Europe: "It is simply about that in Europe even the atheists are Christians. Europe's Christianity means culture, ethics and approach."

He often referred to the fact that after the Second World War it was the Christian Democrat politicians who began to build a unified Europe, and the founding fathers (Christian Democrats Robert Schumann, Konrad Adenauer, Alcide de Gasperi together with Jean Monnet, Paul Henry Spaak, Walter Hallstein, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, René Pléven) belonged to that circle.

József Antall overcame much adversity during his sadly shortened time in government; his political accomplishments were outstanding in the develop-

ment of Hungary and the neighbouring area. He recognised the challenges of his time and he was able to find substantive answers to promote the integration of Central Europe. That is why his thoughts are current and exemplary even today, and should be widely known in Europe and around the world.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Wilfried Martens". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Wilfried" and "Martens" being significantly larger and more stylized than the rest of the letters.

*Wilfried Martens
President of the European People's Party
and the Centre for European Studies*

FOREWORD TO THE GERMAN EDITION

Since the accession of Hungary and nine other Central, Eastern and Southern European countries to the European Union on 1 May 2004, I often think about my friend, József Antall, the first freely elected prime minister of Hungary since the Second World War. During his term of office, between 1990 and 1993, József Antall not only ensured that Hungary took crucial steps to establish democracy and market economy, but he also governed the country towards the European Union with courage and foresight. While his being the Prime Minister, Hungary became member of the Council of Europe in November of 1990, a year later joined the European Community by the Europe Agreement, and finally entered the European Free Trade Area (EFTA) in 1993. By doing so, the first significant measures were carried out that preceded the accession of 2004. Regrettably, József Antall could not see that. The fact that Hungary is now one of the 25 member states of the European Union is – among others, but in the first place – his merit.

We, Germans, also appreciate that József Antall unconditionally supported the unification of Germany from the beginning. We will not forget his significant personal contribution to the re-establishment of the united Germany. We keep his memory in our mind as the passionate fighter of democracy and freedom, a great patriot and a professed European. For all he did and strived for, we owe him acknowledgement and shall save him in our memory.

The collection of József Antall's speeches exquisitely records the passionate influence he exercised on the transformation of Hungary in the 1980s and at the beginning of the 1990s, and his unambiguous plea for a united Europe. It is my pleasure that the collection of his speeches will be accessible to German and English readers in translation.

We, Germans, have been living in partnership and friendship with the Hungarians for a century. Our relations may be traced back to the time of King Stephen the Saint. This friendship was reinforced in the period when the Iron Curtain ceased to exist. We, Germans, will never forget that the Hungarians were the first to help us break the Wall and the barbed wire fence that divided our nation for decades. I also remember the "Pan-European Picnic" in Sopron in August of 1989. Many of our compatriots who wished to leave at that time still existing GDR took advantage of this event to escape to freedom. In the first place, we cannot forget the brave measure taken by the Hungarian

Government in the dramatic days of September of 1989. With the support of the opposition, to which the Hungarian Democratic Forum belonged with the leadership of József Antall, the Hungarian Government opened the border for the Germans who fled from the still existing GDR. We will never forget the Hungarian people this great manifestation of their love of freedom. Therefore, it is an exceptional pleasure that we live together with the Hungarian people in the European House in peace and freedom. József Antall played a crucial role in making it possible.

Helmut Kohl

INTRODUCTION

JÓZSEF ANTALL AND THE WORLD

*Géza Jeszenszky*¹

József Antall was much more than the key figure in the peaceful transition from dictatorship to democracy in Hungary in 1989, the winner of the free election in 1990, and Prime Minister until his untimely death. As one of the obituaries remarked, he was “the unsung hero of the transition” in Central Europe, whose vision, grasp of world affairs and performance were much appreciated by the political leaders of the early 1990s,² but he was not given due recognition by the world press. The present essay does not aim at giving full credit to his contribution to Hungarian and international history, it is only a summary of his ideas and achievements, concentrating on foreign policy.

For the younger generation of Hungarians, and also for foreigners interested in Hungary, the Prime Minister of the first non-communist government represents, fifteen years after his departure, a kind of legendary figure, the well-intentioned, decent, but old-fashioned and not too successful first leader following the ‘regime change’. But today even his former political opponents give belated recognition and praise for his personality and politics. In Hungary, like in all the formerly Soviet-dominated countries, the difficulties of the transition have given rise to a kind of nostalgia for the comfortable aspects of communism: safe jobs, nominally free education and health-care, and the low price of basic necessities. That does not make the memory of the first non-communist government and its leader more popular with the general public. Nevertheless there is enough information available on the personality and accomplishments of Antall for any interested person to make a balanced judgment. The present selection of his major speeches and most important interviews should facilitate that.

Antall’s ancestors were soldiers fighting the Ottoman invaders, and vine-growing farmers living in the heart of Transdanubia, under Somló Hill, where some of the best wines of Hungary are produced. His father, József Antall Sr, was born in a small village, Oroszi, studied law, and became a civil servant in

¹ Géza Jeszenszky (b. 1941) is a historian, Professor at the Corvinus University of Budapest. A founding member of the Hungarian Democratic Forum in 1988, Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1990–1994, Ambassador to the United States in 1988–2002.

² A testimony of that, extracts from obituaries and messages of condolences, can be found at the end of this essay.

the Ministry of Home Affairs. He had strong democratic and humanistic convictions, detested both the Communists and the extreme right. Since the early 1930s he was a member of the Smallholders' Party, then an opposition party.³ From 1939 to March, 1944, as government commissioner, he was responsible for war refugees, and, with the tacit approval of Prime Minister Teleki⁴ and his successors, helped about a hundred thousand Poles to settle in Hungary or to escape to Western Europe and continue the fight against Nazi Germany. He also protected allied POWs who escaped from German captivity, and thousands of Jews, mainly from Poland, providing them with false documents. Following the German occupation of Hungary (March 1944) he was arrested by the Gestapo, and was saved from execution only by his Polish friends who, even under torture, did not reveal the depth of his activities. After the war he received high decorations from the Allies, the Poles named a street after him, and Yad Vashem recognised him *post mortem* as Righteous among the Gentiles. In 1946 Antall Sr became Minister for Reconstruction in the coalition government headed by the Smallholders. He and his colleagues hoped to turn Hungary a viable democracy, but the Soviet Union, represented by the Head of the Allied Control Commission, Marshal Voroshilov, relying on the Red Army in occupation of Hungary, was instrumental in the Communist Party taking over the country by 1948. (The same process led to similar results in all the Central and South-East European countries.) Antall withdrew from public life, and lived until 1973 on a modest pension. His wife was the daughter of another self-made man, who was the private secretary of the Minister for Culture and Education, Count Apponyi,⁵ became a Member of Parliament in the 1920s, and one of the suburbs of Pest owes a great deal to his initiatives. Young Antall thus was much influenced by his family background, including the summers

³ Independent Smallholders' and Civic Party: its roots go back to 1908, when I. Nagyatádi Szabó, a farmer, founded the first party to represent mainly the interests of the peasants, then forming the majority of the population. In 1930 it was reborn under the present name, demanded land reform, genuine democracy and steering clear of any political extremism. Having been in opposition until 1944, it became a member of the Provisional Government set up in December 1944. Received 57 per cent of the vote at the free elections in 1945, but was not permitted by the Soviet authorities to form a government without the Communists. By 1949 the Communist leader, Rákosi, helped by the occupying Soviet army, gradually eliminated it.

⁴ Pál Teleki, Count (1879–1941), geographer, university professor, coming politician, from a distinguished Transylvanian family. Prime Minister in 1920–1921 and 1939–1941. Detested Nazism, tried to keep Hungary out of World War II, and when that looked impossible committed suicide.

⁵ Albert Apponyi, Count (1846–1933), great landowner, was a prominent politician before the war. Was appointed Head of the Hungarian peace delegation in 1920, and was the representative of Hungary at the League of Nations until his death in 1933.

he spent among village kids and wise winemakers in the Somló region. He was sent to the Grammar School of the Piarist Fathers, where the teachers were very demanding. In the intellectually most receptive years Antall grew up under dramatic historical conditions: witnessed the German occupation of his country and the arrest of his father, then watched the battle between German and Soviet forces literally from the top of the 457 metre high Somló, returned to a Budapest totally devastated by the siege, and finally saw the great victory of his father's party and political ideas, only to be crushed in three years. Antall Jr shared his father's political sympathies, became a convinced Anglophile (at the age of 16 wrote an insightful essay on "The United States in World Politics"), and a fearless opponent of the Communist regime. He studied history, literature, law, art, became an archivist, later a schoolteacher (an extremely popular one with the students), and took an active part in the revolution of 1956. Following its suppression he was arrested several times, but no charges could be proved against him, and got away with being banned from the teaching profession. Having spent several years as an assistant in a lending library, in the mid-1960s he managed to join the modest Semmelweis Memorial House. In a few years he developed it into a veritable and internationally renowned institution on the history of medicine, eventually becoming its director. It was also a place where his many friends could gather to discuss informally the political situation at home and abroad. Having been taught such a severe lesson in 1956, nobody in Hungary could continue to believe in overthrowing 'the system', the irrational and inhuman copy of the Soviet Union, directly, but many individuals and private circles, groups of friends were just waiting for the opportunity to wind down 'socialism' (the official term for communism), as soon as a chance for that would present itself.

In a communist country people could not study abroad, even travel to 'the West' was restricted in many ways and required special permission, but by reading and listening to the heavily jammed western radios one could become quite familiar with the outside world. Two hundred thousand Hungarians escaped to the West in 1956, they and earlier emigrants coming back as 'tourists' also contributed much feedback about life 'in the free world'. Thus the main political impressions that influenced Antall Jr's thinking – apart from the difficult history of Hungary, including the hardships faced by the Hungarian minorities in the countries to which they were attached after 1920, and the terrible practice of communism in the eastern half of Europe – were the written and verbal accounts on the post-war success story of Western Europe, NATO

containing the further spread of Soviet influence. He also knew Hungary's neighbourhood from personal childhood impressions, as well as from readings. All that explains how young Antall could know and understand western politics and thinking so well, despite that until the mid-1970s he was not allowed to travel abroad. So Antall as a politician was not the amateur he was often presumed to be, especially by the western media.⁶

* * *

Between the 11th and 15th centuries Hungary was a substantial Christian power, culturally flourishing, linked to all the European countries through dynastic marriages. But with the tragic Battle of Mohács in 1526 the medieval kingdom fell under foreign domination, and most of present-day Hungary, including the capital, Buda, was annexed by the Ottoman Empire. When at the end of the 17th century an international Christian army expelled the Turks, the Habsburg kings came to govern the country as a conquered province of their Empire, and did not respect its laws. Several uprisings by the Hungarians (the most notable in 1848–49, crushed by the intervention of the Russian Czar) failed to restore independence, and an army of occupation remained stationed in Hungary until the Settlement or Compromise (in German *Ausgleich*) of 1867, when the Habsburg Emperor Francis Joseph was crowned King of Hungary. That established the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, giving autonomy, 'Home Rule' to Hungary. Foreign policy and defence became common affairs, and the Emperor-King retained extensive prerogatives. Full independence came only at the end of World War I, but at the price of the break-up of the historic kingdom, only one third of its territory was left to the rump state. Inter-war Hungary was surrounded by a hostile alliance, the so-called Little Entente of Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia, leaving Hungary very little room for movement. Their grip was broken by Nazi Germany in World War II, and Hungary became Hitler's ally, but an unwilling and unreliable one, so in 19 March 1944 Germany overran and occupied it, in order to prevent its long-planned defection to the Allies. It was only then that the 'final solution', the extermination of a large part of the 800,000 strong Hungarian Jewish community, could be carried out. Hungary was delivered from the Nazis and their Hungarian puppets in 1945 by the Soviet Red Army, amid widespread

⁶ Many documents of this volume contain references to Antall's formative years, most revealing is the first "Politics: a Vocation and a Profession".

looting, raping and kidnapping of civilians into slavery in the Soviet Union, and the Soviet occupation continued until 1991.

Thus the dilemmas, the tasks facing Hungary in the international arena were quite similar throughout the centuries: staving off foreign invasions (Germans, Mongols, Ottoman Turks, Russians); preventing a dangerous combination involving hostile neighbours; and finding supporters, friends among the richer, more advanced western and northern (often Protestant) powers in the fights for the rights of the partly Protestant nation. With the rise of nationalism in the 1830s a new task was added: to preserve the territorial integrity of the kingdom in face of the non-Hungarian nationalities inside, and their co-nationals beyond the borders. Since the 1920 Peace Treaty the latter has taken the form of finding a *modus vivendi* with the neighbouring states (who acquired large territories from Hungary), while giving support to the millions of Hungarians who were detached from Hungary and became ill-treated national minorities.

By 1948 a monolithic, communist-controlled system was imposed upon every country under the occupation of the Red Army, and Hungary, too, became 'a captive nation', a satellite of the Soviet Union. Soviet troops, stationed in Hungary, suppressed the democratic revolution in 1956, and even in the later, milder phase of communism, when Hungary was called "the jolliest barracks," total subservience to the Soviet Union in foreign policy was the price paid for the modest economic reforms, for travel outside Hungary, and for a freer atmosphere.

* * *

Antall as a historian specialised mainly in the 19th century, in the great political and social transformation which turned the Kingdom of Hungary into "a model constitutional State."⁷ His deep interest in foreign affairs came from the recognition that the fall of the historic State, and the tragedies of the 20th century went back primarily to international causes, and a favourable turn may occur only through initiatives coming from the Great Powers. During the decades of Soviet domination the most ambitious hopes Hungarians could entertain was acquiring a position like Finland had, self-imposed limitations in foreign policy and special regard for Soviet interests, while preserving a political and economic system of their own choice. The hope that such a status was

⁷ *The Times*, 2 Dec. 1897, p. 5.

attainable found expression in 1956 in the Nagy Government's declaration of neutrality.

No one can deny the seminal role US President Reagan and Soviet leader Gorbachev played in the spectacular changes in 1989, but without the growing demands of the Poles and the Hungarians for political pluralism in the 1980s, and the agreement between the communist leadership and the opposition in those two countries on the peaceful dismantling of the one-party dictatorship, the total collapse of communism in Europe and the ending of the Cold War might still be a pious hope. The rise and progress of the Hungarian Democratic Forum, the first organised political movement to challenge the political monopoly of the communist party, can be well followed from the first speeches of Antall presented in this volume. At the initiation of dozen writers it was formed on 3 September 1988 at a small village, Lakitelek. Antall was one of its 200 odd founding members. At the National Convention which elected him party leader he pointed out that the changes in Soviet–American relations offered guarantees for the transformation of Hungary, but he warned that Hungary must create the conditions for the democratic transformation and for eventual neutrality itself, in collaboration with such old friends as the Polish people.⁸ As President of the Forum he ensured that it would be a modern conservative, centrist people's party, modelled upon the German CDU and other centre-right parties of Western Europe. The international association of those parties, the European Democrat Union (EDU) soon (in 1990) elected Antall one of its vice-chairmen.

A few months later, at the end of March, in his last campaign speech before the free election, Antall could already be more optimistic about the international perspectives. He committed his party to European integration and the Atlantic Community, to the unification of the two Germanies, and to close association with the neighbouring states. At the same time he affirmed support for the Hungarians who lived beyond the borders, and offered dual citizenship and political participation for those whose home states permitted that, particularly for the Hungarian political exiles. Protection for the non-Hungarian minorities of Hungary was also part of his platform.⁹

⁸ See 2, "The Prospects of the Transition".

⁹ See 4, "On the Eve of the Elections".

*The launching of Antall's foreign policy*¹⁰

The election brought victory for Antall's party, but with 43 per cent of the seats he needed partners. The selection was obvious: the traditional party of the farmers and the middle class, the Independent Smallholders' Party, and the Christian Democratic People's Party. The programme presented by the Prime Minister designate on 22 May 1990 to the freely elected Parliament outlined the main foreign-policy objectives of a democratic Hungary: the restoration of sovereignty and the re-orientation of its foreign policy. It required the development of a relationship of trust with the Western democracies and participation in European integration, but the precondition was ending Soviet military occupation and withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact, preferably by way of its negotiated termination. At the same time Hungary offered the hand of friendship to all neighbours, the Soviet Union included. It was hoped that on the basis of the common suffering under the dictatorships, and the common acceptance of the western values, a new solidarity would emerge and the former communist countries would follow the example of post-second-world-war Western Europe by putting aside all quarrels, old and newer, and would concentrate on political, economic, environmental and cultural recovery and reconstruction. All the six parties elected to Parliament showed agreement on those basic tenets of foreign policy.

The Prime Minister knew the pre-war system of public administration very well, and wanted to revive all its commendable elements, including the concept of a non-partisan civil service, where each ministry has a permanent head with the title of state secretary. (The post *Staatsekretär* was inherited from the old Habsburg or German system.)

¹⁰ The present author gave an account of that in several studies. The most important ones: Géza Jeszenszky: "More Bosnias? National and Ethnic Tensions in the Post-Communist World", *East European Quarterly*, 31 (1997) No. 3, 283–299; „Antall József, a külpolitikus” [József Antall and foreign policy]; „Antall József, a nemzetpolitikus” [József Antall and his all-Hungarian policy] were included in the massive volume: *A politikus Antall József – az európai úton. Tanulmányok, esszék, emlékezések a kortársaktól* [Antall, the politician. Studies, essays, recollections from contemporaries]. (Szerk. Jeszenszky Géza, Kapronczay Károly, Biernaczky Szilárd) Budapest, Mundus Magyar Egyetemi Kiadó, 2006. My most recent summary: "Hungary's Foreign Policy Dilemmas After Regaining Sovereignty." *Society and Economy*, 29 (2007) 1, 43–64. Cf. Margit Bessenyei Williams, *Foreign Policy and Transitions to Democracy: the Case of Hungary*. Bloomington, IN, 1997. A detailed monograph on the peaceful revolution of Hungary: Ignác Romsics: *From Dictatorship to Democracy. The Birth of the Third Hungarian Republic 1988–2001*. East European Monographs, No. DCCXXII, Boulder, Colorado, 2007.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was a politically very sensitive institution under the communists. Political loyalty was doubly mandatory for people whose job involved regular contact with the capitalist world, and a communist diplomatic mission in a western capital had a ghetto atmosphere. The wind of change reached that ministry quite early, many diplomats were indeed happy to see the end of communism, and they were eager to serve at last the national interests of their own country. Nevertheless it was only natural that in major NATO countries the new Hungary could not be represented by people who had only recently been their avowed enemies and had worked against them. That was also in line with the Prime Minister's determination not to have any former member of the communist party in his government.

I was picked as the minister in charge of foreign policy due to my background as a historian of international relations, a former student of Antall, who spent two years as a Fulbright Visiting Professor at the University of California, and being a founding member of the Hungarian Democratic Forum. After consulting the Prime Minister, I asked a few fellow academics, people who were recognised experts in the culture of a given country, to suspend their scholarly career and serve as ambassadors or as senior diplomats. Those people had good credentials as believers and supporters of democracy and the market economy even during communism. Most of them turned out to be excellent ambassadors, respected and popular in the host country. The Prime Minister, with his deep interest in foreign affairs, felt he did not need advisors in the strict sense of the word, but needed a staff capable of handling the many international obligations. He found a perfect colleague in the person of Gyula Kodolányi, his Senior Adviser on foreign policy, a writer and specialist in American Studies, who had been involved in Hungarian opposition activities since the late 1970s. Kodolányi accompanied Antall at his international negotiations, and was at hand in case of any political emergency. The three of us were in full agreement about the course Hungarian foreign policy was to take.

The foreign political programme presented to Parliament was not so easy to realise as it looks by hindsight. In 1989 Hungary and its last communist leaders were very popular in the western media and the public. Gorbachev was admired like a pop star, and the West feared that he might be overthrown by the hard-liners for losing the empire. Unlike Walesa and Havel, Antall was not much known, he and his party was suspected of nationalism and 'irredentism', a desire to restore Hungary's old borders. His political opponents at home

had a role in those accusations. But Hungary's internal policy soon earned confidence abroad. The Prime Minister set a precedent by giving important positions in the committees of Parliament to the opposition; the chairman of the Foreign Affairs became Gyula Horn, the last communist foreign minister. Antall's Government made it clear that it was ready to honour international obligations inherited from the previous regime, including servicing the huge (21 billion \$) debt. Rapid privatisation went hand-in-hand with compensation given for the victims of 'nationalisations' and collectivisation, also for those who or whose family suffered from judicial crimes (execution, deportation, forced labour, imprisonment) under the Nazi or the communist regimes. A law on local self-government was passed already in the summer of 1990, and local elections were held in September. When the Hungarian Prime Minister took the initiative in dismantling the Warsaw Pact,¹¹ and enlisted the support of first Poland and Czechoslovakia, later all the others except the Soviet Union, the western capitals suggested caution. But the former satellites pushed ahead and that involuntary alliance was dissolved on 1 July 1991, thus ending the Cold War with the victory of the West, without a shot in the air. I don't recall having received any congratulatory telegrammes from Western leaders, but it must have contributed to the growing respect shown for Antall. His visits to the western capitals soon convinced his colleagues that they found a mature, calm, responsible and determined partner in him, with a rare understanding of both the western and the eastern world. On his official visits in Germany, France, the United States, the Netherlands, Italy, the United Kingdom, the Vatican, the European Community, and at NATO Headquarters he was welcomed most warmly. In Strasbourg he received the Schuman Prize given to outstanding representatives of European co-operation. From among the former Communist-dominated countries Hungary was the first to be admitted to the Council of Europe on 6 November 1990. That was not merely the recognition of the role played in the historic changes but was based on the extensive investigation of the political and constitutional conditions of the country, following the political transformation. When Antall delivered his address at the Paris Summit of the CSCE on 19 November 1990¹² he was already recognised as the most important leader of "the New Europe".

After the bliss of 1989 quite a few observers in Europe and America feared the revival of old conflicts in Central Europe. At the Paris Summit Antall

¹¹ See 19, "The Proposal to Dissolve the Soviet Military Bloc".

¹² See 20, "The Responsibility of Europe's Politicians".

invited his Polish and Czechoslovak colleagues to Visegrád, the ancient royal see of Hungary, where in 1335 the kings of the same Central European countries met to agree upon common policies towards their Western neighbours. On 15 February 1991 the three leaders of the “companions in historical distress,” Havel, Walesa and Antall, signed a Declaration of Co-operation. The association greatly facilitated the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, but Visegrád meant more than co-ordinating policies for certain immediate objectives. It was the alternative to earlier, bad arrangements for the region, such as direct foreign domination (the Russian Empire absorbing most of Poland in the 18th century, the Habsburg Empire ruling over much of Central Europe between 1526 and 1867, and the far more brutal version, Hitler’s Third Reich), or the attempt at non-democratic integration (the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, 1867–1918), or nations ganging up against another and seeking support from selfish great powers (the so-called Little Entente in 1921–1938 and the short-lived alliance of Austria, Hungary and Italy in the mid-1930s). The ‘Visegrád policy’ was an ideal balance between two traditional, but failed foreign political orientations, too: an exclusively Eastern (relying on Russia, later on the Soviet Union) and a one-sided and illusionary Western one (expecting ‘the West’ to protect or liberate Central Europe from Turkish, Russian or German aggression respectively). Since 1991 the close co-operation of the core Central European countries has been a cornerstone for stability in the post-Cold War period. The Central European Free Trade Agreement of December 1992 (CEFTA), originally comprising the very same countries, was also a logical concomitant of Visegrád.

In mid-August, 1991 Soviet hard-liners made an attempt to oust Gorbachev and to restore the Communist system. While giving immediate and strong support to Yeltsin, who took the lead in opposing the *coup*, Antall immediately contacted the western leaders as well as Walesa and Havel. He told the heads of the major diplomatic missions in Budapest on 23 August: “The efforts the Hungarian Government took for the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and Comecon, as well for the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Hungary, have proven right.”¹³ He proposed international action to help the Soviet economy. Yeltsin’s victory enabled Hungary to have very cordial relations with the Russian Federation and at the same time with the other states which emerged from the disintegrating Soviet Union. Antall gave the strongest

¹³ *Magyar Külpolitikai Évkönyv* [Hungarian Yearbook on Foreign Policy], Budapest, 1991, p. 268.

support to the Baltic States, who reaffirmed their claim for the restoration of their independence, in a phone conversation with President Bush (19 August) and in a government communiqué (24 August), which denounced the 1939 Soviet–German Pact and recognised the Baltic governments.¹⁴ Hungary resumed diplomatic relations with Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia on 2 September, when President Landsbergis of Lithuania and the three foreign ministers paid an official visit to Budapest.

The failure of the Moscow *coup* removed the obstacle which stood in the way of a new treaty with the Soviet Union, the latter's insistence on a stipulation which would have curtailed Hungary's right to enter alliances without Soviet approval. The formula was associated with the name of Deputy Soviet Foreign Minister Kvincinsky, and was accepted by Romania in the bilateral treaty concluded in early 1991. On 6 December 1991 Antall and President Gorbachev signed a Treaty with the Soviet Union (it proved to be the last one by that State) on the basis of full equality, and an hour later a similar Treaty with President Yeltsin of Russia, the first international agreement of the now sovereign Federation. To complete the diplomatic feat: on the very evening the Hungarian delegation flew to Kiev to sign the first bilateral treaty of the new republic, which contained special provisions guaranteeing the rights of the 200,000 strong Hungarian community living in the province Subcarpathia (known also as Transcarpathia). It is a charge without any foundation that the Antall Government was responsible for the almost total collapse of trade relations with the Soviet Union and its successor states because of ideological reservations. By 1990 the Soviets went practically bankrupt, and accumulated a huge debt towards all their trade partners. The settlement of the close to two million rubles (1,7 million \$) debt the Soviet Union owed to Hungary took a long time and ran through the term of the next government. But several important political, economic and cultural agreements were concluded with Russia in November 1992, when President Yeltsin paid a state visit to Hungary. It was much appreciated when he called the intervention of 1956 "an indelible disgrace in the history of the Soviet system."

With the ending of the Cold War neutrality, primarily a status one may assume in a war, lost its reason, while the restoration of full sovereignty made it a natural aspiration to make the changes irreversible by NATO membership and thus to anchor the ship of the Hungarian state to the bedrock of the most

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 271.

successful military and political alliance of history. Realizing that NATO in the early 1990s was not yet ready to accept new members into the cosy old club, Hungary, led by Antall, set about changing that mood, and started to work strenuously for eventual admission. Prime Minister Antall was the first leader from the former Warsaw Pact to visit the Headquarters of NATO and to address the Ministerial Council of NATO. On 27 October, 1991 expressed his thanks for NATO having preserved the freedom of Western Europe and thus holding out the prospect of liberation for the eastern half of the continent. "We knew that if Western Europe could not remain stable, if North American presence would cease in Europe, then there wouldn't be any solid ground left for us to base our hopes upon." He also emphasised that Central Europe represented a strategically very important space, a link towards the southern arm of the Alliance and an essential hinterland. Antall called for an active role to be played by NATO in consolidating the changes in Europe and in solving the crisis in Yugoslavia – which was only then emerging.¹⁵ It was fortunate that the Secretary-General of NATO not only sympathised with the nations emerging from Soviet captivity but had an intimate knowledge of their concerns. Manfred Wörner made a great contribution to NATO rising to the challenges of the post-communist world and many of us in Central Europe preserve his memory most fondly.

In perspective the most important treaty signed by Antall (simultaneously with the Prime Ministers of Poland and Czechoslovakia) was the "Europe Agreement" with the European Community (16 December 1991). It opened the markets of the Twelve before most of the industrial products of the new associates in an 'asymmetrical' way (phasing out their protective tariffs only gradually), widened the PHARE programmes which provided financial assistance since 1989 first to Poland and Hungary, institutionalised regular political dialogue, and established an Association Council as well as Parliamentary Committees on Association in the European Parliament and in the associated countries. Hungary and the other two countries made it clear that their main objective was accession; the Community simply noted that without endorsing it. For Antall this Agreement was both an achievement and a source for disappointment: as a first step it was essential, but it showed that full membership, so important both from political and economic considerations, was still a long way to go. That is why in almost all the speeches and

¹⁵ See 23, "NATO, the Key to Stability in Europe".

interventions Antall made in 1992 in front of international audiences (items 23–30 in the present volume) he gave a strong emphasis to the urgency of integration with Europe, in view of the difficulties of the transition, which eroded popular support not only for the governments but also for the West and its institutions.

Hungarian minorities – an informal ‘Antall doctrine’?

The economic and mental burdens of the transition were largely foreseeable, but the violent break-up Yugoslavia, the growing national and ethnic conflicts, and continuing intolerance towards the national minorities came as a surprise. All that affected Hungary very closely both because of its proximity to the troubled Balkans peninsula and the fact that close to three million Hungarians lived in the states around Hungary.

Central and South-Eastern Europe has always been ‘a highway of nations’, a war zone in several conflicts between western and eastern Great Powers. Both world wars broke out in this region and were caused partly by the national aspirations and border disputes that go back primarily to the varied ethnic composition of the area. The geopolitical determination was a major factor of Hungarian history, Antall often gave expression to that in his speeches, and its awareness strongly motivated his policies.

Eighty-seven years ago the 1920 Peace Treaty Hungary was compelled to sign at the Trianon palace near Paris was meant to reorganise Central Europe along ethnic lines, but its gross violations of the ethnic principle made that a true *apple of Eris*. While uniting the Czechs with the Slovaks, the Serbs with the Croats and Slovenes, as well as the Romanians of Transylvania with their co-nationals beyond the Carpathians, Hungary suffered the most drastic reduction of a country in history (apart from the partition and temporary obliteration from the map of Poland in 1795). Ignoring President Wilson’s principle of self-determination, the victors assigned 3,5 million ethnic Hungarians, a third of the nation, and two-thirds of the country’s total territory to the newly-created or enlarged neighbouring states, where they became victims of all forms of mistreatment, including expulsion and mass murder. Hungary signed the peace treaty but openly demanded the peaceful revision of its terms by the League of Nations and the Great Powers. Between 1938 and 1941, helped by Germany and Italy, she regained some of the lost territories, where

most of the detached Hungarians lived, only to lose them again following World War II. The Hungarians torn from Hungary (and their descendants) have never ceased to regard themselves as part of the Hungarian nation. The imposition of communism following the Second World War worsened their lot considerably. Close to half a million were forcefully resettled from Czechoslovakia and Romania, the rest faced the expropriation of their properties and the banning of their schools and associations. They could not even protest, as all political expressions were stifled. The world knows very little about how much the Hungarian minorities have suffered under discriminating and intolerant, undemocratic regimes, and that their very survival was in jeopardy. As soon as the dictatorships were overthrown they formed their own parties and set forth their demands, concentrating on language rights and local self-government.¹⁶

Bearing the above in mind it was not unrealistic to think in 1990 that in the exuberant atmosphere of restored freedom Hungary would renew its demand for the rectification of its borders. She could have argued that the principle of self-determination should not be applied selectively. The Hungarian minorities detached from their kin might have also felt that they were entitled to decide not only who should represent them in Parliament but also which country they wanted to belong to. The concept of human rights included the rights of national minorities to preserve their identity. The 1990 Copenhagen Conference on the Human Dimension reaffirmed – among others – that “respect for the rights of persons belonging to national minorities as part of universally recognised human rights is an essential factor for peace, justice, stability and democracy,” and recommended a large number of measures for their protection, including “appropriate local or autonomous administrations corresponding to the specific historical and territorial circumstances.”¹⁷

Prime Minister Antall and his government were hopeful that democracy and European integration would provide the framework for a fair settlement of the problem of all the European minorities. Presenting his government’s programme to Parliament Antall gave an expression to that hope.¹⁸ But soon

¹⁶ Many works reveal that, Rudolf Joó and Andrew Ludanyi: *The Hungarian Minority’s Situation in Ceausescu’s Romania* (New York, Columbia UP, 1994) is a good example. Michael Mandelbaum (ed.): *The New European Diasporas. National Minorities and Conflict in Eastern Europe* (New York, Council on Foreign Relations Press, 2000) describes both the old policies and the new tensions.

¹⁷ Document of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE, Copenhagen, 29 June 1990, <http://www.ena.lu/europe/organisation-security-co-operation-europe/conference-human-dimension-csce-copenhagen-1990.htm>

¹⁸ See 5, “Presenting the Programme of the Government”.

after he created uproar in the ranks of the opposition and even more abroad by a statement he made on 2 June 1990, at the Third Convention of his party. "In a legal sense, in accordance with the Constitution, I want to act as the head of the government of all the citizens of this 10 million strong country, but in spirit and sentiment as the prime minister of 15 million Hungarians." A few observers feared that the statement prepared the ground for territorial claims against the neighbouring states, while most Hungarians, especially those who lived outside the borders of Hungary, either in the neighbouring states or in western countries, welcomed that reversion of communist policies with enthusiasm. Today many remember the leader of the transformation most warmly for having espoused the cause of the Hungarian minorities. It was simply a memorable paraphrase of Article 5 of the Constitution, which states: "(3) The Republic of Hungary bears a sense of responsibility for what happens to Hungarians living outside of its borders and promotes the fostering of their relations with Hungary."¹⁹

Antall and his foreign minister indeed regularly raised the problem of the Hungarian minorities at the appropriate multinational diplomatic forums, like the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the CSCE meetings, or when various crises offered obvious opportunities to do so, to present the issue as an essential element of international stability.²⁰ In my view that was the only way to break the wall of ignorance and indifference, and to give a chance for improving the lot of the minorities by calling attention to the problem and to the contrast between the many pious declarations and the painful reality. Never since 1990 has there been any instance of violence, let alone act of terrorism, committed by members of the Hungarian minorities. It was only natural for the Antall Government to give full support to their endeavours, in accordance with the declarations and recommendations of the United Nations, the Council of Europe, and the CSCE.²¹ It is not true that Hungary made its policy towards its neighbours dependent on the treatment of the Hungarians by the governments of the neighbouring states. Such 'an informal Antall doctrine' was never enunciated, nor did it exist in the minds. On the other hand it would have been impossible to speak of genuinely good neighbourly relations

¹⁹ *The Constitution of the Republic of Hungary*, 'Lectric Law Library', <http://www.lectlaw.com/files/int05.htm>

²⁰ Critics (mainly at home) often said this was counter-productive, see esp. Pál Dunay: „Hungarian Foreign Policy in the Era of Transition, 1990–2004”, *Foreign Policy Review*, [Budapest] Vol. 2, No. 1 (2004), pp. 196–216.

²¹ Cf. Péter Kovács, *International Law and Minority Protection*. Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 2000.

with countries who mistreated their Hungarians. We were also against accepting the principle of 'reciprocity' over the treatment of national minorities very different in size, traditions and aspirations. When Hungary passed its much acclaimed Law 77 of 1993, conferring cultural autonomy and other extensive rights upon its own few thousand strong German, Slovak, Croat, Romanian, Serb, Slovene and other national minorities, this was not done in the naïve hope that it would be automatically reciprocated or imitated by the neighbouring states. The law simply expressed a conviction that European norms and practises (like South Tyrol, the Aland Islands, and the position of the Germans in Belgium or in Denmark) as well as the very survival of those minorities required that. It was the belief that the governments of Europe and North America are united in their firm support for the rights of national minorities, including their self-government in the form of autonomous administration, that made Hungary acquiesce in the situation where millions of Hungarians, a very substantial part of the nation, remain citizens of the neighbouring states.

Quite apart from the issue of minorities a whole network of bilateral treaties was negotiated in the early 1990s, in the hope of stabilizing inter-state relations in the absence of alliances and membership in NATO or the European Community. The Antall Government signed treaties of co-operation and/or friendship with Italy, France, Germany, Poland, Russia and Ukraine (in 1991), followed by similar ones with Croatia, Slovenia, the Baltic States, Spain and others. In those treaties there was usually a commitment to uphold the basic international norms and principles (contained in the UN Charter and the OSCE documents) in bilateral relations. Mutual support for each other's integration into the Euro-Atlantic structures also figured prominently in the treaties. The will to co-operate in various fields (economy, transportation, culture, environment, military etc.) formed the main body of these agreements. But since those treaties were expected to settle all contested issues between the contracting powers, guaranteeing the rights of the minorities was naturally an important element in them. Those rights were amply covered by special arrangements like the "Hungarian-Ukrainian Declaration on the Principles... in Guaranteeing the Rights of National Minorities" signed on 31 March 1991, the "Agreement on Ensuring Special Rights for the Slovenian National Minority Living in Hungary and the Hungarian National Community Living in Slovenia" signed on 6 November 1992, or the Hungarian-Russian declaration of 11 November 1992 on the rights of national minorities. The other bilateral

'basic treaties', the Slovak one signed on 19 March 1995 and the Romanian one on 16 September 1996, were concluded by a different government, under different circumstances.²²

Hungary and the crises in the Balkans

Contrary to fears, Hungary and the Hungarian minorities did not create any headache to the international community by questioning the borders and undermining European stability. It was the three (at least nominally) federal states which emerged in the wake of World War I that did not prove lasting. But while the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991 and that of Czechoslovakia (1992–93) went on remarkably peacefully ('velvet separations'), Yugoslavia, for long the darling of the western world, became the scene of wars and brutal war crimes (often euphemistically called 'ethnic cleansing') while it broke into six, eventually into seven independent, sovereign states.

In 1990 in the free elections held in April in Slovenia and Croatia victory went to those who were dissatisfied with the existing division of political power and economic expenditure, and wanted to assert their nation's rights embodied in the federal Constitution. At the same time the majority of Serbs supported Slobodan Milosevic and his nationalist Communism, saying no to political change. Still no one thought that the second Yugoslavia was nearing its end. In September 1990 the Hungarian Ministry of Defence agreed to sell a small consignment of rifles for the Zagreb police from the stocks of the disbanded Workers' Guard. In January, 1991 the Serb authorities denounced the transaction, implying that a coalition of "anti-Serb countries" dating back to World War II (Germany, Austria, Hungary, Croatia) are conspiring against Yugoslavia. But even when on 25 June 1991 Slovenia and Croatia made a declaration of independence (perfectly legal under the Yugoslav Constitution), Hungary thought that a looser association, perhaps a confederation, might save the unity of the South Slavs. But at the end of September the federal Yugoslav 'People's Army', led mainly by Serb officers, started all-out war against Croatia. That put Hungary in a most awkward position. The Serbian attack was directed at the north-eastern corner of Croatia, where thousands of Hungarians lived. In the

²² Géza Jeszenszky: *Magyarország és a kétoldalú szerződések* [Hungary and the bilateral treaties] *Magyar Kisebbség* [Cluj-Kolozsvár], 1996, 4 (6) pp. 6–15; "Hungary's Bilateral Treaties with the Neighbours," *Ethnos-Nation* [Köln], 1996 [1997] Nr. 1–2, pp. 123–128.

neighbouring, nominally autonomous province called the Voivodina (before 1920 an integral part of Hungary), almost four hundred thousand Hungarians lived together with Serbs, Croats, Slovaks and other nationalities. The Yugoslav army violated Hungarian airspace almost routinely, hoping to involve Hungary, too, in the war. Hungary was also flooded by refugees, mainly Croats and Hungarians, but soon also by Bosnian Muslims, when, following a referendum voting for independence, Serbia extended the war to that religious mosaic. Prime Minister Antall and the present author made many suggestions in word and in writing to all the interested parties and leaders, supporting the solutions proposed by the European Community, and drawing attention to the likely consequences, like adding an Islamic or Slavic solidarity dimension to the crisis. We constantly warned about the wider implications, too. "In case the international community is unable to facilitate the democratic solution of the recent crisis it would send a negative message for the nations of Central and Eastern Europe, which liberated themselves and restored democracy, or at least move towards it. At the same time such a failure would give encouragement to the supporters of the old, totalitarian regime, who still exist. It is also obvious that the situation in Yugoslavia has a decisive impact on the outcome of the ongoing transition in the Soviet nuclear superpower. Therefore Yugoslavia is likely to serve as a precedent, it will show whether international co-operation can or cannot solve such a crisis."²³

Hungary exercised great restraint in keeping away from the armed conflict, giving much humanitarian aid, sharing its assessment of the situation with interested governments, but keeping a line open to Belgrade, too, in order to prevent ethnic persecution spreading to the Hungarians of the Voivodina. Both in the West European capitals and in Washington, Hungary played an active and constructive role in the numerous discussions about the successive Balkan crises, putting the case of the Voivodina Hungarians in the wider context of ethnic strife, preventive diplomacy, the trial of war criminals, and practical involvement on the spot, like deploying observers and international peacekeepers, or enforcing no-fly zones. All those points were reflected in Antall's speeches delivered in 1992–93 in front of foreign audiences. Hungary's active policy eventually earned the gratitude and goodwill also of the Bosnians, Macedonians, Montenegrins, and Albanians. At the same time, thanks to our careful diplomacy, the Serbs cannot blame Hungary for the misfortunes they caused to themselves.

²³ Prime Minister J. Antall to President G. Bush, 28 October 1991. Cf. Minister for Foreign Affairs G. Jeszenszky to H. van den Broek, Foreign Minister of the Netherlands and Chairman of the EC, 15 November 1991. Copies in my possession.

Working for a secure future for Central Europe

The South Slav crisis found Hungary in a security vacuum, and that made NATO membership more urgent. Hungary became a most active member of the North Atlantic Co-operation Council created in 1991. In 1992, with Russia in disarray, Hungary was eager to see close co-operation between NATO and the new Russia. That is why we did not bang on the door at Brussels for immediate admission. The frequent violations of Hungarian airspace by Yugoslav planes compelled us to seek support from our western friends. NATO understood our predicament and several times expressed what could be interpreted as a verbal security guarantee: in carrying out international obligations under the UN sanctions and in making Hungarian airspace available for AWACS planes monitoring the observance of UN resolutions, we could count on the support of the Alliance.²⁴ By welcoming the Partnership for Peace programme, which was announced simultaneously in Germany and Hungary in October 1993, Hungary tried to prepare the country for eventual membership in NATO. A very emphatic expression of that wish and the arguments in favour were stated by the Prime Minister in addressing the first NATO workshop in a former Warsaw Pact country.²⁵ Following NATO's decision to intervene in the war in Bosnia in order to bring it to an end, and with the new government elected in 1994 offering the territory and air space of Hungary for the Bosnian peace mission (supported by the opposition parties), Hungary, together with Poland and the Czech Republic, was invited to join NATO in 1997. That was the fulfilment of Antall's old dream, for which he had put up such a gallant fight.

Antall and his government received much criticism in the media (both at home and abroad) for its espousal of the cause of the rights of Hungarians detached from Hungary by the peace treaties, while his opponents on the right were unable to understand why Hungary did not raise territorial claims to get back the regions just over the borders, where the population was still predominantly Hungarian. Those people fail to understand that if Hungary had proposed such negotiations the answer would have been not simply negative, but general condemnation, and hopes for Euro-Atlantic integration would have dashed, while the Hungarian minorities would have become victims of various

²⁴ Prime Minister Antall to Secretary-General Wörner, 8 March 1993, and Wörner's answer on 24 March 1994. Copies in my possession.

²⁵ See 33, 'The Atlantic Ideals and Hungary'.

forms of hostile action. It is not by accident that since 1990 none of the parties that represent the Hungarians beyond the borders have come forward with the programme of secession, while they are all adamant that they want some form of autonomy. And that is what all freely elected Hungarian governments have supported and will continue to do so.²⁶

With all the restraints shown by Hungary the border issue has become a subject of serious debates twice since 1990. The 1920 Peace Treaty set the border between Czechoslovakia and Hungary on a long stretch in the middle of the Danube. The Gabčíkovo/Bős–Nagyymaros hydroelectric project on the Danube initiated in 1973 was meant to divert the main navigation course of the river into a newly built canal on Czechoslovak territory, and to build two dams (with two locks) at Gabčíkovo/Bős in Czechoslovakia and at Nagyymaros in Hungary for producing energy. Due to serious concerns about the impact of the project on the environment and water quality, Hungary unilaterally suspended and eventually abandoned the project, while Czechoslovakia responded by the unilateral diversion of the Danube below Bratislava, still on Czechoslovak territory, into the artificial canal on its own territory. That was opposed by Hungary on many grounds, including the opinion that it changed the international border. The major concern, however, was not about the border but about ‘the stealing’ of 90 per cent of the water and the consequent damage done to Szigetköz, the area south of the main riverbed, also the likely adverse impact on the whole ecosystem affected by the barrage system. An additional concern was the fear that the completion of the project would cause economic harm to the area, where the majority of the Hungarian population of Slovakia lived, while also changing its ethnic composition.²⁷ Many courses of action were proposed by the public and various NGOs in Hungary, including the prevention of the diverting of the Danube by applying force. That may have led to war between the two countries, and so it was sensibly rejected by the

²⁶ That position was formulated eloquently by I. Bibó, the widely respected political thinker, a hero of 1956, already in 1946: “Hungary will faithfully respect and carry out the peace treaty, once it is signed. It would be insincere to pretend that she has become an enthusiastic adherent of the grave dispositions of the treaty. But Hungary will not create an ideology or organise political campaigns for changing the borders, and will not pursue a policy which speculates in international crises or catastrophes, so that her territorial grievances could be remedied. Hungary will comply with the conditions created by the peace treaty without any reservations, except one: she cannot give up her political interest in the fate of the Hungarian minorities [living in the states surrounding Hungary].” Bibó István: “A magyar békeszerződés” [The Hungarian Peace Treaty]. [*Válasz*, 1946] In *Válogatott tanulmányok* [Selected Essays], Budapest, Magvető Könyvkiadó, 1986, Vol. ii, 294–295.

²⁷ The gravity of the situation prompted Antall to raise the issue at the ceremonial opening of the Rhine–Main–Danube Canal at Nuremberg, see item 30.

Prime Minister. When the crisis culminated, in October 1992, and the mighty river was diverted, Slovakia had a government led by the nationalist Vladimir Meciar, who negotiated the separation of the Slovaks from the Czechs, and who never hid his anti-Hungarian dispositions. His bias was also translated into laws curtailing the use of the Hungarian language by that 600,000 strong minority, forming then 11 per cent of the population of Slovakia. What started as a technical and ecological debate was escalating into a political conflict. The European Community was aware of the gravity of the situation and repeatedly called upon both sides to refrain from unilateral action. No avail, Slovakia did exactly that, but the European Community decided not to punish Slovakia. Hungary took the case to the International Court of Justice in The Hague (in April, 1993), which, after long and expensive deliberations decided "that both Parties committed internationally wrongful acts": Hungary was not entitled to terminate the original Agreement concluded in 1977, and Slovakia was not entitled to carry out the diversion; both owed compensation to each other, but none were obliged to change the new regime, to undo the diversion or to build a dam at Nagymaros. Sadly, the technical and financial settlement of the issue is still a long way off, even a new round at The Hague is not entirely out of question, but at least the conflict was resolved peacefully, and 'the damned dam' is no longer the main point of debate between the two neighbours. Even the Visegrád Co-operation survived and has contributed to many positive developments since.

The split of Czechoslovakia resulted in the need for the two successor states to re-apply for membership in the Council of Europe. Since that institution is the main guardian of democracy and human rights in Europe, and the Hungarians of Slovakia gave publicity to their complaints against the anti-minority policies of the Meciar Government, Slovakia's admission to the Council in 1993 was not a foregone conclusion. Catherine Lalumière, the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe, insisted that the resolution of the minority question was a precondition for that. The Hungarian Government supported Slovakia's admission, but was of the opinion that it should take place only after Slovakia met the concerns of the minority, which the rapporteurs of the Council also found justified. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council and the member states, however, were ready to give the benefit of the doubt to Slovakia by admitting it and pledging the monitoring of Slovakia's conduct most closely. Facing that unanimous opinion Hungary decided not to delay Slovakia's entry by voting against it; by abstaining we recorded our reservations, without giving

rise to another political conflict.²⁸ As to the suggestion that Hungary should have blocked Slovakia's (and later in that year Romania's) admission in the Council of Europe, one should note that we could only have delayed but not prevented those admissions. It is again the negative impact on bilateral relations, on Hungary's foreign image, and last but not least upon the treatment of the very Hungarian minorities in their host states, which influenced the Antall Government's decision.

Hungary's relations with Romania were at least as tense in the early 1990s as those with Slovakia. An agreement signed between the two anti-communist oppositions on 16 June 1989, when Imre Nagy and the other martyrs of 1956 were given a spectacular reburial, which set forth mutually acceptable proposals for a settlement of most hot issues concerning the almost two million strong Hungarian population of Transylvania, was rejected by the post-Communist government headed by Iliescu. Anti-Hungarian violence and several campaigns in the Romanian media directed both at Hungary and the Hungarian minority in Romania, made any dialogue very difficult.²⁹ It was again the restraint of the Hungarian government and the patient but principled conduct of the Democratic Alliance of the Hungarians of Romania, which prevented the deterioration of the situation. When Romania's entry into the Council of Europe was put on the agenda, and a more soft-speaking minister, T. Melescanu took over the direction of Romanian foreign policy, my official visit in September 1993 brought about a kind of *détente*.

The second time that the border issue was raised was in May 1993. It has already been mentioned what the considerations were which guided the Antall Government in signing so-called basic treaties with our neighbours. When the treaty concluded with Ukraine in December 1991 came up for ratification in 1992, Gyula Horn, the foreign minister of the last communist government and then the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of Parliament, objected to the clause which stated that the contracting parties "have no territorial claims against each other and will not raise such claims in the future." He proposed that the Government should renegotiate the treaty and remove the clause relating to the renunciation of territorial claims. He must have known only too well how impossible the idea was; but it was a perfect way to cause tensions in the ranks of the parliamentary majority. That indeed happened, and a wing of the Hungarian Democratic Forum, led by István Csurka, started

²⁸ On Hungary's concerns see the Non-Paper of 18 June 1993, in my possession.

²⁹ George Schöpflin: *Hungary and its Neighbours*. Chaillot Paper 7 [Paris], 1993.

a campaign denouncing his own government for having “given up” that region of Ukraine which had been part of Hungary before 1920 and between 1939 and 1944. The more naïve members of that group, including a few MPs, readily believed that not only the close to 200,000 Hungarians living in Subcarpathia could join Hungary if only Budapest agreed, but the one million Slavic (Ukrainian and Rusyn) population were also eager to do so, and Kiev would have no objections. In a heated debate in the Hungarian Parliament in May 1993 Prime Minister Antall emphasised that Ukraine had no internationally recognised borders and Hungary was eager to support the new State, its biggest neighbour. His foreign minister repeatedly stated that since Hungary recognised the borders drawn by the peace treaties signed after the two world wars he saw no obstacle in expressing that fact in bilateral treaties, but those treaties must also contain due provisions for the protection of the rights of the Hungarian minorities. It shows the common sense of the coalition MPs that they were not swayed by demagoguery and they provided enough votes to ratify the treaty in its original wording; it is to the credit of the opposition (the Free Democrats, the Socialists and Fidesz, the Young Democrats) that they, too voted for the treaty.

Horrified by the wars in Croatia and Bosnia, and determined to prevent the erupting of similar events, in 1993 French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur launched, with the support of European Community, the ‘Stability Pact in Europe’ project. This concept aimed to reduce and eliminate any potential ethnic tensions in Central and Eastern Europe. Countries who expressed their wish to become members of Euro-Atlantic structures were required to settle all problems concerning ethnic minorities and national borders, so as not to import them into the organisation. At the beginning Balladur mentioned the possibility of “minor frontier rectifications,” but that was almost immediately dropped. Bilateral treaties or good neighbourhood arrangements were expected from all applicant countries, guaranteeing minority rights and reconfirming the existing borders. Contrary to expectations Hungary did not jump at the idea of border ‘rectifications’, but gave full support to the linkage between minority rights and borders.

The man of vision

This brief summary of Prime Minister Antall's foreign policy shows how important it was that during the critical first years of the post-Cold War era Hungary had a leader who had an unusual grasp of foreign affairs, who knew that "there are moments in history that never return, the chance must be seized."³⁰ According to him such a moment was the restoration of German unity in 1990, or the recognition of the restored independence of the Baltic States following the Moscow *coup* in August, 1993. He was also aware when to restrain people driven by passions, as reflected in his handling of right-wing radicalism in Hungary. Foremost a Hungarian patriot, he was also a typical and conscious Central European,³¹ while capable of looking beyond the European horizon. As a historian he indeed drew valid lessons from history, primarily the importance of dealing with potential problems at an early stage and to act decisively. The inability of Europe to deal with the crisis in Yugoslavia reminded him of appeasement (both of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia), and repeatedly called for preventive diplomacy.³² He also knew how to keep the door open to Belgrade. Most probably that helped to prevent 'ethnic cleansing' from spreading to the multi-ethnic area of the Vojvodina. His attitude to Russia deserves more attention. He could understand the soul, the spirit of Russia, that of Orthodox Christianity,³³ and he felt strong sympathy for the sufferings the peoples of the Soviet Union endured. President Yeltsin understood and appreciated that. At the same time Antall knew that "Russia, whatever is its political system, is among the great powers in Europe, indeed in Eurasia",³⁴ which required Hungary to remain on good terms with it, but also to become a member of NATO as a safeguard for independence. He could also argue convincingly why the admission of the formerly communist-dominated countries into the Euro-Atlantic structures is important for the West, too.

The Prime Minister often spoke about "the fact that the world awaited the collapse of Communism but failed to prepare for it." In the early stage of the

³⁰ 1 September 1993. See 37, "The Threat of Political Fundamentalism".

³¹ In his address at the May 1992 Summit of the Visegrád Three he spoke of four elements that bind Central Europe together: historical tradition, geographical proximity, the need for security which can be provided only by the Euro-Atlantic alliance, and the need to join the European Community.

³² He expressed that most emphatically at the Budapest session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, see 27, "What Europe Means for Us".

³³ In 40 ("Collegium Budapest – Responses to the Challenges of Today") he explained that in some details.

³⁴ See 24, "The Transformation of East-Central Europe".

transition, when Soviet troops were still stationed in Hungary and in other countries, he repeatedly called attention to the possibility of a political fallback, knowing that in such a case it was futile to expect outside military help. From 1992 on his main concern became the difficulties, the pains the peoples of Central Europe had to endure during the transformation period, as a result of the loss of jobs and the decline in the standard of living. He knew better than most of his contemporaries that the disappointment of the population would undermine not only the popularity of the first non-communist governments but also the support for the democratic system and the market economy. He could foresee the result: the return of the old guard, the communists. "We must not have any illusions that the old nomenclature has given up everything for good, that they won't try – under changed circumstances and within a meritocratic system – to hold on to some of their power and thus regain some of what they lost."³⁵ "Their connections remain, their financial resources remain, and in fact, clad in other colours or sometimes borrowing another political legitimacy, they can by no means be considered harmless in the long run."³⁶ He hoped that early membership in the Western integration structures, and their concomitant, improved living standards, might prevent such a comeback, such a relapse. What he feared was not that former members of communist parties might fill political posts, but the survival of the mentality of the old order. He was fortunate not to see the realisation of his fears.

In the light of the above statements, indeed even with a limited acquaintance with the person of Antall, it is both preposterous and ridiculous to suggest that the Prime Minister bears any responsibility for the eventual return to power in Hungary of the former communists, who now bear the respectable mantle of social democracy. Recently a few of his erstwhile political allies and people leaning towards the radical Right blame him for not carrying out the allegedly promised 'spring cleaning', for not banning close to 800,000 communist party members from the political and economic life of the country, and thus, inadvertently or deliberately, enabling the communist ruling clique to turn their political power into economic power. But similar tendencies can be observed all over the former communist world. In Hungary Antall's policies, his strong concern for the victims of the transformation, and his uncompromising attitude towards any sign of corruption, had the best chance to prevent

³⁵ 6 May 1992 at the Visegrád Summit in Prague.

³⁶ 6 June 1992, see 24, "The Transformation of East-Central Europe".

or to mitigate such a comeback. Alas he did not live to fight that last battle against the representatives and offspring of the old order.

Antall's foresight was remarkable. In June 1992 he expressed his premonition that the 21st century may see very serious conflicts between North and South, emerging from "the unresolved and seemingly insoluble problems of the Third World."³⁷ A year later he repeatedly warned that social, political and religious fundamentalism "could appear and break on the world as the Bolshevism of the 21st century."³⁸ Whether in the form of Islam or in other forms of culture, "this is the greatest danger which threatens our world."³⁹ In that context he saw a connection with the new, large-scale international migration prompted by social and demographic causes.⁴⁰ He saw the remedy in the rapid integration of Central Europe with the Euro-Atlantic community, maintaining the values and unity of the democratic world.

Judgment by the contemporaries

Antall and his government had little chance to be re-elected (no first post-communist government could achieve that), but his party would have certainly done better in the 1994 elections, had the Prime Minister lived to see that date. Tragically, soon after being sworn in, Antal was diagnosed with non-Hodkin lymphoma. Without the stress of the task, without the enormous responsibility felt by Antal, this illness might never have struck him, or only much later. The obligations of the first months in the office also compelled him to delay the necessary surgical intervention, and that – on the long run – proved fatal. The ongoing chemotherapy was extremely tiring but it did not prevent the Prime Minister from attending his duties practically without a break, for 16–18 hours a day. That was a truly heroic performance, but it restricted his day-to-day contact with the electorate. He was an eloquent speaker and had a warm personality, but television and modern PR was not his genre. Nevertheless, in my view, it is wrong to say that he was an outdated 19th century liberal. He may have mistaken the people of Kádár for the people of Kossuth, he may have underestimated the damage done by decades of communism on the moral

³⁷ See 24, "The Transformation of East-Central Europe".

³⁸ See 33, "The Atlantic Ideals and Hungary".

³⁹ See 37, "The Threat of Political Fundamentalism".

⁴⁰ See 35, "Hungarian Foreign Policy Guidelines".

conduct and the patriotism of the electorate, but he could inspire the public, as he did in his famous 'pyjamas' interview immediately after the blockade by the taxi-drivers in October 1990, broadcast from the hospital, barely recovering from the surgery.⁴¹ In 1991 his illness seemed to have been cured and that was his best year, both in speech and in deeds. Until September, 1993 he performed all his official tasks without faltering, and some of his most insightful addresses were delivered in his last one and a half years. One can indeed say that he died in action on 12 December 1993.

Antall's political opponents in Hungary, even more the majority of the Hungarian media, and, often prompted by those two, the foreign media were severely critical of the Prime Minister's personality and politics. He, who was such an engaging man to his many friends and political supporters, was often described as dour, dull, and rigidly conservative. More serious and equally undeserved was the charge that his concern for the Hungarian minorities undermined peace and stability; that he was an irredentist at least in spirit. It is almost ridiculous to read even today that he deliberately neglected the Soviet Union and stopped trading with it because of his anti-communist feelings, or that he contributed to the break-up of Yugoslavia and was wrong in supporting the independence of Croatia and Slovenia. Some say that Antall was too slow, others that he was too rash in dissolving the Warsaw Pact. At home he was (and is) often criticised for urging Hungary's membership in NATO, also for being too close to Germany and neglecting the US. All that can be explained mainly by the split between Left and Right throughout Europe, which was especially marked in Hungary (and has even grown ever since). Thinking about Antall left-leaning people objected to what was praised by their political rivals. The words of Prime Minister Thatcher are telling. "In Jozsef Antall, the Hungarian Prime Minister, the country was in the safe hands of a genuine Conservative. I had met Mr Antall on several previous occasions and he and I shared very much the same political approach. [...] Mr Antall had the skills and was quickly developing the authority to give Hungary the leadership and continuity it needed."⁴²

Antall's stature and international recognition was reflected in the telegrams and letters of condolences sent by practically all foreign leaders, from Pope John Paul II to Emperor Akihito of Japan to various Hungarian personalities on the occasion of his death. Even "D. Dudajev, President of the Chechen

⁴¹ See 10, "Interview in the Hospital".

⁴² Margaret Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years.*, London, 1993, p. 809.

Republic” expressed his sympathy. It would be wrong to consider all that as routine diplomatic politeness. In many of them, particularly from those who met the Prime Minister, there was warmth, and often insightful words were used. A few examples from the more memorable messages, taken from my personal collection, will show that.

The Pope in his telegram to President Göncz emphasised Antall’s dedication to the democratic and legal norms of the State, as well as to the traditions and values of the thousand-year-old Christian Hungary. He showed and opened the way to brotherly relations and community between the Hungarians and other peoples.

President Bill Clinton wrote to the Hungarian President that Antall “was a friend to the United States and an active partner in the international effort to deepen and secure democracy, stability and economic reform in Central and Eastern Europe.” Former President Jimmy Carter, too, sent his condolences to Mrs. Antall. Madeleine Albright, then US Ambassador to the United Nations, who introduced him at George Washington University in 1991, on her official visit to Hungary just a few days after the death of Antall, spoke very warmly of him at her press conference, where she was the first to state that Hungary will be able to join NATO. Donald Kursch, then Deputy Chief of Mission in Bonn, former DCM in Budapest, wrote to me: “Those of us who had the good fortune to serve in the American Embassy in Budapest during the historic events of 1989 and 1990 will never forget the central role Dr. Antall played in establishing a democratic society in Hungary after four decades of communist rule. We remember him as an individual of broad vision, exceptional character, a great Hungarian patriot, and a very good friend and partner of the United States.” US Senator Christopher Dodd told the Hungarian press: “Although the world knew Havel and Walesa better than Antall, the latter was the most effective and most successful leader of the new democracies. That’s why Hungary attracted the bulk of foreign investments and earned the sympathy of President Bush and other world leaders.” Republican Senator Dole and Democratic Representative Gephardt agreed that the void left by the Hungarian statesman will be felt not only in the Hungarian political life but in the whole Central European region. Several other Members of Congress and the Mayor of Washington, D.C. sent letters of condolence. Governors Pete Wilson of California and Mike Lowry of Washington also praised the late Prime Minister.

Queen Elizabeth wrote to Mrs. Antall of her late husband: “I have warm memories of him from my visit to Hungary in May this year, and I know how

much he personally contributed to Hungary's successful reforms since 1989. He was a most distinguished man, who will be sorely missed." The Prince of Wales also sent a letter to Mrs. Antall: "I recall my visit to Hungary with the greatest pleasure and, in particular, I much enjoyed the opportunity to talk with Dr Antall on that occasion." Prime Minister John Major in his letter recalled: "I remember with pleasure our many contacts over the years and will greatly miss his knowledge and insight on Hungary and the region." Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd wrote to me that the Prime Minister "was a statesman of international standing, highly regarded and much admired."

Contrary to suggested notions, Hungary had most cordial relations with Yeltsin's Russia during Antall's time. The Russian President greatly appreciated the Prime Minister's stand during the 1991 coup, and recognised his role "in placing bilateral relations on an entirely new footing, based on equality, mutual respect and confidence."

The President of the Republic of Poland, Lech Walesa, in his message spoke about the unforgettable merits of Antall. He initiated the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, was the co-founder of the Visegrád Co-operation and of the Central European Initiative, and his friendship towards Poland went back to his family traditions. Polish Foreign Minister A. Olechowski stated in his letter sent to me: "Antall was an outstanding European and a great friend of Poland."

President Vaclav Havel wrote to President Göncz: "I'd like to give expression to my hope that we can preserve and develop further all the beneficial progress we have achieved on our continent in creating new qualities in international relation with the personal contribution of Prime Minister Antall." His Foreign Minister, Josef Zieleniec, cabled to me how highly he appreciated Antall's "personal contribution to solidifying stability and co-operation in Central Europe." President Milan Kucan of Slovenia's letter said among others: "I met the late Dr. Antall on several occasions and had the opportunity to admire his democratic bearing and patriotic pride." Foreign Minister Rupel, a personal friend of mine, was "shocked" by the news of the man who helped Slovenia to gain independence.

Rita Süßmuth, the President of the German Bundestag stated that Antall made Hungary appear like the bastion of stability during the transition. Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel in his letter sent to me expressed his view that Antall "was the true friend of the Germans and contributed in a very special way to the deepening of the good and friendly relations between Germany and

Hungary.” Alois Mock, then the foreign minister of Austria, spoke of the great authority and respect Antall commanded in Europe, adding that apart from Antall’s contribution to Hungary’s transformation and to the construction of exemplary neighbourly relations with Austria, how strong an impression Antall made on everybody he met.

Valéry Giscard d’Estaing, former President of France, recalled his personal encounters with Antall. He appreciated that the transition in Hungary was peaceful and in line with the rules of democracy – thanks to the late leader. Raymond Barre, former French Prime Minister, who knew Hungary extremely well thanks to her Hungarian wife, recognised Antall’s leading role in restoring Hungary’s independence and directing the country on the road of pluralism and economic reforms. Foreign Minister Roland Dumas wrote to me: “C’est une grande perte pour la Hongrie que la disparition de cet homme d’Etat qui a su conduire le destin de votre pays dans une période extrêmement difficile.” Alain Juppé (soon to become Prime Minister) wrote: “Frenchmen who came to love Hungary, like myself, know how much your country owes to the courageous and self-sacrificing struggle M. Antall has waged for freedom, democracy and rapprochement between the peoples of Europe.” F. Fejtő, the renowned Hungarian-born French author hoped that Hungary will continue the centrist policies of Antall. According to the journalist Tomas Schreiber posterity would recognise Antall among the greatest statesmen of the nation.

The President of the Council of Ministers in Italy, Carlo Ciampi (eventually President), wrote to Acting Prime Minister P. Boross: “In this painful moment I recall my meetings with my Colleague, Antall, which were characterised by great cordiality and personal sympathy.” The telegram of Felipe González Márquez, Prime Minister of Spain, said that Antall “was a guarantee for stability in Central Europe.”

On behalf of the Commission of the European Communities Hans van den Broek, in a personal letter addressed to me, said: “I was deeply impressed by the strength of his [Antall’s] commitment to consolidating democracy in Hungary and to bringing Hungary and the European Community closer together. The respect which he commanded from all who knew him enabled Mr Antall to make a crucial contribution to restoring Hungary’s rightful place in the family of democratic European nations.”

The Foreign Minister of Belgium (soon to become Secretary-General of NATO), Willy Claes, recalling his Budapest meeting with the Prime Minister in September 1992, emphasised to me that “as a founding member of the

Visegrad Group [Antall] was convinced that understanding between peoples start primarily with our own neighbours.”

Simon Peresz, then Foreign Minister, today President of Israel, was one of the many foreign leaders who attended Antall's funeral. He observed that his nation knew Antall as the son of one who had saved a large number of Jews during World War II. Peresz was pleased that in Antall's time relations with Israel improved greatly, and the late Prime Minister had supported the cause of Israel in the United Nations, too.

NATO Secretary-General Manfred Wörner in his message to President Göncz stated: “Prime Minister Antall was a truly statesmanlike figure and I believe played a key constructive role in a crucial and demanding period of change and renewal for his country. I also counted him as a good friend.”

Another of Antall's qualities was noted by the Ambassador of Iran to Hungary, Dr. Morteza Saffari Natanzi. In a letter sent to me he recalled Antall's “impeccable knowledge and perceptiveness of Islamic history and culture.”

The international press was less kind to the deceased when trying to draw a balance over the performance of Antall. Some of the criticism was due to ignorance, influenced by political sympathies and antipathies. J. Perlez' obituary in *The New York Times* considered Antall authoritarian and nationalist; it was also replete with factual mistakes, like the charge that Catholic religious instruction became obligatory in the Hungarian schools. (That was corrected two day later.) Reuter and AP news agencies said that Antall lacked charisma, was too much upset by criticism in the press, but was honest, and was aloof towards anti-communist witch-hunt and radical nationalism. His country was a favourite of foreign investors, that was the merit of his [communist] predecessors, but he kept the right course. *The Washington Post* thought that Antall's death was likely to settle the fate of the government coalition at the coming elections. A. LeBor in the London *Times* (rather incorrectly) said that Antall did nothing against anti-Semitic hate-mongers, and his efforts to speak for the Hungarians beyond the borders created considerable mistrust in the neighbouring capitals. BBC Panorama called him a real professional in politics, a great chess-player ready to take risks, the most formidable challenge against him coming from the right wing of his own party. BBC World Service, on the other hand, compared Antall unfavourably to Havel, Walesa and Mazowiecki, and thought that the communist governments had much to do with Hungary's relative advantageous position. *The Independent* was wrong to say that “the most durable prime minister in post-Communist Central Europe” was

characterised by “total lack of charisma.” Had that been true Antall could hardly have “presided over the cabinet like an old-fashioned headmaster,” without any demur from his team. The paper was also mistaken (but not alone) to suggest that Antall inherited “a reasonably sound economy,” which was mismanaged by his “mediocre team,” resulting in a performance worse than Poland or the Czech Republic. Another typical and grossly unfair criticism of that obituary concerned the broadcasting media. Rather being “as tightly controlled now as it was under the Communists,” most of its actors were viciously unfair to the Prime Minister and his government. Similar charges were voiced in *The Financial Times* (and frequently by *The Economist* – both having had Nicholas Denton as Budapest correspondent), but with more perceptiveness. Antall’s reaction to the aggressive role of the modern media was at best prickly, and the Prime Minister found it difficult to get along with his materialistic post-communist compatriots whose Holy Trinity was the car, the video and the week-end cottage.

According to Carl Gustav Ströhm of *Die Welt* Antall was the guarantee of stability of a large region, a Christian Democrat who wanted to safeguard his country through European integration, and resisted temptations coming either from the Left or the Right. He felt the approaching dangers, that’s why he wanted to integrate his country with NATO and the EU. He was the first to call attention to the danger of neo-communist reaction; the West should use all means to help continuing the course of Antall, otherwise Hungary will go down. Georg Paul Hefty in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* compared Antall to Adenauer, who successfully led Germany back into Europe. The life achievement of Antall, who successfully contained radicalism and extremist tendencies, would come only later, when Hungary would be an equal member of the political and security system of the West. The *Süddeutsche Nachrichten* observed that it was Antall who transformed the Democratic Forum into a genuine European party. The *Stuttgarter Zeitung* noted that “Hungary was a firm rock in the agitated Eastern Europe.” With the ousting of Csurka Antall saved his party from a rift and preserved the respect his country earned. *NRC Handelsbad* challenged those who belittled the economic record of Antall’s Hungary. Compared to the ‘shock therapy’ introduced in Poland the results of Hungary were less spectacular but real. In Austria *Der Standard* commented on the vast difference between Antall and his likely successors; the *Kurier* on the disappointment felt by Hungarian population, which is undeservedly directed at Antall’s party. Andreas Oplatka of the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* was always an

astute commentator on Hungarian affairs. He thought that it was questionable that Antall preferred the classical parliamentary interplay of the government camp and the opposition instead of creating a wide political base. Antall freed the Democratic Forum from its original illusion of “a third way” between capitalism and socialism. It would have been tempting to release the spirit of nationalism, but he did not allow such an adventure. Though his sometimes not too diplomatic espousal of the cause of the Hungarian minorities created bad blood in the neighbouring countries, Antall did not tolerate nationalism to break into practical politics. He preserved peace and tranquillity in a region fired by nationalism. He towered above most of the new, ill-prepared politicians in Central Europe.

In a long and incisive obituary in *Le Monde* Yves-Michel Riols paid tribute to the doyen of the heads of governments in Central Europe, who was “a Christian and humanist conservative,” more like the enlightened aristocrats of the previous century than a modern politician. The role of the missionary indeed fit him. He called Antall’s relationship with the media “nightmarish” since Antall (according to him) thought that he was the victim of a conspiracy by the Hungarian media, manipulated by the one-time Communists. The *Liberation* contrasted the great respect felt for Antall outside Hungary with the loss of popularity by his government. *La Figaro* called him “the fanatic of democracy.”

Many other serious newspapers commented the Hungarian Prime Minister’s death. It was often mentioned that Antall’s likely successor, Péter Boross was authoritarian and stood more on the Right. *Svenska Dagbladet* – with good presentiment – pointed out that Boross and Lezsák made only a formal break with Csurka, and that the departure of Antall would facilitate a comeback by the Left.

An exceptionally large number of illustrious foreign leaders paid their last respects at the coffin of the Prime Minister. They included President Walesa of Poland, President Kravchuk of Ukraine, the Federal President of Switzerland, US Vice-President Al Gore and Ambassador Madeleine Albright, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, the Presidents of the Italian and the German Parliament, the Prime Ministers of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Finland, Croatia, The Netherlands, Sweden, Slovenia, and Slovakia, the Deputy Prime Ministers or Foreign Ministers of Austria, Estonia, Croatia, Israel, Lichtenstein, Macedonia, Former Prime Ministers from Belgium, Poland, Finland, the United Kingdom (Margaret Thatcher), Russia, Romania, Slovenia and

Ukraine, also several other Ministers. The funeral was attended by Hans van den Broek (Member of the Commission of the European Communities, Egon A. Klepsch (President of the European Parliament), Cathrine Lalumière (Secretary-General of the Council of Europe), too, and naturally by many prominent – and also many ordinary – Hungarians from the neighbouring States.

With the death of the first freely elected Prime Minister following the collapse of Communism Hungary again attracted much attention. That was undoubtedly due to the impressive record of Antall. When he lay in state in the building of Parliament, half a million mourners paid their respects in front of the coffin, in a belated recognition of his personality and his policies. That defied those who said or wrote how unpopular he was. But with all the belated recognition, Rudolf Tőkés, a refugee-turned-professor in the United States, proved right in a note sent to me: “History will be more generous to him than have been his contemporaries.” Yes, I am convinced that Prime Minister Antall will go down in history as one of the many great Hungarian patriots. Indeed, he belongs to the ages.



*To Dr. Jozsef Antall
With best wishes,
Gy Buzsák*

JÓZSEF ANTALL, PRIME MINISTER OF HUNGARY

Péter Á. Bod

September 1948. Hungary. The Budapest Piarist Grammar School has been nationalised this summer. Despite that, a sixteen year old student is giving a speech in the debating society. There is still a debating society, still Piarist teachers, but not for long. Outside the school, a new tyranny is expanding. This month the State Security Authority, modelled after the Soviet NKVD, has been set up; the Hungaro-American Oil Corporation nationalised. The chief engineers will soon be taken to court; the Primate of the Catholic Church, Cardinal József Mindszenty, will soon be arrested and accused of treason, espionage and currency profiteering.

The communists and fellow-travellers already control most of the society and the economy – with the Red Army standing behind them. Banks and companies are already all nationalised; small firms with over ten employees will have been expropriated within a year.

There is nothing especially Hungarian about this story. The script has been written in the Kremlin for the whole of its new Central European dominion: communists are to take control of the social democrats or socialists and drive the civic forces out of parliaments. This is the summer of the start of the Berlin blockade and of the Cold War.

Nevertheless, there are some brave souls in Budapest, Warsaw and Prague who still study the institutions and forms of democratic rule. One of them is József Antall. Speaking in the debating society about the geopolitical role of the United States, he starts: “The significance of the United States of America in international politics, and concerning the consequences of its position as a superpower, is beyond dispute. Germany has twice plunged into war in recent decades to gain hegemony, first in Europe and then globally; her adversaries have twice owed the victory to the United States. The prophecy of Lajos Kossuth, made while in America in 1851, that the Union would intervene decisively in European affairs had twice come true. The sentences of this great Hungarian statesman proved once again true as the enormous military and economic power of the United States saved the Old Continent from the suffocating embrace of the German colossus. When freedom is endangered, the peoples of Europe turn to America.”

The analysis is accurate, the style mature, yet the text could not be published until 45 years later (in the Hungarian periodical *Magyar Szemle*), in the fourth year of the return to parliamentary democracy. That student became the Prime Minister of Hungary in 1990.

Back in 1948, the fate of the Central-Eastern European region seemed to have been sealed. *Cuius regio, eius religio* – a new system expanded as far as the Red Army had been able to march into Europe. ‘Civilised Europe’ was in ruins: Britain indebted, Germany defeated and still under punitive surveillance, France finally on the winning side but after a humiliating defeat. This Europe would hardly rise up in arms again even in self-defence, most certainly not for others. In Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, in the eastern part of the defeated Germany, in the Balkans and in the Baltic states voters might still be allowed to vote, but not choose.

Yet, even under these conditions, there was a debating society where this student could discuss the similarities and differences of political systems: “In the New World terms like ‘state’, ‘government’, ‘political party’ carry meanings totally different from those in the European Continent and particularly in Hungary. The terms ‘state’ and ‘government’ evoke reflections over there different from those over here.”

Over there, over here

For centuries, this has been the framework of reference for intellectuals in the region east of the rivers Elbe and Leutha (the one-time frontier of Charlemagne’s empire) and west of the forests separating the Polish and Russian lands. This is Central-Eastern Europe, the land in-between. Intellectually, it has always been part of *Europa Occidens*, the *Christianitas*, the West. Economically, militarily and dynastically, however, it has only intermittently been part of the West.

Here, in this region, we like to say that we have belonged to Europe for one thousand years. But Europe has moved around us. As the Hungarian historian Jenő Szűcs has pointed out, when Stalin, Churchill and Roosevelt repartitioned Europe 1130 years after the death of Charlemagne, they merely reconstructed the eastern borders of the Carolingian empire – whose contours became the line where the Iron Curtain would descend. Churchill and Roosevelt most have taken into account more than just the probable advance of the Red Army;

they only gave up at Yalta – or so could they comfort their consciences – what had always been a disputed area.

In 1948, the spirit of the older tradition still lives on: there are artists, teachers and academics who refuse, as long as it is physically possible, to accept that their country has been shifted back to the new Eastern empire. This is not a new situation for intellectuals. For long centuries, the continuity of the region's spiritual bonds has clashed with the volatility of its geopolitical affiliation. The clash of spirituality and reality has charged the Central and Eastern European intellectuals with a specific energy, hardly explicable to a Westerner. It is beyond easy comprehension how men of letters were able to preserve the feeling of belonging to Europe when their nation was in fact firmly subjugated to oriental rule. The intellectual was a keeper of hope, the conscience of the nation, creator and personifier of national or political programmes, at times a conspirator risking his/her freedom or life.

This Central European type of intellectual is different from the West European intellectual who tends to spend his life – a life no longer endangered by despots – in the closed worlds of university, editorial office or artist's studio; but also different from the Chinese clerk who is but a bureaucrat of the empire. The intelligentsia on the periphery of Europe contains elements of both the former and the latter: while aspiring to retain artistic or academic independence, they most often live off the State since it is only the bureaucracy, and not the weak bourgeoisie, that can maintain a sufficient number of white collar workers in intellectual pursuits.

The intelligentsia, caught frequently between the bourgeoisie and the State, may assume a critical role when society reaches a cross-roads. Turning points in history call for those outside – or above – traditional political roles, those with a vision and will to redefine the national or political agenda. Intellectual as chief policy maker? Not unknown, but not common in mature Western democracies. In Central and Eastern Europe this has frequently been the pattern, and was certainly characteristic of the years 1989–90 when Havel the playwright, Mazowiecki the journalist and Antall the historian all emerged as national leaders.

If this is a pattern, then there is logic behind it. The intellectuals' direct engagement with politics has always been prompted by the weakness of the body politic. Weak civic societies allow for, even call for, direct political activity by the intellectuals. Before the Second World War, Central Europe was a region of belated social development with only a weak bourgeoisie. What

happened to the region in the post-war years could only further weaken civic society. What Stalin first of all needed from the small countries west of Russia was that they provide a buffer zone against an imagined Western attack and a military springboard for his war plans. Then the Soviets used their influence and military presence to undermine the democratic system and the market economy, replacing them with the communist regime. Oriental rule, whether Byzantine or communist, rejects the concept of equal status before the law, and, built on a concept of hierarchy, aims to destroy markets, including human capital, since it is marketable and as such can become a means of distance from the state.

The Central European intelligentsia has never been homogeneous, but Sovietisation in the late 1940s and early 1950s definitively broke it up. There was some truth to the communists' claim that the Hungarian intelligentsia of the age could not be regarded as 'modern' or 'democratic'. It had inherited too much from a feudal past and had been too dependent on the powers that be.

In any case, the new regime in Hungary, not trusting the old intelligentsia, recruited a new, malleable and more reliable one. This is the way the Jewish shoemaker, having survived humiliation and the extermination camp, would be made an officer of state security; the communist tram conductor promoted to chief in the State Office for Religious Affairs and later Minister of Finance. The 1950s was the time for crash courses and quick promotions from factory shop level to the rank of chief executive. This was a singular period with sudden elevations and declines in social status. The accelerated recruitment of the cadres increased social mobility; many of those promoted to high positions very young did a good job. Others could not cope with the sudden increase of responsibility, and failed.

It was in this period that József Antall passed his final examination in the Piarist Grammar School and went on to the Budapest Faculty of Arts to study history, Hungarian language and literature, law, anthropology, economics and museology. After graduation he joined the Hungarian National Archives and also started to teach at a grammar school.

At that time, talking about politics was confined to reliable circles of friends and relatives: one talked behind closed windows with the radio playing loudly as a precaution against others listening. József's father, József Antall Sr, was a man of note. In 1939, the anti-Nazi Prime Minister, Pál Teleki, promoted him to take charge of refugee affairs. He managed to perform his duties until 1944

when the Germans invaded Hungary and the Gestapo caught him. However, he survived the war and, once the front moved to the west, he was again in politics as State Secretary in the first provisional government, then Minister for Reconstruction during the coalition period. His home was certainly more than just a residence for the young Antall; it must have been an academy for politics as well.

The 1956 Uprising

The young Antall was twenty-six when revolution broke out in 1956. As a teacher he threw himself into political organisation and was one of the founders of the Christian Democratic Youth Organisation, while his father was busily reorganising the Small-holders' and Civic Party. But the revolution was swiftly put down by the Russians. The younger Antall was detained for some time, then banned from teaching because – as the verdict said – “he had expressed belief in multi-party democracy and called for independence and the withdrawal of the Soviet troops”. He subsequently made a living by working as a librarian. Jails and books and politics: close relations in this part of the world, as they had been for Alcide De Gasperi and many others during the Second World War.

It is surprising how easily totalitarian rule collapsed in Budapest in the autumn of 1956. The party bosses fled the country in a hurry, only to return on Soviet tanks thirsty for revenge. Their revenge was cruel and bloody. Over two hundred thousand Hungarians decided to escape before the border controls were reinstated; most of them were young, some of the brightest students, the driving forces of the uprising. But the spirit of the revolution was not broken immediately; the oppressors and their Hungarian clients were ostracised. The Russians felt that the regime had to be strengthened from inside. Their choice to undertake this task was János Kádár.

Kádár cruelly punished the working class: his machinery of ‘justice’ meted out hangings and life sentences mostly among working men and women. But Kádár was shrewd enough to know that memories fade and people gradually forget the past if not reminded. If they were not to be reminded, the intellectuals had to be properly handled. The Hungarian intelligentsia had by that time been decimated: some were in exile, some in jail, others banned from having their work published or from practising their profession. Perhaps for them the

worst thing was the lack of hope of fundamental geopolitical change. The revolution may have overturned the totalitarian regime in one day, but the Soviet Union's control of the region was not seriously questioned by Western governments. Yalta was alive; maintaining the *status quo* seemed the paramount Western value. The uprising may temporarily have driven away the quisling of the eastern empire, but the empire itself was there to stay; the window of freedom and hope, opened wide in glorious October, had been firmly shut on that generation.

The new regime eventually managed the intellectuals so well that, barely two decades after the revolution was put down, the Yugoslav Djilas's vision of the intelligentsia as part of the new ruling class had come close to reality in Hungary. The revolution of 1956, like that of 1848, started as a demonstration by students. Intellectuals provided its leaders and strategists. It is symbolic that when Russian troops entered the empty halls of the Hungarian Parliament in the early hours of 4 November 1956, they found there one lone person busily hitting the keys of his typewriter: István Bibó, one of Hungary's most influential political thinkers and a Minister in Imre Nagy's government, working at that moment on his famous proclamation to fellow Hungarians: "... I call upon the Hungarian people not to consider the occupying army – or the puppet government which that army is likely to set up – as legal authority ... Now it is up to the world powers to demonstrate the force of the principles contained in the United Nations' Charter and the strength of the world's freedom-loving peoples."

The United Nations did not provide support for the revolution. The Kádár regime took root. The 'new-old' communist rulers managed to subjugate society, or what remained of the dynamic society of 1956. In the decades that followed the revolution, the peasantry ceased to exist: there remained only 'agricultural workers' in co-operatives. Similarly there was no longer a working class in Hungary but workers who spent eight hours a day in low pay, low intensity public sector jobs, doing after hours what untaxed jobs they could find.

And there was a new intelligentsia. While some eminent intellectuals were still in prison and only released as and when the government found it appropriate, certain prisoners proved to be weak under duress and were recruited as informers while in jail.

The real strength of the regime, however, lay not in threats and pressures but in promises. Kádár's promise, albeit a tacit one, to the blue-collar workers

was that as long as they did not bother about politics, the rulers would not interfere in their daily lives. This was the start of the 'liberal', 'enlightened' phase of communist rule in Hungary which would later bring much praise for the regime from many Western journalists and politicians. A meagre deal like that could not have been made but for the historical weakness, common in Central and Eastern Europe to leave politics to those with the requisite skills, that is, to the Party. Anyway, went the argument, just look at the intelligentsia: how comfortable they had found their role in 'building Socialism'.

From the early 1960s, certain key positions were reserved for the reliable only. These were jobs in the police, diplomacy, international finance and the media. Cardholding was required and 'reliability tests' had to be passed. One is tempted to say: an Orwellian world. But it was not; it was less organised and more Central European. There were many avenues into the inner circle, such as friendship or kinship with someone important. Up to a certain level, talent and skills would do. And then you reached a point which you would not be able to pass without surrendering to the Party.

Kádár's regime had softened a lot and, by the mid-1960s, became more tolerable than the rigid Stalinism of the pre-1956 period. Kádárism certainly differed from the communist regimes of neighbouring countries. The level of consumption in Hungary was higher, the constraints on intellectual life less strict. It was never clear where the exact limits lay since they were set by the Party leadership and not the law. Sometimes exciting articles appeared and sensational exhibitions were shown; this was one of the great periods of the Hungarian cinema. A part of the intelligentsia and the Party leadership started to interlock. Indeed it is appropriate to speak of the regime as that of Kádár and Aczél, since Aczél, responsible for cultural and media affairs within the top leadership, managed to link various sections of the Hungarian intelligentsia to himself and to the Party, and maintained the legitimacy of the regime among most of the intellectuals until the mid-1980s. He was simultaneously responsible for cultural affairs on the one hand and the secret services on the other – he alone knew how much the two overlapped.

Influences

Yet there remained some who closely followed European trends of political thought throughout the period. It would be too much to say that they were preparing for the time after communism. The regime was strong, the Soviet Union showed no sign of weakness, Western politicians and leading personalities developed warmer and warmer links with the representatives of the one-party states. No reasonable calculation could then have justified preparations for becoming at some time a non-communist politician. One could even have seemed ridiculous, like a stubborn monarchist in an established republic. But in this region there is a long tradition of maintaining one's moral stance against the odds; otherwise belief in the bonds with Europe could not have been maintained during one-and-a-half centuries of Ottoman domination, or patriotism under the rule of the Habsburgs.

József Antall was among those who managed to follow the intellectual and political events of the age. His later speeches and conversations reveal that he was much influenced by Ortega y Gasset, Röpke, Ludwig Erhard, László Németh and István Bibó, as well as the classic authors of Hungarian liberalism: József Eötvös, István Széchenyi, Kossuth and Ferenc Deák. In his political speeches he frequently referred to politicians whom he may have regarded as political role models: Schuman, De Gasperi, Adenauer, Monnet – the great generation of European unity. The remarkably successful restoration of democratic institutions in Germany after the Second World War and the economic miracle based on the *Sozialmarktwirtschaft* strongly shaped his political ideas and, once in office, his governmental principles.

Antall's enduring interest in politics must have had its roots in certain determining experiences of his youth. In the summer of 1993 he addressed a NATO workshop in what I regard as perhaps his most fascinating speech (reproduced in Document 34 in the present volume – the Editor), in the Upper House of the Parliament building in Budapest. Seriously ill already, he recalled his early personal experiences and readings. He particularly mentioned Averell Harriman's book, *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin*, in which Harriman refers to the first free municipal election in Budapest in October 1945: "Budapest was jubilant. Jack Mc Cloy and I wanted to go to the American mission, but we couldn't get in the door. There was an enormous crowd celebrating the victory under the American flag." "In fact I was there, a young lad", added Antall, smiling.

Antall was without doubt a particularly disciplined politician and intellectual with a strong, supportive family background; but, although educated in and informed about the world's political affairs and European tendencies, he was not unique in Hungary or any other country of the region. The Poles also managed to keep windows of opportunity open to reflect on democracy and prepare for the future; the spiritual autonomy of the Church and the existence of some civic parties nominally independent from the establishment Party was largely maintained there throughout the decades. In Czechoslovakia the 1968 reform movement revealed how strongly democratic, Western-type values were upheld among intellectuals, including some in top positions. During the years after the Prague Spring, the West learned the names of only a handful of Czech dissidents, yet many more longed for democracy.

If one recalls the high expectations of the early 1990s, the transition to parliamentary democracy and the market economy is still not complete. Looking back from the present, given the eminent position in business, politics and the media held by members of the former establishment party, one might even declare the period of the Antall Government in Hungary – or, *mutatis mutandis*, that of Tadeusz Mazowiecki and Hanna Suchocka in Poland – an historical accident. Yet that would be not only unfair, but largely incorrect, too. In spite of recent signs of restoration of an earlier political style and the reappearance of former cadres, the civic governments that came to power after 1989–90 in Central-Eastern Europe were able to make their mark on the socio-economic structures and on the geo-political orientation of their countries.

Antall's rise to power

Just as Yalta in February 1945 once defined the geo-political setup of the Central European region, the politically active perceived a redefinition at the time of the Malta summit between President Bush and General Secretary Gorbachev in December 1989. It is not fully known what the American and Soviet leaders agreed upon there. Even the East European communist party bosses may not have been given a full account of the deal, but what briefing they did get made them change their behaviour. The signs were that Moscow had abandoned them. That impression also transformed the position of the latent political opposition. Cautious reorientation both within and outside the party-state had already started after Gorbachev launched his campaign

of 'glasnost', but the message from Malta changed dimensions. No responsible politician would have risked another Hungary 1956, Czechoslovakia 1968, or Poland 1981 as long as his or her country was regarded – under the so-called Brezhnev doctrine – as a part of the 'Socialist camp' with no right to self-determination. But what if the Brezhnev doctrine were dead? Then the personal risks for politicians in opposition would be greatly reduced, and the call for a change of regime would not necessarily provoke Soviet military intervention.

In 1989, the political landscape of Hungary totally changed. In response to the creation of opposition parties, the Party, that is the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, transformed itself into two successor parties: one faithful to Marxism (Workers' Party), and another bigger one, the legal inheritor of the former establishment party with an undefined attitude to Marxism. As the leader of the 'true' party once remarked, "We inherited Marx and they got the Capital". Some of the opposition parties came into being by re-creating formerly banned, so-called historical parties like the Smallholder, Social Democratic and Christian Democratic Parties; others were organisations without particular historical antecedents. The latter do not have the word 'party' in their name – which says a lot about the strong negative feelings concerning the Party and party politicking – the most important of them being the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF), the Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ), and the Alliance of Young Democrats (FIDESZ).

Family traditions linked Antall to the Smallholders' Party. But, although the Smallholders invited him to join, he committed himself to the Democratic Forum, which he represented in the co-ordinating talks with opposition parties, then in the 'national round-table' talks from spring 1989. The many rounds of talks attempted to determine the constitutional form of the responsibilities of the prime minister and those of the president, and the legal and political guarantees between those in power and in opposition. At that time, the old Stalinist constitution still outlawed political opposition, and Soviet troops were still stationed on Hungarian soil. The opposition thus had every reason to demand guarantees. On the other hand, the Party bosses could not be sure about their victory in free elections, though most of them were confident on grounds of superiority in organisation and material strength; they, too, needed guarantees from the new forces.

No leader rose from the shop floor in Hungary, unlike Walesa in Poland. No wonder: there is no working class in Hungary. In Poland, the misconceived

crash industrialisation programmes of the 1970s increased the size and social importance of the industrial workforce at a time when other countries were already entering the post-industrial age. In contrast, Hungary under the Kádár consolidation was not a land of the conscious worker but of the slick micro-entrepreneur who, though officially employed and paid by the state, earned half of his income from businesses on the side, would not go on strike for better conditions or more pay, but rather minimised his time and effort in his official work-place. The chief personal strategy in 'reform-communist' Hungary was the private safeguard of one's interests. Representation by state-sponsored trade unions, who were not trusted or respected made no sense; unionisation would quickly shrink after the political changes. The new parties were therefore confronted with a double task at their inception: to create a veritable programme for profound change, and at the same time mobilise the cautious and passive, if not suspicious, masses. At the first convention of the Forum in 1989, Antall recalled the words of his nineteenth-century paragon, József Eötvös: "Democracy should be organised not declared."

In 1988–89, the MDF was an organisation of many valuable persons, though not a party. Most of its members were the intellectuals and professionals outside the nomenclature: teachers, middle managers, veterinarians, preachers, lawyers. It was transformed into a party in the autumn of 1989, and József Antall was elected president. It was then the only party with a nationwide network; the SZDSZ was predominantly represented in the capital and larger cities, the FIDESZ in university centres. In 1989 Hungary needed a social force that was to create a constitutional democracy and market economy out of the bankrupt party-state, lead the economy out of the dying Comecon into the commonwealth of market economies, and eventually, Antall hoped, link it to a unified Europe.

That was the challenge of the age. If there was any role Antall had prepared for, that was it. He had kept himself morally and politically intact throughout the decades. Educated in the best traditions of Hungarian liberal conservatism, he had not been lured by the promises of reform-communism or the vague concept of a 'third way'. He stood for changing the system rather than improving the declining regime. The historic occasion for change was somewhat unexpected, but Antall the historian grasped it. He volunteered to lead a movement which encompassed the politically active non-communist classes, a movement which organised itself around the concept of peaceful return to democracy and national sovereignty.

It did not take long for József Antall to rise to pre-eminence among the opposition leaders. His deep constitutional and historical knowledge and a sharp analytical mind were widely acknowledged, even by his foes. Politics seldom honours genuine contributions, but this is what exceptionally took place in 1990: the MDF won a plurality of votes at the spring election and Antall, by that time the president of the Forum, formed a government which he led until his death.

An important party cannot build its programme solely on the direct and short-term interests of supporters and potential voters, nor can it survive without their continuing support either. To be adequate in the critical state of the Hungarian economy at the turn of 1989/90, the MDF's programme had to be tough, inviting at most understanding from its supporters, but not enthusiasm. Its programme aimed at an expeditious change of property rights, yet with an eye to the weaknesses, or lack, of market institutions and with the intention of broadening the middle classes.

As a major party, with a strong chance that it would come into government, the MDF had to deal with the issues of foreign debt, the state of the banking sector and the consequences of the dissolution of Comecon, the Moscow-run trade and production specialisation regime. The question was whether the party would stand for a genuine break with the 'socialist' system – recognising the high social and economic costs of such a decision – or try to invent a 'third way' between socialism and market economy. The draft programme that was presented to its 1989 Convention unambiguously called for a fully fledged market economy; although the inherited debt burden implied that Hungary was to play tremendous transitional costs. There were, and still are, many who hoped for a soft transition with perhaps strong financial support from the West, including write-offs or forgiveness on external debts. Antall nurtured no illusion about the external conditions, and was aware what a shock the economic changes would imply, but he was convinced that an irrevocable transformation could be achieved and that he had to achieve it. In a tough debate, the Convention of his party finally endorsed the economic chapter, but the debate on land and privatisation indicated that the general wish to have access to property would constantly clash with financial reality.

All new governing forces in the region were confronted with the fact that democratic political values had for the previous forty years linked with those opposed to communism. But the oppositions, by definition, lacked all governmental experience. The roots of opposition thinking went even deeper, as

Antall stated in his acceptance speech to the Convention: “In this part of Europe, our desire for freedom and our constitutional spirit were never weaker than in nations of more fortunate history; but they could realise them in institutions. Over here that spirit survived for decades in opposition.”

As the president of a party preparing for government, he undertook the enormous tasks of turning his loosely organised movement into a genuine political party (‘organising the democracy’); preparing the Forum for government; and placing his party movement on the political palette of Europe. It is extremely hard to turn an opposition movement into a party for government: the skills required to manage a country are not the same as those needed to fight for truth and social justice. Management skills can, no doubt, be acquired if history provides enough time. But it seldom does, and here it did not: the democracies of Central and Eastern Europe were reborn in deep economic crisis. The so-called reform-communist countries – Poland, Hungary and Yugoslavia – whose party leadership had experimented with certain market elements and opening to the West since the second half of the 1960s or early 1970s, had become heavily indebted by the 1980s, aggravating the conditions for the first democratic governments.

For different reasons, income and output collapse was universal across all countries in Central Eastern Europe, suffering a drop of about 20 per cent of GDP during the first three transition years. Economists had known for some time that a large part of the socialist economy was totally unproductive; that at least a third of jobs in state-owned factories and public sector offices were just superfluous. Theoretical knowledge is one thing, personal experience another. Transition suddenly hit these societies in 1990–1. The voter would justifiably see it as a crisis, even if the governments had functioned perfectly – but they did not. The first governments did not generally last long. No wonder: to keep power or win elections is difficult in a recession, and what we had in the region after 1990 was much more than recession; it was a deep, protracted transformational crisis. True, the more advanced of the transition countries managed to resume growth after the tough first three years. Western observers cheered and advisers felt justified. Yet with all the recovery it took almost a decade for Poland’s and Hungary’s per capita national income to reach the same level as in 1989. It was no mean achievement though not something to boast about.

Thus the Solidarity-based government in Poland and the Antall government in Hungary were confronted from the very start with the sinister foreign debt, the legacy of the previous regimes, while at the same time a new, democratic

society had to be built. The chances of survival of these first governments were low: economic measures in the first few years counted against the politicians, who thus could not possibly win on the economy; thus a non-economic issue would be needed to woo back the impoverished voters. In Croatia, Slovenia, and the Czech and Slovak republics, national independence issues provided extra legitimacy for incumbent governments, despite the economic hardships. In Lithuania, Poland and Hungary the voters let the forces of the nomenclature back into power in the fourth year of transition.

The margins of victory may surprise observers, but the direction of events should not. Prime Minister Antall, an historian, was aware of the nature of Hungary's social changes, as well as the high expectations of the electorate. That is why in 1990 he called his team a 'kamikaze' government. Time was short, the economic and political institutions of democracy had to be created or re-created, the future of the country was to be bound to Europe for good.

One of Antall's strategic goals well before the elections was to connect the MDF to the Western European party structure. As a result of his efforts, the Forum and two of its allies were accepted into the organisation of the European Democrat Union (EDU), which linked Christian Democratic parties internationally. He himself was elected its vice-president in 1990. He put much personal effort into organising the Hungarian branch of the European Movement of which he later became a vice-chairman, and also the Hungarian wing of the Pan-European Movement.

Antall was motivated in his efforts to construct strong cross-party links not just by his personal attachment to Christian Democracy. He was determined to create a modern party out of the non-socialist and non-nomenclature Forum. In some ways a conservative by British standards, he defined the Forum's role in the centre of the Hungarian political scene, centre-right in parliamentary terms. Clear self-definition before the first free election was important since he sensed that the Socialists, the successor party to the communists, would rely on significant sections of the old society (wage earners, pensioners, those of welfare), and would build links to the SZDSZ with its leftist radical traditions: it was thus to the right of these parties that the political alternative had to be created. Some of his opponents both within and outside his party accused Antall of having 'stolen' the Forum, an organisation of allegedly plebeian origin, centre-left rather than centre-right. And the term 'conservative' may really be misleading as applied to a movement which was the first to organise itself nationwide at the end of the 1980s, firmly in opposition to the party-

state, pursuing goals that critically touched the *status quo*. Parties to the left of the Forum, as well as most of the Hungarian media, have used the terms 'conservative' and 'patriotic' offensively. Antall knew very well how difficult it was to restore values after decades of cynicism, yet he was convinced that a centre party could only be built on a clear moral stance and in cognisance of one's roots. He hoped that strong democratic institutions and a broad economic foundation would emerge after the turbulent first years of change to ensure Hungary's progress in true European fashion, rather than degeneration into unmitigated, peripheral capitalism.

The 1990 spring elections offered Hungarian voters a plethora of political parties from which to choose, but the vast majority of the votes went to just six parties; and the same parties got into Parliament again four years later at the next elections. This stability may be read as a sign of maturity in Hungarian politics; what is disturbing is that the active membership of the parties is limited and mostly draws on people of an intellectual background.

Political democracy is not easy to run. Parties in the region have only a limited appeal and voting base and communicate with the public almost exclusively through the media. No party except the former establishment party has the necessary material base to enable it to be present in all major towns. The parties, with the exception of the former communists, have no communication channels, educational or youth or training centres of their own; all in a society which is deeply suspicious of the political 'party' as such, a society which – after decades of the ubiquity of politics – would like to stay away from public affairs, not fully understanding yet the connection between rights and duties.

Antall as Prime Minister had to expend much of his energy on cultural and media issues. Most of those who controlled and ran the Hungarian media held values different from his. One obvious reason for this might be the fact that the key personalities of the press under communism had belonged to the closely controlled inner circle of the Party. The privatisation of the press had mostly taken place before the changes and the new political forces inherited a given structure of communication. This structure predominantly preferred the liberal-left values and maintenance of the positions of the 'socialist establishment' to the values and programmes of the opposition, as it challenged the financial, cultural and power position of that nomenclature. All in all, a determining part of the media and cultural elite defined the centre-right opposition forces as at best an unknown quantity, at worst a threat to their established position.

Many of his interlocutors on the international stage considered Antall not simply as an office holder from a small country, but as a statesman with global horizons and a strong sense of history. His advice was sought, although rarely heeded, about the possible directions and consequences of the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. Western politicians still held to the concept of the unified South-Slav state, while he was already warning about the futility of maintaining the *status quo* and the tragic repercussions of its unavoidable breakdown. He was among the very first to react publicly to the putsch against Gorbachev in 1991 and, despite his good links to President Yeltsin, he never made a secret of his concern about the potential dangers of events in Russia for the world in general and for Central and Eastern Europe in particular. This is why he was eager to bind Hungary closely to the European political and security community. While influential leaders such as Kohl and Thatcher thought highly of him, the Western community was unable to forge a coherent strategy concerning Central Eastern Europe. Antall saw it as an opportunity missed; the Western vacillation disappointed him.

Antall had good reason to think of time. Not long after he was appointed prime minister in 1990, he was diagnosed as seriously ill with non-Hodkin lymphoma. He underwent the necessary operations and medical treatment with full self-control, but it let him no respite. The tasks facing him as prime minister were huge, his time was short. Sensing that Hungarian citizens, unable to comprehend and digest all the twists and turns of the transformation, would demand explanation, not simply administration, he tried to interpret and explain in parliamentary debates and public speeches what was going on in his country and in this region. Antall took his audience seriously and did not try to court the media: there were no 'one-liners', no 'soundbites', the media found this style archaic.

Humourless, superior, hardhearted: this is the image some in the powerful media created of him. Those who knew him personally knew that the opposite was true. Never arrogant, he thought perhaps too much of ordinary people. Hardhearted he was not: he always instructed his Cabinet ministers to consider those on pensions or with large families when formulating budgets, since they would be least able to adjust to sudden economic changes. This was one of the reasons why he rejected the concept of 'shock therapy' for the economy, so heartily recommended by some foreign advisers. He was not humourless either; he knew how to diffuse the tensions of Cabinet meetings and political negotiations through a fine use of anecdote.

The last time Antall addressed the public was at the statue of St Stephen on the occasion of Hungary's national holiday in August 1993. Stephen was the first Hungarian king, who bound his nation with force to the Europe of his age. St Stephen's day provided the Prime Minister with an occasion to respond to critics: "We are accused of retrospection. Only a fool can think that looking back to where we have come from means neglecting the present and forgetting about the future. Our history provides us with perspective, and this is what recharges us with strength and hope; knowing what hardship we have been through enables us to survive in the future."

József Antall died in December 1993.

PERSONAL

POLITICS: A VOCATION AND A PROFESSION

Students and lecturers at the Századvég College of Political Studies asked József Antall to speak to them on how he had become a politician. Prompted perhaps by the relatively small size of the audience, the talk he gave on 11 December 1991 contains communications of a personal nature that he normally avoided.

First let me say this: when I speak about myself, I am acting on orders. This I must tell you. To do so in the absence of such orders would run contrary to my views.

My career as a politician and in politics has been out of the ordinary.

Political careers take entirely different courses in democracies and in dictatorships. The possibilities are simply different, and so are the roles. Similarly, we see different types of political careers within democracies, depending on whether the democracy in question is a presidential system, such as the United States; a parliamentary democracy; a constitutional monarchy; or a parliamentary republic. Where the legislative and executive powers are rigidly separated, such as the United States, agents of the executive power, i.e. members of the government, the administration, often have careers that are different from those of the elected politicians. In the United States, the last mentioned mostly build their careers and perform their duties in the House of Representatives or the Senate. The situation is entirely different again in Germany, Britain, Italy, and other countries where large numbers of people begin their careers as elected parliamentary politicians, afterwards possibly filling posts of state secretary or minister as elected politicians, as members of the legislature. In other words, within democracies presidential systems and parliamentary systems do differ in this respect.

The careers in Hungary and in this region have been entirely different.

I have to begin by saying that I grew up in a political family. This has determined my entire political thinking and my views on politics, not only in content but also as a vocation. It has also determined the style I represent in politics. This was naturally influenced by the fact that, from my early childhood on, I heard my father and grandfather talking politics; the former

served in the higher echelons of the state administration and the latter was a Member of Parliament. They always represented the same political conception, which, however, qualified in different periods as either left wing or right wing. This is indeed a specific feature of political life in Hungary: in past decades you did not have to change your political views to be labelled first leftist, then rightist; everything is relative. A political stance that in our view here today is centrist would in Germany be right of centre. If we take the CDU–CSU as a benchmark, it would be somewhere between the liberals and the CDU. In France it would lie between Valéry Giscard d’Estaing and Jacques Chirac; in Italy somewhere between the Christian democrats and the republican liberals. My father’s and my grandfather’s political stance had nothing to do with the left as it functions in a non-parliamentary or non-constitutional system, or with any right-wing political position. These two were from the very first excluded from the political currents that I would have anything to do with.

Within those limits, however, it was a matter of approach, a matter of whom you bring into the comparison. It was in any case a liberal, a conservative liberal if you like, Christian democratic stance, with a strong social sensitivity, a strong social commitment, not far from that of the so-called “writers of the people”, not far from the political thinking that advocated land reform, a stance on the issue of land ownership much like Mihály Kerék’s.¹ In foreign policy it was very decidedly anti-Axis, anti-Hitlerist, anti-Fascist, and anti-Falangist, just as it was anti-Bolshevik and suchlike. This was just about the range in the political spectrum in which I could envisage any kind of role for myself. This is how I got started. The government party of that time had among its ranks politicians following a British orientation, such as Pál Teleki,² Ferenc Keresztes-Fischer³ and others. Of the then opposition parties, the Independent Smallholders’ Party,⁴ the political line represented by people like Gasz-

¹ Mihály Kerék (1902–1990), economist, expert on agriculture. He was a strong advocate of land reform, in 1945 he participated in its realisation.

² For Pál Teleki see note 4 of G. Jeszenszky’s introduction.

³ Ferenc Keresztes-Fischer (1881–1948) jurist, politician. As Minister of the Interior between 1931–1935 and 1938–1944, he did his best to contain both the extreme right and left, the latter, the communists were banned by law. During the Second World War, he was well-known for leaning towards the Western allies. When the Germans occupied Hungary, he was arrested and deported to the Mauthausen concentration camp.

⁴ For the Independent Smallholder’s Party see note 3 of G. Jeszenszky’s introduction. The party was re-established in 1988, won 44 seats at the elections in 1990, and entered the coalition government formed by J. Antall. Internal feuds lead to several splits and in 2002 it failed to get into Parliament.

ton Gaál, Tibor Eckhardt, Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky, Béla Kovács, and Ferenc Nagy,⁵ was close to my thinking.

As for me personally, the political ideas held by my father, my grandfather, my family, were undeniably decisive for me. These included all that could be summed up as the values of classical liberalism; Christian democracy; and national, popular and conservative values. This may sound eclectic, unless they are defined within the framework of a specific political philosophy. Although social democracy was not one of these political currents, the classical strand of it represented in Hungary by Anna Kéthly⁶ was certainly not far from being a political ally or a very highly respected opponent.

It is easy to calculate from my age that the Second World War was a decisive experience for me. Owing to family and other reasons, I had the opportunity to meet many foreigners during the Second World War. As a consequence of his political and other functions, my father was professionally involved with refugees, including fugitive prisoners of war who came to Hungary. There was a time when he dealt with the relocation of tens of thousands of bombed-out German children; in one year some 40,000 to 50,000 German children whose homes in the Ruhr region had been destroyed were relocated to Hungary. Furthermore, there were approximately 100,000 Poles, Britons and French, pro-Badoglio Italians from 1943 on, and thousands of foreign Jews. All could live in relative security in Hungary up to the German invasion of 19 March 1944. All this I experienced as a child in complete openness. In 1943, I met British air force officers who had fled to Hungary, from where they were helped to escape further; for this my father received a document of acknowledgement from General Alexander. The Queen of The Netherlands thanked him for having saved Dutch officers; Jews expressed their gratitude to him in the Yad Vashem Memorial Park. I grew up in a humane political environment from which all inhumane, unlawful measures typical of dictatorships and alien to political democracy were excluded.

When I recall a walk I took in the hills with my father in Veszprém County at the age of about six or seven, I can still remember almost word for word

⁵ Founders, members, and leaders of the Independent Smallholders' Party in the 1930 and 1940s. Gaszton Gaál and Tibor Eckhardt were presidents of the party. Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky was executed by the Hungarian Nazis, the Arrow Cross government in 1944. After the Second World War the Smallholders won the election, and Ferenc Nagy was elected Prime Minister in 1946.

⁶ Anna Kéthly (1889–1976), MP, Member of the Social Democratic Party from 1920. She was expelled from the party in 1948 when she opposed its union with the communists. Imprisoned between 1949–1954. Minister of State in the Imre Nagy government in 1956. Following the Soviet invasion she went into exile, became Head of the Hungarian Revolutionary Council in Belgium, and lived there as a widely respected Social Democrat.

how he explained to me what democracy meant. This may have been in 1937 or 1938. He told me what representative democracy entailed, and he said we should be faithful to it, that we should adhere to it no matter what others might say. The commitment I felt in this respect was therefore very strong.

Such experiences were decisive for me between 1939 and 19 March 1944, when the Germans occupied the country. After 19 March 1944, the Gestapo arrested my father. They forced me to stand by his side; I was twelve. It was spelt out in the order of arrest that should he make a move I was to be taken away. This was customary at the time; fiancées and others were treated as hostages. In 1945, when the Soviet troops marched in, I was in a vineyard on Somló Hill.⁷ This was why I went back to Somló Hill on the day we celebrated the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary. I went up to the lookout tower, because I wanted to salute that day on the spot where I had watched the Soviets moving in and the Germans withdrawing along Highway 8. You may imagine what a child of thirteen must have seen and felt, in a hillside vineyard where, in our wine-cellar, 120 hectolitres of mature wine were lost when the barrels were staved in with axes. Today's generations cannot even imagine what a moving battle-line was like, and what we went through. We children saw a lot, because we were already too old to be kept at home but not old enough to be made prisoners of war, as was the fashion for those aged sixteen and upwards. So we could move around freely.

These experiences mean a lot to me. Similarly important are the memories of my grandfather and my father in Russian captivity. I still have the letters they wrote from the POW camps in 1917–18, when the postal service still functioned. Prisoners of war could still hear Shalyapin sing at the St Petersburg opera, because they were admitted in exchange for some dry bread. How the Communist takeover took place, how my father and his fellows were released, how seven Communist sailors seized an entire city, how the mayor and the garrison commander were shot – all this belonged, for me, to the stories of childhood. So, in 1945 I greeted the Soviet troops as old acquaintances, for I knew all about them from my father and grandfather, all about how it had been in 1917. They had already told me about it, several times, after my father's detention by the Gestapo. My grandfather had even been able to tell me how the tsarist Russian troops had behaved in Vác in 1849, because his grandfather had told him about it. So we could even make comparisons.

⁷ Somló Hill is a 437 m high volcanic elevation north of Lake Balaton, one of the best wine-growing regions of Hungary. Many of Antall's forebears lived in the villages nearby.

Events such as these affect one's political thinking later in life. In 1945 I felt close to the Independent Smallholders' Party. I was still a child, so obviously I could participate only in their youth organisation. An active politician, my father was now not only a Member of Parliament, but also a state secretary and later a minister. I count among my most influential memories the visit Avarell Harriman made to Budapest. We students staged a public demonstration for Harriman in 1945; we cheered the US, demanded freedom and waved little American flags. The Americans were quartered in the building of the Hotel Astoria. Not long ago, some eight to ten years ago I read his memoirs, in which he described how, from a balcony of the hotel, he had watched young Hungarians demonstrate for freedom, and how his heart had sunk because he knew he could do nothing.

All these things had a bearing on how my political views developed, as did the big fight with members of the Communist party youth organisation, at the time of the local government elections, in Budapest's Kossuth Lajos Street in 1945, when the windows of a toyshop then called Kraus's were broken. A gentleman called Miklós Szabó⁸ wrote about these things in *A Secret War* and elsewhere in an entirely different vein. I was there, and I can tell you what actually happened in 1945. The Soviet troops eventually rounded us up and I could only escape using Vármegeház Street.⁹ The events of autumn 1945 contributed to the shaping of my political attitudes.

I took my final exams in the secondary school in 1950 and went on to study humanities at the university. There were about 240 students studying Hungarian and history at the Faculty of Arts. At the Technical University the number of students in many subjects was similarly high. They accepted anyone at the Technical University. From 1951 and 1952 on, with the start of the forced resettlements,¹⁰ this changed, as did so much else. I do not really want to go into this in detail; it is not especially relevant here. Everybody went through such things and became opposed to the regime, but this is not what I want to talk about now. There are many people around – many of them still in the forefront of public life – who may have been party secretaries at that time but who today may hold leading posts in the Church, for instance. I am not saying this out of

⁸ Miklós Szabó (1922–1997), a politician in the Smallholders Party, went into exile, probably already as an agent of the Communist regime. Returned into Hungary in 1957 to betray his friends and the cause of democratic Hungary.

⁹ Kossuth Lajos Street, Vármegeház Street: a thoroughfare and a small street in downtown Budapest.

¹⁰ In 1951 many members of the old upper and middle class were summarily evicted from their home and deported to remote villages.

spite; I speak only about the changing times and the changing world. I could also mention that those who went through school at that time may have come under different influences. I, for one, attended Gyula Szekfű's¹¹ lectures, just as I did György Lukács's,¹² and those given by various professors of the grand old school such as the linguist Dezső Pais,¹³ the historian of law Ferenc Eckhardt¹⁴ and Sándor Eckhardt, professor of French literature.¹⁵ Theirs was a great generation. It was such a strange time. Frightened, the grand old generation still gave lectures, and even in the most difficult times they still spoke their mind to us, to those they could, in corridors and in their rooms. The likes of Albert Gyergyai¹⁶ did, and others, too. And what else could we have done in this period? We trained ourselves as best we could, and took an interest in politics.

I can only tell you that I pursued my studies in line with my interests in history, economics, law, and politics, and all the time it was politics I was interested in most. Naturally, I had no chance to practise it until 1956, for at that time there was only one way to be involved in politics: taking part in the politics of those then in power. Or for a short period one could participate in a conspiracy, but this was not practical politics, for it inevitably led to imprisonment. However, in 1956, if one lived to see it, one could play a political role.

In 1956 I was a teacher at the Eötvös Grammar School and I became chairman of the revolutionary committee there. This, however, was just one of my activities, of which I am still proud of. I was in touch with young people, and hundreds of former students kept ties with me. But the real political activity I was able to perform was something else. It was co-operation with the Coalition Government from 1 November 1956 onwards that I consider my

¹¹ Gyula Szekfű (1883–1955), historian, university professor, member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Minister to Moscow (1946–48). His highly popular work *Three Generations* was a major intellectual influence after the First World War. In the 1930s he was aware of the danger of Nazism and tried to prevent the drift of the public towards the Right.

¹² György Lukács (1885–1971), Marxist philosopher, university professor, member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. He lived in the Soviet Union from 1929 until the end of the Second World War. In 1956 he supported Imre Nagy, was kidnapped by the Soviet authorities and deported to Romania. In 1957 he returned to Budapest, reconciled with the Kádár regime, and wrote on Marxist aesthetics and ethics.

¹³ Dezső Pais (1886–1973), linguist, university professor, member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, an innovator in Hungarian etymology.

¹⁴ Ferenc Eckhardt (1885–1957), legal and economic historian, member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

¹⁵ Sándor Eckhardt (1890–1969), brother of Ferenc Eckhardt, literary historian, linguist, university professor, member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. An expert on French literary history and linguistics, and on Franco-Hungarian cultural ties in history, editor of a French–Hungarian dictionary.

¹⁶ Albert Gyergyai (1893–1981), historian of literature, professor of French literature.

most important activity in politics then. I will not now go into details about the demonstrations and other things, like taking over the Semmelweis Street former headquarters of the Independent Smallholders' Party, and the preparations for that seizure. I want to tell you that between 1 November and 3 November I had occasion to stay in the Parliament building and to take on some assignments; a recent article in the monthly journal *História* refers to them. I also attended to some tasks on behalf of members of the government such as Zoltán Tildy¹⁷ and Béla Kovács;¹⁸ in addition, I took part in contacting several members of the diplomatic corps, among them Poles. After the Soviet invasion on 4 November, I participated in the so-called India action, in the course of which I had a separate meeting with K. P. S. Menon, Indian ambassador at the time, who tried to act as mediator between the then Hungarian opposition, the political parties and the Soviet government. This still needs to be written up in detail. There are references to it in some memoirs, but the story as a whole has not been published. There were attempts made up to January 1957 to reach some sort of accommodation, to salvage what could still be saved, but then the arrests made it clear that all such attempts were doomed to failure, whether Kádár and company wanted them sincerely or not, and from January on this was all too apparent.

I myself believe that their willingness to negotiate was part of a transitional pacification. They themselves may not have known this precisely, but it is a fact that certain circles of politicians, predominantly economists, such as István Varga and Jenő Rácz,¹⁹ took part in the preparation of an economic reform. They came from the Smallholders, the Petőfi Party²⁰ and to a lesser extent the Social Democrats.²¹

¹⁷ Zoltán Tildy (1889–1961), Calvinist minister, politician, founding member of the Independent Smallholders' Party in 1930, Prime Minister November 1945–February 1946, President 1946–1948, Minister of State in the government of Imre Nagy in 1956, for which was sentenced to six years imprisonment.

¹⁸ Béla Kovács (1908–1959), politician, Secretary-General of the Independent Smallholders' Party in 1945–1947, Minister of Agriculture in 1945–1946. He was seized by the Soviet military and deported to the Soviet Union to be released only in 1955. He became a Minister in the Imre Nagy government. A close friend of the Antall family, during the revolution he stayed in their home.

¹⁹ István Varga, Jenő Rácz: economists close to the Smallholders' Party.

²⁰ Petőfi Party, formerly the National Peasant Party, a more radical agrarian party than the Smallholders, was founded in 1939 and dissolved in 1949. In 1956 it was reorganised, bearing the name of the great 19th century poet. I. Bibó (see note 23) was a prominent member of the party.

²¹ The Social Democratic Party of Hungary was formed in 1890. It managed to gain 22 seats in Parliament in 1922, and remained an important party in the opposition until 1944. It received 17 per cent at the 1945 elections and was part of the coalition government. In 1948 it was forced into a merge with the Communist Party. It revived during the 1956 election, with Kéthly representing it in the Cabinet. After 1989 several parties were formed under this name but none of them cleared the electoral threshold in 1990 or ever since.

Kádár allowed József Fischer and Gyula Kelemen²² to leave for Denmark even in November 1956.

Events like these, and my participation in them, contributed to the fact that politics became for me not only a calling and a commitment, but also a profession that could be practised in tiny bits, as in 1956. I was not convicted. I was arrested several times but then released. I was suspended from my job and banned from publishing. From 1963 onwards I was allowed to publish professional articles again. I decided to utilise an opportunity and to become active in the field of medical history, because this was an area that neither doctors, nor historians knew much about. You could achieve things in that area, whether in building up an institution or in periodicals, in professional work that won international acknowledgement and prestige for the country. For me it meant at the same time scope for action and, I may safely say, protection, because I soon received acclaim from international organisations and professional bodies that enabled me to secure personal independence at home. I could afford to do a lot, things that others could not do, without writing a single sentence with which I disagreed, without writing things that people could now dig up and use against me. There are people around trying to collect such things.

From 1987–88 on, I naturally joined the political group of the opposition which was close to me. Back in 1956, Béla Kovács and others thought that a political party, or an alliance of parties, should be created with the participation of the Independent Smallholders' Party and the Petőfi Party, with the active co-operation of István Bibó²³ and Ferenc Farkas,²⁴ together with the branch of the Christian Democrats represented by Ferenc Barankovics.²⁵

These currents functioned only as informal gatherings, as there were no political parties at the time. I did not attend their meetings, because they were political circles activated in the shadow of the Patriotic People's Front²⁶, circles

²² József Fischer, Gyula Kelemen: Ministers of State in the Imre Nagy government in 1956, representing the Social Democratic Party, together with Anna Kéthly.

²³ István Bibó (1911–1979), jurist, historian, political philosopher, professor. He was Minister of State in the government of Imre Nagy in 2–4 November 1956. Arrested in 1957, sentenced to life imprisonment, released with amnesty in 1963. His writings were very important in shaping the views of Hungarian intellectuals in the late 20th century.

²⁴ Ferenc Farkas (1903–1966), publisher, economist, politician. One of the founders and leaders of the National Peasant Party.

²⁵ István Barankovics (1906–1974), journalist, politician, Secretary-General of the Christian Democratic People's Party, Leader of the Parliamentary Party, 1947–1948, forced into emigration after the Communist takeover.

²⁶ The umbrella organisation which came to replace the political parties in. It was under the complete control of the communists..

where aged gentlemen received free boiled sausages, there were friendly chit-chats and their requests for bigger pensions were handled. This was no solution for me; obviously I wanted to have no part in it. The only organisation I joined in the political sense was the Hungarian Democratic Forum. I attended the first informal talks held by the Independent Smallholders' Party, but I did not join that party. It was similar when the Christian Democratic People's Party was formed. Both invited me, naturally, but I did not take part. I joined one political party, the Hungarian Democratic Forum, when it decided to become active also as a political party, not just as a movement. And in 1988, when the HDF became an organisation I was one of its founders, since I attended the Lakitelek meeting.

I did not want to take a leading post in the party. At the first national convention I was nominated for membership of the national presidium, but I declined; despite this I received some 300 votes. I continued to attend the sessions of the Democratic Forum, but I did not want to make things final by becoming a member of the presidium, because I thought that some points were still unclear politically. At the time of the opposition round-table talks, I attended some of the sessions that were held at the Law School, at the invitation of the presidium of the Democratic Forum, at whose sessions, from 1988 onwards, I was a permanent invited participant without being a member. It was in 1989, a few hours before the national roundtable talks started, that the presidium asked me, along with György Szabad²⁷ and László Sólyom,²⁸ to represent the Hungarian Democratic Forum in the talks. We were delegated to both the main committee and the middle-level committee, and I also sat on the constitutional law committee, with people like Péter Tölgyessy,²⁹ Viktor Orbán³⁰ and Tibor Füzessy.³¹

²⁷ György Szabad (b. 1924), historian, Professor at Eötvös University, Budapest. Founding member of the Hungarian Democratic Forum, member of its board, then its presidency. Speaker of the Parliament between 1990 and 1994.

²⁸ László Sólyom (b. 1942), jurist, Professor at Eötvös University. He was a member of the Hungarian Democratic Forum in 1988–1989, when he resigned as he was elected Head of the Constitutional Court, a position he held until 1998. Was elected President of the Republic of Hungary in 2005.

²⁹ Péter Tölgyessy (b. 1957), jurist, political analyst, one of the founders of the Alliance of Free Democrats, the main rival party of the HDF. Was elected its President in 1991–1992, left the party in 1996. Between 1998 and 2006, MP in the group of Fidesz – Hungarian Civic Alliance.

³⁰ Viktor Orbán (b. 1963), jurist, politician. Founder and President of Fidesz, the party of the Young Democrats, founded in May 1988, challenging the monopoly of the communist party. MP since 1990, Prime Minister in 1998–2002, since then the leader of the opposition. Starting as a radical liberal, in the mid-1990s he and his party (today Fidesz – Hungarian Civic Alliance) turned conservative.

³¹ Tibor Füzessy (b. 1928), jurist. Was a delegate of the Christian Democratic People's Party, later its MP, Minister without portfolio in 1992–1994.

In the summer of 1989 I deemed it necessary for the stability of the country that the Hungarian Democratic Forum co-operate with the Independent Smallholders' Party, the Christian Democratic People's Party – the latter I had proposed in the spring for invitation to the opposition round-table talks –, the Bajcsy-Zsilinszky Society and, as long as they would be capable of taking root, the Petőfi Party, the Peasant Party now revived as the People's Party. I thought it would be possible to form them into a political force capable of governing Hungary. On the other side were the Free Democrats, the Young Democrats (Fidesz), the League, which was entitled to participate in discussions; and the Social Democratic Party, now with one delegation, now with two.

The really great importance of the round-table talks was, as I see it, that these political parties mobilised hundreds or even thousands of people. And this was an addition to all their other achievements, such as the negotiations leading to agreement with the Communist Party on the transition, contributing to the collapse of the entire Eastern bloc by creating the Republic of Hungary; and at the same time the participants in the round-table talks, together with a set of experts, helped shape a political force. The press, some political analysts and many others may belittle this and question such achievements, but I do not want to begin a polemic about it here. All I am saying is that this was important because up until then the political parties and political forces of the opposition had no genuine experts, such as economists and lawyers, to address practical issues. Lots of legal experts and economists showed up behind us, and many of them now sit in Parliament or occupy political posts.

This was very important. A lot of people were involved in the talks, among them intellectuals who would not have become involved otherwise. Had this not taken place, politics on the opposition side would have remained the activity of political scientists, philosophers, sociologists, writers, and historians, primarily people engaged in the humanities. But then, because the talks were so specific, focusing on constitutional law, the press, the economy, etc., and because there were six economic committees and six political ones, there really was a need for experts capable of addressing practical, concrete issues. This was an achievement of the round-table talks.

I have told you how my political thinking and my political commitment evolved. It is therefore not difficult to guess that beginning in 1988–89, when it was quite clear and very evident that the transformation and the turning-point were near, a lot nearer than could have been expected a few years earlier on the basis of the weakening of the communist regime. I participated in the

process, always on invitation and on request, without pushing myself into the limelight. Authors of recollections state that I came forward in the course of the round-table talks, and that is true. I was one of those who conducted the hard, compromise-seeking political negotiations of the round-table talks. I want to tell you here that these talks were in fact negotiations between the two principal political sides. In many respects the two opposing sides agreed with one another on certain issues much more than with the heterogeneous third side, which was out of place there. We know that the third side was, in this respect, pointless; it was in any case heterogeneous. However, the two sides saw eye to eye on some questions, and both acted according to their possibilities. I want to make it clear here that no improper deal was made at all. There was neither a Bíró³²–Pozsgay³³ deal, nor an Antall–Pozsgay deal, no deal whatsoever. We never spoke a word about who would receive what position; what we did talk about – and this is no secret, for we more than once talked as spokesmen for the opposition – was simply the way in which to wind down the regime. Imre Pozsgay and others attempted to find political solutions *vis-à-vis* Rezső Nyers's³⁴ position, Károly Grósz's³⁵ position, and the way to harmonise these political issues. We always talked about specific issues: about the Workers' Guard, about the presence of political parties in the workplace, about clear-cut political views. I repeat this all the time: Imre Pozsgay performed an outstanding role in the course of these talks and just because he did so does not mean that there was a deal of any sort.

Similarly, there was no deal whatsoever between Tölgyessy and myself. When we speak about compromise in politics, we speak about negotiations, about agreements. Péter Tölgyessy was accused of making a deal with me. Those who made this charge simply forgot to look at the relevant document,

³² Bíró Zoltán (b. 1941), historian of literature, author, the first (acting) president of the Hungarian Democratic Forum.

³³ Pozsgay Imre (b. 1933), politician. Joined the Communist Party at the age of 17, Minister of Culture (1976–1982), Secretary-General of the Patriotic People's Front (1982–1988), when again joined the government. Became the leader of the reforming wing of the communists, the founder of the Hungarian Socialist Party in 1989, and its candidate for the post of President of the Republic. In November 1990 left his party, formed a new party with Z. Bíró, but failed to clear the electoral threshold in 1994.

³⁴ Rezső Nyers (b. 1923), economist, politician, member of the Social Democratic Party, then of the Communist Party. Finance Minister between 1960–1962. President of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (q.v.) and then that of the Hungarian Socialist Party in 1989.

³⁵ Károly Grósz (1930–1996), military officer, politician, Head of the Department of Agitation and Propaganda in the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party from 1961, Prime Minister in 1987–1988. He tried to save the communist system with modest reforms, but was opposed to the democratic transformation.

the agreement the HDF made with the Free Democrats, on giving up some of the laws requiring a two-thirds majority in Parliament, because otherwise the country would have become ungovernable. No budget, for instance, can be passed if a two-thirds majority is needed; it is difficult to get one through even with a vote of fifty per cent plus one. This was what we agreed upon, and also on the persons of Árpád Göncz,³⁶ György Szabád and others. This is well known: we made it public. One thing you should not forget: it was not Péter Tölgyessy and myself who signed it; Péter Tölgyessy discussed the basics with me and then János Kis³⁷ and Iván Pető³⁸ took it further; the signatories were Péter Tölgyessy, János Kis and Iván Pető. For the Hungarian Democratic Forum, Imre Kónya³⁹ and István Balsai⁴⁰ were the participants; they were first and foremost lawyers, for these were legal matters. Then the presidium and the parliamentary group of the Forum endorsed it.

If I look at my own role in it, my role was, I believe, that I conducted the negotiations realistically at all times.

I now want to say a few words about the vocation of the politician. Politics as political science is theory, ideology; it is applied philosophy. Politics in practice is decision-making and action. The two are not identical. They are very often mixed up. One's political conception, one's political programme defines the political motivation of the politician. This is all the more so as we all must have motivation: this is what distinguishes a conscious politician of some stature from people who have no views, no programme, no vision of the world, people who are driven by career goals or by mere ambition, people who have no ideals that they want to carry through to reality. On the other hand, a politician who has a definite vision of the world, a political affiliation and roots must also think in an entirely different way when it comes to reality, when he is confronted with reality. At that point it is a question of proper decision-making and action that is important.

³⁶ Árpád Göncz (b. 1922), jurist, writer, literary translator. In 1946 private secretary of the Smallholder leader Béla Kovács. In 1958 sentenced for life for his participation in the revolution. One of the founders of the Alliance of Free Democrats. President of the Republic of Hungary in 1990–2000.

³⁷ János Kis (b. 1943), philosopher, at first stood close to of the Marxist school of György Lukács. An outspoken critic of the one-party state from the 1970s, one of the founders and first President of the Alliance of Free Democrats. Resigned in 1991 and quit the party in 2002.

³⁸ Iván Pető (b. 1946), historian, politician. He signed the Charta 77, and participated in the 'dissident' movement. Founding member of the Alliance of Free Democrats in 1988, President of the party in 1992–1997.

³⁹ Imre Kónya (b. 1947), jurist, politician, founder of the Opposition Round-table. MP (HDF) 1990–1998. Minister of the Interior in the government of Péter Boross (1994).

⁴⁰ István Balsai (b. 1947), jurist, politician, MP (HDF, later Fidesz) 1990–. Minister of Justice (1990–1994).

Historians and political scientists often quote from politicians' writings; and they do not always differentiate between diaries and policy speeches. Both genres are of interest if we are looking at the mental make-up of a politician, be it Eötvös⁴¹ or whoever, if I take as a starting-point the wise thoughts in his diary. These must, however, be distinguished from what he might declare in public, and what he actually states in public in order to carry out his intentions, to aid the execution of his ideas.

The political diary of Rudolf Andorka⁴² for instance – I am speaking of General Andorka, father of the university rector⁴³ – was among the first to be published; he described his thoughts when he was already outside politics and day-to-day diplomatic service. Or consider those parts of Eötvös's diaries or of the recollections of others that cannot be identified with what they said in the Parliament or on other occasions. One should place great emphasis on what can in fact be implemented in reality.

One problem of Hungarian politics is too much ideology. We are too much occupied with ideological issues, issues that are of minor importance in the practice of politics. We often see that in reality, even in areas such as education, the economy and other fields, there are mechanisms that can be operated in the same way in a milder dictatorship and in a democracy, not to mention the fact that the same mechanisms can function with different ideas in a democratic, multi-party system.

That is exactly why I spoke about too much ideology. It is a curse of Hungarian politics that intellectual, literary and sociological schools clash with each other as overly committed, overly ideological, political workshops. This has been going on since the turn of the 20th century, since the Galileo Circle was formed in the years after 1900.⁴⁴

⁴¹ József Eötvös (1813–1871), writer, publicist, politician, president of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (1866–1871). Highly educated, liberal politician, theorist of the Age of Reforms. In 1848 he headed the Ministry of Religion and Education. A strong advocate of the Compromise in 1867, he returned to the post of Minister of Religion and Public Education and introduced compulsory elementary education in 1968. Author of a major work on political thinking, *The Dominant Ideas of the 19th Century*.

⁴² Rudolf Andorka (1891–1961), military officer, military attaché in Prague and Warsaw, Minister of Legation in Madrid (1939–1941). Following the German occupation he was arrested and deported to Mauthausen concentration camp. After the Communist takeover he was arrested, tortured, his family was evicted from Budapest.

⁴³ Rudolf Andorka (1931–1997), a victim of communist discrimination, he became a sociologist. University professor in the mid-1980s, member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1990. Rector of the University of Economic Sciences (1991–1997). Close personal friend of Antall.

⁴⁴ The organisation of radical Hungarian university students before and during the First World War. Many members played a prominent role in the controversial revolutions of 1918/19.

I want to say in conclusion that I believe that the career of politician is a calling, a vocation. It was a calling for me even when I could not yet practise it. I wanted to become a politician even then, without making it into something I had to achieve at any price. I could not help doing so: it followed from my nature and interests, wherever I was and at any given time from the age of sixteen when politics became one of my interests. I was engaged in many things, history and so on. But from that time onwards, irrespective of the family atmosphere, I followed politics. Consequently, I was, out of my own volition, up to date as regards politics, whether it was Germany in Adenauer's time, or Churchill or Mendès-France in France. I followed whatever was available on the air, in the literature that had been smuggled in from abroad, or in some other way. For me it has not been a problem to meet foreign politicians who have spent the earlier decades as practising politicians. We can speak on the same wave length and exchange similar ideas, and the fact that I spent all those years at the Semmelweis Museum for the History of Medicine⁴⁵ is of no less importance than my spending them in another country in public life would have been. Do not misunderstand me: I am not saying this out of conceit; I am speaking only about interests. This is how I experienced it, with multiple interests and with greater efforts.

Consequently, it is just badgering, innocent badgering I think, when some say that I am a museum director turned erring politician, and I sincerely excuse and forgive these people. I did not find my way to politics from that direction. I was preparing for a political career. I started out to be politician, and even in those years [under communism] I said that I was not actually unhappy. It was just that I was living a life in which things were reversed: I made my living from what could have been my hobby and leisure activity, from art history to cultural history, and politics was my hobby. What happened to me after 1987–88, when I became active in political life, was that this was turned round. I would never regret those years as historian in a museum. I am always proud when, in the course of my visits abroad, I am taken to a museum or a library which has been accorded ten or twenty minutes – be it the National Museum in Japan, or wherever – and from a distance of five metres I can point out with great certainty which century a particular object dates from. I am especially delighted

⁴⁵ Ignác Semmelweis (1818–1865), Hungarian obstetrician, gynaecologist, called “the saviour of mothers.” He invented the method of ablution with chlorinated water to prevent death in childbirth. His birthplace houses the Semmelweis Museum for the History of Medicine; it is largely the creation of Antall.

to be right from that distance of five metres when my guide, the museum director, turns out to be wrong because the object is not exactly his specialist area. Hobby, profession and calling thus coincide.

This is what I wanted to tell you in such an eclectic, confessional fashion, and add that it was a luxury only we could have afforded.

Now that there is democracy in the country and we have a functional parliamentary system, we cannot content ourselves with politicians who picked up politics in an amateurish way and pursue politics as a hobby. Politics is something one has to prepare for as a profession and pursue it with a sense of vocation, yet with professional knowledge. But even the greatest professional knowledge cannot take the place of a sense of calling. Those who have no political commitment and no calling in politics will not become genuine politicians. One can only become a politician if he/she has a commitment, a calling, and if that sense of calling is complemented by a political ethos and an ambition to achieve professional knowledge. This is my recommendation to the next generation and to young people who want to become committed in politics.

I recommend that, besides many Hungarian and foreign publications, read Gyula Kornis's⁴⁶ two-volume work entitled *Az államférfi* (The Statesman), published in 1933. It has shortcomings and in some sense it is outdated, but it is the best summary in Hungarian of what makes a politician's personality. By way of conclusion, I wish only to refer to its table of contents, indicating the numerous topics covered: "The Statesman and History"; "Ethos and the Mental Make-up of the Statesman"; "The Significance of a Statesman's Sense of Vocation"; "The Ideal of Liberty"; "The National Ideal"; "The Economic Ideal"; "The Social Ideal"; "The Tradition-transforming Power of Ideals"; "Politics"; "Love of a Political Object"; "Politics and Selflessness"; "Willpower"; "Will as the Essence of a Statesman-like Personality"; "The Power of Will"; "The Tenacity of Will"; "The Pushy Politician"; "The Political Heroes of the Will"; "The Statesman's Work"; "The Statesman's Sense of Responsibility"; "Responsibility and Democracy"; "The Suggestiveness of the Statesman"; "The Power of the Word"; "The Power of Writing"; "Man as the Material of Politics"; "The Mental Wisdom of the Statesman"; "Contempt of Man in a Statesman"; "The Statesman as an Artist of Compromise"; "Knowledge of the Soul of the Nation"; "Knowledge of the Soul of the Party"; "Mental Elements of the Sense of Reality"; "The Complexity of the Political Soul"; "Political Thinking";

⁴⁶ Gyula Kornis (1885–1958), philosopher, university professor, member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

“Political Intuition”; “Emotions in Politics”; “Ambition and Craving for Power in Politics”; – I am reading just a few more – “Politics and Principles”; “Political Pragmatism”; “Principles and Parties”; “The British Political Personality”; “The French...”, “The German...”; etc. I recommend these two bulky tomes to you to read as specialist literature, if you have not heard of them. There are lines or passages in them that may by now be obsolete, but historically are still instructive.

I wish that more and more of you will be interested in politics as a vocation and as a profession. The country needs persons, and young persons also, in several parties, who can practise politics in a European fashion, in accordance with a parliamentary system, in an appropriate manner, with the ability to carry out their decisions consistently, forcefully, and honestly.

HOME AFFAIRS

THE PROSPECTS OF TRANSITION

Speech addressed to the second National Convention of the Hungarian Democratic Forum, which took place on 20–22 October 1989 at the Budapest University of Economics and which attracted several hundred delegates from all corners of the country. The text is taken from the recording of the speech broadcast by Hungarian Television shortly after its delivery on the afternoon of 20 October.

When I took it upon myself to give a brief presentation on the domestic and the international situation of Hungary, I was not yet aware of the respected National Presidium's motion. For this reason a peculiar sense of responsibility is weighing on my mind.

Now that I have spent several days attending parliamentary sittings as an observer, it is a most difficult moment for me to take the floor and present my views on the domestic and international situation of Hungary.

I am here to perform a thankless task. Those who have addressed the convention so far include such masters of eloquence as Professor György Szabad⁴⁷ and István Csurka,⁴⁸ and also our guest speakers from abroad who expressed their heartfelt appreciation of what is going on in our country.

The task I am about to perform is thankless, and my presentation will necessarily be tedious because I have to speak about the hard realities of the situation. I am afraid I may prove a killjoy and displease you, but anyway I am determined to tell the truth, and, at any rate, to speak my mind.

First of all, I want to tell you that we have gone through marvellous months; we have gone through a wonderful, undreamed of period of eighteen months. We had entertained some hopes ever since 1956 and we had never given them up, but even as late as eighteen months ago we did not dare hope that it was already possible to achieve this much here and now. For this very reason it is

⁴⁷ See note 27.

⁴⁸ István Csurka (b. 1934), popular playwright in the 1970s and 1980s. Founding member of the Hungarian Democratic Forum, elected MP in 1990. Due to his unacceptably radical writings and statements was expelled from the party in June 1993. In July 1993 he established a new party, Hungarian Justice and Life Party, with the members of his national radical group – opposing the Antall government from a radical right-wing stance. In 2002 his party failed to gain any seats in the Parliament.

not only happiness, but a sense of responsibility as well that we should feel in full measure.

Let me review our historic and current situation. The geographical position of Hungary has not changed since the settlement of our country ten centuries ago. We live at the same fault line of Europe which has determined our historic mission and responsibilities in the past. These have never changed. Therefore it is clear that our historic responsibility was and continues to be to serve Europe. When I had the unexpected honour of addressing the Christian Democrat Group in the European Parliament, I told the audience: "Ladies and Gentlemen, you may regard the issue of Europe and Christianity as a political programme, but to my nation it is history, pure and simple. Here, in this corner of the continent, we have been fighting for Europe, and, indeed, for a Christian Europe, all along."

And I did not mean it in any exclusive sense, and even less in a purely Church-related sense. What I had in mind was simply that in Europe even atheists are Christian. The Christianity of Europe consists in its culture, its ethics and its way of thinking; and, regardless of denominational differences, we are all part of this Europe. It is our task to stand up for it.

So the issue that I am about to deal with today is what we should consider as our duty now, in 1989. We find ourselves in a situation where the totalitarian state and the totalitarian party are both in a state of collapse. But we must not forget that totalitarianism poses a threat even when it is collapsing.

Now, as ever, after forty years of totalitarianism (which has had its ebbs and flows, just as Haynau, Bach and Schmerling⁴⁹ represented different qualities of authoritarianism between 1849 and 1867), the only aim we can set before ourselves is that Hungary should be transformed into a constitutional state.

We have just witnessed some achievements in this respect, and it is time for us to ponder over what the current international situation may hold in store for us.

We have had the opportunity not only to visit foreign countries, but also to receive senior politicians from various countries. They spoke to us in very encouraging terms, and we welcomed them as friends, and we can feel and do feel that their friendship is an assurance to us. However, we need to be aware of

⁴⁹ The period of bloody reprisals ordered by General Haynau (1849) was followed by a neo-absolutistic government and military oppression of Hungary and northern Italy by the Habsburgs. Bach and Schmerling were Prime Ministers appointed by Francis Joseph during the period 1851–1867, the era of Hungarian passive resistance. During this period, Hungary was deprived of its constitution.

where the restrictions lie, and need to know what is really meant when we say we are fighting for democratisation, it is our goal to achieve democratisation, and, as we are passing through the process of democratisation, we rely on help from the international community.

It follows that, besides democratisation, stability is the operative word in respect of both our domestic affairs and international relations. If the process of democratisation, if the process of making Hungary a law-abiding state, if the achievement of independent statehood in Hungary is not accompanied by stability and political responsibility, if licentiousness is let loose, and if this country is permitted to fall victim to misjudgement and wishful thinking, we shall go down in history as those responsible for things taking a nasty turn.

We take pride in the fact that constitutionalism and freedom have always been an integral part of Hungarian politics. Hungarian constitutionalism has never had anything to do with absolute monarchy. Hungarians have never wanted and have never been able to live otherwise than in freedom and constitutionalism. And this is something that both our friends and our enemies should keep in mind.

However, Hungarian politics, just as that of many other nations, has three failings, three weak spots. The first is opportunism, or cowardice.

Cowards and opportunists we have always had among our ranks – people prone to yield to opponents prematurely, people without determination. The Hungarian Democratic Forum and the finest part of the nation has never had anything to do with opportunism.

However, there is another recurrent vice in Hungarian politics: doctrinarism. Doctrinarism was always at work whenever the country was put in danger by idealists out of contact with reality, who had fallen prey to abstract theorising, or just adopted unpractical political notions.

Such an attitude should likewise be alien to us, for nothing can be more dangerous than to put the country in the trust of people who, however great their knowledge or intellectual ability may be in other respects, have no knowledge or experience of political affairs. There have been such people in this country, both on the right and on the left, but wherever they are, we'll have nothing to do with such people!

Besides opportunism and doctrinarism, there is a third danger, which has kept recurring, but I should hope it will never become a vice of the Hungarian Democratic Forum: the politics of the pub. It is the kind of empty talk whereby people are content trying to outbid each other; the more you excel in

braggadocio, the braver you feel. And when you succeed in saying something really tall, the others, in order not to be outdone, will try to outshine you. But when the moment of truth comes, the braggarts will usually come to nothing.

In view of this it is necessary for us to know our limitations. Undoubtedly it is Hungary's goal to renew, to make a new start as soon as possible, with guarantees for its freedom. We want Hungary to become free! We want the rule of law to prevail; democracy should consist not only in mere words of the law, but it should be established in practice, and with all speed. What guarantees do we hold?

The most important international guarantee is embodied in the relations which now obtain between the United States and the Soviet Union.

The prevailing Soviet–American relations are favourable to all sorts of change on the international stage; they are such that American foreign policy takes a responsible attitude towards internal changes in the Soviet Union, and *vice versa*, it can be seen that Soviet foreign policy strives to display similar behaviour. Now this co-operation between Soviet and American policy makers, this continuous co-ordination of policies is the guarantee that our small nation may renew, may gain back its freedom. For this very reason it was significant indeed that both Ambassador Palmer and Ambassador Stukhalin attended the opening of our assembly.

But it is just as important for us that western Europe, the Soviet Union, the United States and the rest of the world should closely co-operate. The representatives of these countries have already touched upon this theme, and in this context we should also make mention of the European Community, the European Common Market, the European Parliament and our common European homeland. Together with the United States and other developed nations, Europe is capable of assisting us, and it is well known that twenty-four countries are making a joint effort to assist with the renewal of Hungary's economy, finances and scientific life, and to help set up the country's infrastructure and everything required for the creation of a modern Hungary.

We should, however, not miss the fact that the assistance will be withdrawn if any cooling or collapse in military or foreign affairs occurs. Let no one be deluded into thinking that Western Europe, the United States or any other country would do otherwise than they did repeatedly in the course of our history.

We ought not to be counting on military support or other external assistance but should be creating, by soberly assessing the international situation, the conditions that will allow them to help us, for they will support us as long as the transition, the process of democratisation is peaceful. This was made clear

to us by each and every Western politician who came to see us, from President Bush onwards, and it is something that you must be aware of as well.

This is the international reality we have to take account of, just as our Polish brothers and sisters are taking account of it. Although conditions and circumstances are different, while trying to find a workable solution, we would do well heed the example of Poland where Solidarnosc succeeded in organising millions.

Under such circumstances, while we are loath to renounce Hungary's claim to neutrality, while we insist that Hungary should become neutral (for what else could our small nation in the middle of Europe do but wish to be free and neutral), we should be aware that never in history has neutrality been a question of proclamation, but rather a possibility arising from international agreements and regional conditions.

Until circumstances are such as to allow this, we shall strive to secure, within the framework of a modernised Warsaw Treaty, a position that will ensure that our armed forces have an independent national quality, that our frontiers be well defended in every direction, that no foreign armies can invade the country, and that our own troops may never again be deployed to invade another country.

In the economic realm, Hungary is in crisis and heading for an even more severe crisis. The economic crisis may turn into a social crisis, and the combination of economic and social crisis can sweep us all away. We must guard ourselves against being carried away with unleashed forces, as this could easily lead to a neo-Stalinist restoration – social demagoguery might very easily turn the masses against us as well, against democrats and independent-minded political movements.

We must not allow this to happen, and therefore we should make a fully responsible effort with full determination to ensure that, while our values are maintained, proper political and economic conditions are created for western capital to be attracted to Hungary, for western investments to be made here, and also for Hungary to occupy her appropriate position in the region. It is necessary to set up a new political framework in East-Central Europe, for up to now Hungary has been no more than a member of a military alliance with compulsory rules.

It is also time for us to look around in the region, to rediscover our friends in this part of the world, and to reassess our relations with such old friends as the Polish people.

But it is vital for us to seek a renewal of friendships not only with the Polish people but also with other neighbouring nations. And I want to assert that the Hungarian nation bears no grudge against the Russian nation, has never borne any grudge against the peoples of the Soviet Union. Innocent folks, the common people of various nations have always been on good terms with each other: mutual understanding was common for instance in POW camps and concentration camps, where people of various nationalities (Russians, Hungarians, Lithuanians and so on) shared a common fate.

We have never taken exception to Russian culture. Such writers as Tolstoy or Dostoyevsky have very nearly been regarded as our own. But foreign rule is never welcome. It is perhaps understandable that in the wake of World War II the Soviets did not seek to negotiate an agreement with us, perhaps it is understandable in view of the then prevailing conditions in the Soviet Union, but they, in turn, should also understand now that Hungary was not alone responsible for the deployment of Hungarian forces against the Soviet Union, and that they were making a mistake when they refused Hungary the treatment which should have possibly been accorded to her in all fairness.

May the present day mark the beginning of a new kind of an independent relationship on equal terms between the peoples of the Soviet Union and Hungary! I am convinced that just as the peoples of the Soviet Union enjoy a more genuine friendship with the Finns than with any other nation, so will they find no truer friends than us Hungarians once we are allowed to extend a friendly hand to them of our own free will.

For this reason the Hungarian Democratic Forum will not only insist that Hungary should become a free and democratic country, but also that independence should be linked up with internal and external stability. What we want is a stable Hungary, not anarchy, the perpetual hotbed of dictatorship.

Hence, as we approach 23 October, it is quite significant that it was on that date when, after four decades, the National Assembly adopted a new constitution in the form of a series of constitutional amendments, restoring Hungary to the status of an independent democracy, a republic based on the rule of law. I was truly offended by the words of one MP who said he “found it rather uncomfortable that the opposition, someone from the Opposition Round Table⁵⁰ was watching me closely, trying to see how I cast my vote”. Yes, I admit I was watching.

⁵⁰ The Opposition Round Table was formed on 13 June 1989 involving eight oppositional organisations. Their aim was a national transformation based on constitutional reforms and the nation's real representation in the parliament.

As for the National Round Table⁵¹ agreement, it should be noted that without us the National Round Table could not have reached agreement, and, consequently, Hungary would not have reached the stage where she is now, the stage where she now boasts a modern European and, at the same time, traditionally Hungarian constitution and a law on political parties, and where the HSWP⁵² is obliged to withdraw from the workplace, as was proposed by the Opposition Round Table.⁵³

Today, before I left the Parliament building at noon, I waited for the vote to take place, which was not easy, but the law was finally passed with only a minor, purely technical amendment. The National Assembly has also enacted a new electoral law, which bears the closest comparison with the electoral law of the Federal Republic of Germany, the most up to date of its kind at the moment.⁵⁴

This National Assembly, which has already revised the Penal Code as well, has made historical decisions by enacting these fundamental laws. This afternoon it is going to pass the law on the dissolution of the Workers' Guard⁵⁵ – it is perhaps being debated already. At the same time I have been given satisfactory assurance that our armed forces have already secured the arsenals of the Workers' Guard.

An undertaking to render a full accounting of the finances and property of the HSWP and its successor, the HSP, is soon to be brought before the National Assembly, on the basis of which a full inventory will be published, then the list of assets to be surrendered to the state will be drawn up, and in view of this I think our National Round Table delegates have nothing to be ashamed of, and may rightly ask not to be regarded with suspicion.

⁵¹ This trilateral round table was founded also on 13 June 1989 with the participation of the one-party government, the opposition and non-governmental organisations (e.g. trade unions) in order to consult reforms.

⁵² The Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, i.e. the ruling Communist party

⁵³ The outgoing Parliament accepted that before the free elections the HSWP was required to give up its presence at the work places. During Communism these party branches, in fact their party bosses, were practically overseeing every aspect of work in factories, offices, institutions.

⁵⁴ The Hungarian electoral law is a combination of the proportional and the constituency system. In two rounds roughly half of the representatives are elected directly, while the rest of the mandates are distributed between regional and national lists. The electoral threshold in the Parliament used to be 4 per cent of all the votes, later it was raised to 5 per cent.

⁵⁵ Following the suppression of the 1956 revolution the Communist party wanted to strengthen its control. Therefore – in addition to the army, the police, and the secret agencies – it created a new formation: armed volunteers, wearing uniforms resembling workers' overall. Actual manual workers were increasingly rare among its ranks. An Act of Parliament dissolved this organisation on 31 October 1989.

On 18 September, when we signed the agreement (we have pointed this out repeatedly) we issued a separate statement and attached it as an appendix to the effect that we demand that the Workers' Guard should be dissolved, and this afternoon it is going to be dissolved on the basis of our proposal.

As for the withdrawal of party organisations from the workplace, the proposition put forward by the opposition was adopted by the Legal Committee and then by the National Assembly as well. We also attached it to the agreement and they accepted it. The same goes for party assets.

No member of the HDF need feel ashamed for belonging to an organisation which signed that agreement. The agreement we signed assures that Hungary becomes an independent, democratic republic as of 23 October 1989. It was truly depressing for me to perceive in the National Assembly yesterday that partly because of the tense atmosphere created by the commotion about the referendum, or attempted referendum, and partly because of the problems within the government, the National Assembly, this Assembly, did not seem to be aware of the miracle it had created. I have a strong suspicion that just because the solemnity – so important to us Hungarians – was lacking, the National Assembly simply failed to notice what an historical act it performed yesterday!

Our convention should be aware of the historicity of the moment. I shall leave it to others to talk about things to be done in light of this historic act. What I want to tell you now is that our country is in a peculiar situation. It is not only that we have international obligations, but also that the party at the helm of the country itself is going through an identity crisis, is in the process of trying to find its proper place and role. Its strength has weakened, which is bad for them, but not much to our advantage either, because there exist some more dangerous forces in this country than they – make no mistake about this! We want to face honest opponents, honest political adversaries, if you like, and we should strive to help them become so.

It ought to be said, too, that we have a government which has adhered to the agreement. And this government is finding itself in no comfortable situation. This government, with no proper political background, only a disintegrating state party and an unstable National Assembly behind its back, is at the helm of a country overshadowed by the looming possibility of a political vacuum.

There is nothing more dangerous than a political vacuum. I feel compelled to assert here that all responsible members of the Hungarian Democratic Forum should do everything within their power to prevent this vacuum from occurring, and ensure that the Hungarian Democratic Forum and responsible opposition

leaders will not simply fill the vacuum created, but undertake to secure the intervening period in a fully responsible way. Unless we adequately fulfil our role in the coming weeks and months before the parliamentary elections and the coming into office of a new government, nothing will be left to be taken over by those elected to government positions, whether it be ourselves or others.

I want to end my speech by stressing this sense of responsibility, by pointing out that under the circumstances the Hungarian Democratic Forum should keep its distance from all sorts of extremism, whether left-wing or right-wing, and that no one entertaining totalitarian ideas of whatever shade or stripe in their heart of hearts belongs in our ranks. We have nothing to do with leaflets promoting the ideas of the one-time Hungarian Nazis, the "Arrow Cross", and we have nothing to do with the people who produce them, conceivably with a provocative intention.

It is only true democrats that we accept among our ranks, those willing to identify themselves with the grand heritage of traditional Hungarian democracy and liberalism. It is this heritage which may unify our organisation and make it a new people's party, playing a role similar to that of European Christian Democracy. It is vital for the Hungarian Democratic Forum to become such a unified democratic party and also to remain a movement striving to achieve the restoration and internal transformation of the nation, carrying on with its everyday tasks with a deep sense of responsibility between elections as well, because in this country democracy used to be suppressed not only at an institutional level, but also in the hearts and minds of people.

We ought to be tolerant with each other, we ought to be tolerant even with our opponents, and we ought to dispense justice to all those who have been wronged in this country over the past decades, over the past fifty years if you like, and to all those who have been jailed, put into concentration camps and suffered persecution in its various forms!

I am quite confident that all those who deserve rehabilitation, all those who deserve compensation (moral and, to the extent possible, material) will extend forgiveness even to their oppressors, because history teaches us that the victim is always more willing to forgive than the perpetrator is. This is so because the perpetrator has a bad conscience. That's why he is unable to forgive.

Our nation was forced to accept the role of victim, and as such is quite willing to forgive, because we need everyone who is prepared to redress the sins they committed in the past. Our nation needs reconciliation and unity, so that we may embark upon the reconstruction of Hungary.

AS LEADER OF THE HUNGARIAN DEMOCRATIC FORUM

József Antall was elected party leader at the 2nd National Convention of the Hungarian Democratic Forum (HDF), where, on 22 October 1989, after the memorandum below was read, he gave the following closing address in his new capacity.

“On the occasion that the 2nd National Convention of the HDF, held on 20–22 October 1989, has the honour to request József Antall to accept the Presidency of the Hungarian Democratic Forum, an organisation which aspires to become the movement of the whole nation. This memorandum is to testify that he accepts the commission and will make use of it. We wish him much success in carrying out the exalted aims of our movement.”

When I joined the Hungarian Democratic Forum, I was acting on the invitations I had received separately from my friends Sándor Csoóri⁵⁶ and György Szabad. The friendship lives on with everyone I met here and who received me with friendship. There has been no disagreement between us. This is perhaps the reason why the presidium voted by ballot, with one nay and one abstention, to recommend me for the leadership.

I wish to emphasise that everything I said at the time we started working together holds today, as does everything I thought at the time when my candidacy for the leadership of the HDF was not even being mentioned.

I also wish to emphasise that it is imperative – in the interests of the nation – that the strongest organisation in the opposition with a registered membership and not just with thousands of supporters around stands its ground and accomplishes the tasks that contemporary history has meted out for us.

I do believe that the Democratic Forum will stand united, and that this will be no monolithic unity, the unity of the single-party system, but the unity of a modern, multi-faceted parliamentary party and of an intellectual and political movement which aspires to rebuild the nation. I therefore request everyone to

⁵⁶ Sándor Csoóri (b. 1930), poet, writer, one of the founders of Hungarian Democratic Forum. His sociological works and essays demonstrate his sensitiveness to serious national problems. President of the World Federation of Hungarians in 1991–2000.

make his or her contribution to the work to be carried out in the Forum while retaining his or her own individuality and personality. Let us attempt the impossible and ally freedom and spirit with organisation. It is no small task, for individuality and spirit are all too often lost in an organisation; we, however, must seek to do this, or else we shall be unable to live up to our task.

I do not know what the future has in store for us; I do not know how far we shall progress, and I do not know what we shall manage to achieve. But we cannot afford not to attempt what is ahead of us, for if we do not try then everything may be lost. Therefore, I shall have to re-direct onto you the responsibility that you have devolved upon me. I shall try to attend to the tasks of the party leader with commitment, but this will not be a commitment to the post itself. Nearing sixty, I have lived long enough to be able to say without exaggeration that it is not here and now that I want to make a career.

Some people enter politics out of exhibitionism, financial interest or some other hunger for power. Had I wanted to, I could have done so more than once; it would only have meant to give up some of my principles. That I have never done. This is why I have accepted this post as a calling, but not as the calling of the fanatic, so that the Forum can remain united and fulfil its role. I do not need to speak again about the foreign, domestic and economic political circumstances which determine our possibilities and also our goals.

The Hungarian Democratic Forum should be an organisation in which Budapest and the countryside cannot be set in opposition to one another. We must not become a party for Budapest, an organisation for the Budapest intelligentsia; nor should we become a party of the countryside as opposed to Budapest. This must be a nation-wide organisation, one in which the capital city stands united with the country, not in opposition to it. For what, indeed, does it entail to be an inhabitant of Budapest? The parents or grandparents of most of us came to Budapest from the countryside. Most of the grandparents or great-grandparents of those living in Budapest today were born in the countryside.

It is this unity, I believe, that should render us a national party and a nationwide movement. Let us leave behind the differences we so often engage ourselves in, quite superficially.

There is a way for us to work in unity, provided that we have tolerance among us, that we can bear with others who hold views different from our own, and that we are broadminded enough to accept the fact that various intellectual workshops have emerged within the Forum. We should, indeed, embrace them, be they the intellectual workshop of the spiritual heirs of the

pre-war village explorer movement⁵⁷ (such a workshop has indeed come into existence), the European Christian Democracy workshop, or the two liberal workshops, whose formation has been announced and which place emphasis on general policy and economic policy respectively. And once the outlines of the intellectual workshops are clearly drawn, they will be able to make things clear and there will be unity within the Forum, for all these workshops provide us with intellectual nutriment.

I am also convinced that no organisation, no political party or body exists in Hungary today whose intellectual potential is greater than that of the HDF.

It is my firm conviction that we have in our ranks politically committed members from all walks of life, from economists and lawyers to technical experts, and I shall not enumerate all the professions, that will be capable of working together, that will be able to co-operate with all those working in this country with integrity, even in leading positions, and who are accountable. And we shall have to find the way to call forward those talented people in this organisation who are too modest to come forward by themselves. Modesty in many Hungarians keeps them from putting themselves forward. It is often the most talented who keep in the background, and we are not even aware how many among us are suitable for leadership and political activity.

I have said the same in the forty-odd interviews I gave in these days in the corridors here, and this was my reply to those who asked me the question "Will you have enough competent people to perform the tasks in case the Democratic Forum will participate in governing the country?" I believe we will, I told them, for they are either sitting here or watching the 2nd Convention of the HDF at home. And we also have all those who share our ideas and support our programme, but who are yet to join, for after decades of mediocrity and the humdrum it is impossible that there are no hidden talents among the people of this nation.

Why should people here be incapable of leading the country out of the crisis when the Hungarian diaspora has been capable of asserting its talent all over the world and has distinguished itself by its talent and intellectual capacity? Why should Hungarians in their own homeland not produce enough people to work for the rise of the country? And I do believe we have such people within the Hungarian Democratic Forum.

⁵⁷ The village explorer movement between the two world wars revealed the extremely low living standards and the hard social and economic situation of the Hungarian peasantry. The literary movement of the "writers of the people" (often misleadingly translated as "populist writers") grew out of that and became one of the major intellectual movements in Hungary.

I am positive that we shall be able to organise this work, but that we can do so only together with you. And we have to ask your patience and ask you to wait until the presidium, relying on those bodies that you have elected, will direct this movement together with you and organise this work.

You will also have to take into account the absence of all the technical facilities we need for maintaining contact with you in an organised way.

I ask you not to be impatient; we will do our best to solve this problem and carry on by means of a reasonable division of labour.

A reasonable division of labour also entails that you should place your trust in the members of the National Presidium and the National Board. You can be confident that all those who are going to tour the country will uphold the same spirit, and you will have to understand that it will be impossible for the same persons to visit everywhere.

This much I wanted to say for now. I share, in all respects, the opinion of all those who believe that what started out from Lakitelek⁵⁸ and what started many decades and indeed centuries ago, has always lived on in the minds of Hungarian politicians, writers and intellectuals who dreamt of a better, independent and free Hungary. In this part of Europe, our longing for freedom and our constitutional thinking were no less that of more fortunate nations, where these things could manifest themselves in an institutionalised form. Here they have survived in recusancy over the last decades, but the desire and the spirit were the same. Whether it was England's Magna Carta or Hungary's Golden Bull,⁵⁹ the same spirit of constitutionalism and constitutional governance was signalled.

Tell it everywhere in the country that you are members of an organisation you can trust. You must trust the leadership, and you should not be taken in by calumny. You must not believe that there are opportunists, collaborators and such sort amongst us! Nor are there victims of phantasmagoria or irresponsible people. For it is also a tradition in this country that the overly radical and the loud-mouthed take themselves off while the moderate get hanged.

⁵⁸ Lakitelek is a village on the Great Hungarian plain, near Kecskemét. It was there that on 27 September 1997 a meeting took place, sizing up the critical position of the country, and calling for regular forums where the various problems would be discussed, disregarding official political constraints. A year later the Democratic Forum was created as a political movement, with organisation and membership. That was an open challenge to the one-party system.

⁵⁹ Few years after the English Magna Charta (1215), the Hungarian nobility compelled King Andrew II to lay down their rights and duties in the form of the Golden Bull (1222), which served as a constitution until 1848. It introduced a sort of pluralism in the government of the country.

ON THE EVE OF THE ELECTION

Pre-election speech delivered in front of an audience of several hundred people in the MOM Community Centre in Buda on 23 March 1990, before the first round of the free election.

It is no easy task to rise to speak after Professor Szabad,⁶⁰ and I am certainly not up to the standards of eloquence he was setting, but I shall try and do my best to say to you all that can still be said on the eve of the election.

We have learned a great many lessons from the election campaign. We have been to a great many places across the country, and thus have had the opportunity to draw comparisons between Budapest and provincial cities, towns and villages. The country is unified in its aspirations in spite of the widespread impression that wherever three Hungarians come together, they will want to take five different directions. I have great pleasure in sharing the top places of the Budapest list with Professor Szabad. It means that besides individual candidates, we have undertaken to get as many representatives into parliament as possible on the party list, and we hope that on 25 March the Hungarian Democratic Forum will not only win a significant share of parliamentary seats by list voting, but also that many of our individual candidates will have made their way into the National Assembly already after the first round, and even more after the second on 8 April, so that the new National Assembly will have the opportunity to work effectively and set up a potent government. Otherwise we shall not be able to steer the country out of the crisis, and we shall hardly get out of the tunnel if we cannot do this in a well controlled manner.

I am confident that the Hungarian Democratic Forum will be able to achieve this, and that our supporters will appreciate what the Hungarian Democratic Forum and our candidates stand for. Yesterday we held our last rally at Lakitelek. It was good to revisit the place where our movement actually started from under the tent,⁶¹ to see again the people who had once lined the road only waving at us, and it was good to discover once more the unity of the Hungarian Democratic Forum, and perceive that this unity goes right through

⁶⁰ See note 27.

⁶¹ The Forum was founded at Lakitelek under a big tent. See note 58.

the population from the smallest villages to the capital city of the country. I am sure that the emphasis we place on strengthening and mobilising the provinces does not in the least curtail our presence in Budapest. The present meeting, as well as recent events held in the Sports Hall, or in different districts of Budapest bear witness to the fact that the Hungarian Democratic Forum is at the forefront in the capital as well.

We have come to an historic turning point indeed. I think it is a turning point not only for the Hungarian nation, and not only in Hungarian history. I took particular pleasure in seeing and hearing all those Austrians, Germans, English people, French people and many other nationals who addressed our meetings and expressed support for our cause.

Never mind that the media have not always been generous to us; never mind that they have not always reported extensively on all the guests we had the honour to receive. Never mind the defamation and misconceptions published in the world media; in spite of all that, the public profile of the Hungarian Democratic Forum has become unambiguous, and we have come to enjoy a very good reputation. I believe this reputation will aid us in securing international confidence in Hungary.

We need to establish trust and confidence within ourselves, within the whole country and win the confidence of the world at large. We can never achieve anything without trust and confidence. As to the way people perceive things, there is a palpable difference between the people of Budapest and people living in small villages or on solitary farmsteads. What I mean is not that the people outside Budapest do not want things to change, or that they are not happy; it is that here in the capital we feel that we are numerous and powerful, and nearly feel we have been through the worst part already. We are already removing the [totalitarian] symbols, one after the other, we are making headway.

Yes, a feeling of fear prevailing in many a place saddens one's heart while travelling in the country. Eyes filled with doubt and meaningful handshakes are the signs that tell us: 'Be careful, they are still around. Don't be gulled. Don't think they've given up the fight.' Fears remain. There are local coteries, things have not yet taken a definite turn for the better out in the provinces. The petty kingdoms of local authorities, state companies and other enterprises are still holding ground there. And people's eyes are shrouded with fear and someone needs to encourage them – and it is our duty to encourage them, or else they don't feel that things are different and they have fears. It is impossible to

rebuild a country if you are afraid; you cannot turn over a new leaf if you are in a state of dread. However, what is most important for us is to be able to start everything from scratch.

It is in this spirit that we are preparing for the elections, and it is also in this spirit that we intend to continue right until 8 April, because we must not allow ourselves to rest after the first round. The struggle isn't over yet. The Hungarian Democratic Forum comprises several cultural and political tendencies, which are various strands of thought rather than different factions, and the strength of the Hungarian Democratic Forum derives from the fact that it is heir to the best in Hungarian parliamentarism, heir to the wisdom of the greatest Hungarian politicians, and as such embraces all the ingredients of a powerful unity, and all the strands that, if combined, can really make an impact. Whether we speak about what we call the legacy of the last century's greatest Hungarian statesmen (people such as Széchenyi,⁶² Kossuth,⁶³ Deák,⁶⁴ Eötvös⁶⁵ and others), or about the tradition left behind by the patriotism and sociographical investigations of the "village explorer" writers of the 1930s, or the heritage of the Hungarian agrarian movements, or all the schools of a traditionally based liberalism which at the same time exhibit a modern conception of freedom – all these ingredients are here combined with the doctrines of Christian Democracy. Our uniqueness lies precisely in our integrating tendency. Some of

⁶² István Széchenyi, Count (1791–1860), owner of large estates, politician. Due to his ideas and his self-sacrificing work to make Hungary rise out of its provincial state, he is widely known as "The Greatest among the Hungarians". He emphasised the necessity of modernisation and he himself showed the way by his investments. He founded the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, directed the regulation of the Danube as well as the construction of the Chain Bridge (Lánchíd). During the 1848 revolution, he was head of the Ministry of Transport and Labour. He opposed Lajos Kossuth, whom he considered as too radical. Having suffered a nervous breakdown, he was transported to an Austrian sanatorium in August 1848, where in 1860, following harassment by the authorities, he committed suicide.

⁶³ Lajos Kossuth (1802–1894), jurist, journalist, liberal politician, key figure of the Hungarian Age of Reforms (1825–1848). In 1848 he was Minister of Finance in the first government responsible to Parliament. After the dethronement of the Habsburgs (14 April 1849), he was elected Governor of Hungary. Following the defeat of the revolution he fled. In exile, in his eloquent speeches delivered in English, he denounced Austrian oppression and made a great impact on his English and American audiences. He was opposed to the Compromise concluded between Hungary and the Habsburg dynasty in 1867; he launched the idea of a Danubian Confederation. He died in Torino in exile.

⁶⁴ Ferenc Deák (1803–1876), jurist, politician. Another prominent advocate of changes during the Age of Reforms, Minister of Justice in 1848. After 1849 he declared passive resistance. In 1867 he initiated the negotiations on the Compromise, which established the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. That assured partial independence (Home Rule) to Hungary, while accepting foreign policy and defence as common affairs. That was hotly debated by Lajos Kossuth, who feared that the inevitable fall of the Habsburg Monarchy would lead to the destruction of Hungary.

⁶⁵ József Eötvös, see note 41.

these schools of thought have their separate parties, but we hold the distinction of not forming into factions but unifying all these strands and achieving all this together, not unlike the way it is with the Austrian People's Party, the German CDU or other partner parties in western Europe.

We are not a party based on any ideology. In a political sense, we are a programme party, one that embraces the values of our national heritage and the aspirations towards European integration, a party that promotes the conception and programme of the free market economy as was put into political practice in the social market economy model of Ludwig Erhard, father of the German economic miracle. The significance of this is that all these issues together are part of our political agenda. Speaking in a European sense, we are a centre party which of course takes its proper place in Hungarian political life together with and in relation to the other parties.

Lots of things have been said in the course of the electoral struggles. Political opponents have been peppering each other with charges, raising all sorts of criticisms. This has at times been quite annoying to the Hungarian public, and also to ourselves sometimes. We weren't happy to see all the nitpicking going on between contesting political parties. But we had to resign ourselves to the fact that the multi-party system has its own shortcomings as well.

You will continue to be confronted with things that aren't to everybody's taste. It is not easy to get used to it all. It is not easy to get used to the electoral campaign either. Of course, none of the political parties lack confidence in saying what they want to say, and it is probable that we constitute no difference in this respect. We trust that the Hungarian voters, the Hungarian people will be able to identify the parties which, as we believe, will best serve their interests. We cannot but recommend ourselves and believe that we are the best qualified to serve our country.

Our heart often sinks as we look around and think of neighbouring countries, because it is so difficult to understand why we cannot come to terms with each other, why it is that after all those poetical aspirations and real-political ambitions our peoples find it so hard to re-establish friendship, why they can so easily drift into attitudes which may lead to chaos as attested by the tragic events in Marosvásárhely.⁶⁶ It is a sad fact that it is much easier to make politi-

⁶⁶ On 19 March 1990 a mob of Romanians (many brought from villages nearby) attacked the Hungarians of the Transylvanian town of Marosvásárhely (Târgu Mureş). They set the headquarters of the Democratic Alliance of the Hungarians of Romania on fire. Several Hungarians were seriously injured, including the celebrated writer András Sütő, who lost an eye.

cal decisions and effect political changes in the outside world than in people's minds. Certain political parties find it easier to adopt a new kind of terminology and to pretend as if they had nothing to do with what has passed before, and done in their name. I think that such a political party, and especially the party which has changed its name, should take responsibility for the acts committed in its name over the past decades. It is impossible for them to be so selective as to say, "There have been some achievements, and they are great, they must be preserved, and we are going to take credit for them, but as for the crimes committed against the country, we have nothing to do with those crimes, we are a new leadership, we have just been renewed."

This is an old trick, but we are not going to fall for it.

We cannot imagine Hungary other than as a self-reliant country, an independent state within whose boundaries each of its citizens can really feel at home. It is not without reason that we made Kőlcsey's⁶⁷ words our motto, because 'freedom and property' are the basic requirements for people to feel that their country belongs to them.

Freedom and property. How lofty a word the first one sounds, how pragmatic the other. But I think this is just the point. That a poet, who, needless to say, was also a politician, was well aware that in order for the people to feel that the country is theirs they need to live in freedom, and need to be in the position of true owners. It is this true owner's attitude that needs to be strengthened, and let me add that it should apply to public property as well. This attitude is a vital requirement for us to be able to continue in our path. For this reason the Hungarian Democratic Forum regards this as the starting point and governing principle of its programme.

In foreign policy, our aim remains what we have consistently demanded in the last few months: Hungary's full integration into Europe. It's not as if this country had not been an integral part of Europe in the past, but, in the political sense, we have not been part of unified Europe. The Iron Curtain had separated us from our natural allies, from those with whom we shared a common cultural heritage, even if we never felt any different. This conviction has given us the strength to be always in the forefront not only in fighting for an independent Hungary, but also a Hungary in the European sense of the word. I am sure we may firmly state that we believe in European integration;

⁶⁷ Ferenc Kőlcsey (1790–1838), poet and politician, the representative of the County of Szatmár, and one of the leaders of the reformist opposition. An impressive speaker, in his poems he put emphasis on the problems of the nation in a highly solemn way. Author of the Hungarian national anthem.

but we are also aware that beyond an integrated Europe there is a wider area, one which is not simply a military system; it is an association that certain nations call, and feel to be, the Atlantic community. For the connection between North America and Europe has always been so close that we do not wish to set European integration in opposition to the Atlantic Community; we feel, indeed, that the technological advances achieved in the United States and Canada should also be part of our renewal. Now, when Soviet influence is on the retreat from the heart of Europe, and when there arises an opportunity for new openings in our region, it is very important for us that there should be a multitude of political influences around us. We have been supporting and advocating German unification right from the start, and we have always thought that the Germans' right to self-determination should be something taken for granted.

Of course, the boundaries of Europe should be secured. We accept the Helsinki Final Act, which asserts the inviolability of existing borders, and this also applies when we say that we support German unification within the existing borders of the two German republics, with assurances given to the Poles. For one of the many consequences of World War II was the redrawing of the political map, and the westward shifting of the borders of Poland. Of course, we regard the Austrians as our nearest neighbours (not only geographically, and not out of mere politeness, because they are our guests now). We want to maintain a close relationship with Austria.

In like manner, we seek to live in friendship with our other neighbours. We approach Czechoslovakia with the most honest motives, paying due respect for the struggle they fought for human and civil rights. We have high regard for the merits of Mr Václav Havel. But we are deeply concerned over recent disturbing incidents, over the harassment of ethnic Hungarians in southern Slovakia. We are deeply concerned over the outburst of chauvinism or violent nationalism in any neighbouring country, whether in the Subcarpathian region of Ukraine, in Romania, or in Yugoslavia. We hope that Austria will also continue to make headway with regard to the minority issue, and that our neighbours will do everything in their power for the protection of their minorities, just as we shall do everything in our power to protect ours.

In this part of Europe, where the map is an ethnic mosaic shaped by wars and forced relocation, peaceful coexistence requires tolerance and mutual understanding. The world ought to understand that we cannot turn a blind eye whenever and wherever in the world ethnic Hungarians are being harassed.

We are not chauvinistic, we are not nationalistic; we refuse any such labels. We do not lay claim to broader rights, a wider scope of collective rights for Hungarians beyond our borders than does any other nation for their co-national minorities beyond their borders. We feel we have an obligation to represent all the Hungarians. They comprise not only the Hungarian minorities separated from the motherland by virtue of the Treaty of Trianon, that tragic event which happened exactly seventy years ago,⁶⁸ but also Hungarians living in the West. All the Hungarians, who over the past centuries, for various reasons, have come to live outside the borders of present-day Hungary, from the Csángó Hungarians in Romanian Moldavia⁶⁹ to Canadian and American Hungarians living on the coast of the Pacific, all who declare themselves Hungarian are part of the Hungarian nation in our eyes. To be a member of the Hungarian nation is not only a fact, it is also a spiritual identity, one that can be espoused independently of one's citizenship. The Hungarian Democratic Forum is intent on working for a constitutional solution to ensure that all whose host countries allow dual citizenship or some other special status, be granted the right to vote in Hungary's general elections. If and when Hungary's new constitution allows for a bicameral legislature, it should also provide representation for Hungarians scattered all over the world.

We must understand clearly that we, Hungarians, wherever we happen to live, must co-operate with each other, and today, when we are making a new start, when the country needs to be reconstituted from its foundations, when we have to relearn long forgotten economic methods, or learn new methods and technologies which came into the world while we had no opportunity to gain knowledge of them, we desperately need the backing and assistance of the Hungarian emigration. The emigration should be aware, however, that those in

⁶⁸ The Treaty of Trianon was signed on 4 July 1920. It was the closing act of the First World War for Hungary, which finally dissolved the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The territory and population of historical Hungary shrank to two-third of its original size, leaving about one-third of the ethnic Hungarian population outside the new borders. This treaty led to the revisionist policy of the period between the two world wars.

⁶⁹ Csángó is the easternmost Hungarian population, who live in Romania, outside the Carpathian Basin. They descend from Hungarians who migrated from Hungary over the Carpathian Mountains in Moldavia after the 16th century. Having lived outside the borders of the country, the reformation of the Hungarian language at the turning point of the 18–19th centuries did not affect them, therefore they speak an archaic version of Hungarian, which makes their cultural and linguistic heritage very important and special. Their number nowadays is approximately 100–150 thousands. In contrast with the orthodox Romanians they are all Catholics. They have to struggle hard for primary education in their mother tongue, and the local Catholic clergy doesn't allow the Holy Mass to be said in Hungarian.

the motherland sympathise with them, that they do not regard them as quitted ones, that we are counting on their economic wisdom, financial assistance and participation in our renewal. We do not look up to them like poor people taking pride in having some kin abroad; we hold them to be members of the body of the Hungarian nation, members who want to join us in reconstructing our country. It is for this reason that the word 'nation' is important to us, and not because we are nationalistic. We say with the poet Endre Ady that our "arms stretch out to all who were made Hungarian by virtue of reason, command, fate, intention or opportunity."⁷⁰ This is the way we comprehend the meaning of the Hungarian nation as a spiritual and cultural community open to all who want to join it. We are willing to live together with all ethnic minorities who choose to live with us, while all who want to forego their minority status and join our ranks will be welcomed of course. We welcome all who join us by their own free will, but shall not coerce anyone to do so.

Any political concept which is connected to any kind of extremism is totally alien to us. Strangely enough, extremists are all alike somehow. But every citizen and every supporter of the Hungarian Democratic Forum may rest assured that our movement, our organisation will protect every minority – just as over the past decades and over the past centuries it has never been those who paid lip service to minorities that really protected them, but quite often the very people the minorities were most afraid of.

What we want is a European Hungary where human rights are honoured and civil rights are fully exercised. What we want is a law abiding state that grants complete freedom to its citizens, and a social state that provides both assurance and a sense of security to its citizens (because the two should not be mutually exclusive). But it has been proved that an economy based on the free market and the preponderance of private property is the only one by which this can be assured. It is impossible to establish political democracy without economic democracy; there is no political democracy if economic life is riddled with rules and regulations that hinder economic development and cripple initiative. It is our task to provide both, since both serve people and we are responsible for serving people. In the following weeks, however, we want to take account of what we are about to take over. For although

⁷⁰ Endre Ady (1877–1917), one of the giants of Hungarian poetry, a great innovator in style and content. He was an inveterate critic of the real and imaginary shortcomings of his age. An opponent of nationalism, while a passionate patriot. The original of the quotation: "Kitárul a felé karom, / Kit magyarrá tett értelem, / Parancs, sors, szándék, alkalom." (*A tavalyi cselédekhez*)

we do not bear the responsibility for Hungary's foreign debt of 21 billion dollars, nor do we bear the responsibility for the economic bankruptcy, we have to take it over, however bitter the pill is. We'll have to accept it since nobody will take it over from us, and any political organisation, any political party that claim to have a simple solution for sorting it out is not telling the truth. It is a sad fact that the current crisis is the consequence of decades of mismanagement, irresponsible investment decisions and botched economic policies.

We have often been asked about whom we are ready to form a coalition with, whom we regard as our natural allies. Now, before the election, let me reiterate once again who may and who may not be regarded as our allies, and the rest will be seen after the second round of the election.

A coalition with the Hungarian Socialist Party is definitely not a possibility, even though we have never denied, in fact, we have repeatedly and expressly stated, that several of that party's leading politicians have not only gone all the way down the path of disillusionment, they also wanted to dismantle the one-party state, they wanted to transform it.⁷¹ There is no denying that we have been co-operating with them in doing that, but it's been a political decision on our part that: we shall not form a coalition with the Hungarian Socialist Party. In other words, we shall not work together with the Hungarian Socialist Party or members of the Hungarian Socialist Party in a government. This, however, should not be taken to mean that they could not assume any decent position in Hungarian public life. I have been asked this question so many times abroad and at home that I just wanted to reiterate it once more.

The Alliance of Free Democrats is not a natural ally of ours either. Although we have not in principle ruled out a coalition with any of the opposition parties, it is to be admitted that we do not feel very close to each other. It has to be admitted that we are at different poles of the Hungarian political spectrum. We cannot really agree with them on issues of economic policy, and have even less in common as to style and mentality. In response to the question, "Which party's representative would you most willingly accept as your successor?", Finance Minister László Békesi⁷² said: "As to their economic and financial philosophy, the programme of the Alliance of Free

⁷¹ An allusion primarily to Imre Pozsgay, the leader of the reformist wing of the former Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. See note 33.

⁷² László Békesi (b. 1942), left-liberal economist, politician, Minister of Finance in Miklós Németh's (1989–1990) and Gyula Horn's government (1994–1995).

Democrats is closest to mine. From a technical point of view their programme is the best elaborated one, which is no coincidence, as most of those people have worked in this very building." Still, that economic policy, that joint workshop, has not really been a success. I wonder how they can bring themselves to subscribe to it?

I could as well say a few words about the Social Democrats. There are in fact four parties by that name, but the one I want to talk about is the Social Democratic Party of Hungary. That party issued a leaflet which, besides attacking others, asserts that we are holding out a promise of "roast pigeons in national colours", and that the Hungarian Democratic Forum envisions a future where Hungarians in the very middle of Europe will starve to death in the Hungarian way. That is how they characterise our programme. It is hard to know what to do with such assertions. I have also read an interview given to a social democratic daily by the chairwoman of the Social Democratic Party [Anna Petrasovics], in which she said that we weren't sufficiently Europe-minded. We, who are the ones who maintain the closest contacts with the European Movement and all the other organisations, we are the ones who get invited to speak in the European Parliament and so forth! What she had in mind, however, was that Hungary was still in a pre-capitalist state of development, and that they were the only ones who could show the way forward. I suppose that a modest elementary school history textbook can teach anyone that even as early as in 1867, Hungary had already been past a pre-capitalist state. I cannot see how such assertions in interviews given to foreign papers can contribute to making Hungary more Europe-minded or to attracting western investors, which they also claim to be important; however, rather than sharing our view of Hungary, they speak about it as a pre-capitalist, underdeveloped, feudal country. In our view Hungary is a country which has been ruined over the past forty years, which has been diverted from its normal course of development, but still one which has every potential to become the first East-Central European country to make its way out of the crisis. Western leaders and politicians put considerable trust in Hungary's ability to resolve the crisis and create a market economy based on private property and political democracy. I prefer to believe these people, but, or course, I believe in ourselves first of all. Over the past centuries the Hungarian nation has given birth to many brilliant people who perished on the scaffold or died in emigration. It has given the world many eminent scientists and workers; and I am confident that this nation will be able to perform well in its own country. We must trust that by gathering all the energy of

the nation, all determination and the will for renewal, we shall be able to make progress and create a new Hungary.

It will not be any easier than it was when the ruins of the Second World War were just being cleaned up. Poorly built constructions are sometimes harder to convert into useful facilities than rebuilding something from ruins. Let us rejoice in the fact that the change happened in a peaceful manner, because although we have to pay the price in economic terms, we have not – so far – had to suffer any losses of human life.

In this spirit, ladies and gentlemen, I ask you to place your trust in the candidates of the Hungarian Democratic Forum. I wish that you, who live here, on the Buda side of the city, where the majority of the better off residents of Budapest live, where social conditions are more favourable than in other parts of the city, where people are better informed and perhaps more confident than the inhabitants of small villages are – I wish that you should feel that the Hungarian Democratic Forum is on your side, and that you would put your confidence in the candidates who have undertaken to stand for election not out of egotistic reasons, but driven by a true sense of a mission.

Your confidence will be most needed when vested interests have to be broken, and the country needs to be taken towards new directions under the expectant eyes of Europe and the world.

ON THE ROAD TO NATIONAL RENEWAL

In his speech to the National Assembly on 22 May 1990, Antall, nominated as Prime Minister by the HDE, the party winning the election, set out the Programme for the new Government. The speech was repeatedly interrupted by applause; at the end, HDE, Christian Democrat and Smallholder deputies gave a standing ovation. The text is reproduced from Országgyűlési Napló (Parliamentary Journal), the official report of the debates and proceedings of the Hungarian legislature.

This is indeed a solemn moment as I stand here before the Hungarian National Assembly and before the nation. It is a moment preceded by seemingly endless waiting, a moment we often thought might never come, or if it ever came, most of us would not be around to see it. At this moment I bow to the memory of our comrades, whether known or anonymous, who did not live to see this much-longed-for day.

I emphasise the solemnity of the moment because all of us, politicians and the general public alike, are sometimes weary and impatient. Some of our fellow citizens have not been able to fully comprehend (for circumstances have not facilitated comprehension) that the hour of momentous change has struck, that a revolution has taken place in Hungary, a revolution which, while continuing to demand sacrifice and patience, has brought us all the unrestricted freedom of human rights, is promising the restoration of individual and national self-respect, bodes well for the development of human capabilities and aspirations, and puts an end to four decades of double-talk, lies and suppressed truths. Some of our fellow citizens have fully comprehended the significance of recent developments and have taken an active part in the peaceful revolution over the past two years, but, although they believe in it, still find it too slow, too hesitant sometimes. That peaceful revolution required clear-sightedness and a joint effort by both the ruling establishment and the opposition to avoid extremities.

What has been taking place over the past two years is unprecedented in modern Hungarian history, but it has few parallels even in the history of the whole continent. We have been going through a revolution with extraordinary

determination, and yet without bloodshed, setting a precedent for the entire region. And the world recognises it as such.

The government I am about to introduce will be a coalition government of the Hungarian Democratic Forum, the Independent Smallholders' Party⁷³ and the Christian Democratic People's Party,⁷⁴ and is determined to be a government of the centre. The government whose policies I am about to set forth will operate on the basis of four principles, if it obtains the confidence of the National Assembly. Our government will consider these principles as historic requirements to be fulfilled if we are to stand before the judgement seat of our own conscience and of posterity.

The first principle we announce is that this government will be a government of freedom. It will make every effort to ensure that each citizen of the country has the same rights and duties before the courts, before the authorities and in relation to each other. This government considers it an obligation arising from the rule of law that legislation be introduced relating to the freedoms of opinion, speech, association, movement and travel. The new government believes in complete freedom of the press and culture, and will not restrict the exercise of these rights except in cases where the freedom or the rights of others might be violated.

The freedom of education is an indispensable constituent of liberty.

It is our historical responsibility to restore the freedom of enterprise, a free economy. Hungary will have a future if we assure legitimate opportunities for ambition, talent, and individual and collective initiative to release an immense amount of pent-up, suppressed and diverted energy. We will have no future if the best sons and daughters of our talented nation seek their fortune abroad. At the same time, however, it is our duty to protect the social rights of those who lag behind – we will have to create a carefully designed social safety net. Finally, as a government of freedom, our new government will seek to promote the autonomy of small communities.

The second principle to be laid down is that our new government intends to be a government of the people. It is for the first time in forty-three years that a parliament freely elected by the Hungarian people is about to vote for a new government. For this reason if I obtain the confidence of the House, and if

⁷³ See note 4.

⁷⁴ Christian Democratic People's Party originates from the Democratic People's Party, which existed between 1945–1949 and was led by István Barankovics. It was reorganised in 1989. Since 2002 it has co-operated with Fidesz, and has managed to get several seats in Parliament on the Fidesz ticket.

the new government obtains confidence, it will truly be the government of the Hungarian people. We are well aware that the principle of the sovereignty of the people is a notion brought into the greatest disrepute by the governments of the one-party system. Except for that beautiful but short-lived interlude in 1956, this notion was degraded to the state of a phoney slogan. Our new government will breathe new life into the notion of the sovereignty of the people.

We rely on the elements of moral regeneration lying dormant in the Hungarian people: the wish for inner and external renewal, the avoidance of extremities, tolerance, a calm but determined inclination to progress.

If the new government is truly the government of the people displacing for good the system of oppression and carrying out the transition to a system of freedom, then the government and its organs will no longer deserve to be looked upon with suspicion as the instruments of oppression did. Therefore I call upon the Hungarian people to discard deep-seated attitudes of distrust and to regard our institutions as their own, as instruments serving the benefit of the people. With this in mind, may I encourage the Hungarian people to support its new state, its National Assembly and its government, exercising trust and criticism.

In accordance with our third principle, and being aware that this is the area where it will have to confront the greatest difficulties, this government intends to be the government of economic transformation. It is commonplace to talk of the economic crisis; but the full extent of the predicament facing us still remains to be examined, and whatever we find out will be made public.

It is well known that the annual rate of inflation is over twenty per cent. It is also common knowledge that our national debt exceeds twenty-one billion dollars, amounting to the highest per capita debt in Central and Eastern Europe. Fake employment, or hidden unemployment, accounts for a great deal of our nominal employment rate. The state of the infrastructure is poor, which is one of the greatest obstacles to opening our economy. The state of the public health system is appalling, schools are worn out and neglected; I'd rather not continue.

It is our objective to establish a social market economy, or, in other words, an economy where the open market is coupled with social and, let me hasten to add, environmental considerations of a caring and forward-looking society.

Although some facets of the market economy have already appeared recently, it must be understood that forty-three years of the so-called socialist planned economy cannot be done away within the space of a few weeks. This is not merely an issue of rules and regulations; it is also a question of ingrained

attitudes and economic structure. Our grave economic legacy is at the same time a moral and spiritual legacy. We all have to learn to think differently, to think and to work in a different way.

It has been a long time since a Hungarian government could set out to work under so favourable historic circumstances, but also with such a difficult legacy inherited from its predecessors. My fellow citizens, we are about to make a completely new start, just as we did in 1848, in 1867, in 1918, or in 1945.⁷⁵ If we fail to join forces, if we do not mobilise all our best energies, then we will miss an historic opportunity unparalleled in recent Hungarian history, and no one knows when we might have such an opportunity again.

In the nineteen-eighties, Hungary became engulfed in a deep and all-embracing crisis. The crisis was the fruit of the so-called socialist system of economic development, the fruit of an economic system controlled by the administrative instruments of political power, and the fruit of the totalitarian one-party system, which crippled efficiency, quality and diversity in all areas and at all levels. In the process our biological reserves and vital energies were drained, our spiritual resources and cultural heritage depleted, our natural environment laid waste, and our moral values broken up in part. At this juncture we must transform both our political system and our economic system, and we can only transform both at one and the same time. We must also perform a change of orientation in our international trade relations, concurrently with the return to a European system of values and attitudes, and the restoration of our faith and self-confidence.

We must overcome the crisis, but we must do this only by means which will prepare us for the twenty-first century, within the framework of a comprehensive national renewal. The programme of our government must provide the strategy for transformation, a strategy which is up to date and at the same time based on our historical legacy, and takes account of our capabilities and the range of our freedom of movement. Our proven virtues, which are lying dormant, need to be re-awakened. As far as our long-term objectives (political and economic alike) are concerned, our nation has achieved a rare consensus. The debate concerns the question how best to proceed.

A great leap forward would definitely shorten the length of the transition's most painful phase and make it clear that changes are irreversible; however, the

⁷⁵ Turning points of modern Hungarian history: the revolution and fight for independence in 1848–1849; the creation of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy by the Compromise; defeat in the First World War followed by revolutions; defeat in the Second World War and the attempt to create a democracy only to be thwarted by the Soviet Union. Cf. G. Jeszenszky's essay in the present volume.

economic as well as political costs and risks of a radical transformation would be greatly increased by the inflexibility of broad sectors and the vulnerability of the population, as well as by the fact that the Hungarian economy, which is in a better state than those of our neighbours, also stands to lose more by a hurried transition.

In view of the time required for setting up the institutions and implementing the infrastructure needed to promote savings and entrepreneurial capacities, and to operate a modern market economy, the government believes that a phased transition would be most practical. The success of the transformation regulating developments in the second half of this year, and the success of the medium term transition between 1991 and 1993 will provide the preconditions for a vigorous upswing expected to come in the middle of the decade.

The short and medium-term programme of the government is compatible with the new social and economic system which is gradually taking shape in the country.

If we are to cope with the social consequences of the process of restructuring as it is gathering speed, and also if we take account of the country's historic traditions, its values based on a humane national solidarity and the requirements of political stability, we will not be able to dispense with the requirement for creating a sorely needed, although currently barely existing, social safety net, a social infrastructure. This requirement will make it easier to tolerate the consequences of modernisation, since it is not only a national, but also a pan-European concern that the transformation should continue by peaceful means. Hence, both in the short and in the medium term, the programme for our government will unfold within the framework of the social market economy consistent with the available resources. The Hungarian version of this type of economy will involve the harmonisation of economic efficiency and competitiveness with the requirements of equity and social justice, and with a concern for the natural environment and the interests of future generations.

Finally, in harmony with our fourth principle, the new government will be a European government, and not only in the geographical sense of the word. We stand for the tradition of democracy, pluralism and openness. The past forty years constitute a rupture in the history of our nation. Now we want to return to the European heritage, but also to embrace the values that Europe has created in the course of the past forty years, in the wake of World War II, and on the basis of its terrible experiences.

It is in this context that we should also talk about the issue of returning to the unity of the continent, broken up due to historical contingencies. The government is committed to the idea of European integration. The first chapter of that integration will be Hungary's accession to the Council of Europe. The fact that prospects are favourable for this to happen was confirmed as recently as last week by leaders of the Council during their visit to Budapest. It is our objective to achieve membership in the European Community in the course of the coming decade. This will necessitate restructuring not only in Hungary, but also within the make-up of the European Community, the latter being obviously dependent on the recently commenced great European reorganisation as well. We will, however, heartily embrace the opportunity to achieve partnership status as a temporary measure. At this point our country enjoys an advantage in the region, which holds out the promise of participating in the scientific, technological, cultural and scholarly exchange of the European Economic Community.

A new chapter needs to be opened in the history of Hungary, a chapter of understanding and tolerance between our much troubled nation and the neighbouring peoples, which are burdened by similar legacies. This can only be guaranteed by the transition to a democratic, pluralistic political system, where relations are based on a natural, uncompromising respect for comprehensive human rights. All of us are Europeans. Fraternal co-operation and coexistence are a fundamental imperative for all of us. History has demonstrated that we cannot afford to fight each other. This was the reason for outside intervention in the past.

The central element of our government programme is the individual person. We are familiar with and deeply committed to address not only the problems of the nation, but of the individual as well. The government believes that the test of national renewal is the free individual, renewed in spirit and dedicated to creativity. The renewed Hungary is to be a community of such individuals.

For that reason the rationale of our programme is based on the relationships between the individual and the world in which he/she lives. That issue is most important for us. Therefore I request your patience. The summary of the governmental programme requires considerable patience from those who listen to it. It is difficult not only to conceptualise the future, but also to listen to the government programme.

The first issue is man and his environment. The individual is able to develop his capabilities if he is in possession of full physical, spiritual and social well-being. In contrast, the life expectancy of Hungarians is currently the lowest in Europe. In addition to organic illnesses, major problems are suicide,

alcoholism, drug abuse. We lack social tolerance, helpfulness and respect toward each other. These conditions also degrade the life of the healthy. For the past decade mortality surpassed fertility in Hungary. In view of excessive work hours to assure adequate income and the severe pollution of our environment, the morbidity and mortality rates of the mid-age population are the worst in the civilised world. Thousands of families have fallen apart; the elderly live in conditions of uncertainty. Millions live below the subsistence level. Poverty continues and social handicaps accumulate.

In view of this shocking situation, the basic objective of the government is to revitalise the social and medical systems. In the future it must be the responsibility of social policy to enable people living below subsistence to rise from poverty and help those endangered to avoid it. The new government feels responsible for assuring the social security of citizens, supports families and communities, as the most important assistance for endangered people. The government must guarantee subsistence for those unable to work, children, the sick and the elderly. But the social security of the majority of families must be secured by economic policy, not by social policy. Economic policy is the best social policy.

The open market economy does not mean the reduction of state responsibility for social policy. Social policy is not subordinate to economic policy, but is its equal partner. Retirement pension is a right acquired by work. The economic security of the retired must be based on a renewed security system. In addition, the government supports the charitable activities of churches and voluntary organisations and will provide increased assistance for the economic and social rehabilitation of those with physical handicaps and chronic illnesses.

The government is aware that the basis of a healthy society is the healthy family. Children are the natural extension of the family; therefore it is of primary importance to protect the prenatal foetus and the child. Therefore the government will issue regulations to provide for the physical, intellectual and spiritual development of all children. It will give priority attention to the problems of youth employment, since the life of youth is a decisive element of national development.

The government is aware that only a people with health have a future. Therefore health as a basic value must be emphasised in all areas of social and economic life.

The prevention of illnesses is a common responsibility of society. The government is responsible for the provision of medical services, but the individual is responsible for the preservation of his/her health.

It is necessary to carry out a fundamental and comprehensive renewal of the medical service system, in order that the medical system can serve people more effectively. This requires a greater percentage of funding for medical services. The government will act to reduce the vulnerability of patients by assuring the free choice of physicians.

Another required element of change in the medical service system is the creation of clearly understandable, unequivocal and accountable rights of ownership. The structural transformation of provider institutions will involve diverse forms of ownership. We must develop a system which assures the rights of the patient and is compatible with European legal standards.

The entire system of medical and social insurance must be transformed, so that its resources are protected from the changes of the economy and it is made accountable to an autonomous, self-governing organisation.

The industrial and environmental policy of the past decades has produced a seriously deteriorating, polluted natural environment. In densely settled areas, in Budapest, in industrial centres air is badly polluted. In many areas of the country the provision of drinking water is endangered and the soil is polluted.

The government regards the protection of the natural and built environment strategically important and feels responsible for future generations. Instead of a short-sighted economic policy, it will give priority to the protection of the environment and will issue legal guidelines to that effect.

The government intends to establish co-operative relationships with the European Community, international organisations, and environmental institutions and will seek co-operation with neighbouring countries to restore the ecosystem of the Carpathian Basin.

In view of professional studies, the government disapproves of the construction of a Danube water barrage system, will proceed to restore the flow of the Danube at Nagymaros and will initiate negotiations with the Czechoslovak government to be elected on restoration procedures and the sharing of project expenses.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ The plan for the Gabčíkovo/Bős–Nagymaros hydroelectric plant goes back to the fifties and sixties. Hungary and Czechoslovakia signed a treaty in 1977 on its construction, but work started only in the mid-1980s. Objections by the Hungarian Academy of Science and protests by environmentalist groups led to the suspension of the construction in 1989, and to its termination in 1991. In response, in 1992 Slovakia unilaterally diverted the river and completed the project on its own territory. In 1993 the two governments took the case to the International Court of Justice at The Hague, which in 1997 reached a compromise decision, which has not been fully implemented yet.

Our overall purpose is to prepare an environmental, territorial and health policy which will result in an increasingly healthy population and a society in which it will be a matter of joy to give birth to children, to grow up and to work for the benefit of the individual and society, human co-operation will become a natural activity, and we can spend our leisure time and our old age joyfully.

Our housing conditions are in a state of crisis. The number of dwellings per one thousand people is declining. In addition, we are paying twice, three times and even more for living space, as compared with most West European countries.

The shortage of housing affects primarily our young people. It is necessary to prepare a general reform of housing policy. We intend to draft a strategic plan with consideration of long-range objectives. We shall propose a market-based housing policy, which provides for clear formulation of the state role. The government will seek to assure a minimal dwelling space by the construction of social housing and social support. The objective is to attain an economic system in which housing costs are financed by individual incomes.

Following this discussion of health and environmental issues, I propose to address the question of education and culture.

The prevailing attitudes of discouragement, confusion, lack of balance, intolerance, passivity, self-destructive conduct can be derived in part from the deficiencies of education, upbringing, cultural status. Many young people are not motivated to obtain education, professional training or to strive for a better life, because they have no sense of success or social ties to friends or their country.

Our country as a whole is still subject to the effects of the destructive cultural policies of the party system, the impact of those decades when traditional values and talents were suppressed.

The number of people with deficient or no education is increasing. In the past Hungary was known throughout the world as the country of talent. International sympathy and interest for Hungary is based on the expectation that we will utilise our talent and dedication for rebuilding our country.

The government considers education and culture as a priority issue. As the case of several countries who achieved rapid development indicates, investments in education are the most effective and rapid means of return for the country. We need educated people to accomplish national renewal, as Széchenyi⁷⁷ said many years ago.

⁷⁷ See note 62.

We must renew our national culture by reviving our traditions and modernizing education and learning. The objective of the government is the introduction of reforms which will facilitate compulsory education to the age of 16. One of the basic requirements of this goal is a flexible lower and middle educational system, which provides complete study programmes, but enables students to advance to higher schools.

We must implement a comprehensive system of freedom of learning. This means the right of parents to choose schools freely and to receive full information from schools on the educational process.

We intend to eliminate the feeling of vulnerability of parents and children in the school system. The school is not an authority. We must restore the dignity of the teacher and eliminate his/her subjection to authorities. Our guideline is that the highest direction of schools should be conducted by a school council in which parents, teachers, educators and local government are represented. We plan to have a similar system for institutions of higher education following strengthened university autonomy.

We must also restore their schools to small villages, within dictates of common sense, and terminate the form of centralisation which has produced the dissolution of human communities.

We must assure, as a matter of right, to all children in areas of national and ethnic minorities, the opportunity to attend play-school and primary school taught in their native language. We must take steps to teach as one of the foreign languages the minority language in nationality areas or the language of our neighbour countries for those of Hungarian origin.

Our universities and advanced schools should be centres of instruction of European standards, as well as develop into centres of research for studies taught there, along with the current system of research centres. The government will assure that the instruments required for the freedom of scientific research will be provided. In the view of the government, the restoration of the autonomy of scientific institutes is inseparable from that principle.

Science plays a key role in modern society; therefore the government intends to support research by competitive grants and the provision of sufficient funds. The government also intends to encourage university research and the transformation of the prevailing, ineffective structure of research. It is our objective to develop universities into centres of scientific and technological research, along with other scientific and industrial research institutes, and into genuine universities.

Our university and advanced school diplomas must become equivalent to those of European countries. The government considers it desirable to transform the current qualification system and to make it compatible with European requirements, in place of the previously established Soviet model.

We also consider of importance educational programmes outside the traditional school system, such as community schools. We encourage their support by all educational institutes. We must also support autonomous artistic initiatives by providing appropriate training and professional materials. Artists are free to choose their professional interest groups, who protect and qualify their members.

We intend to give special attention to public collections, archives, libraries, museums, the archival collections of radio, television and film producers, as well as the preservation of museum collections.

Our mass communications programme seeks to support our commitment to attain European standards, but at the same time will be attentive to our domestic cultural requirements. Since in the past cultural activities reflected and intensified social conflicts, we must proceed cautiously in this area. We must not allow the dominance of party political conflicts in mass communications, nor the control of any party, professional group, artistic school or economic interest group over the national media. We must therefore place persons of independence and public respect in executive positions, who are committed to the conciliation of public controversies.

We must not surrender artistic activities completely to the demands of the market; rather we must provide state support to literature, theatre and film, music, dance, the fine and industrial arts, while the market will continue to play a role in their support. But support for the arts does not justify intervention in artistic activities or their evaluation.

The next chapter of the government programme concerns man and his social environment, his institutions.

In the present stage of our history, it has become possible for society and individuals to exercise their fundamental rights freely. Today people in Hungary can exercise their rights to assemble and unite freely, they can establish parties. They can choose their religion purely on the basis of their faith. They have elected by free elections the parliament which expresses the will of the people. This process, however, is far from complete. The basic standard of our legislation on human rights will become the highly demanding European Agreement on Human Rights, as we join the Council of Europe. This government intends

to make sure that the Hungarian legal code and practice comply with this European standard.

Full equality of opportunity does not yet exist for those persons in Hungary, who have suffered imprisonment for political reasons. These numerous political victims have felt oppressed even after their release. It is our duty to rehabilitate them materially and morally. In order to obtain a full evaluation of this issue and to identify actions to be undertaken, we shall establish a special government agency under the direction of a minister.

The government recognises the value of the culture and language of national and ethnic minorities and regards them as an enrichment of Hungarian national culture. Therefore in order to preserve, care for and develop them, it seeks to guarantee the freedom of association of minority communities. It assumes responsibility for support according to the availability of funds.

The government supports the principle of the full separation of state and church. Therefore it finds it necessary to restore fully the capability of churches to carry out their activities, to secure their economic independence and wishes to support the historic role that churches have performed in the past millennium.

The basic condition of an effective legal system is an independent and modern judicial system. This involves as a central element a genuine independence of the courts and the autonomy of judicial institutions. Therefore the judicial system and judicial procedures must be appropriately modernised.

The reform of local governments will be based on the historical traditions of Hungarian self-government and the principles on modern self-government approved by the Council of Europe in the charter of 1985. These principles include the exercise of democratic government at the local level. The communities of towns, cities and counties have the right of self-government, exercised by their chosen representative assemblies. Local self-government has full responsibility for local affairs, based on the right to obtain ownership of properties and other economic sources. Self-government administers services to the local population; therefore it needs local sources of revenue and state support. Another autonomous right of self-governments is to manage their properties and economic sources independently. One of the most important legislative responsibilities of the current cycle is the enactment of the law on local self-government and the holding of local government elections.

I now turn to the fourth chapter of the government programme, economic relationships in the context of our programme centred on the individual.

In the past forty years Hungarian society lived in an upside down world. The economy was not based on the structure of individual and corporate enterprises, society was not built on the interaction of autonomous organisations, but an alien, forcibly imported system was imposed on the population. The state established control over the economy, enterprises were directed from above and the state took over the role of the market system.

Our central strategy is the establishment of a free, socially oriented market economy, based on private property and free enterprise. Those who are in a weak economic position or are disadvantaged expect assistance from the state and social organisations in the context of a social safety net. This net will assist those who became disadvantaged as a result of the injustices or irrationalities of the previous system as well as those who suffered hardships in the transition to the free market economy.

The social safety net will involve the creation of new labour market institutions, effective interest representation, policies to assist new enterprises in the process of the economic transition, as well as assistance to the unemployed to become active members of the economy.

The government will pursue policies to protect the great numbers of the retired from the threat of sliding below the subsistence level as well as to assist young people to receive appropriate training and find the first employment.

Our second basic objective is to contain foreign indebtedness. Our international image is based on our ability to pay interest on these loans and our capacity to establish an effective economy which can handle these debts as a minor or lesser burden. The government will honour our financial responsibilities in full and will strive to restrain further indebtedness. This will require a two-year period of economic transformation, followed by an economic growth rate of 3–4 per cent. Without economic growth we will be submerged in a state of indebtedness and will be unable to join the West European countries as an equal partner country, in fact, we will be unable to join them at all.

An inflation rate of above 20 per cent this year indicates the tensions, the irrational structure and declining conditions of the economy. We cannot accept a constantly increasing inflation rate since this creates a situation in which prices increase from month to month and from year to year.

The first aim of governmental policies is to contain inflationary trends within one year and to reduce inflation to one-digit levels by the end of the three year economic cycle.

Our strategic objective is to create a strong and secure currency and to attain convertibility. We hope to achieve external convertibility by next year and to accelerate processes required for full convertibility.

Our programme will result in a market system in which small and medium-size enterprises will have a dominant role, assuming the role of the wasteful, artificially created and maintained state enterprises. This system will evolve in the process of privatisation, which will include foreign working and investment capital. The proportion of foreign capital in the Hungarian economy will expectedly increase substantially at the end of this programme.

Our overall objective is to reduce regional economic disparities throughout the country and to increase growth opportunities of provincial areas, especially of the small and medium-size towns.

We expect substantial, temporary increase of unemployment, resulting in severe employment problems in some affected areas. The programme seeks to support the employment capacities of enterprises by measures to revitalise the economy. As the market system becomes established, retraining programmes will be organised and former wage earners will create enterprises.

The government expresses its responsibility for the working people of large industrial enterprises. These workers will have a significant role in the new economic system, as productive employees of efficient enterprises.

The state confiscations of enterprises carried out in the late 1940s were politically motivated, socially unjust and economically ineffective. These confiscations, however, cannot be compensated with a single action. Property reform and privatisation must be based on property relationships as they existed in the previous system. With the exception of productive agricultural lands, the confiscated properties cannot be restored fully to their original owners. The management of state enterprises by enterprise councils will be terminated. We will initiate employee stock ownership. The government will prepare a comprehensive privatisation programme. This programme will be socially accountable and just, but will be based exclusively on the principle of efficiency. We shall initiate evaluations of some business units structured from existing state enterprises and if necessary require restoration of the original status. Those private establishments and state enterprises which operate productively and pay dividends will play an important economic role in the future. The effective operation of these enterprises is a basic condition of a growing economy.

The central element of government competition policy is the stimulation of competition and action against agrarian monopolies. We shall abolish privileges

which restrict free competition. We shall prepare legislation on competition authorising the government to take action against lobbies and organisations restricting or excluding free competition. There will be an office on cartels with the responsibility to monitor emerging monopolies and to play the role of a constitutional court in economic life. In addition the government will take action against excessive centralisation of enterprise management.

The government will replace the weak economic policies of the former governments which allowed local enterprise bankruptcies to create a national crisis. The government preceding us was unable to handle this problem. We shall make it mandatory for enterprises to disclose bankruptcies in order to facilitate liquidation procedures. We shall prepare a new bankruptcy act. In the meantime we shall take action against hopelessly indebted enterprises.

The government assumes responsibility to continue liberalisation of the price system, thereby enabling economic actors to respond to market changes. Administrative intervention will be limited to fundamental public interests. In other areas of the economy price changes will be determined by economic competition and laws regulating the economy. Citizens feel the overpowering presence of the government especially in economic affairs, since the government budget represents an excessively large share of national income. At the same time the standard of public services is low. There is a significant imbalance between expenditures and revenue as a result of unjustified and excessive government intervention. The current government financial system fails to meet the requirements of the market economy.

The government wishes to prepare a reliable inventory of government resources and propose a reform of the government financial system. The Hungarian National Bank will act in the future as the central bank of Hungary. It will be responsible for monetary regulation, defence of the currency and monetary circulation. The government will prepare legislation relating to this system. The government intends to create a strong and independent national bank, which will defend the national currency consistently, even against the government. This will be guaranteed by the responsibility of the national bank to parliament.

The government intends to strengthen competition in the commercial banking sector by authorizing the establishment of new Hungarian and foreign banks. In order to stimulate the capital market, the government will encourage the growth of the supply and demand for stocks. In the transition to a market economy, our preferred example is the Western model, in which

every fourth or fifth citizen can own stocks, investments are a natural form of property and savings are channelled to the economy by stocks and bonds. The government intends to utilise foreign securities owned by the population in the interest of the national economy and will guarantee the security of bank accounts.

The government programme will focus industrial policy on those sectors which have an undeveloped market presence. The government will formulate a co-ordinated programme for reducing energy dependence of the Hungarian economy, expansion of new acquisitions and acceleration of relationships to European energy providers. This is not only a question of economic policy, but a part of our political and security programme.

As part of our industrial policy we shall prepare a conceptual plan for technology development as a priority programme, which will include not only basic research, but also applied research. The co-ordination of such a programme is indispensable.

The government programme considers tourism as a major sector. Its development is compatible with our resources. At this time it makes a major contribution to the improvement of our balance of payments and employment. In addition to its economic role, it provides an instrument for the free movement of persons and ideas. For expanding it we need to reduce superfluous regulations and the bureaucracy as well as support for language and professional training. Nevertheless we should not forget that in the newly developing Europe, with special reference to the situation of Central-Eastern Europe, negative impacts may take place.

The government announces a new agricultural policy. The market economy requires real private ownership, which in agriculture means the property of natural persons, that is, ownership and utilisation generally coincides. The new agriculture involves private owners and producers co-operating in a family setting as well as the real co-operatives of owners. In a narrow sector state properties also play a role.

The basic principle of agricultural reform is that land should be owned by that person who will expectedly cultivate it. Our goal is to provide justice to the peasantry for the injuries they suffered. In this respect the year 1947 may be a decisive starting point, since the land reform of 1945 essentially resulted in a new property system and forced collectivisation did not yet exist.

But this reform must not endanger either production or the appropriate formation of the national property system, nor our agricultural policies. Therefore

the agricultural programme of the government is not the programme of one party, but the unified programme of the coalition parties.

The status of the remaining state lands will be determined by parliament. Until that time, lands owned or utilised by large enterprises may not be sold or distributed to co-operative members. The utilisation of productive lands will be determined by their owners; they will decide whether cultivation will take place individually or in co-operation, whether they will be leased or sold.

Acquisition of land by foreigners must be made public and transparent. It can be limited only transitionally. Government regulations will prevent sale of properties by large enterprises for speculative purposes.

The government will propose legislation on agricultural land use. The fundamental principle will be that such lands cannot be acquired freely. In order to support the stability of agricultural production, co-operatives which carry out the instructions of their members should be strengthened.

Our transport and communications system is in a precarious situation. Services are inadequate, there are regional disparities, existing facilities are worn out, and technology is obsolete. State involvement is indispensable in the future in the development and maintenance of capital intensive transport and communications facilities, as well as in those sectors which require state mandated price setting. It is indispensable to introduce more efficient utilisation of resources, liquidate superfluous organisations and initiate progressive privatisation.

Transport and communications are an integral part of the economy. Therefore their level of performance has a decisive impact on the potential of economic and social development. For that reason, the goal of the government is to improve the provision of services to the population and enterprises in the infrastructure systems of transport and communications. We can refer to the ideas of István Széchenyi, who stated over a century ago that transport is the basic condition of innovation and economic development.

The qualifications, composition and work ethic of our labour force lag behind European standards. Its territorial and professional mobility is weak. The government programme will have the effect of revealing the low competitive and income generating capacity of some economic sectors and regions, consequently concealed unemployment will be replaced by open unemployment.

The government programme will include such measures as encouragement of economic mobility, retraining, job creation, reform of education to prevent

unemployment, and moderation of problems arising from transitional and long-term unemployment.

In the context of economic change, it will become more and more important to prevent or moderate labour force conflicts. As private enterprises grow, employees and employers must come to agreements concerning their mutual interests. This means that increasingly local agreements will replace government regulations on labour market issues.

Recognising the importance of this issue, we propose to set up a ministry concerned with labour and employment issues. The interests of employees will be represented by trade unions, as is the case in all democratic countries. In the past four decades trade unions did not represent the interests of workers, but in the past year changes have been taking place. In the future, the government wishes to support the creation and functioning of democratic trade unions, workers councils and other interest group organisations within existing legal regulations.

The system of state services relating to the labour force is of extraordinarily low standard. International relationships are disorganised, legal regulations are partially obsolete. Therefore it is necessary to enact legislation on the rights and protection of employees as well as on interest group protection and conflict resolution.

It is not necessary to point out or to emphasise in the context of a government programme, but especially in the case of economic policy, that there are many questions which exclude each other or contradict each other. But I am of the opinion that a government programme provides an overall direction to such issues, as a separate issue, as a priority, or as the motivation to the next step. Therefore it is the task of government policy to resolve such issues.

The next section concerns the issues of the individual, the homeland and the world. The Republic of Hungary is independent. It will pursue a foreign policy based on the priority of national interests. Our international status is momentarily advantageous, since all great powers accept and support our political transformation and the full restoration of our sovereignty. I state this with the understanding that we are fully aware of existing problems, nor do we have illusions concerning the question that there are those who are not necessarily happy about this.

Along with the success of economic transformation, our foreign policy will be decisive in our efforts to strengthen our position, based on the advantages attained in recent years and the international changes in our region, and to

assume an appropriate role in Europe, defined by our traditions and geographical position.

In the interest of the independence and security of Hungary, our efforts are focused on the departure of Soviet troops from our country prior to the deadline of 30 June 1991, but in any case this should take place on that date, if there is no other choice. The defence of our country and of the new political structure will be based, along with an effective army, on a new European collective security and co-operative system. This involves more than neutrality without the guarantee of the great powers. One of the priority tasks of Hungarian foreign policy is active co-operation in the enactment of such a treaty. Apart from this, we shall initiate in the very near future bilateral treaty negotiations with neighbouring countries confirming our mutual interests and good neighbourly relationships.

Our participation in the Warsaw Pact contradicts the will of the nation, expressed in the Revolution of 1956 and confirmed in the last elections. In our opinion, the Pact is unnecessary. In the interest of maintaining our legal, military and political position, we shall initiate negotiations with member states of the Pact, with due regard to international legal obligations, the viewpoints of our neighbour countries, and the necessity of maintaining the effectiveness of our army. We shall also have to consider the declared position of the Hungarian Parliament.

As a result of the termination of the artificial division of Europe, the most significant focus of Hungarian foreign policy will be Europe, based on economic interests and common traditions. This focus involves both political and cultural factors. We shall start to establish the substantive and institutional framework of this decisive conceptual change by accession to the Council of Europe and involvement in the activities of several West European organisations. It will be necessary to re-examine the legal elements of our international treaty-making practices and to renew them. This will contribute to the conclusion of our associate membership treaty with the European Community, which will prepare our full membership. The European focus of our foreign policy does not contradict the idea of Atlantic co-operation in the broad sense. This is demonstrated by the co-operation of the United States, Canada and Europe in the two world wars as allies.

We shall strive to strengthen our relationships with all democratic states supporting our transformation, with special consideration of traditional cultural and geographical community as well as the changing balance of power in the East-Central European region.

We support the establishment of German unity and we are proud of our role in assisting its success. There are significant opportunities in economic relationships free of ideological bias and based on mutual advantages. To utilise these, however, we must re-examine our priorities and restructure our diplomatic system as a whole.

We seek a balanced, correct, good neighbourly relationship with the Soviet Union, based on equal rights. To attain this, we must find a new basis for our political and economic relationships.

The changes in Central and Eastern Europe have provided us with a great opportunity to put an end to or at least to moderate the animosities that traditionally turned the peoples of this region against each other. Nations achieving independence should develop free contacts with each other. State borders should not obstruct the free movement of persons, information and ideas. We are confident that in the future none of our neighbours will feel the need to use the Hungarians as the image of the foe, so that they could keep their unity. European co-operation goes hand-in-hand with intensive regional co-operation; we shall seek to achieve that with all our neighbours. As Europe moves towards a federation, regionalism is the best guarantee for the preservation of national characteristics and the assertion of national interests, free of intolerant nationalism.

The principal objective of our minority policy is the enforcement of human rights and specifically minority rights, equally in Hungary and abroad. In view of the fact that one third of Hungarians live outside of Hungary,⁷⁸ it is a special responsibility of the State of Hungary to support the preservation of the Hungarian nation as a cultural and ethnic community everywhere. For that reason, we support the maintenance of the right of self-determination of Hungarian communities beyond our borders, in accordance with prevailing international treaties and according to their spirit, as well as in full agreement with the declared promises of the governments of the neighbouring countries. It is timely that the national minorities truly formed the most important bridge of friendship among countries, but this can happen only if the rights and dignity of those communities are restored. In this honest endeavour of ours we count on the support of the governments and public opinion of democratic countries as well as the political assistance of European and international organisations.

We place special emphasis, along with the Hungarian minorities living beyond our present borders, on the territory of historic Hungary, on our

⁷⁸ Due to the decisions of the Treaty of Trianon. See note 68.

relationship with Hungarians living in Western countries. It is our wish that, while we support them as they are involved in resolving their problems as immigrants; they should play a role as a bridge of friendship or diplomacy between their host countries and Hungary.

Our international economic policy is based on the interrelationships of commercial, capital and tourist markets. The strengthening of our international economic relationships is indispensable for reversing our declining international economic position, indebtedness, and impoverishment. In the short and mid-term, it is indispensable, in the interest of improving our international position, image and potential for the acquisition of resources, to increase our exports of products and services to countries utilising dollar-based monetary accounts, in excess of our imports. The strategic requirements for attaining the placement of foreign investments are an accelerated modernisation, increasing export orientation and implementation of the privatisation programme.

We have to strengthen the confidence of our population in future improvements, and we have to speed up democratisation; that makes the deepening of our relationships to West European integration more urgent. As noted earlier, we are making efforts to attain associate membership in the European Community. This will place our co-operative relationships on a firmer basis, since it is attentive to the divergent development status of co-operating countries and provides opportunities for the Hungarian economy to participate in regional research and development programmes, energy development and political discussions. It also facilitates our full membership at a later point. Therefore we welcome the message of the Dublin summit meeting of the European Community concerning the possibilities of new forms of associate membership, which we have repeatedly discussed in Hungary. We also wish to establish institutional relationships with EFTA, the free trade countries, and encourage the country's advancement to the European economies. The diversity of European co-operation and its regional elements focus attention on co-operation among several country groups, such as the Alps-Adriatic country group, which will have meetings in the coming days and weeks.

The changing Comecon⁷⁹ and close economic relations among the East-Central European countries is an element of European co-operation. In the case of Hungary, our relationship to the Soviet Union is especially important.

⁷⁹ Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, the system of mainly bilateral ties among the members of the Soviet bloc, formed in 1949. It institutionalised the economic dominance of the Soviet Union.

Regional co-operation based on new principles, compatible with the rules and norms of international trade, leading to the gradual elimination of borders among neighbouring countries, would be a valuable contribution to the economic and political security of Europe, to the strengthening of its international weight.

The government has inherited an army which is in the process of reorganisation. It is still characterised by those distorted features which were imposed on it as a result of our dependence. Therefore the size, position, equipment of our army does not reflect the requirements of defending our country, but those imposed by the Warsaw Pact. We will have to continue to make changes.

The government will prepare and enforce a new military doctrine. The basis of that programme is our commitment, supported by existing international conditions, to move away from membership in a military block towards a common European security system. Our starting point is to assure the necessary and satisfactory defence of our country, that is, the Hungarian army will be a defensive force and not an offensive one in the future.

Honoured House! I have now concluded the presentation of our political strategy which summarises our basic principles and outlines the activities of the coming years. I will now present the principles of our short-term action programme.

The government programme outlined the basic principles, the main directions of social and economic policies. The first hundred days will be of key importance in attempting to put an end to unfavourable social and especially economic processes in 1990 and in initiating a successful three-year renewal programme.

In the context of the short-term programme the government proposes to undertake the following steps:

The transformation of the organisational and operational system of the government. Both the coalition government based on democratic principles and the transition to the market economy require the radical transformation of public administration. Based on the authorisation of parliament, the government will establish an effective, updated organisational and operational system of state administration, which will be more esteemed socially and financially, but will operate with a reduced size and cost. This will be completed within 120 days of assuming office. In implementing the governmental reorganisation, the coalition government will give special consideration to professionalism, the raising of professional standards and the loyalty of public administration to the government.

The next points concern several questions relating to the programme of fighting inflation and stimulating enterprise development.

Following its assumption of office, the government will consider its basic objective the reduction of inflation. Therefore, it will announce an anti-inflationary and enterprise development programme for the first 100 days, which will launch a concentrated attack on the sources of inflation and will assist the birth of a great number of new enterprises. This programme will be the first step in establishing the often quoted social market economy, by providing opportunities for those losing employment, but possessing enterprise initiative and the ability to adjust, to return to the economic system.

Several important points:

The government will prepare a programme to address the unacceptable number of enterprise financial failures. The government will initiate bankruptcy proceedings against the largest enterprises with long-time insolvency.

The government will announce a programme stimulating enterprise development, concentrating foreign sources of enterprise support and domestic funds.

The government will announce a pre-privatisation programme in domestic commerce, catering services, hotel services, consumer and other services and petrol stations.

The government will initiate the modification of the management system of state company, based on company councils and enterprise assemblies. It will also initiate the modification of the legal status of enterprise units reorganised as business organisation, and if necessary, will establish state control over them.

It will prepare and establish a package plan for stimulating foreign investments.

The government will announce a programme stimulating personal savings, including encouragement of interest for forint accounts and attractive interest for foreign currency accounts.

The government will initiate a comprehensive overview of the state budget.

The government will initiate the establishment of new organisations for labour force information, employment and retraining, and will provide funds for assisting the unemployed and enterprise development, in order to address unemployment as a result of the short-term programme.

The overview of several prominent programmes: The government will examine several socially prominent programmes and plans, for which there is special public interest in view of their economic importance or social prominence.

For example it will prepare and finalise the minimum level programme of the Budapest–Vienna World Exhibition,⁸⁰ with special reference to securing appropriate funding sources, the inclusion of provisions which will benefit not only some regions, but the country as a whole, and which will not only address the purposes of the Expo, but will result in the construction of nationally significant infrastructural developments and in the stimulation of enterprises and investments.

These are the provisions which will make the Budapest–Vienna World Exhibition acceptable to the government.

With due consideration of the basic principles of the government programme and preparatory studies completed, it will prepare a proposal for housing management. It will review the legal regulations on environmental protection, carry out necessary reviews, and prepare missing directives.

The government will prepare its decision on future funding of health systems and arrange for the preparation of proposals on medical insurance.

The government will examine modifications of the sales tax and customs duties, which may better reflect social requirements.

The government upholds its policy to address the issue of the Danube barrage system as previously stated. It will start the restoration of the river area at Nagymaros, and will initiate new negotiations with the Czechoslovak authorities over discontinuing construction activities at Bős.

The government will survey the problems of scientific research and technological development and decide on actions to be taken to the end of 1991.

It is an important task of the government to assure the complete withdrawal of Soviet forces now in progress under optimal conditions, to utilise vacant military installations, and to survey environmental conditions.

At present, committees of the parliament examine our relations with the Warsaw Pact and related problems. After the completion of this review and an official statement of the parliament, the government will examine international legal, military and material consequences and continue to address this issue.

The government will review the specific objectives of the initiated military reform and its status. It will then make a decision on the basic elements of the new military programme and actions to be taken to co-ordinate current re-organisations with that programme.

⁸⁰ In 1987 the Hungarian and the Austrian governments decided on a joint world exposition to be held simultaneously in Vienna and Budapest in 1995. In 1991, as a result of a referendum, Vienna quit the project, but Hungary decided to stage the Expo alone in 1996. The Horn government, however, due to difficulties in financing, abandoned it.

Concerning a survey of the social-economic situation of the country: in the months after taking office, the government will draw up a study of the most important social and economic conditions which form the centre of its three-year programme of renewal. In this context it will present to the public an authentic account of the expenditures of loans borrowed from abroad and their present status, the size and structure of domestic state debts, prevailing regional economic inequities and the actual conditions of enterprises. This reliable report on our social and economic conditions, including calculations and projections, may form the basis of a detailed, definitive government programme.

The government will prepare a detailed programme, based on the basic values and action areas outlined by the government and the experiences of the adjustment period of the first several months. This programme will summarise the actions to be undertaken in the first three years of this government, the detailed calculations and the political and social assumptions of the programme. Being aware of the grave situation of the country, the government has no illusions concerning the popularity and limitations of this programme. The injustices, sufferings, repressed and now exploding emotions of the past decades provide an explanation, if not an excuse, for the emotional and miracle-expectant attitudes frequently expressed in our current public life. Nevertheless, I wish to emphasise, that independently of the question, whether this government will survive the political cycle for which it was elected, the next government will not have an easier task either and it will be unable to pursue an easier political course or promise better things to the Hungarian people.

Emotional outbursts, personal ambitions may easily chart the nation in the wrong direction. Let me quote the well known anecdote of Ferenc Deák: The coachman warns his nervous passenger: "Sir, we may survive if you don't keep pulling the reins, but if you do we'll perish for sure"

In the present situation of the country the wisdom of Deák should be considered seriously. Today many pull and grab the reins; this may easily result in ending up in the ditch. History demands today a government directing the carriage of the country with common sense and a strong arm and having an authentic conception of the future. The working people demand calmness and security. We cannot conceal, however, that national renewal may not only damage the position of those identified with the previous system, but also that of those who are involved in activities which are now superfluous as a result of the change of regime. Unemployment, retraining, the strain of a new

beginning, the provisional decline of consumption, economic transformation, inflation may impose extremely grave burdens on specific social groups, without their fault.

The government is involved in efforts, in the spirit of the admonitions of Saint Stephen,⁸¹ of humanist and national solidarity, to express to the victims of renewal, that there is solidarity and sympathy for them on the part of Hungarian society. The government projects that as a result of sacrifices made in the transitional period, the programme of national renewal, national reconstruction will create and mobilise development energies, internal and external resources which will facilitate the termination of the current crisis, the improvement of well being and the advancement of the country to European standards.

But the programme by itself is not sufficient, the intention of the government is not sufficient, there is a need for confidence and patience from the parliament, and what is even more important, from the Hungarian people as a whole.

Excuse me for referring again to Ferenc Deák, to a lastingly valid, but in our present situation especially timely message of one of his parliamentary addresses in the spring of 1848: "We must attempt to make those who are not friends of the present transformation friends of it. We can achieve our goals only if we join hands. If we are disunited, no alien foe is needed, because we shall destroy ourselves."

The present condition of the country, the emergence of a crisis after relatively good years is not our doing. Our task is the acceptance of the inherited crisis and its solution. This is the message of our history when the issue is national existence: we must stand together in basic questions. This applies not only to the political parties of the coalition, not only to the opposition we respect, but also to all those who live in this country.

In this spirit, in the home of emerging modern Hungarian parliamentarism, in the house of Hungarian legal continuity, I make this request to the government side, to the majority, and also to the opposition, the responsibility

⁸¹ King Stephen the Saint (975–1038). Vajk, son of Prince Géza, was christened in 997, crowned King Stephen (István in Hungarian) in 1000. He defeated his pagan rivals and created a strong central government following the European model. He introduced severe punishment for those who didn't keep the laws of the new society based on the idea of private property and the Christian religion. He organised the ecclesiastical and secular framework of administration in the form of bishoprics and counties. By establishing the Hungarian state on contemporary European models, King Stephen guaranteed the survival of the Hungarian people, who had been considered a century earlier alien and a menace in Western Europe. He was canonised in 1083.

of which is the same as that of the government. We have a government and we have an opposition. I think that this parliament has demonstrated to Europe and to the world in the past few weeks that it is capable of performance, that it is capable of working with government parties and opposition parties, that it will be capable of laying the foundations of the Hungarian future, working jointly.

In this spirit I request the confidence and support of the nation and the parliament in the realisation of the efforts of the government.

AFTER TAKING THE OATH OF OFFICE

In the evening of 23 May 1990, after the Hungarian Parliament had endorsed him as Prime Minister, József Antall, together with the members of his government, took the oath of office. He then delivered the following speech, the text of which is taken from Országgyűlési Napló (Parliamentary Journal).

Today is, I suppose, just another busy weekday for the country. In order to sense the solemnity of the occasion, one has to be aware of the entire historical process in which we have just reached a new stage.

In this House, following intense debate, my Honorable Colleagues, appreciative as it were of the efforts we have made so far and perhaps pardoning our slips, have granted their approval to my assuming the office of prime minister. Needless to say, I am attached to this nation by far deeper roots and by much stronger resolution than any that can stem from a formal oath, however solemn the obligation under which it may place me. For me, this day signifies the end of something in my life, and is the sign of a new beginning.

I confess that doubts keep nagging at me; I admit that the weight of responsibility lies so heavily on my shoulders that I need to gather all my strength and faith to be able to stand firm. But I will not give in because I have agreed to it and because this country, this nation, must not pass up so unique an opportunity as this.

I want to be a humble helmsman steering the ship of the nation, fully aware of the depths and chasms that lie beneath, aware that despite all the cheers and bright hopes, despite all the attention that we are receiving from the world, there may be terrible perils ahead. There will be dangers from without and dangers from within if things happen to take the wrong direction here. It is our mission to gather the faith, knowledge and willpower required to steer our common vessel out of harm's way, forcing our passage round that stormy cape beyond which the new century is beckoning.

This building has been witness to many historic decisions, good and bad alike. I should like to believe that in the future the majority of the decisions will be good ones. To assume the office of prime minister in a country whose first

prime minister, Count Lajos Batthyány, ended up a martyr⁸² (a perpetual warning to every Hungarian prime minister) is not something one does lightly.

To become prime minister of Hungary is not simply to take on the role of head of the government. It also involves an acceptance of the risk inherent in assuming that role, the risk of physical or moral death. The death, the execution, of our first prime minister should serve as a reminder for each subsequent Hungarian prime minister of possible martyrdom and redemption.

It is a sad fact that Lajos Batthyány was not the last Hungarian prime minister to die a martyr's death; the prime minister of our latest revolution ended up a martyr, too.⁸³ The history of this nation has been one in which such an outcome remains a perpetual omen. And not only one but many more individuals who took upon themselves the duty of governance had to suffer a similar fate for this country.⁸⁴

I should like to emphasise before this Honourable House today the need for us Hungarians to gather all strength, to gather all our faith, to extricate ourselves from the present crisis, and the need to exercise solidarity towards each other. The odds are stacked more in our favour than they have ever been before, but we need to have a firm commitment to the creation of genuine political democracy, genuine parliamentarism, through undaunted determination.

My colleagues and myself, the team on these benches (where many of the politicians of yesteryear, small and great, good and bad alike, were formerly sitting; we ourselves had the privilege of meeting a good number of them) have taken our seats to try our hand at the strenuous art of governance. And now, having taken our seats here and having fought our political battles with the present opposition (including the previous government party), it is not only

⁸² Lajos Batthyány, Count (1807–1849), member of the liberal aristocracy, the leader of the opposition in the upper chamber of the Diet from 1830. On 17 March 1848 he was appointed head of the first Hungarian government responsible to Parliament. Having done much constructive work he did his best to avoid an armed conflict with the Habsburg dynasty. Arrested by the commander of the Imperial Army in January 1849, executed in Pest on the same day as the thirteen generals at Arad, on 6 October.

⁸³ Reference to Imre Nagy (1896–1958). Coming from a family of peasants, he joined the Bolshevik movement as a POW in Russia. Lived in the Soviet Union in emigration in the 1930s. Minister responsible for land reform in 1945. As Prime Minister in 1953–1955 he put an end to the most serious abuses which characterised the system introduced by Rákosi (q.v.). Expelled from the Communist Party in 1955, recalled on 23 October 1956 to be Prime Minister. Ousted by the Soviet invasion, deported to Romania, executed on 16 June 1958.

⁸⁴ Tragic fate of Hungarian Prime Ministers: István Tisza was assassinated (31 October 1918), Pál Teleki committed suicide (3 April 1941), István Bethlen was kidnapped by the Russians to die in captivity probably in 1946, while Béla Imrédy and László Bárdossy were executed in 1946 for their political activities during World War II. József Antall was also to die in office on 12 December 1993.

members of the three parties of our coalition (to all of which I feel I belong and whose ideals I have always espoused) that I want to address. I also wish to address those across the floor. For we all share a common fate, and we must work together to show the world that we are living in a European country which will not tolerate, will not leave unpunished, any outrage against humanity, against the Hungarian people or against Europe. It is our duty to give redress to those who have not lived to see this day, the warriors and victims of this struggle over the past decades. They, too, are with us here.

And last, but not least, I want to thank the previous government. I want to point out that we got to know each other as early as the round-table talks, and some of those who are now present were at that time working together with us (even though on the other side of the barricades) to create a genuine democracy. And I wish them to know that we not only regard them as the last vestiges of a fallen regime, but also welcome them among those who helped prepare the way for a new political system. Although we were at opposite ends of the political spectrum, they helped prepare the way within the establishment, and they deserve credit for the avoidance of bloodshed while it all came to fruition.

While we are determined to get rid of the leftovers from the past, while we want to clear away all the remnants and lumber of the past, while we are committed to change things, it must be stressed that these people, too, have their place in Hungarian political life, and we want to treat them as fair opponents. Although we are political adversaries, although we pursue different paths in politics, we recognise the civilised attitude they demonstrated in the last phase of their rule when they did their best as soldiers of a defeated army preparing for surrender to tidy up the barracks, stack arms, and hand over political power in a correct manner.

I know that many people find it hard to understand, that many people find it deeply painful, to think that what they did might not have been right because things turned out to all intents and purposes to the advantage of their adversaries. However, we must always acknowledge those representatives of a declining, waning regime who undertook the noble task of laying the foundations for the coming change, who strove to close down an era and to hand over control in a fair and honest way. It is indeed a fundamental rule of European parliamentarism to acknowledge their merits.

It is our hope that their future activities in politics will not be such as to justify any association of their policies and behaviour with those of the past four

decades. All of them are soldiers and servants of transition, a fact that human integrity requires us to acknowledge. This acknowledgement is also needed to make it easier for the country to recover from the wounds and agonies suffered during four decades of dictatorship.

I am well aware that the victim is always more willing to forgive than the wrongdoer. This is why there are many people outside the walls of this House who think quite differently to us. To such people, this is our message: See what has taken place in the world; see what has taken place in our region, in our country. Do wake up to the fact that you have been defeated, that a new era has dawned on us, and try to follow the example of your former comrades who have realised that preparing the future is worth doing even at the price of personal sacrifice.

With these thoughts, with this acknowledgement, taking cognisance of the fact that we are on different sides, knowing that we do not enjoy their confidence, knowing that they are our opposition, but nonetheless with a sense of respectful anticipation, we are looking forward to their efforts in the future, hoping that this Parliament will become a common workshop for the forging of a better Hungary.

I request the continued confidence of the governing party, I ask the opposition to demonstrate a fair sense of opposition responsibility, and I request the confidence of the nation, and faith in the possibility of a Hungarian renewal, a faith that all the words of encouragement we have been receiving from foreign politicians, from foreign heads of government in recent days, even in recent hours, are not a mere formality. I hope that Europe, America and the countries of the world will recognise that our small nation has played a pioneering role in annihilating totalitarianism this time, and, at long last, Hungary's relationship to Europe won't be like an unrequited love-affair, but we'll join on the basis of mutual respect. Thank you for your confidence.

ON THE ROLE OF THE HUNGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

On 24 May 1990, the day after his inauguration as Prime Minister, at the general assembly of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences József Antall presented the unique traditions of the Academy by illuminating its history. The speech was published in the 1990/7 issue of the journal Magyar Tudomány (Hungarian Science).

I stand before you in this hall moved but not prejudiced. It is not the first time that I have had the opportunity to speak from this rostrum. I speak not in the capacity to which the Hungarian Parliament elevated me yesterday, but as an ordinary scientific researcher who now has the opportunity to be among the first, in the name of the government certainly, to congratulate the newly elected President and Secretary-General.

It is a great joy for me that in Professor Kosáry the Academy has elected a President,⁸⁵ who is a symbol of renewal on account of his political conduct, his human dignity and of the imprisonment he suffered. And, somewhat egotistically, it is especially heart-warming because he always wrote positive reviews of my essays, even when most colleagues wrote negative ones.

The concurrent meetings of the Hungarian Parliament and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences come at a time when the world is looking upon Hungary, at a time when every word and every utterance carries weight. These are moments when the country stands at a crossroads, not only in terms of its internal transformation and fate, but also in terms of its external circumstances.

We are determined to carry through the political turnabout. We have to provide hope for the nation, the belief that we are able to break out of this vicious circle and bring the people of Hungary to their senses. We have to provide enough strength to move ourselves up from this low point. We do not harbour illusions; we have no false hopes. On one thing we are very clear: we have no choice but to move forward. If we fail to do so, if we falter, we will fall

⁸⁵ Domonkos Kosáry (1913–2007), historian. Due to his activities in connection with the revolution in 1956, he was imprisoned between 1957–1960. Elected President of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1990, re-elected in 1993 for another three years.

to even greater depths. Now the debate is no longer about what was good and what was bad. Opinions may differ in this respect and it is clear which side I myself have taken. But it is also obvious that this is the end of an era. This must be clear even to those who come from the other side and to those who, even retrospectively, see the other side in a more favourable light.

For Hungary, this is a time that very much resembles the great turning points of history when shifts occurred in the global *status quo*, a time when new spheres of influence are being created and when we need to have all our wits about us in order to take the right steps and not to err. I think that under such circumstances the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the tremendous intellectual capital that is concentrated in it have a crucial role to play.

The Hungarian Academy of Sciences is a special institution of ours. The world is not aware, it does not understand, just what it means for us. It is a body of great scientists with *esprit de corps*, not an institution involved in higher education. The Hungarian Academy of Sciences is a national institution that has acted almost as a branch of state power in Hungarian society and Hungarian public life in every era. It received such an unparalleled influence and role in István Széchenyi's dreams because the country was backward. Therefore, Széchenyi and his great contemporaries deliberately created an institution that attempted to turn a desolate country into a civilised European nation.

The Hungarian Academy of Sciences was a catalyst for development in all ages. By cultivating the Hungarian language, preserving Hungarian traditions, and then by slowly extending its activities to cultivating the natural sciences and other fields of science as well, it took on a very special role that cannot really be compared to that of any other institution in the world.

We believe that one of the greatest assets of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences is its independence. Now that the era of total dictatorship has come to an end in Hungary and the creation of a parliamentary democracy has begun, now that political pluralism is becoming the order of the day, there is a great need for institutions besides the usual branches of political power that are capable of stabilising this country and keeping it in equilibrium. This is the role that we would like the Hungarian Academy of Sciences to play, this is the role that its leaders and members should establish and promote.

We consider it important to create a state of equilibrium in the world of Hungarian science, as well between the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, our renowned universities and other institutions. The supposition that anyone would want to demolish the Academy's existing institutional network is

completely erroneous and utterly wrong. That is out of the question. But we do have to restore the equilibrium, for the sake of research, higher education and the future, between the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, the universities and the other related institutions, organisations and public collections contributing to the technical and technological renewal of Hungary. This means that the Hungarian Academy of Sciences will have a key role to play in the process of renewal that the country has embarked upon. We are confident that a reformed Academy will consider this to be its primary mission.

Through academic freedom and their autonomy, universities must form a strong academic base. It would be equally important for the principle of autonomy to prevail at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and its affiliated institutions. Intellectual freedom and flexibility are fundamental prerequisites of reform in this field. I think this long-standing institution, which has always managed to play a leading role in development during its almost two-hundred-year history, will today once again find its appropriate place.

We do not wish to draw up a finalised programme of what will happen to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, of how its internal structure and system of scientific qualifications should be reformed. This is up to you to work out, up to the institutions and their staff, and the government will take that as a starting point. We would like you to take the initiative, to put forward expert proposals. We do not wish to issue directives; that era is gone and let us be glad of the fact.

But responsibility, too, will now lie with the Academy, the responsibility to assist the government, to support what you agree with and to voice criticism if necessary. Just as in the case of the Parliamentary opposition, we consider it a natural duty of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences to speak up on what it does not agree with. Of course, we would not hold it against you if you said favourable things about us as well once in a while, but we do expect the Academy, as one of the most responsible factors in the life of the nation, to take a clear and precise position on key matters. I consider it unthinkable that a reformed Academy would not be able to co-operate well with a government that is accountable to a democratically elected Parliament.

Hungarian science must be given the opportunity to serve this cause together with, as well as in agreement and equilibrium with, its age-old institutions. Monopolies, single-handed actions are never beneficial. Competition will also benefit the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. If other intellectual and scientific hubs also emerge, whether at the universities, in industry or anywhere

else, that will also have a stimulating effect on the Academy and its affiliated institutions. We are the proponents of such plurality. I am convinced that the Hungarian Academy of Sciences will be able to fulfil such a role and that its new leadership will understand this perfectly.

In the future, just as it did in the past, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences must make a name for itself in fields of research that do not bear fruit immediately, but rather, in strategic perspective, that serve as benchmarks of the nation's scientific life and as guarantees of its future. Whatever is for the market is worth engaging in today and tomorrow. But anything that is going to serve as a guarantee of our future requires public support, risk-taking and long-term thinking. This always has to be borne in mind when determining the Academy's main directions of research.

I have not come here to make promises. I hope you were not expecting me to, either, since I have not even sat down in the Prime Minister's seat yet. All I can promise is my goodwill, and that this amateur but benevolent government will, with mistakes and hindrances perhaps, attempt to lead the country out of trouble. It is for this that I request your support. Furthermore, I ask you to strive for justice not only in the field of science, but also in scientific life, and for the sense of justice researchers and scientists feel towards each other, so that the Hungarian Academy of Sciences may once again wield the tremendous moral influence that it did in the past.

I cannot imagine having a scientific community in Hungary that would exclude great scientists from scientific research and instead include colleagues with scant scientific credentials, although we have seen several examples of this in the past. When the volume on the 150-year history of the Academy was compiled, I had the privilege of being one of its copy editors. At that time I attempted to calculate how many of the scientists listed in the volume from those 150 years were never invited to become members of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, even though they are now recognised as scientists of note in the history of science. But I also found many scientists who were associate or full members of the Academy with excellent scientific credentials, but who are nevertheless unknown today even to the leading researchers of the history of Hungarian and international science. If we measure the scientific achievements of the past against the truly just scale of the history of science, then unfortunately we can see numerous such examples. I am hopeful that the reformed Academy will not exclude any noteworthy Hungarian scientific researchers, and thereby reduce as much as possible the number of scientists unjustly forgotten by posterity.

I think the Academy's prestige will be reinforced if a balance is created between scientific excellence and positions held. The Hungarian Academy of Sciences should do everything in its power to act as a true stronghold of scientific ethics, and to preserve the special role that it has gained for itself in the history of Hungarian science, a role that makes it a unique institution worldwide.

This is also important because the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, with its extensive network of research institutions and – even if funding always proves insufficient – considerable budget, performs a role that is served by scientific research and technology ministries and ministers in other countries. By accepting the Academy in this form and with such authority, we also acknowledge that in Hungary, the ministry of scientific research and technological development, which exists in numerous large European nations, effectively operates within the Academy's walls. This dual role of the Academy has its advantages as well as its disadvantages. But as long as we wish to maintain the Academy in this form, which I think we should do, then – unlike in other countries – the government will only have a co-ordinating role to play in this field.

Please allow me to offer my sincere congratulations to the officials already elected and also to those about to be elected, where the counting of the votes has not yet been completed. We will support the Hungarian Academy of Sciences as much as possible in its efforts to fulfil the role that its founders intended it to fulfil within the system of Hungarian national institutions.

I would like to ask you to make joint efforts with us in order to keep talented scientists in Hungary on the one hand, but also to provide assistance to them to travel abroad on a temporary basis on the other. If creative individuals and intellectual capacities capable of scientific research do not assist us and are not willing to contribute to the country's renewal, then it will not be successful.

On several occasions during the past decades, Hungary's intellectual life and creative intelligentsia were decapitated and talented individuals were forced to leave the country because they suffered discrimination and prejudice for political or other reasons. But we can be proud of the fact that Hungarian science was capable of producing scientists with the appropriate mentality and expertise again and again.

Thank you for your attention and please allow me to be your humble representative in government with a full awareness of the interests and the mission of the Academy.

AT THE MEMORIAL OF THE JEWISH MARTYRS OF HUNGARY

This address was read on 8 June 1990 at the unveiling of a memorial to the Jewish martyrs of Hungary. The first memorial in East-Central Europe to be erected by the Emanuel Foundation, it is the work of sculptor Imre Varga and stands by the synagogue in Dohány Street, Budapest. Those attending the dedication included President of the Republic Árpád Göncz; Zevulum Hammer, the Israeli Minister of Culture and Education; Edgar Bronfman, President of the World Jewish Congress; and László Keller, President of the Emanuel Foundation. The address was published in the 27 July 1990 issue of the weekly paper Élet és Irodalom (Life and Literature).

We remember one of the most tragic periods of Hungarian history and the history of Budapest, a period that was a disgrace to the 1000-year-old course and traditions of Hungarian history. Remembering it is especially heart-rending and sad for all those who feel strongly about Hungarian history. This heart-rending sadness is at the same time an unforgettable personal tragedy for those who lost children, parents and relatives. No decent person of goodwill, no upholder of human and national values, can, I believe, do other than reject this despicable political act and view it as a disgrace to mankind. All Hungarians, all Europeans and everyone else should be aware that what happened to the Jews was a shameful chapter in history.

But everyone should also be aware that it was not a crime committed by everyone, and that it was not all who had a share in it. It is especially tragic in history that fear paralyses people. It often paralysed decent people also; it turned them silent, as other dictatorships, too, turned decent people silent. Dictatorships are similar. They do not make allowance for human rights, for the duties that follow from humanity, and for laws. Therefore, in this tragedy, in this common remembrance, all discords that divide Jews and Christians should melt away. We must remember what is common in our roots, what is common in creating human values and in religion, just as our pains are shared here and now.

Our pains are intensified by individual tragedies on one side and by a sense of responsibility on the other. Our remembrance at this memorial, in the shape

of a weeping willow, is also shared in that Jews and non-Jews remember here together. They must realise that Hungarians regard this as a common tragedy. The artist has given expression to remembrance by the other side as well. This common tragedy poisoned the air for decades, and perhaps we may say that it still does. This must be ended. I want all of you to know that the Hungarian Government, which has decided to lead the country in these hard times and to lead it out of the crisis into which it was pushed during the decades of the dictatorship, acknowledges its responsibility also for the Jewish community living in Hungary. The Government considers it its duty to defend the Jewish community that has remained in Hungary. I do hope there will never be a need to do so. However, we shall protect the Jewish community from all aggressive ideologies, from all thoughts that remind it of the past.

Everyone should also be aware that this country was the scene not only of persecution. Our great men, the great generation of the Age of Reforms, of whom we are proud and whose successors we claim to be, were – from Kölcsey, author of our National Anthem, through Széchenyi to Kossuth, Ferenc Deák and Eötvös⁸⁶ – all pioneers of Jewish emancipation, as were our poets, among them János Arany,⁸⁷ who commemorated Jewry and the tragedy of the Jewish people in his poem ‘The Eternal Jew’. This generation played a decisive role in Hungary’s becoming, we may safely say, a haven in East-Central Europe for Jews, who arrived here in hundreds of thousands, fleeing pogroms elsewhere in the second half of the 19th century. Hungary is a country where, before the First World War, one million Jews lived, a country in whose capital, Budapest, Jews made up the largest denomination after the Roman Catholics.

And Jews and non-Jews should also remember that although afflicted with humiliations, insults and tribulations, amid the horror and the terrible tragedies of the Second World War, the largest Jewish community of Europe could remain in place here up to 19 March 1944.⁸⁸ And there were people who knew what their duty was, and who took a stand in defence of Hungarian Jewry. Not that this can excuse the culprits or ease the tragedy; still, this, too, is a part of the historical truth.

⁸⁶ For these prominent Hungarians, see notes 67, 62, 63, 64 and 41 respectively.

⁸⁷ János Arany (1817–1882), considered to be the greatest lyric poet of 19th century Hungary. Translated Shakespeare into Hungarian. Member and secretary general of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences between 1865–1879

⁸⁸ The date when Nazi Germany invaded and occupied Hungary, “the unwilling satellite,” as it was called by J. F. Montgomery, the U.S. Minister to Hungary in the late 1930s.

Today, close to the turn of the new millennium, we must declare that this Government will never place hindrances in the way of those Jewish people in Hungary who feel that they ought to live abroad, in Israel. And it will grant the freedom to do so, along with all legal safeguards, to all those who wish to be Jews in this country and want to live as Jews in the first place. And those who feel they should live here as Hungarian citizens and as Hungarians in the first place should, whether they are believers or not, enjoy their full rights and the acknowledgement of society. No one should do anything against this, for those who do will find themselves up against the lawful Hungarian Government.

This is what we profess and whoever might inform you otherwise is telling the untruth. And we shall take a stand on this, because we, the political parties which make up this Government (just as the other parliamentary parties), consider ourselves to be the successors of those political parties, those ideas, which stood in opposition to Nazism even during the Second World War, despite Hungary being an ally of Germany. Our parties are united in their commitment to liberal and social ideas, whether they profess national, European, Christian, or any other ideology, and they reject barbarism and despise everything that reminds us of the sins of Nazism. And the Government and the parties wish to ensure in the future equality, liberty and peaceful conditions for life and work for all Hungarian citizens, including Hungary's Jews. Let all those who are present here and who live here feel that we look upon your martyrs as our martyrs.

We believe that what befell the Jews of Hungary in 1944–45 was a horrible tragedy of history. The reason why the Hungarian people, irrespective of governments and dictatorships, could not offer more and could not express their solidarity better was simply because after the passing of a tragic era they were caught up in yet another one. After the tragedy that befell Hungarian Jewry, as a result of and under the direction of the alien power that then arrived here in the Carpathian Basin, hundreds of thousands were again taken to concentration camps, prisons or were forcefully deported and resettled. A new series of injustices took place and the Hungarian people, oppressed and paralyzed, was unable to give due regard to the injustices of the previous era, in contrast to those more fortunate people who did not undergo new tragedies after World War II.

The Hungarian nation, the Hungarian people expresses its remembrance by remembering with sadness those destroyed by alien occupation or domestic executors. Such actions represent never ending sorrow to the country, the nation and thousands of our families. We shall remember.

THE PLACE OF 1956 IN OUR NATIONAL MYTHOLOGY

On 23 October 1990, the National Assembly held a special sitting to commemorate the revolution and freedom fight of 1956. The sitting was attended by a large number of surviving participants of 1956.

23 October 1956 dawned upon this nation after hours, weeks and years of terrible difficulties. It was a sunny day all over the country, just like today. The country had been suffering under terrible burdens, terrible afflictions. Thousands, hundreds of thousands of people had been imprisoned, deported or had spent years in POW camps; the nation was oppressed by a tyranny. And then, in a matter of a few weeks or months, something stirred in people, and on that morning it took hold of everyone, including those who had not taken part in the events that had gone before.

I think that remembering 23 October implies the need to reformulate an era of our national mythology. In the history of each nation there are deeply analysed, deeply experienced rational consequences and ruthless lessons. At the same time, there must be elements that belong to the domain of mythology, elements cherished and experienced as mythology. In the absence of mythology, there would be no spiritual fellowship, no spiritual community. The history of the United States of America goes back to no more than 200 years, but the War of Independence and the internecine Civil War are nevertheless part of its national mythology.

Our wars of independence, our fights for freedom, which are numerous, are parts of our mythology. It is national mythology that keeps a nation alive; whether it is Rákóczi's insurrection,⁸⁹ or 1848–49 or 1956, it is always the

⁸⁹ Ferenc Rákóczi (1676–1735), descendent of a family of Princes of Transylvania in the 17th century. After the expulsion of the Ottoman Turks from Hungary the kings from the Habsburg dynasty administered the country from Vienna in an autocratic way, and persecuted the Protestants. Rákóczi was asked by Hungarian malcontents to lead their movement against the absolutism of Vienna. Thus a freedom fight of eight years ensued (1703–1711) in which Rákóczi hoped to lean on France, the rival of the Habsburgs. Rákóczi was elected Prince of Transylvania under the name Francis Rákóczi II in 1704. Following the victory of Austria over France Sándor Károlyi, the commander of the Hungarian *kuruc* army (the name coming from 'crusader' was applied for the Hungarian freedom fighters) signed the peace at Szatmár in 1711. Rákóczi did not accept its terms, and lived in exile, in France, later in Turkey, until he died.

conservation and concentration of the nation's soul, faith and will in a single historical metaphor.

Although its time span was brief,⁹⁰ 1956 has become an equally important part of our national mythology, with no less significance than that of any of the above-mentioned longer historical events. Perhaps owing to the speeding up of history, events and struggles that took place within a short space of time may also come to occupy a meaningful status in our collective memory. For this very reason, just as those who were not its immediate participants may be partakers of mythology, so, too, those who were not part of the nation earlier may regard our past as their own (for today's Hungarians, even if their ancestors arrived in the country at a later date, may regard King Stephen the Saint, the Battle of Mohács,⁹¹ Rákóczi, or 1848 as their own). In this way, every one of us may regard 1956 as his or her own, for it signifies a purifying, enlivening period of our national mythology. Nineteen fifty-six is the manifestation of this spirit, and is, at the same time, the source of a unique morality. Those who experienced it at first hand are well aware of this. It was not only martyrdom, which is the greatest gift of every new faith, of every new impetus, for martyrs provide the strongest foundation for the ethics of a nation, just as every new faith requires martyrs. Our nation has come to be tragically well supplied with martyrs for new faiths, for new wellsprings. It is our martyrs whom we must remember first of all, and we must remember the nameless millions as well. For the entire nation became a partaker of this morality, of this enormous moral reserve, when the whole country turned, practically overnight, morally upright after years of a dishonest era awash with moral depravity, where robbery performed in the name of the state provided an excuse for theft in general. But then, suddenly, broken shop windows and boxes full of money could be left unguarded

⁹⁰ The revolution broke out on 23 October 1956, and the massive Soviet intervention, starting on 4 November replaced the government and put down all armed resistance by mid-November. A general strike lasted for about another month.

⁹¹ Mohács is the place of a major Hungarian battle against the Ottoman Empire on 29 August 1526. Due to internal divisions and bad strategy, and in the absence of European support, the numerically inferior Hungarian army was defeated in a battle of three hours. King Louis II as well as most of his army, composed of the nobility, lost their lives. This decisive defeat put an end to the medieval Hungarian Kingdom. Due to the death of the king, a rivalry started between Ferdinand of Habsburg and the nominee of the nobility, János Szapolyai, for the crown. 15 years later the Turkish army occupied the capital, Buda. Thus, Hungary was torn into three parts (Royal Hungary governed by the Habsburgs, the conquered part ruled by the Ottomans, and Transylvania, governed by Hungarian Princes, the first being the son of Szapolyai. In the ensuing 150 years of continuous warfare, infighting factions, and devastation caused by the Ottomans, economic and industrial development stopped, the population was decimated, and Hungary fell behind the states of Western Europe.

in the streets, without anyone touching them.⁹² It is this unique, enormous moral strength that we all need to remember, the knowledge that this nation is capable of becoming purified all of a sudden, and that every individual desires this purification. This should represent a great common strength and remain a common memory, even though robbery got the upper hand again afterwards. However, 1956 is not only part of our national mythology, not only a source of our national ethics. It is also an event of world historical significance. We Hungarians may justly feel pride in proclaiming this before the world, and this will not cause us to feel nationalistic, overconfident or self-centred. Namely, it was the Hungarians who punched a hole in the ship of tyranny; and although the hole was patched and the vessel saved from sinking, the damage could never be properly fixed afterwards.

Nineteen fifty-six was of world historical significance, because even though there had been struggles against Soviet domination, even though there had been fights and demonstrations, this was the first time that a country, along with its legitimate government and its legitimate prime minister, defied the Soviet might of the time. Hungary defied the world power that then dominated our whole region, the power against which the entire Western world had to build defences. Let us take pride in the thought that if the true history of the Bolshevik Party is ever written, it will be reported that 1956 was a historic turning point, in the same way that the suppressed revolutions of 1848 and certain other times were indicators of new eras.

Nineteen fifty-six was of world historical significance, also because it precluded the possibility of any West European country co-operating further with Soviet policy and with post-Stalinist communist parties, without breaking with their own intellectual giants, and because it now became impossible for leftist intellectuals in Western Europe to act in concert with any communist party modelled on the Soviet pattern. This is roughly where the later fad of Euro-communism came from. And leftist intellectuals, such as Sartre and others who had allied themselves with the communist movements or sympathised with them in the struggle against Fascism, could no longer maintain that position, because 1956 had become a clear divide between integrity and deceit, democracy and dictatorship. This is also something we must not forget.

⁹² Boxes were placed in major squares and other public spaces in order to collect money for the victims of the anti-Soviet fighting. The purity of the revolution was also demonstrated by the fact that none of the items from the broken shop windows disappeared, although people lived in poverty.

Today, when the country is going through a difficult period, when Hungary is suffering not only from its legacy, but also from new afflictions, new pains, new griefs, and, much too often, from lethargy induced by disappointments, we still ought to remember 1956. And while 1956 is mythology (because it gives us strength, ideals and principles), it is at the same time a historical lesson and a subject for rational scrutiny. And it may well be stated that our new revolution, which is a peaceful one this time, has not been suppressed in two weeks, nor even in eighteen months. We hope that we shall make it this time. But if we analyse history, if we remember, those who are well versed in history are quite aware of what kind of tensions and conflicts there existed even between the heroes, even between the giants of the national mythology of 1848–1849.⁹³ Those who read the memoirs know what kind of the petty charges those leaders hurled against each other then. Likewise, many of us can remember that besides the things fine and great what seeds of dissent were already present between us in 1956. And the readers of the memoirs about '56, who are familiar with the doubts and accusations, are aware of how colourful our beautiful revolution and freedom fight was, and what kind of antagonism would have erupted had it not been suppressed. But defeat, however tragic, helps to keep mythologies intact.

It is our responsibility to rely on the strength and faith of mythology on the one hand, and on rational scrutiny of the lessons of the past on the other, in order to grasp the need for a grand national unity on the fundamental issues, despite all the tensions and antagonisms that exist between us. This unity should be embodied in such a resolution, which does not affect our multi-party parliamentary system, the democracy for we all struggled together so that it could be brought into existence. But the way in which these antagonisms, disputes and contests are played out, should have its own techniques, its own methodology and its own morality, for this nation, and in particular its politicians, can ill afford a sort of tribal warfare ravaging the country. We must not allow tribal wars to weaken our resolve to create a new world, a true democracy and a viable economy.

This is what the spirit of 1956 is compelling us to do: we in the Hungarian Parliament, we in the government, which is answerable to the Parliament, must

⁹³ This reflection refers to the fact that the main characters who participated in the events of 1848–49 had very serious differences of opinion between one another. For example, István Széchenyi, a conservative, opposed what he perceived as the radicalism of Lajos Kossuth. Kossuth, on the other hand, did his best to dissuade Ferenc Deák from concluding the Compromise in 1867. Kossuth also had a life-long enmity with Artúr Görgey, commander of the Honvéd Army during the revolution, blaming him for the surrender in August, 1849.

do everything in our power to expedite legislation and to create the conditions for the overcoming of this severe crisis. This is what the country expects of us and this is what the world expects of us; this is the only way for us to help the situation.

I am confident that we Hungarians do not harbour any self-destructive aspirations. And if we do not, then we will need, with the invigorating faith of a new era, to be loyal to our ideals, faithful to our political creeds, and showing respect for each other's divergent views, to seek to join forces in government, in Parliament, and in local government, to put up a good fight against destitution, and strive to prevent the plague of indifference from ruining our nation.

THE 'PYJAMAS' INTERVIEW OF 28 OCTOBER 1990

In the evening of 23 October 1990 Prime Minister József Antall entered a hospital, where he underwent surgery the following day. At the same time taxi drivers and truck drivers blocked the main transport routes in protest against the increase of gasoline prices, paralysing the whole country for several days. Some opposition groups attempted to take advantage of the crisis for the purpose of toppling the government. In the evening of 28 October the Council of Interest Groups representing workers, employers and the government agreed to a compromise solution terminating the nationwide protest. The Prime Minister, following several days of negotiations with members of his government and foreign government heads from his hospital bed, spoke to the nation in an interview, transmitted in the evening of 28 October on Hungarian television. Péter Feledy conducted the interview.

Q: *To start with: a prime minister rarely gives interviews in pyjamas.*

A: Yes, I do not like to do it either. My belief is that everyone, including the politician, has a private life and illness is a part of it. I have rarely been ill in the past, since the completion of university studies I have not taken sick leave for decades. But the present treatment was necessary: it consisted of the removal of a lymphatic gland and related tests are now in progress. Nevertheless, I was unable to postpone international commitments, trips which had been prepared. This illness was present at the last stage of the local government elections, as well as during trips to England and Holland, on the day of the election and in the United States. But it was impossible to modify the timing of the U.S. visit and the meeting with the President, whose schedule is set several months in advance. I made the decision to speak in Parliament on 23 October, to participate in the wreath-laying ceremony, to speak at the world meeting of freedom fighters, but then I had to enter the hospital. The following day I underwent surgery. The surgical wound is now healing, I will have another examination and I hope to regain my strength fully after treatment with medication.

Q: Mr Prime Minister, how did you participate in governmental decisions after you entered the hospital?

A: Members of the government worked at a tremendous pace: their efforts in the past several days were superb. While Hungarian society lived through this national crisis [the taxi blockade] I felt as if locked in a lion's cage, in this small room and previously in the intensive section. After I was informed of these events I had no other way but to communicate by telephone. The members of the government were in constant contact with me; they informed me fully and requested my advice. I assisted my government to resolve the crisis.

Q: Do you agree with the statement that the compromise solution was reached with your knowledge and consent?

A: I accept the compromise. I accept responsibility for the compromise, although I was not present at the negotiations. It is clear that a negotiation makes it necessary and possible for the negotiating parties to modify their starting position. I can declare that the government representatives obtained my approval prior to accepting the principal points of the compromise. Therefore I agree fully with the compromise and give my full support to my associates, even though I was not informed of all details.

Q: What is your evaluation of this compromise in view of the fact that it differs from the original plans of the government?

A: This is not an easy question. The position of the government has always been, as repeated continuously during the election, that the issue of energy is a key question for Hungary. Hungary is a country which wastes energy including the use of obsolete technology, obsolete transportation, and the consumption of more energy than necessary. In addition our sources of acquisition are critical: it is well known that since August the Soviet Union no longer provides gasoline and prices have risen as a result of the Gulf crisis. Therefore it is clear that we face an emergency situation in energy management. When I stated to Prime Minister Rocard in Paris that our oil reserves are sufficient for nine days, he clapped his hands and asked again whether he understood me correctly. He stated that the minimum reserves should suffice for no less than 109–110 days; this is the standard in Western Europe. The same point was made by all

other political leaders with whom I spoke and it seemed incredible to them that the countries of East-Central Europe function with reserves for 8–9 days.

When this crisis emerged and a decision had to be made, our supplies decreased to 3–4 days. It is possible to question whether the government made the right decision and informed the public in an effective manner. No one doubts that the government made mistakes, but it is a matter of opinion whether these mistakes were major or minor. A mistake can be made by failing to prepare the public appropriately for such a decision. In my last TV address I stated that we faced an extremely grave situation and gave an account of the state of the nation. But in view of the approach of the local government elections the address was not transmitted. If we had announced at that time that we were negotiating on the price increase since we have reserves for three days only, then we would necessarily have been required to introduce measures to limit gasoline purchases in some way or to restrict them to certain groups, such as ambulances or fire-fighters. We did not do so, but chose to act quickly. It was certainly a mistake that the announcement was not prepared more appropriately and was not justified more convincingly. However, I do not believe that the people would have responded to any justification positively.

It is a fact that the impact of the decision was greater than was implied by the announcement. But it was in fact justified from an economic point of view. As indicated by political statements, no responsible political party questioned the necessity of raising prices and the need to adjust them to the international market. The price included a tax element. The specific amount can be questioned. It is unacceptable that such issues of our transformation be accompanied by the type of paralysis that we experienced. It is clear that the crisis generated social and political tensions which have accumulated over a long period of time.

Q: One of the explanations may be that the majority of the population is not aware of the prevailing dangers? It is not aware of the catastrophic economic situation of the country.

A: I agree with this. We have attempted to make it clear. It is stated in the governmental programme and we also stated prior to the spring election that the country was in an extremely grave situation. But we also stated that it was possible to meet this challenge. Let us not forget that Hungarians are pessimistic by nature. Therefore if we do not have faith and commitment, then we will not succeed. Let me remark: the Poles have survived a much more difficult situation for several years and so did several other countries.

It is a fact that Hungary should have taken this step in 1973, but the country did not do so, instead the problem was addressed by taking on loans. I mentioned before the election that the loans were not utilised by previous governments for privileged consumption, but they were used as subsistence by the country. We must recognise that the current indebtedness of \$20–21 million was generated by the maintenance of inefficient production systems. The country failed to produce the income necessary to survive, but used loans to finance expenditures. This gave people a sense of security. They pursued modest goals: the purchase of a Trabant or a Lada vehicle⁹⁴ and a week-end plot. An acceptable dwelling was difficult to obtain, but a trip abroad was possible. When they travelled in East Germany they felt they were more free than the Germans and they had the same impression in comparison with the Poles, Czechs and Romanians. While Hungary was a one-party dictatorship, the misconceived economic policies made it possible for the population to live beyond its means, financed by foreign loans. After the Vietnam war it was not difficult to pick up loans in the financial markets. Previous governments utilised this period to create better economic conditions in Hungary than those in the other so-called people's democracies. Although the major topic of public discussion for many years was the crisis of the country, the average person was able to get secondary or tertiary jobs in addition to his main employment, which allowed him to improve his lot. This age is now over. A system has collapsed. We are not responsible for this collapse. The regime change in East Central Europe took place as a result of the collapse of the communist economic and political systems.

Q: *One of the basic elements of the transformation is the economic one. But there is another one, the human factor.*

A: This is exactly the point. People did not, do not believe that the age of false security is over. János Kádár⁹⁵ used to say that people do not work enough,

⁹⁴ Trabant was a relatively cheap, two-stroke engine driven car, manufactured in East Germany. The Lada was produced in the Soviet Union, it was more powerful and a bit more expensive. For both one had to wait for years to be delivered after the purchase.

⁹⁵ János Kádár (1912–1986). Communist politician, Minister of Home Affairs (1948–1950), then imprisoned by his comrades. Was a member of I. Nagy's government during the 1956 Revolution, but disappeared from it to reappear as the head of the puppet government installed by the Soviet leadership. After brutal repressive measures, including the execution of I. Nagy, he eased the terror and gradually bought considerable popularity by allowing people to stay aloof from public affairs and be interested only in increasing their personal well-being. In the 1980s he maintained stability at the price of raising large amount of foreign loans. His person has remained the object of much controversy.

but I say: yes, they did. They worked in the first, the second and third shift, but they did not realise that the previous system is over. They believe that the government operates inefficiently. In fact, it is not the government which raises prices; most products are imported and sold at market prices. There is a new system, but it is full of tension. The tension exploded in the present crisis.

After the event I do not wish to criticise any party, social or occupational group. But I do wish to state that all of us have to draw the proper lesson from these events, including the parliament, the government, the interest groups and the council of interest groups. We have repeatedly advocated the formation of a system to mediate between interest groups, and such a system has now been initiated. In a pluralist society we must have representations of employers, including state and private employers, and of employees. In this case these organisations co-operated with each other: the independent League union, the Workers' Councils and the legal successors of the trade unions. Therefore a workable system has emerged which is very important: representations of workers, of employers and the government negotiate and decide important public issues jointly. The desirable structure is one in which employers and employees face each other and the government represents the neutral, mediating partner.

Q: Allow me to return to the compromise solution: what is your view of this and what role will parliament play in this process?

A: I think that no one won and no one lost. Whoever would claim to have won a victory over another is greatly mistaken. That is not the issue. The issue is that the government had the intention to adjust the price of gasoline to world market prices since our budget cannot subsidise current prices. This means that prices can rise and fall. It appeared one day that the price of oil declined, but then it rose again. If a war breaks out in the Gulf then prices will probably rise. Our objective was therefore to free the prices of oil and gasoline in line with world prices. This was advisable since we can obtain oil from the Soviet Union starting 1 January only by dollar payments. Therefore we planned the liberalisation of prices to be effective 1 January. We did not want to adopt world prices as long as we received Soviet fuel on a ruble basis. But the Soviet Union has not provided oil since August, therefore we had to buy and we have to buy continuously elsewhere since there are no reserves. Consequently the government agrees with price liberalisation, this was our original intention.

The difference is that this will take place earlier. Since the two other parties agree with this position, the government had to accept it and I personally gave instructions that we should accept the position of the two other parties. The acceptance of this proposal will remove the suspicion that the government will act arbitrarily in the future. The agreement corresponds therefore fully to the original intention of the government. Both the government and the parliament have to accept this agreement.

The second issue is that we had to manage a crisis and find a solution. We know that the price of gasoline includes a tax, both in Hungary and abroad. We wanted to exclude the possibility that anyone from abroad could buy gasoline in Hungary cheaper than in his/her own country, and thus to obtain a benefit paid from the Hungarian budget. Therefore we had to set an appropriately high price and tax. In order to protect Hungarian citizens we proposed as one alternative the coupon system. This would unquestionably involve a complicated administration and it would have been a temporary solution.

The Parliament will have to discuss and approve urgently the solution that was accepted. In agreement with our coalition partners we issued a statement calling for the improvement of parliamentary procedures, specifically to make decisions along with conducting debates. We discussed this also with the Fidesz party. I hope that the period of debate is over and the parliament will get down to serious legislation. This will mean not only two days per week, but if necessary Saturday and Sunday as well. I will assume my share of the work, my week-ends so far have usually been devoted to official business. It is now imperative to enact legislation. We must approve this bill as soon as possible, this week or by early next week.

Q: Mr Prime Minister, it was reported that leading Western statesmen offered assistance to Hungary. What can you tell us about that?

A: I should mention that I was not idle during my hospitalisation. As I mentioned, I did not participate directly in the negotiations of the compromise, rather, in order to contribute to the resolution of the crisis, I established telephone contact with Western European heads of government with whom I have ties of friendship and those who sent me letters and telegrams wishing me recovery. I spoke yesterday with Chancellor Kohl, who assured me of his willingness to assist us. He understood immediately that immediate action was required, therefore he decided to dispatch a government delegation to Hungary scheduled

to arrive on Monday. We shall then review German–Hungarian economic relations and the appropriate means of assistance. We received similar expressions of support from other governments. In addition, the summit meeting of the Common Market in Rome passed a resolution supporting “urgent assistance.” That resolution of the Council of the European Community expresses its solidarity with the exertions of the country to resolve critical economic problems and to expand the market economy. It confirms the determination of the Council to support the efforts of Hungary seeking to strengthen the foundations of democracy, stability and economic development, rejecting all forms of violence and affirming respect for the rule of law. The European Community, the Common Market and its member states will assist Hungary to resolve its current crisis, especially the problems of energy. They will support the provision of timely assistance by making available the second phase of community assistance funds. This means that we can obtain assistance in the amount of \$350–400 million programmed for next year at this time, enabling us to maintain our financial liquidity. This will also contribute to our efforts to reduce inflation. I was able to obtain this expression of international solidarity and support from my hospital bed which contributed to our ability to accept the compromise solution. Otherwise our financial condition would have been untenable. I wish to recall that during my address a year ago to the Christian Democratic People’s Party parliamentary group of the European Parliament and my discussions with M. Delors and Western government heads as well as with President Bush I emphasised constantly that the transition in East Central Europe was not comparable to the problems of the Western countries nor to those of the Third World. I stated that if we do not resolve the social tensions present in these countries and if we do not receive assistance to do so then no economic genius will be able to implement the transition to the market economy, simply because people will be unable to bear the burdens of that process and will not understand its necessity. Therefore I request Hungarians to understand that the government has always spoken in a straight forward and frank way, but not without the belief of doing the right thing.

Yes, we have stated that the country is in a catastrophic situation. This situation was aggravated by new developments this summer: conditions in the Soviet Union deteriorated to such an extent that it was forced to give up East Germany, an action which was unlikely in the spring. We are familiar with the unfavourable impact of unification, aggravated by drought and the Gulf crisis as well.

The most important lesson therefore should be expressed in the responsible response of parliament and all political parties, in the improvement of governmental policies, a closer co-operation between government and the people. In several studies I quoted the statement of József Eötvös that no people is a diplomat, but least of all are Hungarians. If we want something from the people we have to tell them in a straight way. I think that we have to improve our performance in this respect and I request the assistance of television and the press in that. Possibly the present tension has convinced the Hungarian people, even those who are passive or have divergent views, that an actual collapse is possible. It is possible that we'll lack electricity, we'll lack energy sources, inflation will be given free reign if we do not act with responsibility and discipline.

The local government elections have just taken place. I would have been happier naturally if our parties had won, but from another perspective I am not unhappy. The current situation involves a government coalition which has to co-operate with the opposition and local governments which are responsible for local policies. The country must realise that the government does not possess all authority, but only those responsibilities involving governmental administration. The parliament, the government, local governments, interest groups, employers, employees all have to work together. Now we have witnessed that those who had opposed each other have come together and made common decisions. No one now questions the legitimacy of employer organisations, nor do trade unions question the legitimacy of other employee organisations. I am happy about this. Now we have legitimate negotiating partners and we can negotiate. Those parties which are the opposition in parliament can play a significant, even decisive role in local governments. If we approach our task with common sense, good intentions and a sense of responsibility, a sense of responsibility for the nation, then it is possible that this crisis will be beneficial for the country. But a basic condition is that we preserve the constitutional order, that everyone respect the constitution. Accordingly, as stated in the compromise settlement, everyone must go home, including taxi drivers, the truck drivers, the trucks, since the settlement will take effect only in this manner. It is clear that the government will not initiate any proceedings against the participants of this movement of civil disobedience, I make this declaration unequivocally. This statement does not apply to those who destroyed motor vehicles or were engaged in disturbances. But the government will not proceed against participants of the political movements.

Q: *Mr Prime Minister, as the barricades are removed and people return home peacefully, what is your idea: how can the obstacles created between the government and its electors, the people be removed? How can confidence in the government be improved?*

A: First of all, I wish to state that the percentage of politically passive people was greater in Hungary in the spring election than in neighbouring countries. This is the result of policies in the past several decades. The Kádár system⁹⁶ stabilised the country by a policy of discouraging political participation. Following the forced political involvement of the Rákosi⁹⁷ regime, the Kádár regime was consolidated by providing a measure of freedom and material well-being, while those not interested in politics were not forced to do so. In fact, this was welcome. Hungarian society became accustomed to this system. This is not identical with the political passivity of welfare states. This was the specific political education of Hungarian society. Another element of passivity was the nature of the opposition movement in Hungary. While in Poland there was a mass movement called Solidarity, in Hungary the opposition was made up of small intellectual groups. The current government parties assumed office under these conditions. The Communist Party surrendered power because the country faced a national crisis. Therefore the new government was bound to be unpopular in the first phase. I can state the following: I have no career goals. I will simply serve the country as long as my service is useful. I will do so according to the best of my abilities and as long as the Hungarian nation accepts it. I believe that we shall earn the trust of the people in the following years. I do not know what difficulties we shall face, but I make this promise: I shall always provide an account of those difficulties.

Q: *Mr Prime Minister, thank you for the conversation, with best wishes for a recovery and success in your activities.*

A: Thank you. I hope to start work next week. I am not used to be idle.

⁹⁶ See note 95.

⁹⁷ Mátyás Rákosi (1892–1971), communist politician. Prominent already in the 1919 Hungarian Soviet Republic. Spent several years in prison, transferred to the Soviet Union in 1940. Became leader of the Communist Party in 1945, was instrumental in the communist takeover, after 1948 in the dictatorship, modelled upon Stalin's. His terrorist regime was characterised by thousands of judicial murders, also by collectivisation of the peasantry, persecution of the churches, and extremely harmful economic policies. After the revolution of 1956 even the members of the Communist Party protested against his return to power. He died in exile in the Soviet Union.

AFTER THE TAXI DRIVERS' BLOCKADE

After his operation and the blockade of Budapest by disgruntled taxi drivers, Prime Minister Antall returned to the Parliament on 30 October 1990 and gave the following speech, the text of which appeared in Országgyűlési Napló (Parliamentary Journal).

I did not ask if I might speak, for I did not think I would be asked to do so. Nor should I like to make a lengthy speech, for I think twice has been sufficient for those who took the trouble to listen to me.⁹⁸ I will ask the Speaker of the House to give me a chance in the near future to speak at length, and then I will explain many things.

What I want to tell the House and the nation this time is only this: we have entered a new era, a new period. At the time you elected me, and Honourable Members of the opposition took cognisance of it according to the rules of a pluralist political system, I said there was a link binding all of us in this House. And the link we all share is that it is possible for the nation to get into a fateful situation in which each Honourable Member, no matter on what side of the House he or she is now, would be sitting in jail together with the others, and I do not want political opponents to be swearing eternal friendships in a transit prison, as former political opponents did after the Communist takeover, as happened then.

While we are enjoying liberty today, it is our task to establish the proper conditions for constitutional governance and the operation of constitutional parliamentary democracy. I think that the recent crisis has served as a warning to the political parties, in themselves and in their mutual relations, to the National Assembly, to the government and to various pressure groups alike, which all had been casting doubts on each other's legitimacy. At that time we witnessed these actors behaving amicably towards one another, showing signs of mutual agreement, which amounts to saying that we have true partners now. And thus an era has come to its end – an era of differentiation between par-

⁹⁸ Reference to the fact that the dramatic and moving interview of the Prime Minister broadcast from his hospital bed was shown by Hungarian Television twice.

liamentary parties –, for the parties did not discriminate between those who were with them and those against.

I have not had the opportunity to get in touch with my ministerial colleagues yet, for I have just risen from my sickbed, and I still have to return to it. But I pledge to co-operate in order to find a way out of the present crisis, and to make every citizen of the country understand what lies ahead for us. There is one thing I have said and will say again: we will always tell the people everything [about the state of the country – the editor], even if we lose office as a result. We will tell it how things are. And if the majority thinks I am unsuitable for the job, I will be ready to hand in my resignation. But as long as you honestly think we can go on, I ask you to help ensure that a pluralist society, a multi-party parliamentary democracy, and a whole nation work together. Not in a bogus national unity, but in a national agreement on fundamental issues, engaging in mutual, but fair criticism, and working to maintain stability and the constitutional order in the country, without losing the confidence of the world or of the Hungarian nation.

And for this reason I am asking my own party and our coalition partners, to whom I feel just as deeply attached as to my own party, and I am also asking the opposition, the opposition being understood not as a single unit but as three different parties, and asking the independents, too, who are independent of one another as well, to co-operate in finding that common road. If you really think, as I do, that we have left behind fundamental issues, left behind questions of legitimacy, then we should strive to give the country another two years, during which we will work together to overcome the crisis, exercising criticism and disputes, but relegating party policy standpoints to the background.

And there is another important lesson to be drawn from this crisis: its international implications. It is something that we have often pointed out (although we were not believed), and here I have to repeat it again, namely that the nations of Central and Eastern Europe have no reserves left. They have no reserves left in their economies, not in their households, and these nations will simply not endure the strain. And while the world was giving an enthusiastic welcome to our political transformation, regarding it only as the collapse of the totalitarian political system, this transformation was not in fact a process taking place under rosy circumstances. It is an arduous process, one that this nation and this region will have to undergo collectively.

I will continue to serve the country as long as you have confidence in me. My ministerial colleagues and the whole government thinks likewise, I am

convinced. We will draw the conclusions, and I'll do my best, as long as my strength permits that. Right now I'd like to thank everybody who sent me good wishes from home and from abroad. I am grateful for the sympathy I have received from our supporters, from friends, and also from our fair political opponents.

THE 143RD ANNIVERSARY OF 1848 ON THE STEPS OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM

On 15 March 1991, the 143rd anniversary of the outbreak of the Revolution and War of Independence against Austria in 1848, the three highest ranking Hungarian public officials – Prime Minister József Antall, President of the Republic Árpád Göncz and Speaker of Parliament György Szabád – laid a wreath at the statue of Lajos Kossuth in Budapest’s Kossuth Square. Accompanied by several thousand people, they then walked to the National Museum. Standing on the steps of the building, the Prime Minister delivered the following speech to the crowd gathered for the commemoration.

Representatives of countries in Europe and beyond, assembled here at this historic site, one of Hungary’s sacred places of pilgrimage, to remember the past and to draw strength for nation-building in the future!

This is the place where, on a murky, rainy day, Hungarian liberty and the notion of universal liberty were born. This is the place where on so many occasions throughout our history – in 1848, in 1956 and time and again thereafter – we gathered the strength to stand firm, as Mihály Vörösmarty⁹⁹ said, and to join forces in order to build up our nation.

What does consensus mean to us? In a multi-party system, a pluralist democracy, consensus must necessarily mean that there are some fundamental values, fundamental principles, for which we have to struggle together, not in the spirit of hatred, incitement and irresponsibility, but in order for this plurality to result in consensus on key issues.

For us, 15 March is not merely a day like any other, not even just a day of national endeavour. It is a symbol of the war-torn years of 1848 and 1849, of the battle that this nation waged right up to the disastrous capitulation

⁹⁹ Mihály Vörösmarty (1800–1855), poet, playwright, editor. MP in 1848. Author of romantic poems, ballads, and patriotic lyrics, emblematic figure of Hungarian romanticism. One of his poems, “Appeal” (Szózat) is the ‘second’ Hungarian national anthem.

at Világos,¹⁰⁰ the battle that, even after our defeat, went on to define forever our fundamental national values, the pre-requisites for social change and the fundamental values of our identity as Hungarians in Europe and of a European Hungary. This day signifies all of these values together, and has, therefore, become an integral part of our national mythology.

A nation must be rational in the goals it sets itself; it must be rational in the methods it uses and in the ways in which it evaluates situations. But nations cannot exist without memories, shared memories of great events, memories that hold them together. For us Hungarians, the Revolution and War of Independence of 1848–49 provide the source of these shared memories. Everyone was agreed on this even at the time. But if someone today were to read the yellowing pages of the newspapers, memoirs or correspondence from those days, he would see at once the differences that existed between our forebears, differences in method and in matters of detail.

He would see the considerable differences that existed between István Széchenyi and Lajos Kossuth, Ferenc Deák and József Eötvös,¹⁰¹ Sándor Petőfi¹⁰² and János Arany,¹⁰³ to name just some. We could produce quotations to illustrate these differences, and yet they were not what really mattered. What did really matter was that these historic figures became one in their mutual acceptance of liberty, equality and fraternity. Even though there were clashes on the emotional level, consensus between them was accompanied by unflinching belief and the desire to improve.

Today, when we are gathered here to commemorate these great figures and events, we have a lot to remember. Let us recall, too, that this day also shows that back then, in a developing Europe filled with notions of liberty, we were at one with the most advanced and the most articulate political ideas and movements. We did not learn these merely; we also tried to pass them on to others.

We make no secret of the fact, nor are we ashamed of it, that even back then we looked upon British notions of liberty and the British political model

¹⁰⁰ After the victorious Hungarian military campaign in the spring, 1849, Emperor Francis Joseph turned to the Russian Czar for help, who sent a 200,000 strong force. Overwhelmed, General Artúr Görgey, Commander of the Hungarian Honvéd (Home Defence) Army, formally surrendered at Világos on 13 August 1849 to the Russian General Paskevich. It is the Hungarian equivalent of Yorktown or Appomattox.

¹⁰¹ Leading politicians in the mid-19th century, see notes 62, 63, 64 and 41 respectively.

¹⁰² Sándor Petőfi (1823–1848), most popular poet of Hungary. One of the young intellectuals who started the revolution in 1848, lost his life in the battle of Segesvár (now Sighișoara, Romania) at the end of the war of independence.

¹⁰³ Close friend of Petőfi, see note 86.

as examples to follow, and that *Travels in North America* by Sándor Bölöni Farkas¹⁰⁴ was the best-selling book at the Diet in Pozsony. The United States signified the land of liberty and also served as a model, whilst the French Revolution was Sándor Petőfi's creed. Hungarian special envoys were dispatched to the Frankfurt Parliament and Polish notions of liberty were also very attractive for Hungarians.

In our wider geographical region, the Hungarian movement for freedom and independence was akin to German efforts for unification and to the Italian *Risorgimento*. It is no coincidence that amidst the endeavours of our 1848–49 Revolution and War of Independence, the people of Vienna greeted Lajos Kossuth with an outpouring of joy, and that Poles, Italians and many other nationalities took part in our struggles, as individuals but in an organised manner, as the example of the Viennese Legion¹⁰⁵ shows. It was a revolution and war of independence in which Hungarians showed that when they believe in themselves, they can set an example for others to follow and that they can fight resolutely.

Just now, when we were coming over from the Kossuth statue, some people next to us were quietly humming the old song “Lajos Kossuth has sent word that his troops are used up; if he sends word again, we'll all of us have to go.” It occurred to me that Hungarians are special in this respect. Every nation has revolutionary marches that – like the French *Marseillaise* – urge people to rise up and fight. But I do not think that there is any other nation in the world where one of the best-known revolutionary marches says: “If he sends word again, we'll all of us have to go.” Because if someone sends word just once, then perhaps he does not really mean it and it is not important enough for us to join in. This aspect is a part of our national character, but I should like us to believe that there is no need to send word twice.

We have to shoulder what is allotted to us at the first time of saying. We have to identify with the fight for freedom, because, as József Eötvös once said, democracy does not have to be declared, it has to be organised. It is easy to declare it when no one is shooting at you. It is easy to declare democracy when demonstrations are not broken up. It is easy to declare the notion of liberty now that we have the means to do so. But it is much, much more difficult

¹⁰⁴ Sándor Bölöni Farkas (1795–1842), writer, clerk at the Transylvanian chancellery. His *Travels in North America* was published in 1831, and was banned soon. Ranks with Tocqueville's great work.

¹⁰⁵ In 1848 many foreign volunteers fought with the Hungarians, out of solidarity and hoping for freedom to spread. University students from Vienna and other Austrians formed this special unit.

to organise, operate and maintain all that we have achieved in the spirit of freedom. Therefore, I would like to ask you, my fellow countrymen, to make consensus and common objectives, and not dissension and party struggles, the motto of this 15 March national holiday.

On 15 March 1848 we had to perform a historic task and to take historic action. The Twelve Points drafted by the revolutionaries on that day spelt out the agenda of the time. They spelt out everything that young people felt back then. The politicians in Pozsony¹⁰⁶ knew that this declaration, these Twelve Points, would provide impetus to reform Hungary's internal political structure in a lawful revolution and to establish political democracy in Hungary in the way, and to the extent, possible at the time.

Because politics is not just a goal, not just an opportunity: it also requires certain conditions. This is why Kossuth, along with many others, said that politics was the science and the art of opportunities. We have to take these opportunities as our starting point. What opportunities do we have? Albeit amidst severe internal tensions as well as national and ethnic conflicts, we have the opportunity today to build a stable European future under peaceful conditions. We do not have to build up a country lying in ruins after a lost war, but rather we have to do away with poorly constructed structures in a country badly built.

This is much more difficult than to build in a defeated and destroyed country because people – individually and collectively – do not understand that we have emerged from the underground bomb shelters. They do not embrace each other and say: “Friend, we have come through!” They do not greet each other as survivors among charred ruins, but rather – inevitably and understandably – they try to protect the meagre livelihoods that they have somehow managed to scrape together for themselves and their families. They face severe financial problems, hardships and insecurity in their everyday lives; they are afraid that tomorrow they could become unemployed and be unable to provide for their families.

We have a difficult year ahead of us. On behalf of the government, I cannot promise sweet dreams or offer false hopes. What I can promise is that if we stand firm at this difficult hour, if we persevere through these difficult months and years, we will dig ourselves out of this hole. We can count on each other,

¹⁰⁶ Pozsony (German Pressburg) was the capital of the Kingdom of Hungary between 1541 and 1848, where the Diet held its sessions and the kings were crowned. Since 1919 it is called Bratislava and is the capital of Slovakia.

and if liberty, equality and fraternity belong to us all and if we have a collective feeling of fraternity, then we do have a chance to rise up and prosper.

For us, 15 March 1848 should signify that the idea spelt out by the revolutionaries, the notion of universal liberty, is a Hungarian revolutionary notion but one that was in unison with those of the other European revolutions of that time. The German poet Heinrich Heine wrote the following about the Hungarian War of Independence that grew out of the Revolution and confronted tyranny: "My German garb tightens when I hear the name of Hungary." Because these were times when, even when the other revolutions had been defeated and other wars of independence crushed, the Hungarian Army still stood its ground. The superior numbers of two of the mightiest European armies of the age were needed to bring the Hungarian War of Independence to its knees at Világos.

We must, therefore, stand firm not only in this respect – in our belief and in our liberty –, but also in our everyday work. Hungary will then rise up and prosper. This depends on every single one of us. I ask for the trust, the belief and the support of all my fellow countrymen in order to bring this to pass.

THREE IDEOLOGICAL TRENDS IN THE HUNGARIAN DEMOCRATIC FORUM

On 20–21 April 1991, the Christian Democratic Circle of the Hungarian Democratic Forum held a meeting in Győr-Ménfőcsanak. In his closing address before an audience of several hundred members, the party leader outlined the three intellectual-political trends at work within the HDF. He also commented upon the other parties of Parliament. His remarks on the current mood of the public, on compensation for nationalised properties, and on the economic situation are most revealing.

I have been invited to give a closing address, not a lecture.

The place where we are exudes an air of history; it preserves memories of Hungarian victories and defeats. Unfortunately, Hungarian history is not wanting in failures and defeats. Not far from here stands the memorial of the last mass levy of the nobility in 1809,¹⁰⁷ and there are others around, such as the memorial of the Battle of Ménfő,¹⁰⁸ and this building itself. This fine, vaulted building provides a worthy milieu; it is a worthy scene for us to gain strength for renewal, rebirth and the strength to endure all that we must endure so we can start building a better and happier Hungary.

I am aware how inane and sometimes offensive it is to speak of good things at a time when everyday life is unfavourable and joyless; indeed when we are often overwhelmed by dejection and a sense of uncertainty. And then someone appears and starts speaking about a happier future. This is especially offensive in a country where falsehood has been widespread, where telling lies and quibbling has become almost part and parcel of politics – we have seen ample examples in recent decades.

It is therefore no easy thing to remain credible – which is, perhaps, my only personal ambition – when one speaks about difficulties, and says at the same time that, alongside the difficulties, there is hope indeed for this country to get out of the present crisis.

¹⁰⁷ Battle of Győr in 1809, when Napoleon's troops defeated the Hungarian army composed of the nobility.

¹⁰⁸ The battle took place in 1044, when Holy Roman Emperor Henry III defeated King Samuel Aba of Hungary, who died while escaping.

My colleagues and friends informed me that you have heard several lectures during these two days, and they also told me that these sessions took place in a very good atmosphere. I wish neither to repeat them, nor summarise them, as might be fitting in a closing address. I would much rather share with you a few thoughts, a few questions about the Hungarian Democratic Forum, about our position in Hungarian politics and about the future.

One question is, what is the point of a Christian democratic circle within the HDF; why should it be a separate entity? We all know that there are three ideological trends in the HDF; one is the legacy of the [pre-war] popular–national trend, the second is that of national liberalism, while the third is our intellectual legacy of Christian democracy.

These three trends exist in the HDF side by side. Two points must be seen clearly. One is, that these three trends *should* exist side by side in the HDF. They should assert themselves separately as well as in harmony with one another in the entire political programme of the HDF, and within it, in our economic and social policies. This is what sets us apart from other political parties. The intellectual legacy of our popular–national trend has for long been present in Hungary. It emerged in the 19th century in literature, alongside a Latin-oriented culture. The popular–national trend in literature, the work of Sándor Petőfi and János Arany,¹⁰⁹ meant nothing other than searching for the deepest roots of the people, from where renewal should come; it meant that the rebirth of the nation should be formed by popular traditions, the purity of language and thought. In our day, and in our programme, it also means the wisdom and common sense of the people and their literary expression in the works of László Németh,¹¹⁰ Gyula Illyés¹¹¹ and István Bibó¹¹² – and the list is far from complete. When we hear these names, it is clear that the popular–national thought can never be anti-democratic, it can never go contrary to parliamentary democracy and can never tolerate dictatorship of any sort.

If we think of these three personalities, no one can say that the popular–national trend is not European. Were not Gyula Illyés, László Németh and István Bibó European? No one can really question their European orientation.

¹⁰⁹ Great poets and great friends, see notes 93 and 86 respectively.

¹¹⁰ László Németh (1901–1975), writer, essayist. The spiritual leader and organiser of the movement of ‘writers of the people’, who explored the conditions of village people between the two world wars. In his plays he examined the relationship between history and its great characters.

¹¹¹ Gyula Illyés (1902–1983), writer, poet, emblematic figure of the ‘writers of the people’. His ideal was Sándor Petőfi.

¹¹² See note 23.

Our popular–national heritage and character mean exactly that and this is one of their distinct features.

When we speak about national liberalism, we speak about the rule of law and a view of the market economy that translates into a system of parliamentary institutions in politics and the market economy in economic life. We speak about a great tradition of the 19th century, which was in fact the intellectual–political workshop of Hungarian modernisation, of Hungarian renewal *vis-à-vis* the absolutist rule of the time. In this concept of national liberalism, the demand for national sovereignty is tied to the rule of law and a market economy. In view of centuries of foreign political dominance and oppression, we have a historical reason for distinguishing Hungarian liberalism from other liberalisms. Our school of liberalism means that, in it, the rule of law – which manifests itself in parliamentary democracy and a free-market economy – is linked to a strong commitment to national independence. Széchenyi, Kossuth, Deák, Eötvös, Wesselényi¹¹³ (and I could go on listing the great intellects) were outstanding pioneers of Hungarian political thought. They generated a Hungarian political culture of high European standard. Whenever our nation digressed from that it lost its way. There are those who disagree with this conception, those who think that ‘national’ and ‘liberal’ are not compatible, are gravely mistaken. The legacy of 19th-century liberalism in this form, in conjunction with a commitment to national sovereignty, is indeed a distinctive, determining feature of the Hungarian Democratic Forum.

The third trend in the HDF is Christian democracy.

Democracy in Christian democratic thought is identical in meaning with the popular–national and liberal conception of democracy. However, it assumes special significance when combined with the basic ethical values and spirituality of two thousand years of Christianity, and with universality that has linked peoples in Europe since late Antiquity and the Middle Ages. This universal thought of Christianity corrects extremist prejudices and acts as a balancing force in the rise of excessive nationalist thought and conflicts. Christian thought brings together all who stand for Christian values; and this system of Christian values entails tolerance even towards non-Christians.. When we speak about Christian democracy, we mean that we identify with European thought and a common European political and ethical value system. I need not

¹¹³ Miklós Wesselényi (1796–1850), Transylvanian politician, author, landowner, a friend of István Széchenyi, but supported the politics of Lajos Kossuth. He was acutely aware both of the social and nationality problems of his time.

go into details, as several speakers have already referred to that. After the Second World War, the idea of a united Europe, indeed of European co-operation and solidarity, was initiated not by political parties which had earlier written international co-operation on their banner. The builders of a united Europe were chiefly Christian democrats, rather than the social democrats, whom I, too, hold in great respect.

After the Second World War, as people in various countries were appraising the experience whereby national thought can be distorted and developed into a violent aberration, whereby peoples could be turned against one another, three Christian democratic politicians, Konrad Adenauer, De Gasperi and Robert Schuman, laid the foundation of European unity. They saw the solution in a united Europe. They also considered it as a defence against the threat coming from the East in ideology and even military action. They saw that the values of a new Europe must be built up, and that they must be implemented, I emphasise, under the aegis of Christian democracy. The Christian democracy that evolved after the Second World War differs from the Christian political movements in the inter-war period or from earlier ones, precisely because its representatives rejected all ideas that are contrary to parliamentary democracy; they rejected all trends that could in any small way play into the hands of political dictatorship. They distanced themselves from those Christian movements of the inter-war period which trespassed against political democracy. They committed themselves to the rule of law without abandoning social goals. Alongside the liberal element, the rule of law and a market economy which have been accommodated in Western Christian democratic values, the social element has also been preserved. It is well worth mentioning the social element now, in the anniversary year of *Rerum Novarum*. It is no accident that Christian democrats incorporate the social market economy in their economic policy, in the compensatory system of market economy, and while preserving national values, they also put the supranational and universal European Christian values in the foreground. No one must think that this stands in opposition to national awareness in its proper sense, and to patriotism; it is simply that, elsewhere, with other nations, primarily great nations, where independence and sovereignty have not been in jeopardy, this is not an issue. No one should think that the French, the Italians, Germans or British are less committed in the national sense than we Hungarians are. It is just that they do not have to talk about it. Those, for whom state independence and sovereignty are things taken for granted, do not have to turn these into an issue. But if you go to these

countries, witness their state functions, observe their celebrations and political manifestations, I believe you cannot really say that, for example, the political manifestations of Britons are not British enough. Or you can go and take a look at the state celebrations in France, with their forests of the national colours, or see what it means for Italians and Germans to be Italian and German.

We only spoke and continue to speak about national independence today because, for us, it has not been something to be taken for granted, and because it is still a vital political programme. I, as a politician, because of my reference to 15 million Hungarians, have been accused of touching nationalistic chords – I can declare that we shall never overemphasise this, never make it into a separate political programme once we regain our full national freedom. When this happens and when no one is threatening it, we too can afford to speak less about national independence and sovereignty, for these will be just as evident for us as for greater and happier nations. However, our history still makes it imperative.

A philosopher of history once said: “Happy are the peoples who have no history.” Well, we have one. This is exactly why these three great political ideologies appear in the Hungarian Democratic Forum. Ours is set apart from other parties in Hungary by the simultaneous existence of these three sets of values.

One could now rightly raise the question – why then form separate circles? Why do we have a well-functioning Popular–National Circle in Budapest, where I also had occasion to speak; why have a Christian Democratic Circle, and why a National Liberal Club (or clubs, we may say, smaller and yet still in the bud) within the HDF, despite the fact that we stand for all three trends, together, merged and in synthesis?

It makes sense, and there is need for this, because one value system may receive greater emphasis than the other in the thinking of our people, whether they are HDF members or just supporters. It makes sense for those who are less attached to one than the other, so they can feel their separate presence; for those who are less ready to embrace the values, say, of the national liberal or popular–national thought and place the Christian democratic values in the foreground in their own political aspirations and wish to serve these – values which include an emphatic Europeanism and European co-operation. Or for those who wish to place greater emphasis on the development of a political party vertically, in depth, with social programmes, people’s colleges and other similar movements, it is important to feel that they have their place in the

HDF and here, naturally, they can also meet the others. This is one reason then – it simply provides a practical opportunity for people, should they put greater emphasis on one trend than on the other, to find a forum for the ideas closest to them and where they can represent them.

The other reason is more theoretical, more ideological in nature. Intellectual workshops must be created – workshops where the values that are upheld in this political party are translated into the language of the late 20th century, and where modes are found regarding how these three great legacies, three great sets of values, are to be interpreted and applied at the end of this century. For this we need intellectual workshops. As a workshop, the Popular–National Circle will have to work out what the legacy of László Németh, Gyula Illyés and István Bibó means today. This does not mean that they are cited on every occasion; it is not just some source of reference; nor can this be done in the case of Christian democracy. After the dominance of Marxism–Leninism for seven decades, for almost fifty years in this country, I believe that people are fed up with quotes, they are sick of references. All this is not about going on quoting the predecessors all the time; we have to be able instead to apply these values and turn them to a living intellectual heritage relevant at the end of this century and the turn of the century. We have to be able to build from them and reinterpret them. This is the reason why we need a separate Christian Democratic Circle, a circle where we can formulate a modern, 20th-century interpretation of Christian democratic ideas, and adopt them.

Now we need to speak about the difference that exists between the Hungarian Democratic Forum and other political parties, which have also adopted this legacy. The Independent Smallholders' Party, the classic, old combatant party, for instance, adopts the thinking of national democracy as conceived in the national liberal idea. They also uphold Christian values applied to the direct representation of the interests of a particular social group. The Christian Democratic People's Party is a modern political party, too, a modern Christian democratic party. So was its predecessor, the Democratic People's Party led by Barankovics,¹¹⁴ which had a great tradition in Győr, since their paper, *Hazánk*, represented an important legacy at the time and also later. But they define themselves as an ideological party, not a programmatic party. There are ideological parties in the world, in Western Europe, but the majority of such parties, for instance the CDU–CSU and other Christian democratic parties in

¹¹⁴ See note 25.

Western Europe, consider themselves programmatic parties, rather than ideological parties. The Hungarian Democratic Forum is a programmatic party. We are a party with an election programme, a movement which has adopted, upholds, and tries to put into practice, these values in the aggregate.

This is why we have come together here. This is why it is important that, concentrating on and reconsidering one of the three ideological trends and thoughts which are laid down in our statutes, we work out what they mean in practical terms now in politics and economic policies.

When, from 1988 onwards, the Hungarian Democratic Forum emerged as an organisation and, after the second meeting in Lakitelek, its ideas were formulated, reference was already being made to this political heritage. By making a reference to predecessor parties, the Lakitelek Declaration indirectly contained the undertaking of Christian democracy – at a time when it was not yet advisable to speak about parties, and founding a party was not yet on the agenda. As early as at the first national convention, the HDF formulated its value system and incorporated in its programme the concept of a social market economy, which was taken over from Christian democracy. This appeared among the HDF's first policies. In the beginning, the popular–national line received greater emphasis in the Hungarian Democratic Forum, and it was later complemented by national liberal thought. This is how the triple foundation evolved, in which Christian democratic thought has become an equal and powerful element. This is why, I may say, the Hungarian Democratic Forum could and did become the winning political party at the 1990 election – because it undertook to stand also for Christian democratic values; and this is how, through Christian democracy, it has become a clearly comprehensible political party for Europe. With this, the Hungarian Democratic Forum has become an eligible partner party in Western Europe and elsewhere. By adopting such values, it has become a partner party for great parties in the modern world, whether in government or in opposition. This is important indeed, for starting out from the popular–national and the national liberal trends, which are both deeply rooted in Hungarian history, it was through Christian democracy that the HDF has become articulate for anyone elsewhere. With this, by a sincere statement of our principles at the 1990 election and by amalgamating it in unity in our political programme, by undertaking and representing Christian democratic values, we could attract those who supported or joined us exactly for this reason, and they gave us their vote. This is why it is important that the Hungarian Democratic Forum preserve its Christian democratic character,

that this character be pronounced, and through this, the policies of our political party be made clear in and outside the country.

This is how we have become a member of the Christian Democratic International; this is how we have joined the EDU, which includes the European democratic parties and within them, Christian democratic parties and people's parties. It is owing to this that the Hungarian Democratic Forum has become a suitable partner for all great international organisations. We were the first to have clearly defined our position within the party structures in Europe. The Alliance of Free Democrats, after several years of speculation and deliberation, decided only recently what to become, for riding two horses at the same time made it difficult for them to choose between social democracy and the liberal movement. They have now joined the Liberal International, as observers for the time being¹¹⁵, and decided that they were not social democrats after all.

Other parties have also kept this question on their agenda; so has the Hungarian Socialist Party, which aims to become a social democratic party.

Fidesz, the Alliance of Young Democrats, and this must be said clearly, has from the very beginning professed itself as one of the European liberal parties. Its programme has been homogeneous in this respect, and so is its commitment. But then political parties are feasible only if they clearly specify their position in the world. This is how we can make ourselves understood. This has practical consequences, too. We have to decide where to sit in the European Parliament, where to sit in the Council of Europe. We cannot have our representatives trying to find out in the corridor whether to take their place in this wing or that, whether one should sit here and the other there. This is a question of political credibility. A country should be able to spell out clearly where her political parties belong.

This is precisely why I now have to speak about something that I have not as yet touched upon in this form, and I now do so for the first time. There was a statement read out here, to the effect that Imre Pozsgay,¹¹⁶ who has left the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, and Zoltán Bíró,¹¹⁷ who is a founding member of the Hungarian Democratic Forum and was its first acting president, have unfurled their banner; together they wish to launch a new political movement – though it is not yet specified exactly what – and today they have made an announcement to this effect. Since the question has been put, it

¹¹⁵ Full membership was obtained in 1993

¹¹⁶ See note 33.

¹¹⁷ See note 32.

naturally calls for a response on my part. They did not speak in personal terms, nor do I want to make a reply from a personal aspect. Yet I want to say first, that as an actor on the political scene, Imre Pozsgay can take great credit for fulfilling a historic role in the transformation. In recent years he has worked for the transformation and chosen to change to a democrat from a reform communist. Zoltán Bíró, with the others who were expelled from the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, Mihály Bihari, László Lengyel and Zoltán Király,¹¹⁸ have found themselves a place in various political parties and movements. Bihari was for some time secretary-general of the Social Democrats; Zoltán Király joined the parliamentary group of the HDF and later left it; László Lengyel has published articles with an independent trend, yet increasingly directed against us – these four people, who actually belonged to the same circle and were purged from the HSWP, were significant figures in the transition period, as was ex-premier Miklós Németh,¹¹⁹ who is also a representative of the transformation. These people, and others too, like Mátyás Szűrös,¹²⁰ who have taken that direction, must indeed be held in great esteem, for they were able to recognise the historical process that led to the end of the communist regimes. They saw that the communist system went bust, and the splinters, the debris of the collapse are now falling back on this country. And we had better remind ourselves that it is not Hungary that went bankrupt, it is not us, but the system of the command economy and the communist political system which got into a deep and great crisis and collapsed. As this took place in Hungary, too, we have to build up a new country on the ruins of this crisis – we should see this clearly. We have to build a new country while cleaning up the wreckage of a collapsed world system, and we would be grateful if our adversaries, who may

¹¹⁸ Four public figures of the eighties who were expelled from the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party because of their frank opinions. Their career developed in different ways: Zoltán Bíró, the first leader of the Hungarian Democratic Forum, is nowadays a bitter critic of Antall; the legal expert Mihály Bihari became the head of the Constitutional Court delegated by the Hungarian Socialist Party; László Lengyel had participated in the Lakitelek meetings but was highly critical of the work of the coalition after 1990; the journalist Zoltán Király, after having been an MP in the Hungarian Democratic Forum for a short period, then quit it and joined the Hungarian Social Democratic Popular Party in 1992.

¹¹⁹ Miklós Németh (b. 1948), economist, politician, Prime Minister in 1988–1990. He contributed to the peaceful change from communism into democracy. He became vice-president of the EBRD in 1991 and held this position until 2000.

¹²⁰ Mátyás Szűrös (b. 1933), diplomat and politician. Ambassador to East Berlin, then in Moscow (1975–1982), secretary of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party between 1983–1989, Speaker of the Parliament in 1989, provisional President of Hungary in 1989–1990. From 1990 to 2002 MP, in 2002 quit the Socialist Party, was a member of the 'historical' Social Democratic Party from 2003 to 2005.

have possibly participated in its construction, when speaking about the ruins, do not blame them on us.

Since the outlines of a new political movement, a new political party, emerged, when Imre Pozsgay and Zoltán Bíró announced the unfurling of their banner, I react in concrete terms only by expressing my esteem towards them personally. I do not doubt their good intentions in launching a political movement which is to participate in and contribute to the success of the transformation process. But as they appear as political adversaries, at any rate as political rivals, it is our duty to speak up and make our position clear – as we have always made our stance clear toward any party.

The way they have presented and announced it, this political movement does not aim to be simply a political party, one of many; it aims to satisfy a need that people have come to feel in the multi-party system, a need that no other party has satisfied. The many parties that have emerged are not able to satisfy public opinion. This is indeed a deficiency in the present state of our country. Part of this sense of deficiency is natural – Hungarian society is not accustomed to competing political parties. It is unaccustomed to the political battles in Parliament, and this is no wonder, for few people stay up and watch British or German television and see how MPs go at one another even if there are only a few of them left in the chamber, or how they may even come to grips, as happened in the Japanese or the Italian parliament. Amidst the fall of living standards, people cherish a desire that those in parliament should argue less, do some common thinking instead, and sort out problems in great harmony.

Well, these will not go together – rejecting dictatorship, rejecting the one-party system, and demanding some sort of great accord. This is a multi-party system! When some deplore the fact that we have got sixty or seventy political parties, as Zoltán Bíró said in a radio interview today, I cannot approve. When we were still in opposition and toured the world, we were also invariably asked – in America, in Britain, everywhere they asked – how it is with you, how many parties you have got. They were keeping a tally on it, that there were thirty, thirty-two, thirty-three political parties registered. It doesn't matter, I said, for I am certain that less than eight of them can return candidates to parliament. Well, six of them did. Complaining that there are so many parties – this will not do. Hungary in this respect is just like any other country; people at a card-table or a dinner-table get up and call themselves a party thenceforth, because it makes it easier for them to account for their absence from home.

This is exactly why it does not matter. What matters is which of them are active, functioning political parties.

When there is general dissatisfaction in the country because of the political consequences of transformation, there is also dissatisfaction in our party, the Hungarian Democratic Forum, because this is not what people expected. They expected something better. When there is political apathy in the country and people fail to turn up at local and by-elections, I am not sure whether it is right to draw the conclusion that there is a need again for some sort of a new 'people's front', a need for some movement that calls for great national unity. This, ladies and gentlemen, is contrary to what we have fought for, contrary to the political multi-party system, in which interests are asserted in opposition to one another and which has a working mechanism of its own. It is no solution that we revert to the idea of creating national unity in the form of some novel people's front. I do not agree with this, for the outcome would be something that is alien to functioning parliamentary democracies, alien to the system of the social market economy and alien to what we are progressing toward.

Another thing is that it is ill-advised to build a policy on political discontent, on political remnants. In transitional periods, you always can count on the disillusioned for some time. I do believe, however, that you cannot really build a movement by counting on those who have stayed away from political parties, who have opted out of it all, and by organising from them a group of the frustrated, the remnant supporters, those who otherwise stand for different sorts of political ideas. I do not concur in this. I have nothing to say against it, indeed I heartily support the idea, when talented politicians, such as Imre Pozsgay and others, set sail and take on their share of the work of transformation and reorganisation, and formulate their political will, but they should not carry it out in alien structures, in a system-alien form. Talking of political democracy, parliamentary democracy and free social market economy, there are parties which fight their battles in or outside parliament. There are social movements, such as the movement of people's colleges, and other movements which organise society according to various interests, and there are labour organisations and other interest groups, such as farmers' unions, smallholders' associations, industrialists' associations, entrepreneurs' or employers' associations, and employees' or workers' associations, i.e. trade unions. All these form part of a modern, working industrial society. Once any of these is missing, the balance is upset. We need political parties, we need labour unions and we need social movements. But you cannot introduce alien structures into the system, such as may be able

to form some sort of political–ideological central power in a one-party system or in other societies which have no party structure, no constitutional political system. There might be parties in a country, which hold identical political views; there might be parties which claim to be the real Christian democratic party, the real liberal or real social democratic party, and then they are weighed in the political balance and are found wanting or not wanting, according to the returns in the elections. It is also true that, in a well-working European democracy, there is need for such political values as are called in a very simplified way the centre, the centre right or the centre left, or they are blended together in what is called left-wing values. It is hard to define them because for many, the Left means social sensitivity. The Right, in this part of the world, has become grossly compromised. It is easily mistaken for Nazi or Fascist political ideas or reduced to mere conservatism. This latter, too, has taken on a different meaning here, in contrast with other regions where such values present themselves in a different way. Oddly enough, Lajos Kossuth's words still hold true – in 1868 he wrote that left-wing and right-wing do not make much sense beyond the parliamentary benches. It is difficult to define them clearly. But if by the Left and left-wing ideas we mean that in a modern European country there is need for social sensitivity, there is need for the representation of political ideas such as, to put it simply, social democracy and left-wing liberalism stand for, then I can say that we do need them. A country can keep its balance only if all values, from the conservative to these so-called left-wing values, are represented on the political scene. If a political trend aims to do this, then I can say that we need it. But if it wants to gather the drop-outs, those who cannot find their place in political life, or those who have already opted out from this or that party, and then label it some sort of obscure centrist movement – there I disagree. I do so not because of the persons, but because such an idea, such a structure has no place in a modern parliamentary democracy. Time will show if they move on and find their own place as a political party, and we shall see if they are wrong or I am.¹²¹

As regards other issues ahead of us, most of them have already been broached in other lectures. Of them, the most significant and essential domestic issue involves the settlement of ownership relations. It is a question that concerns masses of people in this country; it is of concern to those who hope to regain part of their properties, and also for those who worry that while

¹²¹ The new party of Pozsgay and Bíró gathered only 0.52 per cent of the vote at the 1994 election, then it was disbanded.

others regain their ownership by right of old, they may be left out of it. Settling ownership relations, the question of ownership itself, is therefore a vital issue in Hungary. This has found expression in the Compensation Bill on which the National Assembly will probably decide next week.

I first want to explain why we think this bill is the solution.

In the first place, I want to posit that there is no perfect solution, economic, political, legal or moral, for putting the question of ownership relations in order. Whoever is going to contest the Compensation Bill¹²² or controvert this conception, will come off with flying colours. Should anyone say that the bill will not reinstitute decent private ownership, the question arises, where to draw the line? Would they accept the 1949 conditions, the 1947, the 1945 or the 1939 conditions? Where is the true legal justification that could not be disputed?

Let us consider what happened, in the legal sense, to the inhabitants of the former historic Hungary – this was also a subject of legal disputes in the inter-war period. *Bona fide* Hungarian citizens, they had lost their properties beyond the present borders and came here penniless – they, too, can have claims. Those who came here after 1918 as Hungarian citizens can also claim that they did have properties. Others left the country but want to get back their earlier properties. I have received a letter from someone who demands the restoration of the ownership relations of 1939 and before, and accuses the government with the violation of the rule of law. But that family had received part of the confiscated estates of the Rákóczi¹²³ and Bercsényi¹²⁴ families in 1711. Shall I go on? We could consider all changes of rule, including the Turkish wars or those before 1526 and all the rest – and we could soon end up with Árpád and the Magyar Conquest.¹²⁵

¹²² Law XXV of 1991 decided that properties nationalised after 1945 without compensation will not be ‘reprivatised’, given back to the original owners, but will be financially compensated on a regressive scale. Further compensation laws dealt with those personal cases where the Hungarian state, or the Nazis or the Soviet Red Army unjustly executed, imprisoned or deported somebody. Since financially it was not feasible and very often physically was not possible to return either the original property or its full value to the original owners or their descendants, they were given bonds (coupons) issued by the State, which could be used to buy land, shares, or real estate.

¹²³ See note 88.

¹²⁴ Miklós Bercsényi (1665–1725), confidant of Ferenc Rákóczi II and his fellow leader of the freedom fight between 1703–1711. After the defeat of their movement, he followed Rákóczi into exile in Poland and later Turkey.

¹²⁵ Árpád was the leader of the seven Hungarian (Magyar) tribes that arrived in the Carpathian Basin in 895–896 AD and settled there. That was the Conquest or Settlement. Árpád’s descendants, the kings of the House of Árpád, were the ruling dynasty of Hungary, reigning between 1000–1301.

There is no perfect, legal solution to the ownership question. This must be emphatically pointed out. Who is in the right? Nor can you find a perfect solution in the moral sense. And what about the economic aspects of the question? Everybody may interpret it in many ways. People on one side claim that any change in the present system of state and collective farms may lead to a catastrophe. The way they speak you would think we want to do something that would destroy a well-functioning system of producers' co-operatives and state farms, one that has been working brilliantly so far. Well, nothing of the sort, it was far from working brilliantly. Had it done so, the country would not have got into such a mess economically. No, we would not want to smash a perfect system. Nor do we want to restore the property system and forms that evolved around 1947; this would be neither possible nor operative. Not because it was bad, but because the present production system and structure of agriculture in the world will not allow small estates to survive in the long run. Small plots of a few acres and household plots could work well alongside and in symbiosis with a dysfunctional large-scale production system, from where various things could be obtained above or under the board. But if we build them on a market economy, and we will do so, so that we could sell our products in Europe and in the world, then plots of a certain size will emerge, which are able to function. Well, neither a large state farm nor a system based on state farms will be able to function profitably – nor indeed the co-operative system or small plots of the old type. In Europe too, such forms of production have evolved as are appropriate in horticulture, others are appropriate for fruit and vegetable farming, yet others for animal husbandry. In neighbouring Austria, in Burgenland and Lower Austria, owners of land below 50 to 70 hectares in size are already afraid that they will not be able to stay on the market, and we can talk of even larger sizes overseas. You cannot carry on animal husbandry in the drier areas of Lower Austria, only in the Alpine provinces, because the prime cost of milk is too high to sell the products on the market.

People may speak indiscriminately, but those who have been in these regions in Austria, and talked to the farmers' union there, know about it. For the last two-three years, they have been busy working out what sort of production system, what product structure to develop for the time when they would become member of the Common Market.

In this region, the kind of agricultural system that has evolved, is geared for the Soviet market, a system which was able to sell anything on the Eastern markets or in the Third World. No wonder there is now a milk crisis here,

an over-production of pork, and we are very close to having difficulties in exporting our cereals. Well, there were harvestmen's strikes in 1904 and 1905, and there was the *boletta* system (old folks are still familiar with this rationing system from the 1930s) because cereals could not be sold at a suitable price. When, before the First World War, large-scale grain production and grain export started on the black earth in the Ukraine and in Canada, and Australia stepped on the scene as a grain exporter, Hungarian agriculture faced an imminent grain crisis. We can thank Lenin for the upswing of our grain sector. He happened to create socialism next door and with the kolkhoz network they managed to introduce an agricultural system that turned otherwise well-producing Russia into an importer. Had that not happened, we could not have carried out what developed here. And now it has all fallen upon us. Not because we bungled it up, but because an economic system that had evolved for seventy years in Eastern Europe, has now collapsed. Unfortunately, owing to the occupation and the political dictatorship, the entire Hungarian economic life had adapted to this and become part of the Soviet imperial markets and their satellite markets. We had to gear ourselves to them; Hungarian agriculture and industry geared themselves to them, and exported goods there. That is why heavy industry in Hungary was developed; that is how the structure of the entire Hungarian economy evolved, because we looked in that direction, and the Soviet Union was Hungary's number one economic partner. By now, the Soviet share in Hungarian exports has fallen below 20 per cent, and the share of the rest of the 'socialist' countries below 10 per cent. At this moment, only 30 per cent of all Hungarian goods can still be sold on the territory of the former Soviet camp – much less than half of the exports we could make on that territory.

Now let us note a few figures, both good and bad, which will highlight our position.

Under our government, Hungary's currency reserves, the basis of economic and financial stability, have trebled in one year. The situation in the last months of the earlier government was close to desperate. Currency reserves were around 700 million dollars and started falling even below that. The then chairman of the National Bank was an everyday visitor, though I was only a potential prime minister of the opposition. I was asked to write a letter to US treasury secretary Brady to request support from the US *vis-à-vis* the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. We wrote the letter together with Miklós Németh; he was still prime minister. Yes, reserves were that low,

and now some say that this government is a lot worse, they have no experts. Well, that was then, and compared to it, Hungary now has close to two billion dollars, including the safety reserve as yet uncalled, but callable anytime. To be sure, people fraught with everyday troubles cannot see this. And nobody puts the question to the big experts, who are never ever called to account for anything, for they do not sit in my far from comfortable seat. No one asks them what they said last year and before, when they predicted rapid inflation in Hungary; they were croaking that the same would happen in Hungary as happened in Poland and Yugoslavia – massive inflation! Well, the inflation rate here is not 60 or 70 per cent, as they predicted, it is around thirty. Well, this is something, but it is very difficult to stress it, because it is a negative result. In any case, this is the reason why prices have not gone berserk in Hungary.

Again, in the present state of the country, when the situation is critical after the collapse of the Soviet and eastern markets, when thousands of pigs cannot be sold and cannot be bought up, when we cannot sell our goods in a year because of the collapsed Soviet markets, it is no consolation for people individually that in the Hungarian economy, 70 per cent of exports had to be re-g geared towards the West, so as to be suitable for the old hard currency markets.

This turn, and all that a changeover like this entails, and that it has been successful, are, I believe, things that should be counted amongst the achievements.

Everybody in Hungary speaks pessimistically about collapse – indeed, some people appear on television or on the radio three times a week and tell you how blank the future is, newspapers are also full of such articles, and they contend how stupid Hungarian foreign policy or Hungarian politics is in comparison to the Czech or the Polish. Well, everyone is cleverer in this country, everyone can say clever things, everyone has a good idea fit to embitter the country day by day. (Luckily, they use so many foreign words that they are not always understood by all.) This happens very often in the press too.

I never had trouble with the entire press, not with everyone. I know many decent and honest journalists who write good analyses and are, unfortunately, often in a difficult position amongst their own colleagues. Nor do I resent sharp criticism, which is a feature of journalism. They have got to write reflecting public opinion, and the ministers or the prime minister should be confronted with it, lest they fall asleep; they have to pay attention to it. We should be grateful for this service and I fully agree with it. Nor do I expect the press and the media to be always absolutely consistent. They need not be absolutely

consistent, as they have to hold up a mirror to developments. A British paper, to mention a non-Hungarian example, said of Mrs Thatcher that she failed to consult her colleagues and made her own decisions in an authoritative way – and what a sin that is! And now the same paper says that the new Prime Minister, John Major, keeps consulting his colleagues, instead of making decisions quickly. One may be annoyed at this, but it is the paper's duty to point out these two things.

I have related elsewhere, at a press conference of the HDE, though it was never quoted, how a journalist friend of mine visited home from Israel and told me never to get annoyed at certain manifestations of the press. The Israeli press would write pro-Arab articles when Scud rockets were falling. This has comforted me ever since – if things are this way over there, there is no reason to become annoyed.

What I have told you are facts – what this increase in currency assets means for the Hungarian economy; what it means that the Hungarian economy has been re-directed; and what kind of exports it has taken to achieve it. It is also a fact that the Soviet Union has been unable to pay for scarcely anything in the past three months. Not that they want to punish us – they cannot pay even those they would want to. The Soviet economy is simply in a state of insolvency. The Hungarian foreign trade surplus *vis-à-vis* the Soviet Union, what they actually owe us, has exceeded one and a half billion dollars. And it continues to increase. Now here is the catch – should we continue to deliver more goods without any hope of getting our money's worth, or should those factories be closed which have catered exclusively for the Soviet markets? This would have serious consequences. We cannot sell our pigs, we cannot sell our grain, we cannot sell our foodstuffs, our heavy industrial products, because they cannot pay for them. Now we are trying to change things through a committee, and we have started negotiations with the Soviet Prime Minister and others at various levels. We are trying to find the forms, any form in trade, from cash payment to barter trade, in order to save those factories that can make the switch-over – temporarily, until they can re-profile themselves. In order to be able to sell our goods, we talk with them at all levels, from the central government through the republics to the companies. Do we then address problems awkwardly or badly? Well, show me an example where others have done better. I made enquiries concerning the best place, Finland, which has gained the most experience in the Soviet Union and knows the most about Soviet trade; they have got the best name in the Soviet Union because, owing to a specific

political attitude, Finland has achieved a special position in the Soviet Union. In recent years, even dinners were flown by aeroplane from the Stockmann Department Store to receptions in Moscow. There was indeed a well-functioning market economy in Finland, one of the European miracles; it was called the European Japan not long ago. Today Finland faces serious economic problems which they cannot solve. Finnish politicians told us that it was very difficult to conduct negotiations; they could not achieve any result because of the grave depression and because the Soviet Union could not pay. I have mentioned it many times and at many place that last June we made an offer to Ryzhkov, then prime minister, and also at bilateral negotiations, that we propose to build a market depot for the purpose of selling Hungarian food products. We could do so, he said, but they still cannot pay. So we could not undertake to do that. However bitter and however sad it is, we have to face the fact that this is a transitional period which makes our situation so difficult.

I can therefore say, in the name of the government, that we do not take it amiss if someone criticises us, if the press points out mistakes or gives us ideas. We do, however, disapprove if someone makes the proposal for resolving our indebtedness, for instance, that all we have to do is to bring the issue up at international negotiations and state that the major Western banks and the Western governments have contributed to the fact that our debts have grown this much, and therefore we should now expect them to cancel our debts. This is what some responsible Hungarian politicians say; this very morning I have heard words to this effect. Well, whoever says that the debts which the previous governments had accumulated could be withdrawn just like that, whoever thinks we only have to say, please cancel them, why did you support this country – that person has either never talked seriously with responsible leaders or does not know what democracy is. Why would the German, American or British taxpayers want to finance from their own budgets the cancellation of these debts? Nor can we expect this from banks, and we are indebted predominantly to private banks. We are trying to find the solution, indeed we leave no stone unturned, to improve Hungary's financial status. One thing needs to be said though – we shall meet our liabilities, and we are not going to change this, our position. Hungary will redeem her debts and will not request her debts to be rescheduled. Rescheduling our debts would mean we could get no further credits, just like the Poles, who have not received credits for ten years, and now – as the Paris Club decided, under pressure from the American government, to cancel part of their debts – the Japanese finance ministry has suspended a 500 million dollar credit the Poles could have received.

I say to those who tell tales about the debts having increased, that Hungary's debts have not increased. During our term in government, Hungary's indebtedness has decreased. In other words, the rumours spreading about growing debts are untrue. Naturally, we have to find ways to maintain Hungary's solvency, given the fact that Hungary is redeeming her debts, and at the same time we have to take steps to prevent the withdrawal of financial resources from the Hungarian economy that are necessary for economic growth. We can negotiate about these issues, we can find solutions, but only by observing these priorities.

A gentleman called Iván Völgyes, a university lecturer from Nebraska, appeared on Hungarian Television or Hungarian Radio. He said that Hungarian politicians and the Hungarian government are not very clever because they do not make use of the possibilities of the Brady Plan, namely the rescheduling of debts. When he said this, people in Hungary listened wonder-struck that someone comes from America and talks like an oracle. I read about it in Britain where, on the same day, Brady, creator of this plan and economic solution, was congratulating us for not employing his method. I could give you a list of similar cases.

To sum up, I can tell you that the Hungarian economy is following a sound direction as far as its overall processes and development are concerned.. Hungary is regarded as the most stable, most promising country in the region. This is indicated not only by statements but also by the fact that half the working capital that has been brought to this region, including the Soviet Union, has been invested in Hungary, and half of this half, some 600 million dollars, is from America. Bankers and financiers are not sentimental. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund think likewise. These are the questions of fundamental importance which give us hope to move ahead.

Unfortunately, there are also serious economic and social problems, even though they may be temporary. We need to say out loud that while the living standard of part of the population has increased (a smaller part, unfortunately, due to the nature of the thing, some estimate it at 10 per cent), the living standard of 30 per cent has decreased, and of the rest is stagnating. This means that there is reason, genuine reason for the bad mood. It makes no sense to tell such numbers to those who are just facing the fact that they have fattened their pigs in vain and cannot sell them. All I can say is, we shall do our best, we shall leave no avenue unexplored, to improve the situation and accordingly, in the interest of the future, to help recovery in the country. When, by introducing the Compensation Bill, we aim to provide partial justice, while keeping the country fully operational and pointing to the future.

In our foreign policy we try to establish good relationships with all regions and all countries. The region closest to us is Western Europe, Europe in general. We had to give priority to them. Therefore the form of association with the Common Market, and the agreement with the free trading zone, is of fundamental importance. Our government's programme is to attain an associated relationship first, and full membership in this decade.

Another thing is that we have to think in terms of the entire Atlantic region. North America and Europe form a partnership. This does not mean that tomorrow we shall join the military organisation of NATO. It means that, even though certain countries were enemies in the two world wars, North America and Europe have always belonged together to the extent that we must not think in other terms but of the Atlantic region. On the other hand, we think that the American presence, in the military sense too, is of essential importance also in the newly emerging Europe. We said these two things, namely that we think in terms of the entire Atlantic region and of maintaining American presence, just as clearly in June 1990 in Moscow as we do today. It is our conviction that we have to maintain this position in the future.

We also have to maintain good relationships with the neighbouring countries. Those who claim, whoever they are, that we have damaged our relationship with the neighbouring countries, because we are either amateurish or ignorant, are either false or silly. We have always aimed steadfastly to cultivate good relations with all our neighbours.

With Czechoslovakia, our relations have on the whole been good. It is natural to have tensions about the issue of the Gabčíkovo/ Bős dam,¹²⁶ when they want to build it, while we do not. Some claim, too, that we view relations with the neighbouring states through the eyes of the Hungarian minorities living there. This is untrue. We want to have equally good relationships with all neighbouring countries and beyond them with Poland and Bulgaria. It is, however, impossible to keep contacts unclouded when the Hungarian minorities cannot exercise their human and minority rights, when they are either denied this or there are problems with it. All we have ever said is that one aspect of co-operation, of good co-operation with the neighbouring countries involves a correct, appropriate handling of the Hungarian minorities. In our country, this is connected to a free and liberal nationality policy, without any conditions. We have never said anything else, so we do not look at relations with the

¹²⁶ See note 80.

neighbouring countries only through the perspective of the minorities, but we cannot leave them out of consideration.

Our interest is, and this we must say, that our region, the entire East-Central European region, be democratised. Unless it is democratised, it is a danger-zone. Last year I said at the Paris Summit that armies that are turning independent pose a great threat in this region. It was met with great acclamation on one side and tense staring eyes on the other. This means that, for us, it is a matter of political guarantee that these countries have a democratic, parliamentary system. It is clear that we welcome that. On the other hand, it cannot be our goal to have civil war raging in these countries, that they become destabilised, that order is upturned, because, for one, we ought to reckon with thousands, hundreds of thousands of refugees. Furthermore, destabilisation in the neighbouring countries would also put the country into jeopardy economically. The international financial community is quick to react and when making investments its members do not only consider this small Hungary. They also take into consideration whether further markets could be found in the neighbourhood of this small country, and whether this country could become a bridgehead. They will make more investments only if we are a model country, we are the model territory, where their centres can be opened amid the most stable conditions, and from where they can then expand to other markets. If, on the other hand, they think that economies around us are going to collapse, that political developments around us involve the threat of civil war, they will never come here in the first place. International risk assessment is undertaken by first examining the domestic situation of the given country, then of the neighbouring countries. It is our elementary interest that, for instance, when they speak about a federation of sovereign republics in Yugoslavia, this should emerge in an orderly way, not in the context of a civil war, through wars conducted against one another. This is the only way we can expect the world to understand our intentions and future policies. This is the way to make things understood, by declaring what steps we are about to take, or what steps we will not take, based on rational arguments.

I would now like to close this session of the Hungarian Democratic Forum by saying that we should have faith that it is not a group of ignoramuses, an amateurish team of players who are governing this country; the country is not directed by a political management where experts are lacking. We have our experts in order to achieve what we can achieve. Here and now I repeat the response to what some people have raised as an objection – I do not know of,

nor have I seen, a single programme in Hungary that could have rivalled that of the government, or would have rivalled the government's work and offered a better one, or anything at all. Thus, I can hardly wait for that brilliant counter-programme to come to light; to get acquainted with those ideas, some of which we could even adopt. Should these be that marvellous, we could share their originators' knowledge and information, and then the country will decide what they think of us. For the time being, however, we have not found anything like that; these people could tell us nothing new, either in general terms or in detail. If they wanted to communicate something good, or if they found something good about us, they said 'Look, they have approached us, they have taken over ideas from us'. Well, you can learn from any programme, any political idea – even if only the fact that you must do exactly the opposite!

In this context, so that you could see I that I refer not only to Christian democratic thinkers and politicians, I mention the following. Bebel, that great figure of the German workers' movement, whose portrait, incidentally, hung in Helmut Schmidt's study together with that of Bismarck – well, Bebel said: "I always get cold feet when my enemies praise me, lest I should have done something idiotic."

If I adopt this example, I feel that we must have trodden the right path so far, to have earned relatively few compliments.

Thank you for having listened to me. Now I am about to close this successful conference. You should go home in the knowledge that, although at the cost of difficulties, Hungary has many good opportunities, the best in this region, to really emerge from the position it is now in, if she can remain steadfast amid the difficulties – though this will be no easy job. However, we cannot promise we will reach the land of milk and honey given the short time we have had; other countries too, which many people look upon with envy, have worked for decades and have achieved their goals over decades. We, however, are left to ourselves to do our best to get on our feet – and then we shall obtain due support and gain the confidence which goes with it.

AT THE END OF SOVIET OCCUPATION

While the last member of the occupying Soviet forces, namely Lieutenant-General Victor Shilov, left the territory of Hungary at Záhony at 3.01 p.m. on 19 June 1991, it was only on 30 June that the sovereignty of the country was officially restored, in accordance with the appropriate agreement. Then, on the Day of Liberation, the people of the Somló Hill district gathered in an open field on the outskirts of Somlóvásárhely to celebrate. On this day, in towns and villages throughout the country, the restoration of Hungarian independence lost in 1944 was remembered ceremonially. The Prime Minister gave the following speech on 30 June.

I am delighted to be here with you and to enjoy a glass of Somló wine¹²⁷ to celebrate the Hungarian motherland and Hungarian freedom. It is an unforgettable day for all of us. However, all this wine-tasting would have been conducted with a gourd when I was a child. Times change however, and wine is now poured from jugs rather than from gourds, when, controlled by the finger, the wine slowly fills the glass.

It is no secret that I was invited to many places, to many towns today. But on this day, when we think of Hungary's freedom regained, and are grateful to have lived to see and celebrate the re-establishment of Hungarian independence, I wanted to be in my home country, where I have a relative resting in every churchyard, every cemetery, from Somlójenő (the former Kisjenő) to Oroszi. I was here at the end of March in 1945, when the front passed through the Somló region, with the German troops withdrawing from the area and the Soviet troops coming in. Now I have managed to return to the place where – together with your grandparents or great-grandparents – I once endured all the tribulations associated with the movements of the front and the somewhat lengthy temporary stationing of the Soviet troops in our country.¹²⁸ I have lived here with you and this made it obligatory for me to accept your invitation.

¹²⁷ See note 7.

¹²⁸ This ironic remark refers to the fact that following the signature of the Austrian State Treaty in 1955 and the suppression of the revolution in 1956, the official explanation for the stationing of the Russian troops in Hungary was that they remained in the country 'temporarily'. Finally that came to 46 years; several jokes made fun of that.

Standing at this spot, I cannot remember the time of the war without being moved, when mothers of the area dreaded the moment the postman arrived, bringing news of the military draft or notification of a son killed in action. It is the dead of two world wars that oblige us to commemorate in the churchyards, even if only with symbolic graves, the sacrifices made by the Hungarian people, the Hungarian nation.

I remember how a hard-to-handle, freedom-loving child of thirteen personally experienced the front and the day it passed through the area. That day everyone was making preparations to hide all they could, the food, their wives and daughters. The men were in dread of being taken away. There were two German formations here: a Wehrmacht armoured formation and an SS formation. The commander of the armoured one had close links to the generals involved in the plot against Hitler. Its headquarters were in Somlószőlős, but some units were stationed in Borszörcsök and the neighbouring villages. Their presence provided the area with protection even in the days of the Arrow-Cross regime.¹²⁹ This was the time when I learned that the people of a nation cannot all be lumped together, for these German soldiers were protecting civilians from the robberies carried out by SS units and by stragglers from the routed SS Adolf Hitler Division. I was there among them, guiding the commander of the Wehrmacht armoured formation, when a firefight nearly broke out between the Wehrmacht and the SS troops here, at the bottom of Somló Hill. Although not many people witnessed it, this, too, is a part of the history of this area. I was the interpreter for the Wehrmacht commander. They were excellent soldiers. They despised everything linked to Hitlerism, and behaved very decently when they were stationed here from October 1944 onwards. As far as I can recall, the number of this Wehrmacht unit was 509.

Then they left and we could have gone with them. However, we stayed and waited for the fighting to come to an end. In December we could hear the rumble of the guns from the direction of Lake Balaton, but then the Soviets were pushed back to the River Danube. In March, just like a line of beaters at a shoot, the Soviet front was approaching again, stretching from Pápa to Ajka.

¹²⁹ Arrow-Cross was the name and symbol of the party of the Hungarian extreme right, the imitation of national socialism. During the Horthy era their organisation was closely watched, their leader, Ferenc Szálasi was even imprisoned. After Hungary's unsuccessful withdrawal from the war (15 October 1944), an Arrow-Cross government was installed by the occupying Germans. Szálasi became "the leader of the nation", and his regime introduced a reign of terror, primarily targeting Jews and the resistance movement. In 1946 the majority of the Arrow-Cross leaders were tried and executed as war criminals.

Early in the morning of that day I climbed the Somló lookout tower (its old name of St Stephen's lookout tower has been restored) – by then it had been abandoned by the artillery spotters – and had an unforgettable experience: with my binoculars I watched the line of the Soviet front all the way from Pápa to Ajka as the armour deployed and advanced. It was a beautiful, sunny day. Standing in the tower, I could see the Russian forces reaching Sártó and Oroszi, and when I turned round I could still see the withdrawing German units, making their way toward Graz, on Highway 8. This was the time when Somló Hill was positioned between the two lines. I ran down the steps of the tower and made my way towards Oroszi from the bottom of Somló Hill, meeting my first Russian soldiers somewhere between there and Sártó.

I am only telling you this because the story illustrates perfectly how little sense of danger and fear a teenage boy has. There are many young people and children here today: look after them! So, I walked towards the approaching Russian line. I do not want to talk about what happened next. That is not why we are here today.

Today we are here to acknowledge that, in accordance with the agreement between the two countries, Hungary has become fully independent. There are no foreign troops in our country, either legally or otherwise: the history of the Soviet occupation in Hungary is ended.

It is my strongest desire that this occupation should never be repeated. During the 1000-year-old statehood of Hungary there were many enemies and foreign soldiers in our land. However, owing to the special location of the Carpathian Basin, no enduring Russian military presence occurred here in the past centuries. They came here in 1849 to crush the War of Independence at the request of the Court in Vienna; they were called in to put down the Hungarian fight for freedom. That was the prelude to the capitulation at Világos.

We can proudly say that the Somló region has always supported the motherland with many soldiers. They took part in the Battle of Győr in 1809 and today there is a memorial plaque in their honour. My family history recorded that my great-great-grandfather returned from that battle; it was called the Battle of Karakó and took place near the tavern, for French troops straying here were attacked by a small Hungarian detachment. And in 1849 many soldiers from the Somló region returned here from Világos. I could continue the list of how much blood, sacrifice and struggle is characteristic of this area, and how many hardships the local people have had to endure. These memories give us strength, as we celebrate here and now the fact that there are no more

foreign soldiers on this soil. We have lived to see an army leaving without another coming in to take its place!

I cannot stay with you all day to celebrate. It is my duty to be here, a duty I am happy to fulfil. From here I am to fly to Prague, to sign (on 1 July 1991) the document for the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact. In my opinion, when we speak about Hungarian independence and sovereignty, we must affirm that Soviet troops have now withdrawn from Hungary. From now on only businessmen, diplomats and tourists may reside in Hungary, and all those residing here illegally will be dealt with in accordance with Hungarian laws.

Recently we signed the document on the dissolution of the Comecon¹³⁰ in Budapest. We terminated an agreement according to which Hungary had been part of an imperial market since 1949. This economic alliance had determined and distorted the entire Hungarian economy. We were coerced into it; it was not our choice, unlike the European Economic Community, or EFTA for the peoples in Western Europe. It was a manifestation of Soviet hegemony. I am not saying this only here and only to you in order to say something popular; I said the same thing at the farewell reception for the Comecon representatives in the presence of the Soviet government delegates. I would also like to add that we are now witnessing a historical and political process that started in recent years. We must also state that we never accepted the foreign occupation of Hungary; we never accepted that a political, economic and social system alien to us rule over this nation!

This country made three attempts to change that. There were free elections in Hungary in 1945, under the supervision of the Soviet army and the Allied Control Commission. These free elections expressed the will of the people: the Communist Party, despite all the help it received, received only 17 per cent of the vote. It should not be forgotten by those gentlemen who are now saying that the Hungarian people are disappointed in the present transformation and want the Communists back. I don't believe it.

Béla Varga, Speaker of Parliament after these free elections,¹³¹ is about to return to Hungary for good. Béla Varga, former parish priest from Balatonboglár and MP during the years of the Second World War, was obliged to live

¹³⁰ Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, the organisation set up in 1949 to bind each 'people's democracy' economically, too, to the Soviet Union.

¹³¹ Béla Varga (1903–1995). Roman Catholic priest at Balatonboglár (1929–1947), politician of the Smallholders' Party, patron of the Polish refugees. MP from 1939, vice-president of the Party from 1945. Escaped and emigrated from Hungary to the USA in 1947, and returned in 1990 to address the new, freely elected Parliament.

in America for decades. Unfortunately I cannot welcome him, as I will have to be in Vienna at the time of his arrival.

The second attempt was in 1956. I was here in 1956. I arrived in one of the first cars from an encircled Budapest to fetch my father, who was staying at our vineyard. I gave short speeches in Devecser, Doba and Borszörcsök, updating the people on events in Budapest. It should not be forgotten that Plot 301 contains a Modory boy from Borszörcsök, someone who was executed though innocent, merely because he had been seen with a gun in his hand. He is one of the heroes of this region.

This 1956 attempt of ours was our second attempt to throw off the foreign yoke, as well as the alien, foreign political system. We know the results. However, don't forget that today we are celebrating the Soviet pull out and tomorrow the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact. This is the pact that the Hungarian government withdrew from in November 1956, declaring that Hungary did not wish to remain a member. This cost the life of the then prime minister [Imre Nagy],¹³² and the lives of many others.

Now we can commemorate that we had to start all over again in 1988–1989, when international conditions and the internal situation in the Soviet Union allowed us to achieve Hungarian liberty and to defeat the Communist political regime permanently by peaceful means and in a peaceful manner. We cannot say, however, that this was achieved by one single government, party or simply by us Hungarians. To say that would not be the historical truth. But it should not be denied that we played a substantial part in it. Under the leadership of Gorbachev, changes began in the Soviet Union in 1988 that transformed internal conditions and led the people there to recognise that they could no longer follow the path they had been following until then: the entire economic, social and political system of the Soviet Union was in crisis. Gorbachev was therefore searching for new directions. I assume that he did not have in mind what they have got now, but once the genie is let out of the bottle it is impossible to put it back again.

Therefore we had to acknowledge the fact that we could not have achieved our turnaround had there been no changes within the Soviet Union. And we must also recognise and stress that the primary victims of a dictatorship are always its own people. When we talk about the Soviet Union – and also about those who committed crimes against us when the military front passed through

¹³² See note 83.

– we must point out that the first victims of the Bolshevik system were the Russians and the other peoples of the Soviet Union. It is difficult to calculate how many millions of kulaks or Russian peasants and other ordinary Russian people considered enemies died in famines in the 1920s and 1930s. Hundreds of thousands of Russians were held in Soviet concentration camps. We must remember this also. Here I should like to quote the words of Béla Kovács, former General Secretary of the Smallholders' Party.¹³³ (By the way, were he still alive, he would not always be proud of the things going on today in his old party.¹³⁴) So, I shall quote Béla Kovács, who stayed with my family in November 1956, in the days of the Revolution. He told us that in Siberia, where he had nearly forgotten even his mother-tongue, there were hundreds of thousands of Russian prisoners and that even the Russian guards gave him words of encouragement that helped him to survive. When he was carrying a plank somewhere in the taiga, the man he was working with suddenly asked him: "It's a very heavy plank, isn't it, Mr Minister?" "How do you know who I am?" Kovács replied. "I arrested you in Váci utca in 1947", came the reply.

This was the Russian general who had ordered the encirclement of Kovács's house and the taking away of Kovács himself to nine years in captivity. Later this officer, too, was arrested, enabling him to tell Kovács the news and what had been happening in the world up to 1951. This was the Soviet system. Therefore when we are establishing new relationships with the peoples of the Soviet Union, we must bear in mind that they, too, are victims.

Of course, talking about the victims does not mean that we must forgive the political regimes. There cannot be forgiveness for dictatorships and systems of terror, only for those who confess their crimes and sinfulness, who will be at least modest in the new Hungary. They should not be telling lies in a loud voice and pretending that all they did was good, and that only they can lead the nation out of the crisis into which they themselves have led it... This nation will not swallow such a lie! I think that more than four decades produced enough lies in this country to prevent the people from believing the demagogues, the political charlatans from either political side, those whose conscience is burdened with the sins that have caused our present troubles.

People in this region have always had both courage and common sense. People worked in the fields from dawn to dusk, creating exemplary agriculture, with pedigree livestock and excellent wines produced for export. This region

¹³³ See note 18.

¹³⁴ Allusion to the internal divisions in the Smallholders' Party, caused by a treacherous MP, J. Torgyán.

should again be what it once was, so that we can regain first place in today's conditions. And this is a region where our industry and mines are undergoing severe difficulties, where people are struggling with unemployment in the region of Ajka and Bakony and elsewhere in the county. We have to start new enterprises, placing our trust in each other, holding each other's hands. We must resolve together not to let the intriguers steal from us this 1989–90 turnaround, as they did those of 1945 and 1956.

I would like to think that my message reaches not only the people of the Somló region and leaders of the county, but also the television and radio audience. I hope that my message will be quoted and the press will report my words with integrity. For I have confidence in the Hungarian freedom of press and I trust that both the public and the press will realise that this country requires accurate reporting.

I cannot promise that the future will be easy. We are going to face hard months, hard years, but I can promise you one thing: we will always tell the truth. And I promise to lead the country out of her present troubles if we receive support from the people and if the people do not fall for the demagogues and windbags shouting from left or right. This country has an internal debt of one thousand billion three hundred million forints. One thousand billion three hundred million! The external debt is twenty-one billion U.S. dollars. We also have to reckon with the fact that although the Soviet troops have left, their memory remains not only in our hearts, but also in the damage they left and in their debts to us. Do not forget that they owe us the net sum of one and a half billion US dollars in foreign trade. We must also mention the sum the Soviet Union is demanding for the premises and airfields left behind. On the other hand, they do not want to acknowledge the damage they caused to our environment and buildings. But I trust that we shall be able to reach agreement on the issues yet to be resolved. At this time it is vitally important that the Hungarian government, every responsible individual and the Hungarian people face our present situation with resolution, courage, honesty and common sense.

Now, when we are celebrating their departure, we must not forget that they are not so far away. And we must not forget that many things can be done to offset geography except by means of politics. The Soviets are still within the Carpathian Basin. They are a nuclear world power, they are still one of the greatest military powers in the world, although they are struggling to overcome crisis and internal trouble. Therefore we shall continue to negotiate with the

delegates of the Soviet government with honesty and integrity. At the time we were in the opposition I said that if they remove our handcuffs, we shall offer a hand of friendship. This is what I am saying again, on their departure. You should continue to discredit the blusterers and the loudmouths who used to skulk in the background. And do not believe those either who now think that the Hungarian people suffer from amnesia and have forgotten the past decades. These individuals now pretend to be the advocates of the Hungarian workers and peasants. They are the ones who crippled the farmers, confiscated from them even the last seeds of grain and coerced the country into Stakhanovism¹³⁵. They are the ones who forced the country into hard, unsafe work and labour in the mines, while 10 per cent of the population experienced prison, internment or deportation. Those people may think that they can play at being advocates of workers' and farmers' interests and the noble representatives of European ideals of freedom. I hope they do not wish to make the people believe that they can cleverly sell Hungary's surplus pigs to the Muslim countries of the Middle East, where the consumption of pork is prohibited anyway. I hope they will not come up with things like that.

When we present the difficult situation of the country unequivocally, we have to acknowledge that hundreds of thousands of jobs have vanished in recent years, because of the need to maintain agriculture based on the Soviet and other Comecon economies, which were all based on shortage. We had to produce agricultural and industrial goods that could only be sold in the Soviet market.

It is not our fault that the Soviets are unable to pay. What do people propose to do who are wailing that we have not come up with a better solution? Should we continue to supply products without payment despite being owed one and a half billion dollars? We surely can't do that. However, we hope that as a result of honest, equitable negotiations with the Soviet central government, we shall be able to continue to do business with individual republics and with companies. Now that we are free, we must find a way to trade with them, preferably with payments received.

It is a great achievement that Hungary was able to change direction in the midst of the distress that had actually been brought about in our agriculture and industry by the internal Soviet crisis, which increased our debts. We are

¹³⁵ Named after a Russian worker who set sensational records in productions (later revealed to have been faked), it became a movement in the Soviet bloc to increase production through better organised hard work.

able to sell the bulk of the products of Hungarian agriculture and industry on Western markets. The Hungarian economy has managed to switch direction, so that today our primary economic partner is the Western world rather than the Soviet Union and the other Comecon states. It is very important that we are present in the world market and that our trade with the Soviet Union has fallen to below 20 per cent of the total.

Our main trading partners are Germany, Austria and Switzerland. We should also bear in mind that Hungary enjoys international confidence to such an extent that more than half of Western capital invested in the former Communist countries last year (1990) was placed in Hungary. More than half of this capital has come from America, and we know that the Americans never make bad investments in insecure places. The greatest sign of trust is the fact that the prime investors in this region are Americans, although they are not our main creditors. Forty per cent of our credit comes from Japan, and another 40 per cent from Germany. On the other hand, only 3 per cent of our foreign trade is with Japan. So we can say that Hungary is trusted in both the political and the economic sense.

The national pessimism and distrust that have spread all over the country and which was generated artificially by many over the past one and a half years will not get us anywhere. Those who seek to discredit their political opponents with political propaganda that harms not their opponents first and foremost, but the country as a whole, are taking a great risk. If an American or a German businessman reads bad news about Hungary, he does not ask whether this is the view of the Hungarian Democratic Forum or any other party. Rather, he assumes that this is what Hungarians are like. Seeing foreign tourists, we, too, tend to draw conclusions: the Dutch or the Italians are like this or that... It is always easy to make sweeping judgments.

That is why it is our joint responsibility to encourage the rest of the world to have a positive image of Hungary, and we have all the resources to do so. However, this takes hard work, togetherness and faith. This is the faith and trust that I would like to build up in you so that you can believe that despite all our difficulties, we have the greatest chance in this region of re-emerging, so that we can again pride ourselves on being Hungarians, not only because of our political reforms and transformation, but also because of our achievements.

The Hungarian people have always been aware of what is going on in both the Western and the Eastern parts of the world. Unfortunately, we can no longer greet those prudent farming people of an earlier age, who while having

a rest and a chat in Somló's wineries after work often exhibited more knowledge of the world than many learned men. I remember listening to them talking about what America was like, for some of them had been to New York and Washington without ever having been to Budapest, as they had never had any business there. Those who had crossed the Atlantic or had worked in Western Europe knew what the cutting edge of the world meant. Those who managed to return from the front or from the prison camps told us what life had been like in the kolkhoz, how people had farmed to the east of us. I believe some of you could talk about it.

I would like to encourage the elderly to tell their children and grandchildren their memories and the stories of their families. I would like to ask the grandchildren not to believe that the old people, who may be struggling with afflictions and who may be a burden to them, cannot tell them new things. Just have the patience to listen to their stories. Then the young will learn what the true history of Hungarian everyday life was like, the history of millions of everyday people, how they survived the past, the battlefields, the postwar times, the regimes of Rákosi¹³⁶ and Kádár. Then the generations will understand each other, they will understand what historical, political and family continuity means. There is no Hungarian nation without such an understanding. If historical memory is lost, then we shall no longer belong together, we shall not be able to take strength from the past in order to survive the calamities of the present.

I am driven by faith and a sense of duty to try to lead this country out of what we are living through today. We have achieved many things in foreign and security policy. But we have to make appropriate changes in the economy, in the system of ownership, and there are many more steps yet to be taken in agriculture, industry, trade, science, and other areas. This requires trust and faith which I hope to receive from you.

There is a Somló Hill basalt stone on my father's grave in Budapest's Farkasrét cemetery with a quotation about Somló inscribed on it. When I visit my father's grave, I always remember that the Somló basalt and the Somló soil brought to his funeral by the people of Oroszi obligates me to regard this region as the home of my father and family. And the Hungarian districts and Hungarian villages with which I have ties – here in Transdanubia those from Dörgicse to Kötöcse – are all unforgettable for me.

¹³⁶ See note 97.

As we know from a historical anecdote, when the first Hungarian prime minister, Lajos Batthyány,¹³⁷ was being taken to Vienna as a prisoner, the locals around Somló wanted to free him. But Lajos Batthyány told them not to try, as they would only get themselves into trouble without being able to help him. Do not forget that – out of mercy – a bullet, and not a rope, ended the life of our first prime minister. Hungarian history, which is rich in tragedies, should determine our behaviour and give us the faith to be devoted and courageous, and not to be scared of the past, the present or the future.

If you believe in us and undertake to go through all this with us, then keep us. If we lose your trust, then discharge us. But as long as we govern this country and enjoy the trust of the world, and hopefully the trust of the Hungarian nation also, then stay with us in the hours of hardship, in the hard decisions which I cannot always discuss with you, perhaps only in my memoirs, if I shall have time and strength enough to write them. In the meantime, believe me, even if a commander cannot always explain every sentence of his order, a soldier should believe until he is disappointed. If I deceive you, if only once, then discharge me. But until then, let me have your faith and your trust. In a few years from now we shall look back on these days as the turning point for freedom, as a period of hard months and years but as worthwhile nevertheless. I do believe it will be so.

God be with you.

¹³⁷ See note 82.

ON THE 35TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE REVOLUTION AND FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

On 23 October 1991, the speaker at the national holiday gala concert held at the Opera House in the evening began his address with a reference to Gyula Illyés's poem "One Sentence About Tyranny", written in 1950 and published in 1956. A recording of the poignant poem read by the author was played before the speech.

Apart from representatives of political and cultural life, the President of the Republic, the Speaker of Parliament and the Prime Minister invited a good number of participants of the revolution and fight for freedom, many of whom had served long prison sentences. Prime Minister Antall took stock of the achievements reached since 1990, set against the demands of 1956.

Gyula Illyés¹³⁸ did not live to see this day. The poet of "One Sentence About Tyranny" did not live to be able to write of what has ended. To write of the grave concern of the nation now.

"One Sentence About Tyranny" earned Gyula Illyés a place among our greatest poets, the authors of "Appeal" and the National Anthem¹³⁹; and we are justified in mentioning him among the greatest, from Balassi¹⁴⁰ to Ady¹⁴¹ and Babits.¹⁴² This poem in itself would be sufficient to reflect a whole oeuvre. With this poem, Illyés proved what several critics have maintained – that Hungarian lyric poetry has no equal; half the literature of the world would be made up of Hungarian poems had they not been written in Hungarian. "One Sentence About Tyranny" contains everything tyranny means in the life of a man and a nation, and it could be written only in this way, only in Hungarian. In verse, Illyés was able to convey what innumerable others managed to reveal only by extensive analytical discussions, in studies of political science – such as

¹³⁸ See 108.

¹³⁹ The poets Vörösmarty and Kölcsey respectively.

¹⁴⁰ Bálint Balassi (1554–1594), poet, founder of the Hungarian lyrical tradition. Himself a valiant soldier, he immortalised those who fought the Turks on the border, in the confines.

¹⁴¹ See note 70.

¹⁴² Mihály Babits (1883–1941), poet, translator, and editor of *Nyugat*, the emblematic literary paper of the age.

Coudenhove-Kalergi's *The Totalitarian State Against Man*. We, however, were fortunate enough to have a poetic and suggestive rendering of what a tyrannical state portends, what a tyranny, that like seaweed entangles every part and every fraction of our lives, implies. In 1956 the ship of this tyranny was scuttled by the revolution and freedom fight of a small nation, the Hungarian nation. All Hungarians can pride themselves that their country – confident of its inner strength – dared, like David rising against Goliath, to attempt to shake off the yoke of tyranny in the face of the strongest or second strongest, but certainly the most tyrannical power of the time. Trampling it under foot, foreign troops prevented it from achieving the honourable and sound aims of its revolution; it therefore had no choice but to fight for its freedom. This was how the 1848–49 revolution turned into a war of independence, and this was how, short-lived as it was, the 1956 revolution ended in a bitter fight for freedom again.

Speaking about 1956 involves a profound responsibility. One must be careful not to express commonplaces or superficial political and historical generalities. For 1956 constitutes a spiritual and moral value in the life of this nation that must take its place in Hungarian historical mythology for centuries to come, from which power can be drawn in times of difficulty. It must enter the world of heroes, martyrs and trials, the primal source of which people can always have recourse to. In remembering 1956, we must therefore speak of what is elevating about it. On such occasions, we must recall and relate our memories in a way that even those who were not participants, who did not experience those events personally, who did not march from the Petőfi¹⁴³ statue to the Bem¹⁴⁴ statue, to the Parliament, to the Radio, who were not present at the demolition of Stalin's statue, may understand what it all means. Recalling those events should in no way give young ones the impression of elderly story telling, aged boasting. They should not think they are being told of things they could never imitate, and therefore they may not believe in the authenticity of the accounts. Why, how could they know what 56 means? For decades, they heard nothing or sheer lies about it. But as they can grasp the meaning of tyranny from Illyés's poem, they will understand that fear silenced even those parents or grandparents who would have had stories to tell. This is why it is all important for them to speak the truth now since they are free to do so. They ought to dare tell their stories; they should dare speak their minds, and the

¹⁴³ See note 99.

¹⁴⁴ Józef Bem (1794–1850), Polish general, hero of the 1830 uprising against the Russians. Volunteered to fight in Hungary in 1848–1849, was very successful in the campaign in Transylvania.

children and grandchildren should ask again and again, because this is how history comes to life, being passed on from generation to generation. This is how it becomes the common experience of families, of everyday, simple people, not only the material of textbooks and historical monographs.

23 October 1956 is a momentous day in the history of the world. We are justified in saying this even though the contemporaries did not always sense this. Oddly enough, the world paid more attention to the Suez crisis, just as today when the Near East draws more publicity than our neighbour Yugoslavia. In 1956 too, the world did not notice immediately that more than pure power politics and more than the collision of spheres of interest was at stake, that world history was being made. A little nation was getting ready for no less than the overthrowing of world communism.

These were the years when, after the death of Stalin, the world was granted an opportunity. Perhaps not as great as now, in these past months and years. Though unrealised history can never be proven, we can say that there was a chance at that time as well for a united world to show a bold front and turn the wheel of history. It did not happen. We would have been deprived of the moral power of a defeated revolution, but the world would have gained an unspoiled thirty-five-year period of peaceful development. Nevertheless, 1956 has become a decisive experience for the whole world. Anyone travelling abroad can experience that reality. A whole generation watched the events of the Hungarian revolution and freedom fight on television and cinema news reports. If one mentions the word Hungarian to any foreigner, if one has a little chat with him, it immediately turns out – I myself have experienced this with politicians and others several times – that 1956 was a fundamental political experience in their lives, whether in Paris, London or Washington. For they saw with their own eyes the force of a people raised against tyranny, and the suppressing power of hordes of tanks. They felt the fury, the fury of helplessness, that has had to be experienced by people of good will and nations with sympathetic understanding, when they wanted to help others but their hands were tied. They all felt how the world was confined by a prevailing international power system when they tried to support the Hungarian people crying for help. Now, as we recollect the events, we can readily say that the revolution and freedom fight had a profound impact both on the Soviet Union and the West.

Even on this day, we must clearly declare that the incredibly heavy sacrifices were not in vain, not only because of the arrival of these days and years of

fulfilment, but because, without the revolution, there would never have been the so-called 'soft dictatorship' after the years of reprisals.

1956 was also a momentous lesson for the Hungarian communist party, the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. The lesson was that this country, this people, could not be treated as it had been treated beforehand. The Soviets were likewise aware of this. This country would never have been 'the jolliest barrack in the camp'¹⁴⁵ without the frightful experience of 1956, which first provoked merciless retaliation, but the wielders of power immediately drew the lesson. We also know that the experience of 1956 had its lasting effects within the Soviet Union. It was no coincidence that Ambassador Andropov, later KGB head [and even later Soviet leader], never forgot the lessons and shocking experiences, fears and anxieties of his Budapest ambassadorship. He passed on to his pupils something that was called Perestroika and Glasnost six years ago. It was not accidental that it dawned on his pupils that there was something which could never be reformed. Many believed that socialism, so-called existing socialism, could be reformed, re-christened as democratic socialism, and could become a functioning economic, social and political order. However, with the passage of time, it became ever so clear that what could not be reformed would not be reformed.

Another historical result of 1956 was that no honest West European left-winger could allow himself to co-operate with the communist movement any longer. The romance of the socialist or social democratic parties or any other political circles of intellectuals with Marxism during and after the Second World War was over. There was no more coquetting with Marxism and Leninism without running the risk of gross political impropriety. All these political and intellectual issues changed as a result of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956.

Then, as a result of the interaction of massive historical forces, the time arrived for a historical turn of the tide. It ensued because the world could no longer accept a continuing symbiosis with a communist system. The communist political system obstructed the summons of the time, scientific-technological development. As a result, the system could no longer compete economically with the free world, it could not feed its population and partake in the arms race, which the free world forced on the Soviet Union in order to protect itself. It had to surrender! It had to choose! Mr Gorbachev chose well, for he gave up

¹⁴⁵ The widely used term refers to the fact that in Hungary in the 1970s and 80s living standards were higher than in the average in the communist bloc, due to the fear of another revolution.

the arms race, and tried to find another way out, whereby he contributed to our success in reviving the never-forgotten ideas and aims of 1956.

This is the very first opportunity to commemorate 1956 when there are no foreign troops in the land; when the Soviet Army has left the country for good; when we have not only seceded from the Warsaw Pact, but also contributed to its dissolution; when there is no Comecon¹⁴⁶ any longer, which crippled and deformed our economy. Now that we have a parliamentary democracy, stumbling as it may be, when we have freedom of speech, freedom of the press, who dare say that we have not realised anything from the aims of 1956? Who dare say that we have not achieved any of the political goals of 1956 when the country has regained its sovereignty, when we had the audacity not to sign bilateral agreements that would have impaired that sovereignty? Does all this amount to nought? I checked both the Twelve Points of 1848 and the Sixteen Points of 1956, and I can confidently say that the nation, everyone of us, can subscribe to having achieved those aims which have been possible. We shall accomplish all the aims we have set ourselves, all the aims the nation has the power to fulfil. We shall carry them through not only in foreign policy, but in legislation, in reforming governmental structures, in laying the foundations for a reformed economic system. Naturally, this takes time; it cannot be done overnight.

Discussing all this, we may assert that the historical legacy of 1956 is the common legacy of the nation. The national unity, however, which provided the power to rise against tyranny, would have certainly produced diverse political conceptions had the revolution won. The germs were present, because an outcome of multi-party democracy, a 1956 demand, is that there is no all-embracing heavenly unity. There is no unity without difference of opinion. No, there should never be! But, for all the disagreement, we certainly should find common ground, without which there is no country, no nation.

If we compare the demands of 1956 with those of our day, we will note the differences. We will find differences in the demand for radical change and the harshness of method. But we must never forget that those few days of Hungarian independence were born of a revolution and fight for freedom. Now, no revolution or freedom fight could have flamed up among a people doing better than those of the neighbouring countries, and perhaps it is better that this was the case. We took advantage of the fortunate historical conditions that were created by international power relations, the domestic changes of the Soviet

¹⁴⁶ See note 127.

Union and the crisis in the Hungarian political system. Let us declare it clearly: we made use of the situation brought about partly by the major crisis of the Hungarian economy and partly by the debt crisis. For had this not been the case, why would they have peacefully surrendered, when, thirty-five years ago, a whole country had to take up arms to wrench power from their hands.

A peaceful transformation has a price which has to be paid – we have to carry it out with no cathartic experience. However, our determination should not be weaker, for we are still involved in a revolution. We have fought the fight for freedom at the negotiating tables. We started a revolution not by piling up flagstones in the streets, but by carrying out a constitutional revolution. What a revolution fights out in bloody street battles we have attained with no loss of human life. We want to continue by acting according to the principles of justice – without the destruction of homes, without windows being fired into, without houses being burned out. It is better to be the boring country in our region than to gain daily publicity like our southern neighbours. Even if we recognise the disadvantages of such a position, we should be rather contented.

I must also note another difference compared to 1956. At that time many believed in a more democratic version of the socialist economic and social order. Many believed in the possibility of building a modern economy by way of huge state-owned firms, state-run companies, co-operatives, even their self-management. This should not be surprising. The world at the time was full of socialistic illusions; nationalisation was the fashion in England and France; people believed in a form of welfare state managed in a democratic way but saturated by socialist ideas. It was believed that there is such a thing as ownership without owners. Hearing all of this, we can say they were understandable at that time. Today, however, the world is beyond these illusions, so are we and so are our late-starting neighbours, and even the Soviet Union.

The international world has also changed, the security system of Europe has been transformed, our foreign relations have altered. Back then, declaring neutrality – internationally guaranteed neutrality – meant withdrawing from the Warsaw Pact, a status of international law worth the political struggle. By now, however, as we know, neutrality no longer has a place in the European or the global security system. We have no need of it today. We have no need of declaring self-containing neutrality. We have to become part of the unified European security system. We should seek to be present wherever European security is guaranteed, wherever Hungary can receive recognition and achieve maximum security in a region far from being stable, in this region where the

peaceful and secure coexistence of peoples and nations that is characteristic of the wealthier part of Europe is far from being achieved. In our region, wild passions and ancient drives are set against each other: it is a bitter fate to live the lives of minorities; it is still dangerous to claim linguistic and national identity here. This is a region where we need to attain security. It is a region where we must guard our achievements, our common values, where we have to ensure that no extremist movements endanger our multi-party democracy ever again. We are, however, compelled to ask that people should not talk of the devil thoughtlessly, not to imagine extremism when it is not a threat to our legal system or democracy, not to cry for police action when persuasion and discourse are real alternatives.

We should also ensure that the guilty do not remain unpunished. If they are given pardon, they should still understand what it means to be despised or forgiven by the nation. It certainly does not mean the abuse of the spirit of forgiveness; it does not mean political impertinence and arrogance, laughing in our very faces, pretending that they had always taken the right course of action, and that it is sufficient to revise political labels and to make half-hearted turnabouts in ideology.

The legacy of 1956 is a moral, political and inclusive national legacy. It would be good to be able to talk of a final settlement after thirty-five years. This, however, would require acceptance of the past in the hearts and minds of people. The offended, however, will not rest as long as they find that the guilty fare better than the victims. This is true even though the victim generally finds it easier to forgive the offender than the other way round.

On this day, we must also point out that we want law and order, justice done and a responsible nation. We not only want a responsible government, but also a responsible nation, a nation conscious of itself, a nation not afraid, for it has nothing to be afraid of. It is of utmost importance that everyone protects true democracy, so that no extremist currents receive public acceptance, and no offenders find concealment. As to the guilty, let us suggest – not as a matter of naïve faith, nor of moral, political naivety, but as an opportunity – that they look into their conscience, and at least try to say to themselves what they ought to declare in public. Should they do so, not only will they make some amends to victims, but also unburden their consciences.

Considering all these issues, let us be proud of what we have achieved. We should not say anything contrary to the truth, that we have accomplished only some of the aims of 1956. We have in fact achieved many objectives that we

could not achieve in 1956. We have brought to fruition things that were not even dreamt of in 1956. We must not deny, however, that we still need to unite our forces in solidarity and support for those in need. It is fundamentally important that, in the shadow of a collapsed world empire, in a region where blood is shed, where passions are dominant, our nation remain peaceful. That the country should retain international trust – a respected country where no offender can live without justice done, where the needy and offended are given all possible support.

With this in mind, I express my profound respect to all the victims of the 1956 revolution and fight for freedom. To those who fell in street fights or combat, to those who were mercilessly murdered while lining up in peaceful demonstrations, to those put to death by the executioner, to those whose lives were cut short by bitter years in prison. We must never forget that Haynau¹⁴⁷ ordered no more than 30 executions, and we are still revolted at the fate of the martyrs of Arad and others. What are we then to say of the over six-hundred slain in what was dubbed the administration of justice in the wake of 1956?

¹⁴⁷ Haynau was lieutenant-general of the Austrian Habsburg army in the campaign in 1849. He was instrumental in the ensuing severe retaliations. This meant above all the execution of the first Hungarian prime minister, Lajos Batthyány, and of 13 generals in Arad. He imprisoned hundreds, and ordered the Hungarian soldiers to fight abroad.

HALFTIME

On 13 April 1992, the Budapest organisations of the Hungarian Democratic Forum held a rally in Erkel Theatre – a kind of half-time reckoning in the middle of the parliamentary and governmental cycle. The forum was preceded by meetings of the district organisations of the party. The closing speech was delivered by the party leader/prime minister to an auditorium full of HDF delegates.

Having been a frequent visitor to the opera, a rather strange feeling crept over me as I came in through the artists' entrance and on to the stage of Erkel Theatre, former City Theatre, and cinema of my childhood and youth. I even saw the last performance of Josephine Baker – with that I have given away my age.

The honourable Chairman¹⁴⁸ has allotted me the task of delivering the concluding address at this assembly prepared by Budapest district meetings.

I think the Hungarian Democratic Forum has now certainly reached its halftime. It means the halftime in government, not only in the chronological sense of the word, but in the sense that we are only halfway in our actions, in accomplishing our tasks.

As regards the analysis of the current state of Hungarian politics, let me first make it abundantly clear that, despite all internal tensions and disputes, the parliamentary system in Hungary is firmly established. Our parliamentary and multi-party system is functioning even though feelings often run high as though a tribal war were raging. Fortunately, this tribal war is increasingly acquiring the characteristics of choreography, a sort of ritual dance of savages. Thank God, the various political forces have not yet actually pounced on each other with their bludgeons and spears. Anyway, we will not let them go as far as that. Though it sometimes does feel like a war being waged, let it remain a cultic dance, a tournament; it may not always be to our liking, but this is the way things are, this is our destiny.

The really important issue here is that our domestic situation, if we compare it with that of our neighbours, is far more advantageous. It is not only the horrors of the Yugoslav civil war I have in mind, but also the fact that no national or ethnic strife divides the nation; the Opposition Round Table talks and the

¹⁴⁸ Ferenc Szegedi, HDF 11th District President, was in the chair.

National Round Table talks¹⁴⁹ established the basis of a peaceful transition. There are many criticisms lodged against the various aspects of the Hungarian transformation. Some go as far as calling the constitution a “Stalinist” one. This simply does not square with reality. It is owing to the achievement of the opposition at the roundtable talks that, for all its shortcomings, we now have a stable and functioning parliamentary democracy in Hungary, and, since the responsibility has been assigned to us, we can be proud of having borne the brunt of formulating the new constitution and the pivotal legal acts.

It would have been possible to do more and do better, had we had more time. Nevertheless, it was the Hungarian Democratic Forum that initiated and proposed the republican form of government in force in the country, on the basis of which we established the constitutional framework of political democracy as of 23 October 1989. Had we not taken this course of action, the transformation could hardly have been as peaceful as it was, and it could not have been carried out. Yes, it must be clearly stated that it was the political and constitutional principles and programmes promulgated by the Hungarian Democratic Forum that were realised in the political turnabout of 1989; we played a decisive role in it, though we did have our associates. Contributions were made on all sides of the table, of course, but the basic concepts on the form of government and the constitution, as well as the Electoral Law, came from us. The fact that our form of government meets the requirements of any constitutional monarchy or parliamentary republic and therefore makes it possible to maintain a system of responsible ministerial government implying both a tradition and a future programme for Hungary is based on those principles. Our system of voting with two sheets of paper – in the shaping of which we had the example of the Federal Republic of Germany in mind where the individual election framework is complemented by a list system – and the four per cent threshold ensured that actually only six parties got into Parliament, and that Parliament and the cabinet are capable of functioning and governing. Thanks to this system, we do not have to put up with seventeen parties in Parliament, which was a genuine possibility. Let me tell your that, wherever we went before the elections, Western politicians would point out that they had heard Hungary was going to have fifty parties. I always assured them that we were not going to have more than eight, and that we rather expected six.

¹⁴⁹ The round-table talks formed the basis of the peaceful transition. See notes 50–51.

I believe this is fundamental in our ability to operate. We can be proud of it, of having undertaken the task, and we can be similarly proud of accepting the political disadvantages entailed by entering the agreement, whereby we exposed ourselves to many attacks. For, had we not signed the agreement, which I firmly believe to be the foundation of the transition, the HSWP would never have fallen apart, and HSP would not have started as a new party, the moment of inertia would have kept thousands of people in the former. A good example of this can be seen in the case of the unions. Yes, this was necessary, we insisted on establishing it as a condition. We followed a clearly formulated policy. We defined all the preconditions of a functioning parliamentary democracy and government – the withdrawal of parties from places of work, disbanding the Workers' Guard and all related issues. We should never forget this.

Secondly, I wish to refer to our political traditions. In Hungary and in all countries with a normal course of development, society produces its leaders in an organic way. When the capacities of such an organically created leadership run low, new leaders take their place. In Hungary likewise, both social forces and individuals rose and matured in past centuries, utilising their capacities in the interest of the nation. Naturally this does not involve the defence of the untalented but the acknowledgement of the talented. It was no wonder that the genteel middle classes were used to saying whoever pours scorn on a peasant pours scorn on his grandfather. Talented young members of the working classes gradually and continually rose to the upper crust. Just take a look at the biographies. Reformed colleges, various Catholic and Lutheran institutions of learning consciously strove to foster the upward mobility of children with humble backgrounds by granting scholarships to the talented. This is just what a nation needs.

In past decades, it often occurred that poor and simple children could not afford to learn. This was in part propaganda of the times. In fact, those who lived in villages and small towns and their family income was inadequate, were certainly at a disadvantage. The proportion of working-class or peasant youths at faculties of liberal arts, for example, was not lower in the Horthy era,¹⁵⁰ than

¹⁵⁰ The period 1920–1944 is often named after the Regent of Hungary. Miklós Horthy (1868–1957) was the last Commander of the Fleet of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy as Rear-Admiral. As the throne was vacant, King Charles having been compelled to go into exile, Horthy was elected Regent by Parliament in 1920, a post he held until October, 1944, when he was overthrown by the Nazis and deported to Germany. Although the victorious Allies did not consider him a war criminal, they did not permit him to return to Hungary after the Second World War. He was invited to live in Portugal, where he died.

it is today. No doubt, we must support the talented. Whoever says that this government or political coalition seeks to conserve or restore the past is not speaking the truth. But it is a fact, one we have never denied, that we are in favour of continuity, the continuity of values. We also contend that whatever was done violently contrary to continuity and was forcibly torn out or blocked must be restored. For our political culture, our political heritage is certainly linked to historic Hungarian political culture. We trace our political culture back for centuries. What we consider our most immediate political heritage is the heritage which all states that are founded on the rule of law and are functioning political democracies profess. For instance, the United States continues to preserve its political traditions of the past two centuries, including its civil-war tradition. Why is it wrong to respect and relate our policies to the great Hungarian political tradition of the nineteenth century, hallmarked by names such as Széchenyi and Kossuth, Deák and Eötvös, to list only a few, and to continue that tradition? What is so wrong about expressing our respect for the internationally significant leaders of the post-1867 compromise era, such as Andrassy¹⁵¹ in diplomacy, Wekerle¹⁵² in general politics and Gábor Baross¹⁵³ in economics? Need I continue the inventory? Why should we be ashamed of such men? And when we refer to the Horthy era, we are far from wanting to return to something hopelessly outdated, being driven by some nostalgia, all we want is to restore fair judgement. What we want is the demonstration of the values of those times, the achievements of this past century and a half in terms of foreign, economic, social and health policy. Naturally, we discuss and think of all those who preceded us, whether involved directly in governance, in sociological literature or opposition debate. They all make up our common heritage. Should anyone try to follow in their footsteps, he or she certainly does not deserve to be accused of restoration efforts or reactionary ideology.

¹⁵¹ Gyula Andrassy, Count (1823–1890), coming from the liberal aristocracy, he represented the revolutionary Hungarian government in 1849 in Constantinople. Following the defeat he was sentenced to death in absence and lived in France, until he was permitted to return home. Together with Deák (see note 64) he negotiated the 1867 Settlement with the dynasty, and became Prime Minister until 1871, when he was appointed common Foreign Minister of Austria-Hungary. He played a prominent role at the Berlin Congress in 1878, and when he failed to commit England to an alliance against Russia, he concluded the Dual Alliance with Germany in 1879.

¹⁵² Sándor Wekerle (1848–1921), first Prime Minister of Hungary who was a commoner. He filled the post three times: 1892–1895, 1906–1910, and 1917–1918.

¹⁵³ Gábor Baross (1848–1892), minister of Public Transport and Public Works (1886), later Minister of Commerce. His lasting achievement is the completion of Hungary's railway network, making the Lower Danube navigable, and developing the port of Fiume (today's Rijeka).

Allow us to regard as our tradition our own Hungarian history, not Russian history, as it was compulsory in these past forty years. This belongs to the identity of a nation. Benjamin Disraeli, the future Earl of Beaconsfield, who did not belong to any of the great families of British history, recognised that the past is a part of power, though he observed this from the outside. Nevertheless, he became one of the greatest proponents of the comprehensive conception of British politics of his time because he knew that history entails responsibility; that a nation is stabilised by its roots; that its ship can be steered better through storms with this kind of security.

In these past two years, we have carried out many actions that were far from being popular. Have we, the Democratic Forum, ever said that we were going to make popular decisions? Why then did we say that we would even sacrifice our party in the interest of the nation? I hope this will not be necessary, but, by saying this, we meant that *we would not sacrifice the nation in the interest of our party*. If need be, we would do just the opposite. This was actually why we chose the only possible way: the way of the transformation. We have often said so, but it will do no harm to repeat it, that our inheritance was indeed very hard.

We do not question that the situation thawed after the reprisals, after 1963; that there were attempts at reform in 1968; that the political and economic conditions were better here than in the neighbouring countries. But, I pray, thanks to what? Thanks to 1956. Please, let us not be so grateful to the former regime as to believe that they realised this on their own accord. Why, when, in 1956, Kádár¹⁵⁴ was taken with Ferenc Münnich¹⁵⁵ to Moscow the Russians made Rákosi¹⁵⁶ sit in front of him. Though he did not say a word they made him face Kádár whenever they brought up their demands. Malenkov and Khrushchev had experience in conducting this kind of business. But from this moment, from the time Kádár decided to accept the role – a difficult one no doubt, but he did have the routine – he always had 1956 in front of his eyes. The Hungarian communist leaders always mentioned 1956 in Moscow whenever they could not fulfil the demands. The Hungarian government had a special man, Antal Apró,¹⁵⁷ who would be

¹⁵⁴ See note 95.

¹⁵⁵ Ferenc Münnich (1886–1967). Communist politician. Although he was Minister of the Interior in the Imre Nagy government in 1956, he defected with János Kádár, to return from Moscow as the second most important person in the puppet government. Prime Minister in 1958–1961.

¹⁵⁶ See note 97.

¹⁵⁷ Antal Apró (1913–1994), communist politician, holder of several positions during the communist era. He ordered to shoot at the civilians on 23 October 1956. During the retaliation he supervised the prosecution of Imre Nagy. As Speaker of Parliament he received the Holy Crown of Hungary when it was returned from the United States in 1978.

sent to Moscow sobbing that we could not pay more. He would say we could pay no more because, otherwise, there would be another 1956. This was the way we ensured that military expenditure would be less here than elsewhere, for our army and police forces put together never exceeded the number of Russian troops stationed here. This is why Interior Minister Boross keeps complaining now – because the police were included.

It was therefore the revolution and war of independence of 1956 that taught the Russians, the Soviet Union and the Communists that Hungary was to be dealt with differently. But let me go further. The masterminds behind the often mentioned “new economic mechanism”, the new economic policy,¹⁵⁸ István Varga and other economists, were the specialists of the post-1945 coalition period. Varga, Jenő Rácz and the others involved were not only the specialists of the so-called ‘bourgeois’ parties of the coalition, not only did they work for the 1956 government, but they had been the director and colleagues of the Institute of Economic Research run by the Confederation of Hungarian Industrialists before 1945. Such were the figures who developed the new economic policy. There were some among them who came in a more roundabout way, for example Béla Csikós Nagy.¹⁵⁹ He had acquired a different kind of experience, as he had qualified as a university lecturer with a thesis on “great space” economics, with reference to the Germans. Incarcerated at 60 Andrassy Street,¹⁶⁰ Zoltán Vas¹⁶¹ took him under police guard to the National Planning Office. There are many ways of finding specialists in a dictatorship. But what was certain was that these genuine specialists had their roots in the philosophy of a market economy, and knew perfectly well what their suggestions were about. But these ideas and teachings, this approach, would never have been given vent had the ghost of 1956 not continually haunted the communists. This was what made life different in Hungary,

¹⁵⁸ This programme was launched on 1 January 1968 by the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party. They decreased the role of the state in the planning of production and gave more liberty to the individual plants and factories. However, the state still influenced the pricing of products and the market. The programme was withdrawn four years later.

¹⁵⁹ Béla Csikós Nagy (1915–2005), economist. Starting on the Right, served the Communists. Member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, founder and head of the National Office of Pricing until 1984.

¹⁶⁰ Notorious as headquarters of the Arrow-Cross Party in the early 1940s; it was transformed into the headquarters of the ÁVH (State Security Police) in the communist era, where many were held prisoners and tortured. Today it is a museum called The House of Terror.

¹⁶¹ Zoltán Vas (1903–1980), communist politician, Mayor of Budapest from 1945. He supported Imre Nagy and joined his government. In November sought asylum at the Embassy of Yugoslavia. He, too, was arrested and deported to Romania, but was permitted to return to Hungary and was not tried.

just as without the revolution of 1848–49 the Habsburgs would never have struck a compromise with us.

A new birth, like any birth, has its throes. But we should be most happy that there was no bloodshed, though the throes must come. I have reiterated many times, and I sadly admit, that the country is not happy enough about the withdrawal of the Soviet troops. This was no trifling achievement. It must be repeated again and again that the Soviets said in the spring of 1991 that they would not leave if we did not pay up. This was by no means simple, for we did not have the support we had had when proposing the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, withdrawing our officers in 1990 and not taking part in the military exercises. Looking back, all this looks so easy. Certainly, we dissolved Comecon¹⁶² last year with no legal successor. None of the Comecon countries supported us. We were all alone in getting our proposal through; we had to convince them. It was very difficult; we were under constant political and psychological pressure. But we would not give in. For all the adverse conditions, we now at last live in a sovereign, unoccupied Hungary.

There is no Warsaw Pact, there is no Comecon; and it was a wonderful opportunity that I had to take the floor in Parliament because Gyula Horn¹⁶³ had wanted to discuss and ask the government to request our accession to NATO. I made a very restrained answer. I said nothing that would have been offensive in any way. Had this arisen earlier on, years ago, I would have surely acclaimed it. But now I felt that his arguments, the reference to the issue of Hungarians in the neighbouring countries, and the statement that the only solution to our security was represented by NATO, were amusing to hear.

I beg your pardon, but let us not have them teach us. I have backed NATO ever since it was established in 1949. My students are my witnesses that I taught them about NATO in front of a map from 1955 until they forbade me to teach. This was what I spoke of in opposition; this was what I spoke of in Moscow when we made our proposal for the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact in June 1990. I was the first one from our region to visit NATO Secretary-General Wörner in Brussels. Hungary was the first country to authorise its ambassador to represent it at NATO. There is no need of teaching us. But what is the point of requesting the government to do this? As though

¹⁶² See note 130.

¹⁶³ Gyula Horn (b. 1932), diplomat, politician. After the 1956 revolution he supported Kádár. In 1989 he joined the reformists and as Foreign Minister ceremoniously cut the Iron Curtain together with his Austrian colleague, Alois Mock. Led the Socialist Party to victory in 1994 and became Prime Minister until 1998.

the government would not do so on its own if it is appropriate? Such an action has its own particular schedule; it involves certain types of negotiations. And a government does not want to be given a refusal, to be told to stay back. For it involves a commitment, a defence commitment, on the part of NATO, which they have already spoken of. It should be born in mind that the members of NATO are sovereign countries, with sovereign parliaments.

As far as our domestic actions are concerned, our steps have been within the limits of the possible. We have done all we could. But we must ask the members and sympathisers of the Democratic Forum, and do so publicly, why do people behave as though they had all been pugnacious in 1989 or before the election in 1990? Please, let us know, where were those contentious leading intellectual specialists who sneer at our actions, saying we should have done better. Where were they in 1989? A lot of people, thousands, tens of thousands did not believe that the Russians would leave, that the Warsaw Pact could be dissolved, that free elections could be held, and that the whole ghastly system would wind up at last. This was certainly no mistake, they committed no crime by not realising what was imminent, but at least they ought not to disparage those who carried it all through. This is absurd! The country should not be confused with a football stadium where 22 players run and 80 thousand onlookers scream. You cannot have people shouting about where to kick the ball and how to pass it on without anyone of them coming down into the field. Those of us who were there and took part in the game, did what was possible, and we certainly did it in the interest of these achievements. And we never lied; we always stressed it would be hard; and this was only part of our task.

The often mentioned legacy has been truly bitter: the national debt, the ill-managed and ill-structured agricultural and industrial large-scale firms unable to adapt to changing economic conditions. On top of it all, who on earth would have expected such a quick collapse of the Soviet market and the dismemberment of the Soviet Union? We harboured some such hope, but no one ever dreamed of a sudden, domino-like fall of all communist dictatorships; least did we foresee that trade between Poland and Hungary or Czechoslovakia and Hungary would dwindle to 2 per cent each, when almost 50 per cent of our exports had gone to these countries. We never expected that the mass-producing and mass-employed companies that had been specially set up to supply the Soviet Union would lose their market and go bankrupt overnight. This was not our bungling. It was partly due to decades of bad structuring and management in agriculture and industry with respect to the international economy.

We thus have to rethink everything. Also, we have to continually conquer newer and newer markets. Accomplishing this is no mundane task, and to keep the country running at the same time surely requires extraordinary effort.

I could list the economic achievements that are encouraging with regard to the future. No other policy would have been possible. This is what I had to say at the Meeting of the Board of Governors of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, this was what I had to say to the German and American finance ministers visiting me. Yes, this was the only possible financial policy we could follow, the policy of restriction, for had we not taken this course, we would not have been able to achieve these promising results.

In this year, however, we must stop the process of slackening production, and we have to gradually move toward growth. It will be very difficult. This can only be carried out if there is political stability in the country, if we are trusted, for foreign capital will only come in, the foreign or home investor will only put his money in us if yields are ensured. This is what has guided us in our actions: in our successful foreign and defence policies, in our legislative initiatives, such as those concerning political institutions, banks, the National Bank, etc. I will not go in to enumerating all the acts of Parliament that have laid the foundations of economic transformation.

We have still to pass important bills concerning social policy, but this does not mean that we have had no social policy. Still less does it mean that we have been socially insensitive, as we have been accused. Why? We certainly have done our utmost best to support those who have been marginalised, afflicted; we do have a social safety net in place for them, whereby we can give support in this transitional period.

It is quite absurd that all of a sudden every apparatchik of the former regime, the former communist party, which led the country into this crisis, now steps forward as a specialist. With arithmetic bravura cutting even a magician to size, they prove what we ought to be doing in every area from economic to social policy. I beg their pardon, we have only had two humble years to accomplish all that. They have had their forty, and made naught of it, too! And they dare disparage whatever we now do! The Hungarian people are not so forgetful as that, are they? But I do believe that the specialist knowledge they keep bragging about is certainly here in the country, in our very rows, and we have to build on it. Naturally, it is difficult to manage; we sometimes find it difficult to learn. There are excellent engineers, excellent physicians, excellent

specialists in every other field; they are lacking only in organisational science, in management.

There is another thing. Take a look around in the neighbouring countries, see their governments, including the one in the GDR. The first cabinets were formed by co-opting a few members of the opposition, then some former regime ministers were kept in office. This was the situation in Poland, in Czechoslovakia; it is partly the case even in Romania. There is no point in bringing up further examples. They were all coalition governments with old-guard ministers, state secretaries and party functionaries involved.

The only government to be formed as a result of free elections was ours. On 23 May 1990, we sat down in the Ministerial Council Hall of Parliament, and I chaired our first cabinet meeting. We had not even been deputies before. We did not belong to the ruling elite of the former regime; we were all beginners. Still, some of our specialist ministers gained recognition at international negotiations. This was how we began to nominate our state secretaries.

We ought to bear this in mind when talking about why things went this way and not that way, about what should have been dealt with immediately. What had to be dealt with immediately was how to avoid the country going bankrupt with a total of no more than 700 million dollars in reserve. Today our reserves amount to above 4 billion dollars. Our immediate concern was to be able to govern, maintain the army, the police and everything else. And do not forget, the Soviet army was still here! We now talk as though we could have settled certain things straight away. Well, it was not as simple as that.

It is our halftime now. We laid the foundations in the first half, but now we have to get started and build on those foundations. Yet I will not make a secret of it, the conditions are just as difficult. Everything around is unstable, and we have to win foreign capital and investors to create employment. From Japan or America, the distance between Belgrade and Budapest is but a centimetre on the map. What is more, the former Soviet Union, the Commonwealth of Independent States, is far too near. All the troubles of the region seem to weigh us down. Internal tensions, demagogue statements, mean censures also weigh us down.

We count on and require the freedom of the press. But, apart from being critical, we also want the press to be truthful. I doubt that the truthfulness of the press means that they keep silent about what is good for us and bad for them. This is the case of the old-timer joke on the former party paper *Szabad Nép* (Free People) saying that had Napoleon had his way, the Parisians would

still not know that he was defeated at Waterloo. But truthfulness is not something unattainable.

Let no one say we do not want to hear criticism from the press. We do want it. Freedom of the press is a basic principle. Exercising a critical voice is also one. We are not afraid of it. So are the sanctity of news and the freedom of comment, but lying constitutes no part of any liberal law.

With all lawful and possible means, we want to ensure genuine parliamentary democracy in Hungary, to assert national independence and maintain voluntarily entered alliances, such as the Western treaties. We want to have a truly functioning market economy. This we have to achieve with a firm social awareness. But, if the country is not going to believe, not so much in us as in itself, in that it is capable of achieving this, it is not going to attain renewal, to carry the transformation through, for Western help will not accomplish it by itself, it requires a determined domestic will.

The Marshall Plan saved Western Europe, protecting it from falling prey to Soviet imperialism after the war. But it meant only the surplus that started development. Each one of these countries took on and wanted the transformation; they all believed in their progress. We ourselves, all the members of the Hungarian Democratic Forum, the rank and file of our transformation, have to believe in this.

We also have to learn and remember that the Hungarian Democratic Forum can only achieve results if it does not allow its internal unity to be wrecked, its cohesive elements turned against each other. Furthermore, we have to strengthen our positions in Budapest. We cannot give up Budapest. Budapest is the testing ground of all national parties. As a focal point of all serious anti-communist forces, the Independent Smallholders' Party, the representative of the values we ourselves now profess, won a 57 per cent majority at the 1945 national elections because it had secured an absolute majority in Budapest.

We therefore cannot do without Budapest. The Hungarian Democratic Forum must present to Budapest an image of itself that is modern, timely and meets the requirements of the end of the 20th century. A modern party that safeguards the values of the past certainly can meet all the demands of the end of this century. Do not let ourselves be swayed by newsmen and spokesmen of manipulated polls. No, we are not being conceited. When, during elections, someone goes to the poll booth, he is not necessarily going to defer to someone's good looks or haranguing or to the smiles of a merry triumvirate on posters, but he might very well look for the best guarantee of security, stability and the

country's international acknowledgement. In the solitude of the booth, these will be the issues he is going to ponder, just as British voters did recently.¹⁶⁴ And advice does not always help. Let me repeat a story here too. When the British media mogul Maxwell came to see me in Parliament the last time, he said he had an excellent piece of advice for me that I should never make the mistake of not meeting Labour leader Mr Kinnock because he was going to be the next prime minister, the conservatives had no chance of winning the elections. Well, I took the risk of not seeing him. Mr Kinnock has since resigned.

Let me finish my speech and close this meeting, along with the series of discussions that have taken place in Budapest in recent weeks. I ask you to prepare for the imminent trials of strength. We still have another two difficult years ahead. Foreigners increasingly express their appreciation of our results. I would like to believe that we are going to receive support not only from without but also from within, in 1994 too. Being a historian, I could hardly deny that I am interested not only in the judgement of contemporaries but also in that of posterity. I trust that we will not go down in history ignominiously, but as the first free government of the first freely elected Parliament after a dictatorship – as a government that knew what it had to do, and did its very best.

¹⁶⁴ When they voted for John Major as Prime Minister.

AN END-OF-YEAR CONVERSATION

On December 20, 1992 Hungarian Radio broadcast a conversation with the Prime Minister, where both public and private affairs were discussed. Among others he assessed the performance of the government and its electoral prospects, also the internal tensions within the coalition parties, including the radical challenge by István Csurka.

LÁSZLÓ RAPCSÁNYI (Hungarian Radio): *Welcome to you, Prime Minister, and allow me to start with a question that we were invited to put during the Saturday Morning Chronicle programme on Radio Kossuth. It concerns the fact that information has been appearing about changes in the government in January. The commentator of the morning programme phoned László Medgyasszay, press spokesman of the Hungarian Democratic Forum, for his response, and what he said amounted to this: Ask the Prime Minister. So I can't avoid asking you.*

JÓZSEF ANTALL: *There's nowhere else I can refer the questioner for information, and so I'm left with it. I myself, on the other hand, do not feel it is justified to comment on this question. Anyone who looks at the changes in the government in the past will see that the composition of the government occasionally changes. There are in fact some people who go as far as to talk about a first and a second Antall government – which doesn't, of course, make any sense as such. This is the same government. The people in it change, which is a quite natural thing over a four-year period.*

JÓZSEF P. SZABÓ (Hungarian Radio): *Let's take a slightly broader view. If we're going to draw up an account at the end of the year, what springs to mind is the government's activity throughout the year. Well that's too broad a question. I'd put it like this: What are the things, in the Prime Minister's view, that the government has succeeded in achieving this year, and what are things one might say haven't succeeded, that you regret haven't succeeded?*

JA: *It's very difficult to draw up a balance sheet of this kind. I think the most important thing – and this seems to be fairly general – is that we've maintained*

the stability of the country, we've maintained the country's equilibrium, in spite of the symptoms of crisis, in fact the crises.

One thing that clearly has to be picked out is the extent to which we have managed to curb inflation, by about 10 per cent. This is extremely important, and it's a great achievement even though it has involved a reduction in domestic spending, which is, on the other hand, essential to achieving the export successes, of course.

One can argue about how to assess the situation with unemployment. Unemployment is certainly high, and it's graver still when it is considered in terms of specific people, specific areas and specific branches of the industry. Unemployment at present stands at 11.6 per cent, which amounts to 627,000 people. This can hardly be listed among the successes. But we must also consider that the steady rise, which has lasted from 1990 to the present day, is a consequence of the transformation in general, and structural transformation of the economy in particular. If we take into account that the Hungarian economy has created almost 300,000 new jobs in the same period, concurrently with the market change, the appearance of new sectors, the appearance of new markets, it's an enormous achievement. On the one hand, unfortunately, unemployment is a by-product of this transformation, of this success, in fact. On the other, it's a consequence of the loss of the Eastern markets, which is not some kind of subjective mistake committed on our part; it took place independently of us. For decades the Hungarian economy was producing for the Soviet market or the less demanding markets of the Third World. Since the Soviet market became insolvent and we had to halt exports directed to the Soviet market, that's how we managed to contain the Soviet debt of between \$1,700 and \$1,800 million, so that it didn't climb above that level. Apart from that, we had to restructure our exports to the Third World, since our markets had been concentrated on countries with a political line close to the socialist camp. We also had to make a big transformation here, in fact. So it's a great thing that Hungary was capable of gaining a foothold in the hardest of tough markets, and thereby created jobs. If we hadn't managed to do that, Hungary's unemployment would be in the millions. Which means that in the case of the biggest problem of all, which means unemployment, the treatment of it in this sense can again be counted as successful.

Alongside inflation and the handling of unemployment, I also consider the transformation of the great systems of distribution to be a serious problem. But these are all such complex issues. We have not achieved what we would

like to have done, in other words as quickly as we should have done, in the social insurance system or medical care or education or other areas. In these cases one can talk of a good and a bad side. But the fact is that we have progressed more slowly than we have, for instance, in the privatisation, or in social security or in other areas. But if this hadn't happened, there would inevitably have been a social explosion. One can say a great many things, but people want security, and people's attitude, more or less, is that they gladly accept all the advantages of the market economy. They gladly accept all the advantages of capitalism, if it is a matter of their personal success, but if the drawbacks of this appear, socialist reflexes immediately come to the fore in people.

LR: If I were to sum up or seek statements the Prime Minister has made up to now, all of them, I am sure the two most frequent expressions in them, in an almost decisive way, would be stability and governability. How satisfied are you, Prime Minister, with the stability of the government coalition?

JA: Perhaps I can justify why I mention this so often. First of all, stability is the basis on which people invest in Hungary. It is not by chance that more than 50 per cent of the foreign capital invested in the whole East European and East-Central European region – apart from East Germany – has arrived in Hungary. And more than half of this is American. If Hungary weren't stable, if it didn't have this reputation, there wouldn't be any investors.

So stability, political stability, is the real confidence-builder. As a consequence, not only is this stability decisive for our existence in a political sense, it also represents the road to advancement in an economic sense.

The question was how I saw stability from the point of view of the coalition. The first thing is clearly how the three coalition parties, the three coalition parliamentary groups, are capable of co-operating, and in addition, how capable the individual parties are in themselves.

It's clear – and no one can doubt it – that there are tensions in every political party, including the Hungarian Democratic Forum. There are tensions in a governing party or governing parties particularly, when difficult, unpopular measures have to be taken, and when the government is somewhere about halfway, and if it's beyond this, we could talk at greater length about all the things that happen in the world and everywhere in relation to the pre-election period. So people find it very hard to bear the burden of this, which means there are tensions within the political parties. Then there's the fact that people think

of their futures, and clearly politicians do too. So there are tensions from this point of view.

I think of the fact – and this still comes under the achievements – that Hungary has an accepted budget for 1993. I haven't looked into this matter right now, but to my knowledge, none of the former communist countries have one, just as they didn't have one, last year either, when we firmly pushed the budget through. So this, too, shows that the coalition was capable of pushing through the budget, capable of producing it under such very difficult circumstances. In this, and so in fundamental matters, the coalition works well.

The other thing worth mentioning is that we now have the abortion law. It hasn't been emphasised enough how significant it is that it was born. Because it was born in such a way that no one managed to make it into a big issue. Because the things people deal with a lot, in the press and elsewhere, are always the things that can be blown up into a scandal. It's an unconditional success for the government itself, and for the Hungarian Parliament and Hungarian public, that it didn't allow itself to be drawn into passionate debates on this extremely sensitive subject. The subject gave rise to great antagonisms in many countries, and there were many who hoped to accomplish the same here. The debate took place normally and in a calm atmosphere. I think this shows the maturity of Hungarian society, the Hungarian Parliament and the political parties. It is clear that everyone can declare their own views according to their own beliefs and their own convictions, and can exhibit the behaviour that they wish in accordance with their belief and religion, but they cannot force this on society. Hungarian political opinion, the Hungarian National Assembly and of course the Hungarian government took the position that a stricter solution was proposed in Version A of the bill, and that Version B was one that was acceptable, but also satisfied those who wanted a stricter solution. And everyone still has the voluntary chance of adhering to a stricter version. I think that Hungarian society, from the churches through to the political parties, has again given evidence of their maturity, and this deserves appreciation.

JPSZ: I don't know if the information's correct that you will take part in a meeting of the Smallholders' Party on Monday.

JA: The fact that I've received an invitation is correct.

JPSZ: I think that in a sense the divisions among the Smallholders are one of the serious problems facing the government. If you take part in this meeting, what problems do you think you will face?

JA: First of all, the parliamentary groups of the three coalition parties hold regular joint sessions. I was able to speak at the three groups' last joint meeting as well. In the same way, I've been invited to meetings of the Independent Smallholders' parliamentary group several times, and to those of the Christian Democratic People's Party. So it's a natural thing for them to invite the head of the government, either as president of the Hungarian Democratic Forum or as prime minister, and question me directly and inform themselves directly on the questions that arise. The present internal problems of the Independent Smallholders' Party, beginning with the differences of view between the party, the parliamentary group and various Smallholders' groups within the parliamentary group or outside Parliament, are certainly a drawback for Hungarian domestic political stability.

I certainly believe in the co-operation between these three parties. It has taken place since 1989; in fact ever since there was a chance of it and initiatives were made, I have been a supporter of this co-operation. I continue to acknowledge the basic principle that in Hungary today, these three parties must work separately, but in alliance with each other, so that the unity of the Hungarian Democratic Forum, the unity of the Christian Democratic People's Party and a unity of the Independent Smallholders' Party as well can apply in such a way that suits them for the role of governing parties and allows them to perform well in the elections. I think at present, in Hungary's period of transformation, there is a justification for the separate existence of all three parties; they each have stronger ties and roots in different age and social groups or even territorial groups, and this is an important aspect. From the summer of 1989 onwards I have made every effort to ensure that all three political parties together join their respective international and European organisations. And that in fact has happened, so that these three parties together are all members of the European Democrat Union and the Christian Democratic International. Of course there are some confusions here at present, due to the party factions inside the Smallholders' Party and the internal tension there, but I don't want to go into that now.

It's not my party that is concerned here, even though I was a member of the Smallholders' Party. I played a certain part in it in 1956, and that means,

of course, that I have strong links with it. In family terms, in fact, I was born a Smallholder, but in 1988 I became a founding member of the Hungarian Democratic Forum, and I never joined the reorganised Smallholders' Party, I merely played a part, by invitation, in its reorganisation. But when it came to membership, I never joined.

LR: *This conversation, Prime Minister, is a look back on the past year, which you have visibly stood very well, because as I look at you now, I see a smile on your face as you think back to one thing or another. Let me risk a piece of black humour that was recounted not long ago to illustrate the difficulties of democracy by Ferenc Fejtő,¹⁶⁵ speaking at the French Institute in Budapest. The question goes, "What's worse than communism?" And the answer: "What comes afterwards." Fejtő concludes from this how incredibly difficult it is to create democracy. This is something you often talk about. But is there something in the past year whose omission you particularly regret?*

JA: You'll find it hard to believe that I smile on the radio of all places, and less on the television, but as I said once before, I will when there's really something to smile about. That's only a jest, of course. After all, you can't live without smiles. But apart from that, one really must sense what a weight the population of this country is carrying, and however strange it may sound, I really sympathise very deeply with those in difficult straits and those who make personal sacrifices and those who suffer from this transformation. And I can say that if we take this approach to the transformation and to this remark by Ferenc Fejtő – whom I know personally, of course, I've had a chance of meeting him, and I consider him a very intelligent and clever man – it's not certain that we agree on everything politically, but what he said by that is partly true.

It's true that communism deflected the world from its normal course to such a degree that you might almost say that restoring it is far more difficult than the situation after a right-wing dictatorship. This follows from the fact that the right-wing dictatorships so far, from Hitler to Mussolini, or Franco, Salazar etc., as I've said elsewhere, these right-wing dictatorships in term of political mercilessness – here I'm thinking primarily of Hitlerism – certainly

¹⁶⁵ Ferenc (François) Fejtő (1909–2008), historian and political writer. After a brief encounter with Marxism (and a short term in prison) he became a Social Democrat. Emigrated to France, participated in the Resistance. By 1949 lost his illusions about communist-led Hungary. His most important works are *L'Histoire des démocraties populaires* (1952) and *Réquiem pour un Empire défunt. Histoire de la destruction de l'Autriche-Hongrie* (1988), both have been translated into English.

did not fall short of certain periods under the communist systems. But there was a great difference in that they did not forcibly transform the economic and social structure to such an extent as the communist systems did. So it follows from this that the fall of the political system in the case of the right-wing systems meant that after a certain economic restructuring, investment, injections of capital, and renewal of the systems of institutions, society began to work again. We saw that in Germany in the grave times after the war, from 1949 ultimately in West Germany, or in Italy under de Gasperi, and we also saw this in Spain and Portugal, where it could be observed after several decades of right-wing dictatorship. In Portugal they had a short left-wing period as well, which made the transformation more difficult, but in all events these countries are viable. But in the Soviet Union or in the wake of the Eastern European communist systems, it's a real problem that the reorganisation of society extended to its roots, that the foundations of the market economy were eradicated, that the production system, the social structure were transformed to such an extent by the destruction and eradication of the various branches of employment, entrepreneurial groups etc. that it's hard here to get the new political system going. So to that extent he's certainly right that the transitional periods are very hard. Historians and political scientists are wont to say, of course, that only the transitional periods are permanent in our age. But it was always like that in history: the transitional periods lasted longest.

The way I see it – now that we've taken such a theoretical direction – is that in the course of history there are always socialistic theories, there is always a search for truth, in fact starting right back with Plato, and this can be sensed through Fichte everywhere, there is always a kind of desire for the perfect state, the perfect society. Not all these are Utopian ideas. In fact they operated as moral-cum-social corrective theories alongside the economic-cum-political systems applying in the natural course of events. Now there is no greater tragedy than when instead of making a correction in the organic development of society, we elevate the correction into a socio-political system. This is what happened under communism, when the theoretical ideas that shaped it were used to replace the organic development of society, and from that they tried to create a political system. The great political thinkers of that period – including some Hungarians among them, ranging from Kossuth to Eötvös¹⁶⁶ – saw clearly first of all that although the realisation of communism was not impos-

¹⁶⁶ See note 41.

sible – in essence this is what Eötvös says – it could only be imagined under absolutism, and it was bound to give rise to a despotic regime. So having been acquainted with the works of Cabet¹⁶⁷ and others, that was enough for Eötvös to arrive at this idea, which did not precisely occur to many others for decades.

So in this sense I agree with Ferenc Fejtő that it's very hard to rebuild the foundations of the market economy and political democracy, but I still say that it's much easier to bear than communism itself. This, perhaps, is the difference between our opinions.

JPSZ: Allow us to return to the government coalition to the extent of one specific question. I think that in any government there are inevitably popular ministers and less popular ministers. It also applies in the case of ministers that they can make mistakes. What I'd like to ask is how far someone can expect the prime minister's support and confidence, or to put it a little differently, where is the barrier beyond which the activity of a minister can even cast a shadow over the work of the whole government?

JA: Well the answer's partly there. If someone casts a shadow over the work of the whole government and disturbs the government's activity or its success, then laying aside all other criteria, we have a clear duty to change the make-up of the government, and new ministers will come. But there are cases of ministers themselves growing tired of their work and asking to be relieved, and there are clearly cases where political parties can decide that they'd like to have certain ministers dismissed. Such cases occur, of course, in the operation of all administrations. If a minister's performance is unsatisfactory, if it does not accord with the government's work, or other administrative political criteria play a part, such a change can take place.

But this doesn't operate so that the political forces opposed to the government start attacking somebody, and achieve their dismissal by the attacks, which we must clearly examine. They don't usually achieve by their attacks that we dismiss the ministers. For in general the attacks are made very often against the ministers – and here I mean serious political attacks, not satirical attacks – who are key figures, or in a sense play a fundamental role among the equal ministers, and it would be very much in the opposition's interest – and this

¹⁶⁷ Étienne Cabet invented the term 'communism' in 1839.

mustn't be taken amiss – for these ministers to drop out of the government, or they may destroy the government's reputation, either at home or abroad. But I don't want to give people ideas, so I'll say no more.

JPSZ: How do you see the government's popularity? Do you think it at all important that the government should be popular?

JA: I've never met anyone mad enough not to be pleased at being popular. This also applies to the government. So the government has an interest in being popular, but it's not an end in itself. When this government was formed, I even said to the ministers, and I spoke plainly on this, that this government cannot be popular. And anyone who accepts a part in this government and believes he can be permanently very popular had better not start. This government – and I don't want to quote Fejtő – but this government has to carry out measures, has to pursue a policy in the interests of the country and the nation, that the public cannot immediately agree with, and it's not even certain that we could make ourselves understood in every case and explained ourselves well. So popularity on the one hand would do us good emotionally, and it does everyone good emotionally, many people seek it, and on the other hand, in practical terms, it's useful and good for a government to have certain popularity because it can then carry out certain matters more easily. And thirdly, the responsibility of a responsible government, apart from its responsibility to Parliament, certainly means a general historical and political responsibility as well, including fidelity to the oath we have sworn to serve the country. This we must undertake even if we aren't popular. It may be that this will only emerge afterwards, it will be judged in the short term in the elections, and later by posterity. What I consider the most important is that we should choose with honour and honesty the road we consider best, so that Hungary, transformed, can turn into a country that is really developing in an economically healthy way, that it is politically stable and has foreign political security. This is the government's job. If this can be accomplished with popularity, it'll be a very good thing. I would like our people to understand this and I trust they will. But if they don't understand immediately, we have to carry out this task, not court cheap popularity.

JPSZ: The Hungarian Democratic Forum is preparing for a kind of reckoning. I'm thinking now of its January national convention. People say there are three strands within the HDF. In the relations between these, at least as far as I see, the liberal

wing dissociates itself more and more strongly from the extremes. How much of a danger is this, in your opinion? Will it be possible for the various trends, particularly such extremes, to remain within one party? Will it be necessary to draw a line somewhere?¹⁶⁸

JA: The conflicts in the Hungarian Democratic Forum, in my view, are not based on those currents of ideas. Those currents of thought represent values laid down in the statutes. This is something we've said time after time. So the national liberal values, which are present in the common heritage of Hungarian politics, represent the Hungarian historical liberalism of Széchenyi, Kossuth, Deák, Eötvös and so on. I need not make a secret of the fact, and others, too, have acknowledged that much earlier. As a historian I was the first to describe this concept, by drawing a distinction between national liberalism and radical liberalism, a later phenomenon. We consider this national liberalism as a great fundamental value, attaching to it the European values of Christian democracy and the popular-national values, which in fact became typical in the 20th century, when they were proclaimed in a pronounced form by the village explorers, but here I could enumerate anyone from László Németh through Gyula Illyés to Bibó, Imre Kovács¹⁶⁹ and others. So these values balance each other and do not conflict with each other at all.

This is something people talk about less often. If I conducted a real university history seminar, I would ask the representatives of each trend, how many of them had read Kossuth, Eötvös, Széchenyi, the great national liberals. Or I could ask the members of the popular–national school, the most ardent of them, whether they'd read all the works of László Németh, from *In Minority* to *The Revolution of Quality*. I could list all the village explorers, for I 'happen' to have read all these and I have all the first editions of them. I could say the same for the seminal works of Christian democracy.

So as currents of thought, as ideological trends these are highly compatible and in synthesis with each other; they're espoused together by the body, the whole of the HDF membership, and the majority in our party do not want to

¹⁶⁸ The question is directed to the so-called „Study” published by István Csurka, one of the eight vice-presidents of the party, on 20 August. He suggested that the Democratic Forum should not refrain from using non-democratic methods in order to carry out its aims, and that would revive the popularity of the HDF. In the ensuing debate Antall naturally condemned the thesis. Cf. note 48.

¹⁶⁹ Imre Kovács (1913–1980), author and politician. In the 1930s exposed the conditions of the rural population. After 1945 became one of the leaders of the National Peasant Party (see note 20), but contested the methods of the communists. Seeing the signs of the communist takeover he went into exile in the United States.

choose between them. This is the basic issue. They accept them as intellectual workshops, but we want to be united around the unity of these three currents of thought, and we're not prepared to divide ourselves.

If we examine the matter like this, in the knowledge that the HDF is a platform party, not an ideological one, and also an electoral party, which treats these values together, this is not where the tensions in the HDF appear. Where they appear is if anyone casts doubt on the basic values of democracy and constitutionalism, and if anyone takes as feasible within the party a method of approach or set of political ideas incompatible with what we call the Hungarian Democratic Forum. That brings them into conflict with the fundamental ideals of the Hungarian Democratic Forum, with the Lakitelek foundation document, i.e. the programme and initial tenets of the party. That's just why I don't agree when attempts are made to divide the Democratic Forum on the basis of these three trends.

When certain groups use the slogans of a trend as a banner, in a figurative sense, or as a kind of screen or shield to hold in front of them, they're not really talking about ideology. When a group becomes radicalised in one direction and overemphasises its commitment in one direction, it in fact comes into conflict with the programme of the Democratic Forum. Those who abandon a clear commitment to the Hungarian community and try to depart from a clear commitment to democracy or from classic parliamentarianism, they depart from the basic programme of the Hungarian Democratic Forum. For this reason, our aim at the January national convention can only be to place these values clearly in the service of unity.

The tensions and battles within the Hungarian Democratic Forum – and I put 'battles' in inverted commas, of course – start from the fact that in relation to the transformation, one side questions that the transformation, the regime change is being carried out. Perhaps it is dissatisfied with the determination with which the transformation is being carried out, perhaps it expects a determination which is running up against constitutionalism. The other side feels keenly that constitutionalism will be threatened if the methods of transformation advocated by the other political group are employed. So in fact the basic issues can be found here, in the conflict between the radicalism of the transformation and the legality of the transformation. I'm sure that the centre, which forms a big majority of the Democratic Forum, wants to remain unequivocally faithful to all these, and expects and wants to follow the road that's expressed in adherence to our basic programme. The other thing is that the tensions

we're talking about also appear in the mood of the country. A party doesn't live in seclusion, no one in this country lives in seclusion. People don't go along in cars with the curtains drawn or whatever. We all live our daily lives, and the press certainly enjoys all the pleasures of the freedom of the press. I can safely say this has such a scale that if any country can offer and show more, I'd be curious to see it. The members of Parliament sense that, the members of our party are confronted by this mood day after day. So they're in the hardest position of all. In small communities and villages, everyone calls them to account for what happens in that village, which they can't solve. Or the problems of a small town as they appear in the local government bodies or at other places. So what follows is that discontented elements or bad phenomena are reflected in and influence the members of the Hungarian Democratic Forum, and the bad feelings derive from this. I don't think this need be seen as some kind of special phenomenon. It's the fate of all governing parties to be reproached by their members for the problems. Apart from that, certain people have gained certain positions that others haven't. Clearly anyone would gladly change places for a position they thought was better. So the internal tensions in a democracy are reflected in a party in just the same way as they are in the country as a whole.

LR: *What do you think, Prime Minister, about the four-year term of office laid down by law? Looking at matters a bit theoretically, is it enough for a government?*

JA: No government can really implement in four years the programme it sets itself as a long-term programme. It's immaterial here if it's four years or five in various democracies. But if the four-year period weren't adhered to in democracies, there would sooner or later be a danger of dictatorship, if not in a Bolshevik or Hitlerite form, but there could arise some form of government that was undesirable. So it's not fortuitous that democracies tie their programme to four years, tie the electoral opportunity to a four-year term. In America, in fact, they elect representatives every two years, even though they often feel that that is a bad thing, but that's how the tradition has developed there. I think the four-year electoral system is certainly right and has to be maintained under all circumstances, even though there's never been a truly successful period of government that has only lasted four years. It takes at least two electoral terms for a government to implement its programme and have enough time for it. So if we consider the Thatcher government or the Kohl government or others, the first four years, in fact, have generally sufficed – even though there was democracy

there before – merely to rectify the mistakes of the previous, fallen government, to make changes, to lay the foundations and take the unpopular measures. The really big issue at stake in the first elections after four years is whether the government and party or party coalition can convince people that what it has done so far was right, and can bring its programme to fruition in the next four years.

LR: Now we're past the halfway mark, what's your experience, Prime Minister? Can the government attain what you just spoke about? Can it gain acceptance?

JA: I think we've been able to accomplish in this period what was required for the country's independence and important in terms of the place we should occupy in Europe and the world, as it has often been expressed. In this respect we've managed to achieve what we wanted. With the economic transformation of society as a whole, we still cannot be satisfied at all. Starting with the privatisation process, I could list I don't know how many areas where changes should be made: in the budgetary system, where new laws are already available, but in some areas not even the institutional foundations have been laid. We're still working on this, and we have to cope with an amazing barrage of demagogy, the various observations of political charlatans. During the year and a half that remains before the elections, there's certainly a chance for the governing parties, the government and the governing coalition to size up its achievements, define the tasks for the future, and not just implement but correct its programme continuously according to the conditions that emerge. There's no government programme so perfect that it can be decided four years in advance, that could have taken into account in advance the consequences of all that goes on around us, Maastricht and everything else. The whole situation of the country must be adjusted to these. My view is that we have a chance: by the '94 elections Hungarian society will see what's happened in these four years. And we'll be able to convince Hungarian society that there really was a need for these four years and that what we've accomplished in these four years is more than could ever have been expected. And that it's Hungarian society's interest for us to proceed further in this direction. So I therefore look to the '94 election with confidence, and the by-elections are not disappointing from the point of view of the centre parties. In fact we can learn the lessons from them, I think. The crop we've sown, the crop we had to sow with sweat, but not with blood, won't be reaped by other political forces boasting about how clever they are. Very many are observing this and thinking on such lines as they watch what we do.

LR: *Your resolve, Prime Minister, or to use your own words, your missionary activity, always captivates your listeners so much that now, at the end of the year, when it's extremely difficult to sum up the contents of the past year, I think my colleague and I can only express our personal good wishes to you. We wish you strength and health and prosperity to your family, if such words are still permissible in 1992.*

JA: Thank you, but I must respond to that, however much of a concluding line it may be. For we're constantly being accused of having a sense of mission. And this, curiously, is a negative attribute today, or a sense of mission is a negative concept. A sense of mission is negative if it really means some kind of Pol-Potist, 'society-improving' sense of mission of that kind. We simply have a sense of mission that can be expressed in the very simple word: service. And those in this transitional period who lack a sense of service, a sense of mission interpreted in this way, are really incapable of undertaking this in such a transitional period. I don't feel any reluctance to present myself as a missionary. I certainly declared before the election to a foreign paper that whoever becomes Hungary's prime minister after the election will have to be a fanatic or a lunatic or a missionary, and that's how this has remained and has been quoted several times. I was never a fanatic, nor am I a lunatic yet, and so I always had to choose the missionary. But in hard times missionaries were often boiled in Africa. This missionary fate may be awaiting me. At most in this sense do I accept the expression missionary.

ON THE FEAST DAY OF THE NATION – THE LAST PUBLIC ADDRESS

József Antall delivered his last public address at the statue of King Saint Stephen in the Buda Castle District on 20 August 1993. In it he emphasised the significance of historical consciousness in overcoming contemporary difficulties.

I would like to join the entire nation in celebrating this feast day and welcome you all. I am deeply moved as I stand here at the statue of St Stephen,¹⁷⁰ at the foot of our ancient coronation church. Buda and the Castle Hill have been a symbol and a stronghold of the nation ever since the Mongol¹⁷¹ invasion of Hungary in the 13th century.

The anniversary of the foundation of the Hungarian state by King Stephen the Saint is what we are celebrating today. This feast day, the anniversary of 15 March 1848 (which marked the birth of the modern Hungarian state) and the anniversary of 23 October 1956 are the three most festive days for this nation. Of these three days, the Parliament has chosen to declare St Stephen's Day a state holiday.

Not only because it is the earliest of the three dates, but also because it is the best symbol of the Hungarian nation, a symbol representing continuity in history. Why do these three holidays represent a sense of unbroken continuity? What is their message? They are the emblems of the freedom and independence of the Hungarian nation, and of the inescapable necessity of redefining our nation after a millennium.

What does our shared history – our past, present and future – mean to us? Some people often criticise us for looking into the past. It is foolish to say that looking into the past is tantamount to ignoring the present and the future. There is no future without the past, and we need to hold on to our

¹⁷⁰ See note 81.

¹⁷¹ The Mongols under Genghis Khan destroyed Kievan Rus, and in 1241 invaded Central Europe. King Béla IV of Hungary was defeated in 1241 at Muhi. After that the Mongols and their Tatar auxiliaries devastated the kingdom, killing a very large part of the population, and only a few fortified strongholds held out until the enemy withdrew in the following year. The lesson was taken: fortifications were built around the towns and on many hilltops.

roots as we look into the future. History proves that in today's confusion we can only focus on the future once we have examined the patterns that existed in the past.

The past has given this nation a historical consciousness that has helped it endure and survive even the most gruesome times, as well as a dogged hope for the future stemming from our memories of what we have gone through. What does this day and the thousand-year existence of the Hungarian state mean to us? What does our accession to the EU mean in the light of the spiritual and moral heritage of the Christian tradition? What does it mean to have lived in the Carpathian Basin over the last thousand years?

How was it possible for our nation to settle in this land amidst the turbulence of the Great Migrations, which forced several nations across the plains of the continent?

We did set foot in this land, bringing with us a combination of our Finno-Ugric language, our cultural heritage from ancient Iran and the world of the Turkic people, along with the seeds of a settled lifestyle, such as cultural heritage, works of art, spirituality and many other qualities that later served the foundation of a legal system, the state, and paved the way to our conversion to Christianity.

Our ancient culture was easily malleable, providing excellent raw material for our adoption of the Christian religion of contemporary Europe. The figure of King Stephen has become a symbol of the amalgamation of our ancient cultural values with the traditions of European Christianity and culture. St Stephen also demonstrated that the country's independence and sovereignty were most crucial.

Independence, sovereignty and – ultimately – law and order can only prevail if a country stands on secure moral ground. Without law and order there can be no constitutionality, as chaos always leads to anarchy or dictatorship, restarting the vicious cycle all over again.

St Stephen's message is that being Hungarian, Christian and European are inseparable, and that together they form the very basis of our consciousness.

In his admonitions to his son,¹⁷² the King highlights the need for ruling the nation wisely and firmly, for openness toward all the problems and travails of everyday people, and for taking responsibility for the entire country and all

¹⁷² The King wrote his admonitions to his son, Prince Imre. Unfortunately his heir could never ascend to the throne as he died in a hunting accident. This work belongs to the mainstream of those European theoretical writings which contain the principles along which a wise ruler should govern his country.

Hungarians wherever they may live. The openness of the Hungarian nation toward foreigners is also a tradition that goes back to St Stephen. Over the last thousand years, we welcomed all foreigners, which is a natural element of our present historical consciousness. When we think of St Stephen and his time, we think of the description of foreigners who moved to Hungary as ‘guests’. In the early 20th-century Hungarian poet Endre Ady wrote, “I stretch out arms to all who were made Hungarian by virtue of reason, command, fate, intention or opportunity.”¹⁷³

Many people have expressed different views on the development of the Hungarian state recently. Let me tell you my opinion. To us, historical continuity and development mean that the ancient Kingdom of Hungary, the constitutional Kingdom of Hungary and today’s Republic form a unity, irrespective of the form of the state.

We do not renounce the kingdom of St Stephen and consider it to have been the result of the natural development of the state. What was special about the evolution of the early Hungarian state is that it resembled, to some extent, a republic while in fact it was a kingdom. This was why the natural features of constitutional monarchy were so easily incorporated into the constitutional framework of the Republic. As much as possible in any historical period, this nation has always created constitutional forms of government based on freedom, what we would call today ‘pluralistic democracy’ rather than tyranny.

Consider the motifs of St Stephen in advising his son to co-operate with the magnates and the clergy. That was an early attempt at a division of power in order to prevent tyranny. This intention prevailed during the later history and development of the Hungarian state, leading up to 1848, and the beginning of responsible government. This constitutional principle was always preserved in Hungary, except in times when the country was under oppression or foreign rule. And this principle is what we were able to restore owing to the recent political changes.

The idea of the division of power, the separation of the central government and local government, is deeply rooted in Hungarian thinking, and is the result of a thousand-year-old tradition.

The counties established by King Stephen the Saint were not independent local government authorities, but simple administrative and military units

¹⁷³ See note 70.

controlled by the central government. The first steps toward local government authorities were made in the 13th century with the appearance of the counties of the nobility, the first one being Zala County, followed by many others. The following centuries saw the development of the county-level local government system, and the autonomy of a number of towns. By the 15th century, during the reign of King Sigmund, all parts of this system had evolved. This process led to the establishment of Hungary's governmental system incorporating towns, counties and the central government. In modern times, professional administration also became a feature of this system. The 19th century statesman Lajos Kossuth pointed out that the modern state is not just responsible for security and administration, but should also deal with all areas from culture to social issues, thus becoming the 'catalyst of progress'.

A number of studies of the time examined the relationship between central government and local government. They included "Centralism and Municipalism", an essay written by Kossuth on a subject that had been debated for centuries.

I would not like anyone to misinterpret or mismanage the issues of central government and local government and their significance in modern times. We think it is necessary to sustain a balance between central and local government.

The tradition of St Stephen does not simply mean the internal development of the state, but also gives us an idea of our regional mission based on our freedom and autonomy. Hungary is intersected by a number of historical and strategic forces. Our country has never been on the peripheries, life has never been easy here, and because we are so exposed geographically, we have not been able to endure the hardships of history in a cosy corner of the continent. In fact, Hungary has been a highway of the nations; wars have never passed us by and we were trampled down from time to time. We must always direct a watchful eye to the world so that we may take note of the perils of both today and tomorrow. We should be grateful that historical events have produced the turning point that eventually made our oppressors withdraw their troops from our land. We are independent, but we must also learn to handle our independence. As St Stephen and even his father Géza¹⁷⁴ and his predecessors were

¹⁷⁴ Prince Géza, although baptised, did not keep the rules of the new religion. However, he appointed the best teachers for his son, who became the founder of the Hungarian Kingdom with the coronation in 1000.

aware, we must also keep in mind the forces running in an east–west direction across our region.

When threatened from either West or East, our predecessors made alliances with third parties. Hence the significance of our relationship with the Vatican, and the need for a balanced foreign policy towards the Holy Roman Empire, Byzantium and other powers. These powers have included Russia, the Soviet Union and other countries. I do not think I need to list them all.

Over the last thousand years we have been reminded on several occasions of the fact that Hungary is located in a collision zone between great empires where new threats may arise at any moment. Those who underestimate the threats are simply fools. We are now in a situation where we have to make the most of our freedom and our opportunities. Let us all hope that the world will become wiser; let us all hope that wars will not ruin our region any more.

But the world is not controlled by reason, but very often by intense emotions and some madman's imagination. We must never forget that. What does not seem to be a threat today may become one tomorrow. This small nation must ensure its safety and its position as a part of Europe, and later on as a part of the Atlantic region.

What is the significance of the termination of the Warsaw Pact, the dissolution of the Comecon and the withdrawal of the Soviet troops? In the present situation, those in the West and East who want peace, freedom, renewal and a modern world must join forces in all possible ways. Not only Hungary, but the entire world, too, is facing new challenges. Do not forget that our transition would not have been so peaceful had international communism not entered a state of crisis. The former regime would not have surrendered its power had it not realised that the country was on the brink of collapse. The economic difficulties we are facing today in all areas started during the communist era, and not during the term of this government.

We must remind the public of this cumbersome heritage over and over again, even if our enemies are bored with the topic. We must remind everyone that change has its price, just as it did in St Stephen's time. These side effects put immense pressure on the country, as our survival depends on our ability to adapt to an ever-changing social, economic and political situation with new forms of ownership. If we had insisted on preserving the old system, the country would have fallen into ruin.

In addition, the world is in a state of prolonged recession. Economic growth has been on the decline not only in Hungary, but also in countries such as the United States, Japan, Great Britain, and Germany, causing severe economic and financial problems. How could our tiny nation possibly be the only one to prosper when such huge and rich countries are facing such difficult problems?

We must bear all this in mind, but we must never give up hope. Our nation must work hard for the development of the country, and preserve our freedom by daring to act when necessary.

We have lots of good and bad memories attached to this day. We still remember those years when 20 August was a distorted, falsified holiday. Although those in power at the time dared not conceal St Stephen's ideas completely, they gave all sorts of names to this day. We must also remember that in the course of history August was not only a month of victory. The anniversary of the foundation of our state is flanked by such tragic dates as the surrender at Világos¹⁷⁵ at the end of the 1848–1849 War of Independence, and the defeat at Mohács¹⁷⁶ by the Ottomans in 1526, in early and late August respectively. Do not forget that our defeats and losses have been significant, but we must draw strength from King Stephen the Saint amidst all our woes.

Ironically, Hungarian troops were forced by the Warsaw Pact to invade Czechoslovakia on 20 August. And our Moscow 'friends' chose to proceed with their *coup d'état* on the same date, threatening the world on a day when the Pope happened to be on a visit in Hungary. We have good and bad memories, but they are nothing but minor historical episodes in comparison with the real meaning of 20 August.

To every ordinary citizen of this country, this day means that we must preserve our past, and do our best for our future. Allow me to borrow an idea from former U.S. President Kennedy and transpose it to us: Do not ask what Hungary can do for you, but what you can do for Hungary.

Let this day be a feast day worldwide, wherever Hungarians from all over the world may gather. Let it be the same as parish feasts held in every village, a day when all inhabitants return to the village, either physically or spiritually, and join their fellow-villagers during the celebrations.

Today is the worldwide feast of Hungary, this mighty village of Hungarians, when everyone is awaited, either physically or spiritually, for participation

¹⁷⁵ See note 100.

¹⁷⁶ See note 91.

in the celebration of St Stephen's Day. This, too, is symbolised by today's events and feast.

May these thoughts be preserved in our national consciousness, because this is the only way we can be Europeans and even cosmopolitans in the positive sense of the word.

FOREIGN POLICY

THE PROPOSAL TO DISSOLVE THE SOVIET MILITARY BLOC

On 7 July 1990, barely over two weeks after the Government entered office, the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty met in the Kremlin in Moscow. In line with the rotating presidency, it was the turn of the Hungarian Prime Minister to chair the meeting. József Antall was accompanied by President of the Republic Árpád Göncz and Minister of Defence Lajos Für, on the trip to Moscow, where he put forward the proposal to dissolve the Warsaw Treaty. Ferenc Somogyi, Under-Secretary of State for public administration at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Imre Szokai, Deputy Under-Secretary, Lieutenant General László Borsits, Chief of Staff, and Sándor Györke, Hungarian ambassador to Moscow were also members of the Hungarian delegation.

The Soviet delegation was led by President Mikhail Gorbachev and consisted of Prime Minister Nikolai Rizkov, Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, Alexander Yakovlev, a member of the Supreme Soviet and Minister of Defence Dimitri Yazov. The Bulgarian delegation was led by President Peter Mladenov and Prime Minister Andrey Lukanov. Prime Minister Lothar de Mezier and Sabine Bergmann-Pohl, President of the People's Chamber, represented the German Democratic Republic. The Polish delegation was headed by President Wojciech Jaruzelski and Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki. Romania delegated President Ion Iliescu and Prime Minister Petre Roman, while the Czech and Slovak Republic was represented by President Václav Havel and Prime Minister Marián Čalfa.

This is the first time that I and the other members of the Hungarian delegation have the opportunity to participate in a meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty and to represent the Republic of Hungary, which was proclaimed barely half a year ago. I feel it is my duty first of all to summarise the changes that have occurred in Hungary and then to outline the objectives toward which our future development should in my view be aimed.

In the spring of this year, for the first time in more than forty years, the Hungarian people had the opportunity of participating in a truly democratic, free election, pursuant to the new electoral act based on a restored multi-party system. The will of the absolute majority of voters was clear. Instead of the continued patching up of the old order, it is necessary to carry out a comprehensive political and economic change of system.

The composition of the newly elected Parliament and of the newly formed coalition Government reflect this decision. By modifying the constitution and approving a series of fundamental acts, we have taken decisive steps towards establishing a new system comprising pluralist democracy, political freedom and a social market economy. Our goal is to implement the most highly developed European values and norms in every sector of society, including our foreign relations.

The road ahead is long and difficult. But we are proud of the fact that this radical turnaround was realised without bloodshed. It gives us strength to know that we are heading toward tried and tested values, and also the fact that we are not alone. Most nations in central and eastern Europe, albeit at different paces, have oriented themselves toward the rule of law, a free market economy and catching up with Europe, rather than dictatorship, planned economies and one-party systems.

The sweeping changes in Central and Eastern Europe would not be possible without the complete transformation of the international, and especially the European political *status quo*. After the Second World War, the political system, built on ideological confrontation, led to a total political, military, economic and ideological opposition that we called the Cold War. By now this system has irreversibly disintegrated and lies in ruins. The new principles around which European relations are increasingly oriented are the respect for mutually recognised values and acceptance of human and in particular of European values.

The importance of military force and of the two military and political blocs is continuously decreasing. Thankfully, the roles of economic co-operation and of humanitarian and legal dimensions have increased. This pan-European process has yielded exceptional results, which have manifested themselves in the Vienna closing document, the most substantial document of its kind. It is now possible to continue the negotiations between the twenty-three nations in Vienna¹⁷⁷ on

¹⁷⁷ Talks on the CFE = Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. It was signed on 19 November 1990, at the same time as the Charter of Paris.

the radical reduction of conventional armed forces and arms, as well as the talks between the thirty-five on the new generation of measures to increase trust and security with the hope of success in the near future. I agree with President Gorbachev's proposals, and declare that Hungary will do everything possible to assist in bringing the Vienna talks to a successful conclusion as soon as possible.

The follow-up events of the second and the third baskets are turning out to be promising as well. There is a realistic chance of holding the summit for the thirty-five CSCE¹⁷⁸ countries before the end of this year. Although the bloc structure is still in place, a system of multilateral relations has been established between the member states of the two alliances and dialogue has been initiated between the institutions of the two blocs.

The changes in Central and Eastern Europe and the desire and the acceptance by the German people, based on self-determination, for reunification, have created a substantially new situation. Following the ideological deterioration of the bipolar confrontation, the artificial division of Europe and of Germany can no longer be maintained. On the level of principles, it is important that German reunification be realised within the framework of an all-European process. Germany's obligations as a member of NATO and of the European Community will provide the sufficient and necessary guarantees for her to gain full sovereignty without endangering the rightful security interests of her neighbours or of the continent as a whole.

We are convinced that Germany will become an integral builder of a new Europe which is unified in political, economic, cultural, humanitarian and legal affairs. The 2+4 negotiations forum will be capable of providing sufficient guarantees for that. We will seek to carry over the contractual allied relations and the continuous co-operation existing between the Republic of Hungary and the German Democratic Republic to the reunited Germany. We have received assurances from both German states to this effect.

In this substantially new situation it is necessary to establish a new structure and institutional framework for all-European security and co-operation that reflects the new circumstances. The level of co-operation already attained in political, security, economic and humanitarian affairs must form the pillars of the new system, on which we shall construct an edifice of institutionalised dialogue. We believe that a system of bilateral and regional treaties concluded on the basis of the Helsinki norms will become an integral part of the united European security

¹⁷⁸ CSCE = Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

structure. It is essential that the Helsinki process must rely to a sufficient degree on the existing European organisations that are functioning appropriately. We need to develop these organisations further and make them all-European. However, this also presupposes that the unviable organisations are dissolved.

In the area of the military it is essential to ensure the continuity of talks as we try to enhance the continent's security. Following the imminent conclusion of the first agreement between the twenty-three, we need to strive for further breakthroughs. Therefore, the impetus of the negotiations must be maintained until the next Helsinki follow-up meeting. The trust and security forum of the thirty-five should also be treated similarly. In 1992, following sufficient preparation, a security forum of the thirty-five nations could be set up.

The establishment of the new all-European structures is assisted by proposals, some of which have come from Hungary, aimed at setting up a system of communication between the twenty-three and the thirty-five, as well as the regular annual meetings of the experts of the thirty-five. The latter could also serve as the framework for a consultative system in military and security affairs that would fulfil the role of a workshop on military doctrine as well.

We wish to propose the establishment of a political and military conflict management mechanism similar in nature to those already accepted in the humanitarian field. We would happily lend our support to proposals with this objective in mind. Within the framework of this mechanism, it would be possible to organise the compulsory provision of information as well as bilateral and multilateral talks.

Hungary is actively engaged in studying the proposals pertaining to a broad European military, security and political structure, including the Polish, Czechoslovak and Soviet proposals. We advocate the creation of a new, broad, pan-European security system that reflects the new reality, fits into the Helsinki process, supplements the radically transforming and disintegrating bloc structure and then gradually replaces it.

On the level of principles, it is important that this system should build on the active participation of all thirty-five OSCE member states. The responsible involvement of the United States and of Canada is indispensable, as is that of the Soviet Union. Here I would like to emphasise that Hungary welcomes the new Soviet stance acknowledging the importance of American military commitments in Europe. We believe the military presence of the United States to be a stabilising factor that will continue to have a definitive positive influence even after German reunification.

During the process of forging European unity, it is expedient to rely on stable Atlantic co-operation, which proved in the course of two world wars that Europe and North America are inseparable, regardless of which nation stands on which side. We do not wish to exclude the peoples of the Soviet Union from the unified Europe. We oppose merely shifting the line that divides Europe eastwards. The only credible alternative is the complete elimination of such divisions. When we emphasise the Atlantic idea in the broad sense, we do not follow Kissinger's way of thinking. On the contrary, the Soviet Union must be part of the process of European integration and North America must also be included in it.

The Hungarian government's and the Hungarian Parliament's view on the future of the Warsaw Treaty and Hungary's membership therein are rooted in our evaluation of the new situation in Europe. In 1956, the revolutionary government led by Imre Nagy adopted a resolute stance and unilaterally decided that Hungary should leave the Warsaw Pact.

Today – and we agree on this matter – the Warsaw Treaty, one of the remnants of European division, is in need of revision. Under current circumstances, the military organisation of the Warsaw Treaty is devoid of purpose. We believe that its future existence is no longer necessary and its gradual liquidation by the end of 1991 would be expedient. Naturally, this should come about as a result of co-ordinated meetings and efforts, and it would be unwise for any party to take unilateral steps in the course of the process.

We are convinced that we should not waste our efforts trying to reform this organisation, which has not yielded any notable results for years, but rather we should be engaged in establishing a new, joint European structure for security and co-operation and fit the Warsaw Treaty into such a framework. According to our position, our security should be based on European and regional co-operation rather than the balance of power and the rivalry between military and political alliances. We do not advocate less security. On the contrary, we want more security. We wish to be the allies not only of Eastern Europe but of the whole of Europe.

The Republic of Hungary wishes to initiate talks in order to review the nature, the function and the activities of the Warsaw Treaty, especially with a view to establishing a collective European system of security and co-operation, and the tasks of fitting into such a structure. In the meantime, until these negotiations yield results, we should identify those elements of the Warsaw Treaty that violate the sovereignty of member states and invalidate them. We, on our

part, are intent on regaining sovereign control over the Hungarian Armed Forces. Our Parliament has taken the first steps to this end.

At the same time, the restoration of Hungarian sovereignty does not entail the unilateral termination on our part of our relations with the member states of the Warsaw Treaty. During the drafting of our proposals, we shall naturally take as our starting position the condition that neither the security of the Republic of Hungary, nor the security of her allies, thus of the Soviet Union, too, should be diminished and that co-operation between our nations should improve harmoniously, just as with the other European nations. In the course of realising our plans, we seek to create accord with pan-European processes and the tasks ahead. The elements of confrontation must be eliminated from the Warsaw Treaty.

We propose that this committee decide on the establishment of a special inter-governmental committee consisting of ambassadorial special envoys that would review the nature, the function and the operation of the Warsaw Treaty. By the last quarter of this year, this body would submit specific proposals to the Political Consultative Body on these matters, including the gradual elimination of military co-operation and its organisations, taking into account the circumstances and the development of the European security and co-operation process.

The drafting of the proposals should be scheduled so that the PCB could review them before the OSCE summit at the end of the year, which will have a decisive influence on the future of European security and co-operation. Member states should have a clear picture of the nature of the Warsaw Treaty in the future and about how it will fit into efforts aimed at ensuring security for the whole continent prior to the summit getting under way. It would also be expedient for member states to use this proposed extraordinary meeting of the Political Consultative Committee to exchange views on further developing and enhancing European security and co-operation. We, on our part, would be prepared to host the extraordinary session of the PCB in Budapest. We should also agree that the implementation of the decision accepted at the PCB meeting should begin as soon as possible, but by 1 January 1991 at the latest.

The aim of Hungarian foreign policy is to provide for the complete enforcement of the ten Helsinki principles and extensive co-operation between equal democratic nations. We insist on adherence to the principles of the OSCE and to all West European norms that have been or are about to be accepted on a voluntary basis by the nations represented here today. We shall strive to ensure

that the recommendations worked out jointly during the Helsinki process should be gradually enforced as valid international norms. Such obligations must include the treatment of national minorities as well.

We are convinced that democracy cannot exist without respect for the rights of national minorities. On account of our dedication to democracy, we urge the establishment of the institutional framework required for the exercising of the individual and collective rights of national minorities as soon as possible. The right of ethnic self-organisation must be ensured and autonomous ethnic institutional structures must be created on a proportionate basis with the sharing of public funds, so that national minorities are able to decide autonomously about the key questions concerning their ethnic existence. It is important to ensure that ethnic minority groups are able to cultivate relationships with friends and family unhindered, to preserve their colourful cultural and folk traditions and their history, and to be able to use and cultivate their mother tongue in private and in public life, including all levels of education. We believe that all this requires the establishment of an institutional framework as soon as possible, and the provision of bilateral assurances that are also accepted on a regional and an all-European level as well.

We are convinced that the entire system of our contractual bilateral and multilateral relations must be modernised and developed further with the most highly developed European practice and norms in mind. If this were to be realised, then our nations, which have chosen the path of democracy, would have established a truly substantial system of co-operation and of friendly and neighbourly relations. Our earliest possible accession to the developed Europe requires that unresolved issues concerning the relations between our countries are settled and managed with the appropriate mechanisms. The way in which such issues are settled could determine the pace as well as the reality of our countries catching up with the more developed countries of the continent.

We welcome the outcome of the Soviet–American talks, the preliminary agreement on the main elements of the strategic arms limitation treaty and the limitation of nuclear tests. We believe these results concur with the interests of our country and of our continent. If these treaties are implemented, they will not only make our world a safer place, they also pave the way towards the conclusion of further important treaties, including the limitation of strategic nuclear weapons. The acceleration of the work of forums aimed at multilateral disarmament could become a reality.

We consider it important that the direction and the rate of the steps to be taken by us as part of the new all-European process should be in harmony with the developing relations between the two superpowers. The summit of the thirty-five nations later this year requires the acceleration of talks between the twenty-three and the successful conclusion of the 2+4 negotiations. We consider it important to continue the discussions of the Open Skies conference in Budapest as soon as possible. On account of its agenda, the summit of the thirty-five, which we have supported with high hopes from the beginning, is destined to be a milestone in disarmament and the building of a new Europe. These objectives are worthy of our best efforts.

Our experts participated in the drafting of the declaration and the minutes to be published about this meeting. We have made our position clear and we approve these documents.

Finally, I would like to thank President Gorbachev and our Soviet hosts sincerely for the warm welcome afforded to us and for providing excellent conditions for our work.

ON THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EUROPE'S POLITICIANS

On 19 November 1990 the heads of state or government of the countries participating in the Helsinki process met in the French capital to sign the Charter of Paris and the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. The presence of US and Soviet Presidents George Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev, and of German Chancellor Kohl, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, Czechoslovak President Václav Havel, Polish Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki, and other prominent political personages, was in itself an indication of the hopes for a new European co-operation. The Hungarian Prime Minister spoke about the historical responsibility of European leaders.

It is a great feeling to be here at this summit, where division and confrontation are pronounced to be over, and a new era is announced in the development of post-war Europe.

Awareness that the changes in Hungary have also contributed to the advent of a new epoch in history is extremely important for us. After decades of confrontation, new horizons of co-operation based on common principles and common values have opened up for the states participating in the Helsinki process.

I am convinced that the Helsinki Final Act and the process it set in motion have played a crucial role in bringing about this historic turning point. The free nations that consistently stood up for the protection of human rights merit the highest praise.

It is beyond doubt that human rights, the free flow of ideas and information, the freedom of intellectual and physical movement remained for a long time an unfulfilled promise in our region. In the forums of the CSCE process, however, the Central and Eastern European regimes were continually confronted with European values, which contributed to the preparation of the political changeover.

We should value highly the great efforts made by Mr Gorbachev and the Soviet reformers in seeking a way out of a political and economic system in

crisis in a positive direction, thereby facilitating the restoration or creation of the institutions of freedom in the eastern part of Europe.

With the collapse of the Berlin Wall, a symbol of European confrontation for decades, the division of the two German states was brought to an end. The unity of Europe would be inconceivable without the unity of Germany, and the accomplishment of German re-unification has freed our continent from a four-decade-old burden. Hungary played an active role in setting the process in motion.

The documents of this summit will not only give genuine expression to our common determination to create a unified and free Europe, but will also serve as an important factor in East-Central European stability.

I am pleased to confirm the outstanding performance put up by the nascent democracies in the common European effort while struggling with the grave difficulties of the change-over. In the course of negotiations they have displayed their readiness to make concessions; their skill at assessing situations, advantages and disadvantages reasonably; and a sense of responsibility for our continent. This has enabled them to rise above historical resentments that had become even more aggravated during the decades of the now-defunct regimes. Their common sense and willingness to co-operate are promising signs for the future. They provide convincing proof that creating democracy and obtaining freedom do not necessarily pose new difficulties in international relations.

By virtue of achieving the objectives Hungary pursued in the course of negotiations on disarmament and on the basis of the agreement concluded this spring concerning the withdrawal of Soviet forces from the country, Hungary is soon to regain full sovereignty, which is a pre-requisite for further strengthening our ties with European integration once we are fully independent.

The reformulation of mutual relations and security policies is a must for the fledgling East-Central European democracies, including Hungary. Events so far have proved that the emergence of a so-called security vacuum in the region is not inevitable, even if a number of obsolete multilateral organisations, such as the Warsaw Pact, cease to exist in the near future in accordance with our intentions. The Hungarian position on the Warsaw Pact has been reiterated on a number of occasions. We are delighted to see an emerging consensus among member states concerning the termination of that military organisation. We are confident that the conditions for winding up the Warsaw Pact will be created in the course of the European security process by the end of 1991 or by the spring of 1992 at the latest.

When Hungary joined the Council of Europe, it was the first major step for our country along her road back to Europe. The act of becoming a member state accelerated the process of Hungary's integration into the European system of political, social and legal standards. These standards have had a direct influence on various domains of the life of Hungarian society, including the economy, culture, public health, environmental protection, and the protection of human rights.

We will achieve the objective of reaching the general level of development of Western Europe when Hungary is fully integrated into the European Community in both political and economic terms. It is our hope that negotiations on Hungary's accession to the EU and on foreign policy co-operation will commence as early as this year, and that we will enjoy associate membership of the European Community effective on 1 January 1992. In addition, on the basis of the principles and intentions set out in the declaration made by the twelve EEC member states, we seek to establish co-operative relations and a security partnership with the NATO, now being transformed, and also with other European organisations.

We are aware that it will take some time until the new democratic institutions are firmly established in East-Central Europe, and that the West is also interested in arriving at adequate ways of co-operation during the transition period as well. It is not simply Western aid that is needed; it is also vitally important to expand and accelerate political dialogue and economic integration processes. Should this fail to happen, there might easily emerge a new welfare barrier in place of the now-demolished Iron Curtain.

I believe this summit will accomplish a historic mission by drawing up common principles and values for the participating states; it will also enable the Helsinki CSCE process to perform its new functions by establishing appropriate institutions.

The human dimension has been a basic component of the process right from the outset. The strengthening of democracy and democratic institutions and the complete fulfilment and continuous monitoring of obligations relating to human rights remain tasks of primary importance in our view. In spite of the changes that indicate a movement towards democratisation, ethnic and minority tensions sometimes appear to be even more exacerbated than before in Europe. It is our conviction that such tensions can only be defused by continued dialogue and by the fulfilment of political obligations acknowledged according to the requirements of the Council of Europe within the framework of the Helsinki process.

For a long time, Europe and North America (our Atlantic Community, as it was) fought internecine wars; at times during our century a number of countries came to be hotbeds of vicious political creeds. Nations lost their independence, while other nations languished desperately waiting to gain autonomy. And today the world is resounding the slogan of freedom, a claim that requires fulfilment to everyone's satisfaction.

In our time the peoples of Europe, who are enjoying peace and security, are in the process of creating a continent of stability and prosperity. Never in the history of Europe has there been such an auspicious moment as there is now, when all countries of our continent as well as the two great nations of North America simultaneously announce that they will restrict themselves to the exclusive use of the political, legal and economic tools of a several-thousand-year-old European civilisation, and exclude the use of weapons, in their efforts to solve all their problems. It is in the common interest of us all to ensure that this promise is fulfilled.

It is our hope that once we have eliminated confrontation and no longer regard each other as enemies, once we have established equilibrium at a lower level of armament, there will be no way for disappointed military officers to embark upon political adventures, try their hand at grabbing power, and prevent the full realisation of democracy. Ventures of that kind are unsuitable for offering a solution even to the worst kind of economic and social tensions.

On the threshold of the 21st century, Europe and North America should join forces in striving to find their mission, for they are about to face new challenges concerning the politics of power, energy resources, social conflicts, and unfamiliar world views, often in the shadow of international terrorism, and this makes it necessary for them to restore historical unity, and spiritual and moral solidarity. It is this historical responsibility that weighs heavily on the shoulders of the participants at the present Paris summit. Instead of breaking under this weight, we should stand upright and look into the eyes of the world, and – hopefully – into the eyes of future generations, with heads held high.

On behalf of my delegation and myself, I should like to express my gratitude to our hosts, and to President Mitterrand in particular, for the excellent way in which they have organised this summit.

HEXAGONALE SUMMIT IN DUBROVNIK

On 27 July 1991, the Pentagonale, the forum of five countries (Italy, Austria, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Hungary) established in 1989 to ensure regional co-operation between neighbouring countries which belonged to different political groupings, became Hexagonale, also expressed by the Greek number, when Poland joined it as the sixth member. When the prime ministers of the six countries held their meeting in Dubrovnik¹⁷⁹ the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic was still unitary and although symptoms of crisis already appeared in Yugoslavia, the federal government of Premier Markovic was still trying to keep the state together.

On behalf of the government of the Republic of Hungary, allow me first of all to express my gratitude to our hosts, who have agreed to hold this excellent conference in such a difficult period. In addition, I would like to thank the Italian government for its work of last year, which facilitated the Pentagonale's operation and enabled the successful preparation of today. Thirdly, I would like to welcome the Polish government delegation and the fact that Pentagonale has been able to become Hexagonale, and that now Poland is participating in our work as a full member.

Dubrovnik and this region where we are holding our conference today is of symbolic value in itself. It is symbolic because it expresses the close connection between the Mediterranean and Central Europe. This is an area which for centuries has been characterised by peoples living together, commercial contacts, and cultural and intellectual influences. I think that Poland having become a member of our organisation is of special significance from this aspect, too.

I also consider the presence of economic and financial organisations such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development as extremely important. It is essential that economic and financial aspects, cultural and intellectual relations, and the idea of solidarity should be taken into consideration jointly, and that is also

¹⁷⁹ A port on the Adriatic Sea, once it was under Roman, Byzantine, Venetian, Hungarian, Ottoman, and Habsburg sovereignty. After World War I it became part of Yugoslavia, since 1992 it belongs to independent Croatia. Dubrovnik was declared a world heritage; its siege by the Serbs started in October 1991 and lasted for seven months. It led to much destruction, but the town was not occupied.

true for the issue of security, which is the most important issue of our region and is not only simply a military security issue but also includes political, social and economic dimensions. Economic success has primary importance among the politically stabilising factors. It is of vital significance that concrete investments, the development of infrastructure, first of all the construction of roads and a solution to transport problems, would make the population, the peoples of our countries, realise that ours is a real organisation, a real, pragmatic institution. Therefore, the unity of the region is in the joint interest of all the countries. Unity of the region implies that if factors of insecurity and instability appear in any country, they will affect the entire region. Looking at it from distant regions and other continents, Europe is on the whole rather small, not least this East-Central European region. Therefore, if there is a crisis, insecurity or domestic conflict, let me not even say a civil war in any country among the states of the Hexagonale, namely in our next-door neighbour, it will afflict us all. It endangers the economic position of us all as well as the confidence we enjoy, since we are regarded as a joint region and our neighbours' problems and destabilising factors affect us jointly. That is the reason why it is so important that we should be able to co-operate in this respect and be able to provide assistance to one another. That gives real meaning to Hexagonale.

We have joint responsibility for each other, a shared responsibility for each others' problems. Therefore, I think that after having acknowledged the Helsinki Document and the whole Helsinki process, which outlined the fundamental issues which were essential for Europe in recent years, there is no need to explain every declaration, no need for a special explanation of what joint responsibility means. Signing the Paris Charter and the statement of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe were outstanding points in the Helsinki process. I think if we examine them together we can see clearly what is regarded as internal affairs and what is considered as interference in domestic matters, or what we regard as a common problem whereby an interest in each other's problems is not to be regarded as interference but as support and assistance. Hungary and the Hungarian government will never consider these questions differently. Therefore, we think it is very important for economic co-operation to be formed and secured in all fields, and in this respect we consider it especially significant that countries with flourishing economies, countries with well-functioning market economies, like Italy and Austria, are members of this organisation and can provide help, teaching us, countries which have been part of a dictatorship, to operate a modern economy. In this period of democratisation

and transformation to a free-market economy we consider being able to be with you and building the future together as vitally important.

I would like to mention as a success for Pentagone the fact that the Pentagone countries could prepare together for the Geneva Conference of the CSCE with regard to such a delicate matter as the issue of national minorities, which plays such an important role in the region, and that these countries were able to come to an agreement concerning principles. It indicates that an opportunity for agreement is present even when dealing with the most difficult questions.

I would also like to call attention to the fact that the economic development of our region necessarily and directly has an impact on national and ethnic tensions. It can be seen in various regions of the world that if ethnic, nationality and minority tensions are burdened with social problems and issues concerning the standard of living, then there is an increase in contradictions and tensions. This being the case, it is very important for the leading industrial countries of the world to provide wide-ranging support for our region, approaching the region with a comprehensive, global financial and economic strategy, and within our region the Pentagone or now the Hexagone countries.

Of course, we cannot leave Dubrovnik without talking about Yugoslavia and that is signaled by the third declaration, which concerns Yugoslavia, in addition to the political and economic declarations. We regard it important and extremely significant that we have come to Dubrovnik and that here in this town we express our solidarity with the peoples of Yugoslavia and our desire to provide support for the peoples, nations and nationalities of the Yugoslav republics to settle their internal conflicts in a peaceful and democratic way.

Together with you, we are inevitably concerned about the escalation of violence. We regard the successful stabilisation of Yugoslavia in these three months, during the period of the moratorium, as being absolutely important. We think that the activity of the 12 and the *troika* is very significant. Our declarations so far have also expressed our view about the right of self-determination of nations and peoples, and about supporting a peaceful solution. We consider it very important that there would not be uncontrollable armies, uncontrollable military forces in our region as I already referred to in my speech at the Paris summit last November. Our strong view is that irregular military forces should not be without control. We regard as vital that military forces should be withdrawn and not act contrary to the political order and settlement. We think that guarantees to peoples and nations are very important in these months because crises always become psychological crises, emotional components become predominant and make settlement difficult.

Therefore, it is very important to guarantee democracy, tolerance and human rights and to succeed in finding a solution acceptable for all parties. When we talked about the idea of the confederation of sovereign republics and when we expressed our view in that respect, it was always in accordance with international agreements, the Brioni Agreement. We think that the Yugoslav government delegation here and Prime Minister Markovic have taken on a superhuman task to find a solution to the crisis in this three-month period, and we believe that both moral and political support must be given to the Yugoslav federal government to enable it to perform this task. However, it can only do that if, in accordance with the Constitution of Yugoslavia, the Yugoslav State Presidency monitors and controls the military steps and prevents the independent activity of irregular armed groups, and if it is able to meet the expectations of the member republics of Yugoslavia, providing the necessary guarantees to the republics for them to feel secure. We regard guarantees as vital so that the member republics would not fear or be threatened by either irregular or regular military intervention. The European Union, the family of peoples, and we in Hexagonale must do our best to support a process whereby, whatever way and whatever solution is chosen in Yugoslavia, it would take place in a democratic and constitutional manner, and whereby the federal government of Yugoslavia would be able to use these three months for implementing it. It is important for us to confirm that Yugoslavia and its member republics will receive political and moral support in the interest of the above. But this is obviously possible only if there is a democratic change and a pluralistic political system, and if the right of self-determination of nations, minority rights and general human rights are in place. I trust this can be achieved in these three months. Hexagonale must also give its support to the European Union, because if no results are achieved in the period of the three-month moratorium the consequences would be catastrophic. Therefore these three months represent a joint responsibility for all of us, not only for Yugoslavia and its member republics. So we are asking our Yugoslav friends to regard our concern and the expression of our worries not as unauthorised interference but as the manifestation of solidarity and support.

Thank you for your attention. Thank you for being here in this wonderful town, which in itself is a symbol of our co-operation. And I welcome the Polish delegation once more, for their presence provides a new dimension for Hexagonale, it signifies new prospects and a new bridge to the north towards regions which concern our development as well as to other neighbouring regions.

ON THE PODIUM OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Speech of the Prime Minister of Hungary at the 46th session of the UN General Assembly, 1 October 1991.

On this occasion, I welcome the representatives of the new UN member states, the Baltic states, the two states of Korea, the Marshall Islands and the Federal State of Micronesia, and especially Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, whose presence in our midst not only signals the UN becoming more universal but also the strength of peoples' right to self-determination in overcoming all difficulties. The message of this strength is especially relevant in our world today.

Three and a half decades have passed since the people of a small country in central Europe defied communist dictatorship and foreign occupation with the slogan of freedom, independence and democracy. As the *ultima ratio* of its fight, that country turned to the United Nations with its cry for help. Due to the Cold War confrontation of the time, the free world and the UN could not provide actual assistance to the Hungarian revolution and national fight for freedom beyond moral and political support. Thirty-five years ago unprovoked Soviet tanks triumphed over the right of the Hungarian people to self-determination.

Here I must express my gratitude to those diplomats who, since the autumn of 1956, worked for years to reveal the just nature of the Hungarian revolution to the world. We, who tried to provide the UN with information from home, know what the UN meant then – the only possibility for the hopeful and also a forum, a connection with the free world for the sceptical. I thank all those who helped!

I think that I can declare with pride before this forum that the goals of October 1956 have been realised. The system change took place in harmony with the will of the people expressed during free elections in Hungary. My country is really free, independent and democratic – it is a country where the profound changes that took place are now irreversible.

The last units of the Soviet army stationed in Hungary left the country in June this year. Thus Hungary regained its sovereignty, which practically had

not existed since March 1944,¹⁸⁰ and her people may now in fact exercise their right of self-determination.

The world had been waiting for the moment of communism's collapse for more than seven decades. My government has played an initiative in that the former Communist countries have dissolved the Warsaw Treaty, which represented an enforced military–political bloc entirely alien to their peoples. However, the European collapse of communism caught the democratic world unprepared. It had not prepared for the problems emerging in our region or for their resolution.

Dramatically, in addition to communism, another totalitarian system, fascism and national socialism also afflicted generations of our century. Generations suffered the consequences of the inertness against the Bolshevik power grab in 1917 and the defeatist politics following Hitler's takeover and the subsequent international agreements. They suffered because political leaders lacked resolution and determination. The world paid dearly for that lapse. No *Realpolitik* should absolve a generation from maintaining certain fundamental political and moral standards, because once they fail to do so – and no steps are taken against a totalitarian system in time – millions will be destroyed instead of hundreds. That is the lesson of the 20th century.

Today Hungary enjoys a parliamentary democracy with a multi-party system, which is fully compatible with the European and North American democratic political systems. Similarly to other states based on the rule of law, a broad range of human rights and other fundamental rights of freedom are guaranteed by our legislation in full harmony with international norms.

Fundamental and joyful changes for humanity have recently taken place in the world's international relations. The East–West division based on an ideological and military confrontation has ceased and the period of the Cold War has ended.

According to the Hungarian government, time-tested European structures, such as NATO, the European Union and the Council of Europe, are pillars of European security and stability. They are operational organisations which are attractive to peoples and nations, effectively guaranteeing these nations' security, as well as economic and social development. Hungary full-heartedly supports their role and mission. We also regard of fundamental importance and welcome the efforts of the above organisations to establish

¹⁸⁰ Date of the German occupation of Hungary. A puppet government was installed, and the deportation of the Jews soon started.

essential relations with the new democracies in the Eastern and Central European region.

With the adoption of the Paris Charter as the culmination of the Helsinki process, a new chapter has opened up in Europe, the continent which was most affected by the post-war division and which suffered the consequences for decades. This document, based on Euro-Atlantic shared values among the participating states, may become the codex of all-European co-operation.

However, the promising process of creating a peaceful and prosperous, free and democratic Europe is fundamentally endangered by situations of conflict, such as we can witness, for example, in the case of Yugoslavia where the forces of communist-nationalist dictatorship, which have not suffered a complete defeat yet, confront the followers of democracy; where the efforts of the self-determination of nations within the same political system are increasingly given overt expression; where the just demands for nationality and minority autonomy are stifled; and where above all these, the army has slipped out of constitutional control.

Due to the danger to Europe's security and stability, Hungary is greatly concerned about the tragic developments in Yugoslavia and feels a special responsibility for the half a million Hungarians living in that country. World public opinion entertains the false belief that there is a ceasefire in Yugoslavia, violated only by sporadic incidents in towns of unknown names. I am sorry to say that in reality a constant and cruel war is being conducted. There is mobilisation on a mass scale, which has been condemned even by the constitutionally elected president of Yugoslavia. Ill-prepared conscripts are deployed in the battles of a conflict in which they do not want to participate. Therefore young people from among all the nations in Yugoslavia flee across the border numbering hundreds and thousands to escape being drafted and a senseless death. The Croatian and Hungarian civilian populations are being driven away from their places of residence. In addition to refugees from other countries, Hungary already has thirty thousand Yugoslav refugees, of whom only ten per cent are Hungarians. Our country finds it increasingly difficult to manage the manifold human and financial issues of this crisis.

It is in our basic interest that the crisis enveloping our southern neighbour will be resolved by political means and in a democratic way, in accordance with the principles laid down in the Helsinki and Paris documents and the UN Charter. Similarly to the other participants of the CSCE, Hungary supports the mediating efforts of the European Union, including the activity of the Hague Peace Conference. In this regard, I must stipulate that it is essential

to include the representatives of the Albanian and Hungarian as well as other concerned ethnic minorities institutionally in the resolution of the conflict, and to take their just aspirations into account. We believe that the crisis in Yugoslavia can only be resolved in the long term by simultaneously applying the right of nations to self-determination, as well as universal human and national minority rights.

We welcome Resolution 713 of the UN Security Council, which declares that the Yugoslav crisis threatens international peace and security and which expresses its concern about the consequences of the crisis affecting the countries of the region, especially the border areas of neighbouring states. It also specifies that any violent territorial change within Yugoslavia is unacceptable and pledges full support for the peace efforts of the European Union and the CSCE.

We are convinced that the international community and all those participating in the Yugoslav peace process must draw the indicated conclusions from the situation caused by the bloody violence and act according to the actual conditions.

It is in the universal interest of the whole world that crises and tensions in Europe be resolved as soon as possible and that a united and stable Europe be established, which can act as a stabilising force in neighbouring regions and beyond. In the pursuit of this process the UN will have significant responsibilities to perform in the near future.

Glancing beyond Europe, the region of which Hungary forms a part, we can witness the continuation of positive processes and changes. Our bipolar world has become multi-polar. The end of the Cold War made it possible for regional conflicts, which earlier represented sharp opposition and rivalry, to become the subject of co-operation between the superpowers. Thus there are more favourable opportunities than in the past to settle regional conflicts of potential destabilising effect by the use of political means.

Paradoxically, the beginning of this new era is signalled by a broad coalition of nations in connection with a war, the Gulf War. During the Gulf crisis unprecedented international co-operation, brought about to protect international law, can be regarded as the first practical manifestation of global co-operation of partners following the Cold War antagonisms. We also regard the experience of the war as a milestone, and one which is exemplary in terms of the UN possibilities regarding conflict management and role-taking. Since the foundation of the world organisation this has, in reality, been the first occasion to enforce keeping to the principles of inter-state relations with "all necessary

means”, namely to apply the UN’s collective security function, which in practice had existed to date only on paper. In connection with this, as a member of the community of democratic nations, we are proud of having been able to contribute to the victory of the allied forces liberating occupied Kuwait, even to a small degree considering our modest means.

We are convinced that the sanctions against Iraq must be in force as long as the Iraqi government fails to fully meet all its obligations stipulated in the resolutions of the UN Security Council. A particular consequence of the Gulf War is that it has created a more favourable situation for a diplomatic solution of the Middle East conflict, which has spanned several decades. We hope that as a result of changes in the standpoint and behaviour of the respective parties on the basis of UN Security Council resolutions, the obstacles to creating a comprehensive, just and lasting peace can be removed. On our part, we are determined to support the idea of calling a Middle East peace conference and in parallel beginning direct negotiations between those involved in the conflict.

The principle of peoples’ self-determination cannot be applied selectively. Achieving peace in the Middle East, among other issues, is possible by taking these principles into account. Thus it is an urgent task for the UN General Assembly to overrule its resolution of 1975 concerning Zionism. Zionism is the philosophy of the Jewish people’s self-determination and founding of their state. Thus this UN resolution questions the fundamental rights of the Jewish people.

As we approach the end of the 20th century, human and minority rights are increasingly taking their worthy place in the world of inter-state relations, through the growing ideas of freedom and democracy.

The international protection of human rights and fundamental rights of freedom are accordingly among the priorities of Hungarian foreign policy, which therefore also includes the unequivocal accountability for the execution of liabilities assumed voluntarily by states in this respect, independently of the country in which such rights might have been violated. This policy of ours cannot be separated from promoting a joint international position for the active protection of national minority rights.

In agreement with other democratic countries, we represent the determined viewpoint that the violation of human and minority rights cannot constitute the exclusive internal affairs of a country. The UN has achieved several results in changing the behaviour of governments illegally secluding themselves

from international accountability. It is unfortunate, however, that the principle whereby the UN legitimately acts in the interest of respecting human rights is not universally accepted. We think that when the world organisation takes steps concerning the above, this must be seen and accepted as a helping hand, not as the accusing finger. This also leads us to support holding a World Conference on Human Rights in Berlin in 1993.

One third of Hungarians, one of the largest national minorities amounting to many millions, have lived outside the borders of Hungary for seven decades. In accordance with her international obligations, the Hungarian government pays special attention to the fate of Hungarians and, indeed, every minority, and to the enforcement of their human and minority rights. We support and urge the international community to assume a role in ensuring that these rights are realised. Therefore, we will not hesitate to use international forums, in addition to bilateral relations, to establish responsibility and eliminate the violation of human rights.

Under the present, in many respects transitional, but basically favourably changed circumstances, this is the first time since its foundation that this world organisation has had the opportunity of fulfilling in practice the principles and aims stipulated in its Charter. With respect to recently achieved successes and results in the maintenance of international peace and security, world public opinion has increasing trust in the UN and demands the strengthening of the world organisation's role and activity. Mr Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, the retiring General-Secretary of the UN, has played an outstanding role in the above and I would like to express my government's genuine recognition for his ten years of activity.

The changed international circumstances present a new situation for the United Nations. The present structure of the organisation still reflects the post-World War II world image. The world organisation has to face new challenges and tasks which require reform and adjustment to the changed circumstances. The UN has as much power as its member states provide. Therefore, member states and major powers must provide to the UN adequate authority not only to exercise rights but also the ability to enforce these rights. The organisation has never had such a responsibility and has never had the opportunity as now, when the bipolar world has ceased to exist.

We welcome the concrete and brave initiative US President Bush recently made to reduce nuclear weaponry significantly as an innovative manifestation of the responsibility leading powers have. We also regard it as encouraging

that the Soviet leadership also expressed a similar willingness. We believe that these steps are heralding a more secure new world.

The UN is likely to have an increasingly significant role in the last decade of this millennium and in the first decade of the next. It must face broad international problems, which include transforming military industry to peaceful aims, reducing the exorbitant differences in economic development, the demographic explosion, the destruction of the natural environment, and the worldwide realisation of human rights.

The UN can participate effectively in resolving these global problems only if it becomes a modern, dynamic, flexible and efficient organisation. The Hungarian government supports continuous change in this direction with all its means.

NATO – A KEY TO STABILITY IN EUROPE

On 28 October 1991, József Antall was the first from among the heads of government of member states of the former Warsaw Treaty to participate in a meeting of NATO's Council of Ministers, and to have talks with Secretary-General Manfred Wörner. Ministers of Defence and Foreign Affairs of NATO countries are members of the Council of Ministers and the meeting was held at the NATO Headquarters in Brussels.

It is a special honour for me to address you. I will always remember a few great moments in my life. One of these was when I could put forward the proposal for the revision and dissolution of the Warsaw Treaty in Moscow last year and then when I signed the document on the dissolution of the Warsaw Treaty in July this year. It is also an important moment that I am the first from among the heads of states or governments of the former communist countries to be able to enter this building. This is a special experience for me because Hungary took to arms in 1956 to execute this political orientation, thousands sacrificed their life for it and two hundred thousand people fled Hungary. I am one of the participants who remained in Hungary and tried to implement the political will of 1956 at home. What is extraordinary is that I am fortunate enough personally to be able to realise this programme, and that I was in the same building in the days of October and November 1956 where I am working as Prime Minister now.

It is also a special pleasure for me that we could enjoy your sympathy in the struggle when we tried to prepare the democratic change with peaceful means in 1988, 1989 and 1990. Right here and now there are politicians – Your Excellencies, the German and French Minister of Foreign Affairs – whom I met as one of the leaders of the opposition already in 1988–89. Sometimes their moderating advice, sometimes their encouragement, but always their attention especially meant support for us. Mr Secretary-General's interest and the encouragement of the heads of states and governments of the free world, and, I can readily say, their anxious sympathy gave us a special strength to implement the changes in a most determined way. Our revolution, the 35th anniversary of which we have just commemorated, was crushed in 1956. However,

recently we were able to celebrate for the first time the fact that no Soviet troops were in Hungary.

We are going through historic changes: the communist world system has collapsed, the Soviet Union has changed. The Soviet Union and Soviet Russia, which were created in 1917, have definitely ceased. Unfortunately the world cannot easily handle it. Perhaps I will not offend you by saying, that 74 years have not been sufficient for the world to prepare for the collapse of communist systems. You have prepared in a military sense for what would happen if there was an attack, but no preparation has been made in the case of collapse. This is our big question.

We are committed to European integration and perhaps I need not emphasise my personal commitment having received the Schuman Prize. But I must say that European integration is inconceivable without transatlantic co-operation. Two world wars prove, even if certain NATO members had opposed one another then, that the marked presence of the United States and Canada is vital for European security. NATO is the cornerstone of European stability for us. Although we highly esteem international agreements, Helsinki and the CSCE, still we regard NATO as the effective security organisation.

I would also like to emphasise that the internal and external stability of the new democracies is also an economic issue, namely democracy and the market economy go together. We must also emphasise that besides national self-determination and human rights, securing minority rights, with respect to both personal and territorial autonomy, is essentially connected to security issues in our region.

A peaceful way of ensuring internal change and democratisation in the Soviet Union is in our fundamental interest. We are striving to have good neighbourly relations with the Soviet Union and its member republics. However, I must also emphasise – and allow me to quote myself and repeat what I said at the Paris summit meeting – that armies without political control represent the biggest danger in the region. A Western newspaper reported that General Yazov looked at me sharply from the other side of the table when I talked about these issues. Today General Yazov is in prison wearing a track suit, but I can give a speech to you. This is a merit due to NATO.

I would also like to say that this problem has not only been highlighted by the Soviet coup attempt but is significantly marked by the internal crisis in Yugoslavia. In that country the constitutional head of state, the official chief of command, President Mesic, has not been able to give valid commands to the

army and the jointly connected guerrilla forces, and Prime Minister Markovic has no influence on the military. The basic problem of this region is that similar situations can occur since hunger, misery and economic deterioration are bad pointers, and we cannot be optimistic in this respect for the long run – the danger of anarchy and a military coup is present. There is nothing more important than to adopt the necessary security measures and to maintain a stable NATO. I think all efforts must be made to resolve the Yugoslav issue. We fully support all the initiatives of the European Union and the negotiations which are now underway. We supported from the very beginning the idea that the United States and the Soviet Union take an active part in resolving the Yugoslav question.

I would strongly underline that we welcomed the Genscher–Baker initiative. The three countries, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, who want to join the European Union and continue accession talks, regard it as extremely important and welcome that NATO is concerned with short-term ideas related to the institutionalisation of the present liaison. We think that these three countries, even though they cannot be separated from the region and do not want to pursue a selfish political line, have played a special role in pushing back the Soviet influence for decades. Having striven to defeat world communism with revolutions, freedom struggles and reform politics they deserve special treatment whereby the western world relates to these three countries with particular responsibility. We think that the fact that these three countries are conducting promising accession negotiations with the European Union must be reflected in their relations with NATO. We would like to emphasise this interest and responsibility and, as has been said, making it formal and institutional will be the subject and task of your meeting in Rome.

We consider it vitally important that NATO should feel its responsibility to stand up against aggression and the violation of borders. But naturally NATO cannot take on the resolution of ethnic problems and minority issues or of such domestic political problems which do not belong to its tasks and work. Other organisations are there to do that. NATO does not exist to resolve classical civil wars, but we think that in the case of European states, which are independent or becoming so, standing up against aggression counts among the tasks of the organisation, since only thus can the security of Europe be guaranteed.

The region our three countries represent in Central Europe is also extremely important for NATO from a security aspect. It is enough to consider that the

south-eastern wing of NATO, primarily Turkey, is wedged in the strife-torn Middle East region, and Turkey may still have an outstandingly significant political and strategic role regarding the southern Muslim republics of the Soviet Union, whose populations include Turkic peoples. Examining this south-eastern wing and its military and geopolitical position, I think that Central Europe also represents an indispensable and vital background factor. This is well signalled by the fact that our air space was continuously used for supplies and reinforcement during the Gulf War. But I must also mention that besides Turkey, Greece in the same region has a key role in another respect, both in the Middle East and in the unstable Balkan region. This makes co-operation important from the point of view of Greece. We esteem the role which Greece may play.

I think it is an important fact that NATO not only represents the western part of Europe and the western part of Central Europe. It is worth paying attention to the fact that this region from Finland to Greece should be an important stabilising region as the anteroom of NATO in the sense of security.

Finally, I must again emphasise our commitment to European unity, a unity which cannot be separated from the Atlantic idea. I have not come to ask for something you may refuse. But I am here to ask for your goodwill and to be at your disposal with my possible answers to provide you with information about our region.

Thank you for having defended the western part of Europe. The foundation of NATO in 1949 was always a source of hope for people behind the Iron Curtain. We knew that if Western Europe could not remain stable, if North American presence would cease in Europe, then there wouldn't be any solid ground left for us to base our hopes upon.

TIES THAT BIND – THE VISEGRÁD SUMMIT

Address delivered by the Prime Minister of Hungary at the Prague Summit of the Visegrád Three¹⁸¹ (Prague, 6 May 1992)

It would be superfluous of me to repeat the fine words of my esteemed colleagues, though I naturally agree with what they said. I would like to take this opportunity to highlight and to underline some matters. I find it extremely important that the Foreign Ministers and the representatives of the European Community continued yesterday with their fruitful negotiations. This greatly eases our tasks.

The question is always raised: What exactly is it that binds us together? What first binds us together is historical tradition, together with memories, both good and bad. Naturally, geographical proximity also binds us, providing the opportunity for economic co-operation. The third thing that binds us together is the Euro-Atlantic security system, which is a matter of absolute necessity for us. The fourth tie that binds is practical one. We are sitting together in the waiting room of the European Community. That association agreement which we all signed onto together compels us to co-operate in our common interest.

Firstly, it is my conviction that we must also – as I mentioned in preliminary discussions with the other presidents – agree to co-ordinate and harmonise our formal applications for full membership. These applications may be presented parallelly, but it would certainly make sense to act in concert and not as rivals. This would give us increased weight and is also very important to the EC. If we come to an agreement on this point it would be a very substantial achievement. Secondly, we should continuously co-ordinate our policies on NATO. I needn't go into details on why this is so important for us, but co-ordination on this issue is every bit as crucial as it is in case of the Western European Union.

¹⁸¹ Recalling also the historical meeting of the Czech, Polish and Hungarian kings in Visegrád in 1335, the three Central European countries: Czechoslovakia (later the Czech Republic and Slovakia), Poland and Hungary met on 15 February 1991 and created the Visegrád Co-operation. The immediate aim was to leave or dissolve the Warsaw Pact and to speed up integration with the Western institutions. Today it is a consultative institution, very active in the field of culture.

Following the Maastricht Summit, we must all be aware, as we are here at this table, that within the European Community there is not complete agreement on every question. Formally, everybody agrees but there are differences of emphasis (on currency, on certain economic questions, in questions arising from the state of the development of the different regions, in the degree of sovereignty, etc.). We must, therefore, recognise that we will not be joining the European Community of 1992 but rather the European Community of the end of this century. We must prepare for this. It is thus very important that together, as one, we follow continuously the development of the European Community. At the same time we must prepare ourselves for the European Community of the future and work together accordingly with the member states of the European Community. It is very important that we do everything possible to adjust to the norms of the European Community in our economic systems, in our legal institutions, in education and in all the minor issues, like patents and others, which are indispensable if we want to be deserving members of the European Community.

It is probable, indeed certain, that Austria, Sweden and perhaps even Norway and Finland will precede us. It is only after these states that our turn comes, but this time will not be lost if we spend it preparing. Until that time comes we must work together, and together we must welcome the very significant fact that the European Community and EFTA were able to come to an agreement (except in agricultural questions). This enormous European space represents an economic unit of huge significance in world history. It behoves us, therefore to consider the issue in this light.

President Walesa pointed how important it is that we play a role in the assistance the West is extending to the Community of Independent States, the former Soviet Union. We really must make sure that we are compensated in some manner, at least to a limited degree, for the losses suffered directly by the economies of our countries. In other words relief supplies should be bought from us as well. The West will be helping the former Soviet Union in two ways: short-term aid which can be likened to putting out a fire (we can get involved in this too); and assistance of a strategic nature, the precondition of which being that such structural change be carried out and such an economic system be created in the region that further capital investment makes sense.

It is in the interests of our three countries, which have lived through so much, that here in Central-Eastern Europe and in the Balkans there be peace and orderly relations. It is also in our interest that on the territory of the Czar's

Russia, or of you prefer, on that of the successor states of the Soviet Union, market economies be developed and the rule of constitutional law be established. At the same time, it would be a colossal mistake on our part to believe that there aren't dangers. Despite our best wishes the danger always remains that forces, be they among the politician or in the army, may make attempts in the coming years or decades to disrupt these developments. It is imperative that we work together to block any such attempts as we will be first ones affected by any negative tendencies cropping up in the region.

It would be naive to hope that everybody will disavow from one moment to the next political and foreign political aspirations that have been around for centuries. For this reason we must stand together and follow a common policy. That policy is not directed against anyone; instead, it means that we should handle these issues in solidarity with each other. Moreover, we all must rebuild societies that were totally dominated by the communist system – politically, economically and socially. We have many similar experiences, similar problems. We mustn't have any illusions that the old nomenclature has given up everything for good, that they won't try – under changed circumstances and within a meritocratic system – to hold on to some of their power and thus regain some of what they lost. It is our duty as committed democrats to stand up to this. It is vitally important the word see not only the nuclear danger presented by the break-up of the Soviet Union – the main danger if it goes unchecked – but also the dangers posed by conventional weapons and, even worse, the long-term danger of armed forces controlled neither politically nor legally. This danger can be seen in miniature in the example of Yugoslavia, and it could occur on a large scale in the territories of the former Soviet Union.

Another problem is the intransigence of the Yugoslav question. I do not wish to look back one or two years to when our countries gave so many signs and so many warnings to the world. I truly believe that the world did not listen to us. If it had paid closer attentions to our opinions on the issue, we would all be much closer to a solution to Yugoslav question.

The Yugoslav question is not simply an issue for Central Europe and the Balkans. Yugoslavia is a meeting point of three religions, three cultures, three political cultures and a battleground of at least two, perhaps three, ideological and political trends which will continue to have an impact on the world into the next century. The world cannot ignore this. This is where Western Christianity meets Eastern Christianity and both meet Islam. At the present this facet is not manifesting itself so sharply, but if the crisis is allowed to protract,

the situation will polarise and escalate and there could be unpredictable consequences for the relations between Christianity and Islam in Europe.

Another issue, intertwined with the Yugoslav question, also must be finally settled. If the world has recognised the independence and sovereignty of its member states, then an army which remains without permission on the soil of another sovereign country and wages battles there is committing an act of aggression. For this reason we consider it untenable that members of the civil population of Serbia, including its Voivodina province¹⁸², should be called up to take part in military operations on the territory of countries recognised by the European Community and the countries of Europe to be sovereign and independent. This must be unanimously opposed, or else we are all guilty of perfidy and our behavior is ambivalent.

We regard it as crucial that in this spirit the Visegrád Three widen its co-operation. We value very highly the co-operation achieved up till now. We are honestly disappointed in those that don't appreciate its significance and who believe that by disregarding it they can more quickly, and separately, enter the family of the European Community. We are disappointed, too, in those who feel that the Visegrád Three is a triple obstacle to rapid integration into NATO. It is our opinion that these organisations will more readily receive us together. Whoever sees advantage in following a separate path will sober up in a few months' time.

In this spirit I welcome your invitation. Every conflict in the minor questions, every problem of detail is dwarfed by these big issues. If we wish to solve these together then we must not lower our eyes but stand up for not only national independence but political democracy and the free market economy as well. We must not allow any group of our countries, political or otherwise, whether voluntarily or out of selfish motives, to involve itself to the detriment of the Visegrád Three in a co-operation arrangement antithetical to these fundamental principles. Prague must be a symbol to us, as it is here that our many centuries of history come together.

¹⁸² This region (in Hungarian *Vajdaság* or in a wider sense *Délvidék*), where the relative majority of the population was Hungarian, used to be a part of historic Hungary but was detached in the Trianon Peace Treaty of 1920 and assigned to Yugoslavia. Today it is a semi-autonomous province of Serbia, with a significant (14 per cent) Hungarian minority.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF EAST-CENTRAL EUROPE

The following is a speech by dr. József Antall, Prime Minister of the Republic of Hungary, at the international conference entitled „The Transformation of Eastern and Central Europe. Appraisal and Prospects” (Budapest, 6 June 1992)

Allow me to express in particular how delighted I am to see that representatives of parties which uphold our common values have arrived here from all parts of Europe.

Our discussion today is basically concerned with the transformation of the East-Central European region. But before turning to this, I would like in a few words to touch upon some general problems inseparable from our special, regional problems.

(I) One such question is basically the problem-area of parliamentary democracy in the world. Parliamentary democracy anywhere in the world works so long as the vast majority of society feels secure, at least in economic and welfare terms. So if we want the world, the greater part of the world, to operate as a democracy, a representative parliamentary democracy, it is an indispensable condition that society should feel a measure of economic and social security. We have witnessed in the 20th century a crisis of the parliamentary democracies and their defeat at the hands of various totalitarian systems. Unless there was violent outside intervention, the basic problem in these cases was invariably the unresolved economic and social questions and the accompanying moral and spiritual crisis. For this very reason our parties, our trends, as the guardians of traditional European democratic values, the very parties that have had nothing to do in any sense with Marxism, let alone Marxism–Leninism, pursue a realistic and very decisive policy guided by the true European values. We aim to bring about a miracle, so that instead of the democracies pursuing a reactive, defensive policy, we become capable as democrats of an offensive policy and in foreign-policy and security matters would pursue a pre-emptive, preventive policy.

The lesson of the 20th century is that the biggest problem, the bane of the democracies has always been their pursuit of a defensive policy, always remaining on the defensive and only reacting after the event. The affluent countries, the stable countries were able to survive that; they managed to pull themselves together, and overcoming their initial disadvantages, succeed in the end. But there is no chance for that in our region or in this contracted world. We have to think ahead and define our objectives in advance.

The other point I would like to underline concerns the parties in the parliamentary democracies. Parliamentary democracies cannot function without well-organised political parties, in fact without a well-organised multi-party system. If one looks at the world, it can be seen that sympathy even for parties which have been established for decades, operating well, has declined in a significant part of society. Looking from East-Central Europe, we envy you, of course, envy the developed party structure and smoothly running parties, but we also see the phenomena represented by the new movements known as protest parties. We see even in the Western half of the world, the half with the democratic traditions, a challenge from society to which the traditional political parties are not always able to respond. It is vital for the democratic parties in the parliamentary systems constantly to regenerate themselves intellectually and escape from the problem of bureaucratisation and 'becoming empty'.

This is not yet our primary problem in the Eastern half of Europe. Here it is not yet a matter of large, established political parties becoming tired or being eroded in power, or not reacting nimbly enough to the wishes of new generations. The problem we still have to tackle is that the frames of the political parties have yet to develop adequately and their organisations are not really functioning. But although the problems are not identical, attention must be given in all parliamentary democracies, whether they have operated for decades or whether they are new, present-day democracies, to the organisation of the political parties and to their intellectual and substantive issues and programmes, and to a search for co-operation with other organisations in society. In other words the parties must have the ability to respond to the problems of the end of this century, or if you like, the turn of the millennium.

Society in both the advanced industrial countries and our region has undergone changes in recent decades that affect the structure of the economy and society as a whole. New problems are posed for us all by the fact that heavy industry, sectors employing vast masses of workers, has lost ground everywhere, from America to Europe, and likewise by the radical fall in the number of

those working on the land. Society in the Western world presents an entirely new social image as a result of today's new scientific and technical revolution. The working class in the traditional sense that Marx envisaged and prophesied has disappeared. Meanwhile the voting constituency is changing politically, and in East and West alike we have to tackle new problems.

(II) In a way the years 1987–89, and in part up to 1990, were a period of doubt in the free world: would communism really fall? Would the Soviet Union really collapse? And was the world ready for it? My answer to that is no. So those years were years of doubt about the coming of the transformation. As usually happens, the doubt was followed by a period of excessive optimism and illusions.

In a sense the domino-like collapse in 1989–91 of the communist systems in the Eastern region, through revolutions or peaceful transition, briefly fostered an illusion in the free world that the basic problem was solved: the great enemy had fallen, and so an easier period of history would ensue. Less would need to be spent on soldiers, and defence would be less important. Then it was hoped by the peoples concerned as well that the collapse of communism would be followed by the higher standard of living desired by the East as it looked westward.

After that came a period of disillusionment in these countries, because the collapse of the political systems, the world communist system, does not immediately create a welfare society; in fact the structural transformation can temporarily entail a fall in the standard of living.

I believe this lack of preparation, the fact that world awaited the collapse of communism but failed to prepare for it, also points to certain internal structural disorders in the democracies. We must do something about this, because there have been dire examples and dire consequences in the 20th century of the democracies not being well prepared, not being decisive enough, not going on the offensive when required, not pursuing a preventive foreign policy, but merely trailing along behind events. So in the West and the East we must reinforce and consolidate the parliamentary systems and find out how they can be made as effective as possible.

The security of the world forms a uniform whole. At today's technical level, in an age of nuclear war and nuclear threats, it can no longer be assumed that any global conflict would only affect particular areas. The danger of global conflicts has existed for decades, and we cannot be lulled by the lucky fact that no

mistake that might have led to a third world war was ever made over those decades. So we must not succumb to a feeling that all danger has passed with the break-up of the Soviet Union and the collapse of the world communist system, and that we can now live in peace. I think the danger is not over; only that one form of the danger has passed. For one thing there remains the danger that political changes in the territory of the former Soviet Union will lead to defeat or loss of ground for the reformers.

The other danger is that internal conflicts in the territory of the former Soviet Union can always escalate. Naturally, the countries in the territory of the former Soviet Union still constitute huge territories with huge resources, even though they now feature separately, but with their vast social problems they also amount to grave sources of danger to Europe and the whole world. One thing we must certainly all accept is that Russia, whatever its political system, is among the great powers in Europe, indeed in Eurasia. And Russia always has its own aims, its own traditions, and its resources. Russia will always remain a leading force to be reckoned with, even if it is suffering from a serious illness today.

Nor must we forget that Ukraine alone is a country of the same order of magnitude as the large European countries.

(III) Taking all this into account, I consider it most important to underline that the Western world must realise how the break-up of Soviet Union and the collapse of its Eastern military bloc does not render either NATO or the American presence in Europe in the last superfluous. In fact the constitutionally and politically uncontrolled nuclear and conventional armed forces pose no less a danger in the region than the previous situation. For this reason it has never been more important for the defence and security systems to remain firm, and for the Western European Union, as one of the major organisations of European security, to form the European pillar of a united NATO, because if we do not maintain our stable security system, the presence of such uncontrolled armies and the old daydreams of certain politicians and generals could encourage them to embark on adventures. Under no circumstances would we consider it right to pursue a policy that could shed any doubt on the legitimacy of America's presence in Europe, or worse stills reinforce the tendency towards isolationism in America. We are well aware that lack of foreign political awareness in America has caused the isolationist trend to strengthen there on more than one occasion. We Europeans must take special care that this does not

occur, and that the international commitment of the Americans to an American presence in Europe meets with understanding from the American people and sympathy from the Europeans.

The other thing that is extremely important is to prevent any reawakening of old reflexes in Europe with the lapse of the earlier direct Soviet threat and communist danger, or at least the assumed abatement of that danger. We deem it most important that the firm sense of alliance forged earlier under the common danger should be preserved by Europe's leading countries – Germany, Great Britain, France, Italy, and the list could continue –, the great European nations that played a leading part in bringing European culture into being coupled with the smaller countries that established our European culture and civilisation.

It is vital for the sense of British, French, German and Italian solidarity that emerged in the Cold War to remain firm and develop further in the European Community, the European Union. There will always be political groups and forces in the coming years that yield to the temptation of prising things apart and succumb to certain nationalist overtones. We must not let this happen. Allow me to say this in the name of a small country – and certainly many will agree with me – in the name of a nation as whose head of government I can call it one of the greatest experiences in my life to be at once the friend of the German, French, British, Italian and other heads of government, and not need to choose which line to follow. We can at once be friends of the various European nations and friends of America, and our geopolitical situation does not oblige us to choose the countries with which we wish to act in the name of the transatlantic ideal and Europe.

(IV) The next group of questions on which I would like to speak is the period of transformation. What is actually meant by the transformation that we simplify by calling the collapse of the communist systems? It produces a new situation not simply because the communist system has fallen, but because it entails the reintegration into Europe – or if you like into the Atlantic region – peoples who also bring in other systems of traditions. Clearly there cannot be drawn a distinction whether certain countries or the cultures of certain countries do or do not deserve to be a part of this. The new situation also means that of the three great linguistic families of Europe, the German and Latin peoples who have made up Western Europe and the European Community so far are now joined by the Slav world, and numerous new problems and new

elements enter the greater Europe along with this Slav world. I say this as the son of a people who are not Latin, German or Slav. We are distinct, and perhaps in that sense we can be dispassionate observers.

The other new element is that contact is made with countries where there appears alongside traditional Western Christianity – I use the term Western Christianity in a cultural, intellectual, not a religious sense – the great Byzantine culture, another system of traditions, another way of thinking, another philosophy. So apart from the communist world collapsing, this means integration by parts of Europe that have constituted for centuries another tendency that Europe must likewise digest. A new mode of European thinking must apply, with a new pluralism of thinking.

Viewing these questions in this light, the question certainly arises as to how this transformation can make our parties capable of being and remaining the leading force in Europe, without denying that the system of political rotation is natural. The political parties that never espoused even the revised version of Marxism, but supported basic Christian principles and embraced the achievements of 19th century liberal constitutionalism, managed to combine the market economy with the emerging social-welfare concept. These political parties that deemed it important to retain true national values, the national independence of peoples and national character, will be able to remain a leading force in the coming years, both in the western half of Europe and in our region as well.

These problems are not only presenting a difficulty for our trend, the challenge of the end of the century or the turn of the millennium. They will also place a new situation before our rivals, social democracy. The social democrats must address the problem of what the transformation of the world, the scientific and technical revolution and the transformation of society signify. They must also address the problem of what is entailed in the disappearance of existing socialism and the end of Soviet Union. A great many things may happen, including the strengthening of the radical Left. Even the phenomenon of political polarisation may occur either in the western or the eastern half of Europe. So it is extremely important for the political forces that form the main strength behind democracy to have striking power and be on the offensive in these difficult years.

(V) The problems in the eastern half of Europe, in East-Central Europe, are not uniform. Nor was the level of development the same before the turning

point in 1989–90. Dictators, of course, are still dictators, even if they are tougher in one place and milder in other. Dictatorship in itself and state socialism or the communist system in its basic attributes always signify the same thing, whether the regime is tougher or milder, even if there is a great difference in terms of the lives of individual people.

Hungary is taking a relatively luckier course of transformation, because we are carrying out the transformation without ever having entered into a coalition with the former state party or taken part in the work of the previous government. There was an opportunity in 1989 of our being drawn into the work of government, as happened in other countries. This we declined, allowing instead the last government to lead the country until the elections. A compromise was struck in which there was dialogue with the previous administration and its caretaker role, and our political parties undertook to form the government only when we were in possession of 60 per cent of the parliamentary seats after a free election. We formed an administration in which no member of the government has ever been the member of the communist party. This difference compared with all other East-Central European countries amounts to one of the characteristics of our political transformation. I consider it important to stress this because it is often forgotten. It is not a generalisation about 'party membership' but a matter of principle.

Our government and political force must strive in the whole region in the coming period to take the transformation consistently, and handle the accompanying social tensions.

But our friends in the West, in America or wherever must realise that the transformation in these countries is accompanied by very grave dangers. Society will not easily accept the inevitable difficulties of transitional times.

They have grown accustomed to the cossetting of a paternalist state, and although the care was at a low level by Western standards, it still meant that individuals felt secure about their jobs, about provision for their children from the kindergarten to the university, and about a less than high level of medical provision. Society in these countries lived through these decades in the knowledge that if people remained depoliticised and expressed no opinions, they could survive the dictatorship, at least in the final years. Today they feel disillusioned. Their feeling is that everything which represented basic security for them should have been kept, and in addition they would like to have received all the advantages of a Western consumer society, a Western market economy.

This issue is best appreciated, I think, in Germany, where the economic system of West Germany, built up with great diligence over many decades, meets in one country with the eastern half of Germany, which wants to resolve the problem by changing from one day to the next to the living conditions enjoyed by their compatriots in West Germany. Germany in this sense is a good model of what Europe's unification signifies. It is not fortuitous that we always said: the unity of Germany is the basic question in the unity of Europe. Now too we can say the unity of Germany symbolises all the problems entailed in the unity of Europe. These issues cannot be resolved without determination on our part and help from the world.

(VI) We considered it most important in the transitional period – and here I speak only in the name of the Hungarian government and the Hungarian parties whose representatives are sitting here – to concentrate all our energies between 1989 and 1991 on achieving the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary. Our Western friends often failed to see why we put such emphasis on this, why we pressed for it so hard, and why we considered it so important that it should occur as soon as possible. Nor did they always understand why we considered it so important that the Warsaw Pact should be dissolved. Why was it so important to us to put forward in Moscow in July 1990 our desires concerning the re-examination and dissolution of the Warsaw Pact? Why did we immediately recall our liaison officers, and why did we refuse to take part in military exercises? Why did we do all that, and why at the same time were we the only ones to advocate the immediate dissolution of Comecon without a successor organisation?

I can say after the event that they often thought our intentions were too fast. They tried to reassure us or slow us down, saying we should not rush ahead so fast. I must also say we did rush ahead and force things. We wanted, if you like, to carry these things out at a forced pace.

There was a moment when I and my government felt that the people of Hungary, and perhaps others as well, clearly understood the forced pace – at the time of the Soviet coup in August 1991. We had always feared there might be an event in our region entailing the danger that forces struggling for a reversal of events would still find support here. So our purpose was for Hungary to be not only independent, but free of all international organisational ties that had bound it earlier.

It would be mistaken to imagine that the communist nomenclature, the 'new class', had ceased to exist in the region just because it had dropped out of

the administration. The fact that the transition took place by peaceful means, not war, means the communist nomenclature in this region now lacks a faith and ideology, but in a pragmatic sense it remains as a system of interests. Their connections remain, their financial resources remain, and in fact, clad in other colours or sometimes borrowing another political legitimacy, they can by no means be considered harmless in the long term.

(VII) At the same time – I think I am justified in saying this – Hungary was one of the guards watching the situation in Yugoslavia. It is not hard to say why, because it is quite clear from our proximity. In the case of every neighbouring country, we considered the process of democratisation important, and we also deemed it important that human and minority rights should apply. To be frank we could reproach the world – and the world must recognise this – for not taking the Yugoslav question seriously enough, not sensing the grave danger of it in the last one-and-a-half to two years.

Some people have asked me what I ascribe the heightening of the Yugoslav problem to, why this internal conflict and civil war in Yugoslavia has ensued. My answer was that the situation would have occurred not long after Tito's death but for the presence of Soviet troops in Central Europe. This Yugoslav crisis is not a wonder. The problems that have now surfaced have always been potentially there, but the fact of a vast Soviet army being stationed in the whole region kept Yugoslavia together, even after Tito's death.

The Soviet transformation, the whole Gorbachev transformation, followed by the withdrawal of the Soviet army from the region, removed the binding force that countered the otherwise centrifugal forces in Yugoslavia. So it is no surprise that the conflict should have broken out now, instead there is a reason why it has only broken out now. This is integrally connected with the weakening of the Soviet positions and the Soviet withdrawal from the region.

If the world had paid adequate attention, the Yugoslav transformation and the solution of the Yugoslav problem would have gone better, and it might have been possible to avert the bloody civil war, about which we still do not know when or how it will be resolved.

I think the great transformation in East-Central Europe has already taken place. To sum up the analysis of this, first I must clearly say that the transformation gave a chance of success, i.e. offered an optimistic version of how this region might be free, giving this region a chance to integrate into Europe as a real democracy and a real market economy. But for the optimistic version to

succeed it requires cohesion from the world, activity by the European Community, EFTA and the whole security system, including NATO and so on – I will not list all – and constant political action and foresight. Otherwise the pessimistic version cannot be ruled out.

The pessimistic version is for the economic and social issues, compounded by ethnic and other problems, to lead to conflicts and create anarchic conditions, Yugoslavia being a good model. And if the political forces that survive in this region as remnants of the communist system, including the uncontrolled armies and the remnants of the nomenclature, get a chance, there is certainly a danger that we will have to reckon with the pessimistic version. Let us have no illusions that there are no generals or politicians who think in the same way as at the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in 1918, that one can temporarily evacuate territories, temporarily abandon positions, and regain these positions one day.

This is why I deem it so vital for the 'free world' – an expression we heard so much of from inside the Iron Curtain, and under which now we too list ourselves – to watch events with constant vigilance, solidarity and cohesion and be able to think on an international scale in terms of Europe and the whole Eurasian region.

(VIII) Having taken all this into account, a brief comment must also be made in the third point on the North-South problem. There is no century in European or world history when there was no chance of political forces exploiting grave economic and social conflicts. So the turn of the millennium and the 21st century may see the appearance of political tendencies reminiscent of the totalitarian trends in the 20th century. These may come in the North-South conflict, primarily among the various trends of fundamentalism. The danger of fundamentalism, notably in view of the unresolved and seemingly insoluble problems of the Third World, may entail grave conflicts for us, and Europe must be ready for this as well. For this reason we must basically consolidate our positions in the Atlantic region and within the framework of European unity, but our entire policy and world political orientation must extend uniformly over the world, because otherwise we cannot assess our own situation.

Thus the political consequences must be drawn, and the economic and financial structure of the world also has to be suited to the purpose, because there may arise questions about whether our present economic and financial system of institutions will suffice to resolve the problems we face in the extended world now before us. The world is 'one and indivisible' in this sense too, and

it is inconceivable in such a geographically quite small area as Europe for the region to be divided in two by a social iron curtain. If we cannot resolve in the eastern half the social problems that represent basic economic issues, the welfare of Western Europe will also be endangered, not just in the long term. Thus our region's problem becomes a pan-European and international problem.

HUNGARY'S ROLE IN A FREE EUROPE

The Prime Minister spoke about the state of the transformation of East-Central Europe, the mistakes of the West during the Cold War, and the need for preventive policies, at the Nuremberg Chamber of Industry and Commerce (Nuremberg, 24 June 1992)

I would first of all like to thank you for your invitation and cordial reception. I am most grateful for this opportunity of giving an account, in a short address delivered between these ancient walls, of the situation of Hungary two years after it regained its sovereignty, and the role it can play in a free Europe advancing towards unification.

I think I am justified in saying that a world system which was thought for decades to be unshakeable has undergone radical changes at a tempestuous speed. Since the end of the Cold War period, the world has seen freedom, democracy and constitutionalism steadily gaining ground. But this transformation is accompanied by enormous difficulties and tensions, and these are particularly tangible in the countries that suffered so much during the abortive experiment known as communism.

So what is actually meant by the transformation that we call for simplicity's sake the collapse of the communist systems? The situation is a new one not simply because the road to integration has been taken by regions of Europe that display a significant divergence in their mentality, language and culture, and have possessed these marked differences for centuries. A new mental outlook must apply in Europe under these circumstances, a new pluralism of outlook.

In my view the great transformation in East-Central Europe had good prospects when it took place. It presented an optimistic scenario in which this half of Europe would be free, and integrate into Europe under real democracy and a real market economy. For the optimistic scenario to prevail, it is essential to have the economic support that the member states of the European Communities and EFTA, along with the United States and Japan, are capable of providing, and the security guarantees that can only be extended if the transatlantic system and NATO remain. Should this support, of which both

ingredients are important, not be forthcoming, it is almost certain that the pessimistic scenario will prevail.

According to the pessimistic scenario, the political, economic and social conflicts in the region, compounded by ethnic problems which have always been present in a latent form over the last few decades, will produce anarchic conditions, of which the situation in the former Yugoslavia is a prime example. If the political forces that survive as a remnant of the communist system in Yugoslavia, the CIS states¹⁸³ or elsewhere, including the uncontrolled armies and the vestiges of the nomenclature, have a change of re-entering the scene, we must certainly reckon with the pessimistic scenario.

On these grounds I consider it extremely important for the 'free world' to follow events with ceaseless vigilance, solidarity and cohesion and be capable of thinking on an international scale, both in Europe and in the whole Eurasian region.

Instead of the transformation in East-Central Europe merely being followed by foreign policy, a preventive outlook with a strategic perspective is needed. The Western world, including the G7 and the international and European organisations, relied too much and too long on the so-called pragmatically minded 'reform communists'. Regrettably, the Western world in the last century has more than once committed in the case of other countries the error of betraying their true friends and those who shared their ideals, or not valuing them sufficiently, and co-operating with the representatives of violent, dictatorial forces. The world was unprepared for the fall of world communism and disintegration of the Soviet Union (merely advocating them verbally). So it undertook longer-term co-operation, and what can be called in some cases connivance, with the political forces that still clearly served communism in their policies and actions, although they were distancing themselves by then from the ideas of Marxism. We experienced numerous signs of this in Hungary, not only in past decades but in part of the period of transformation.

Europe is not merely a geographical concept. It is not simply the name of the continent where Hungary is among the countries to be found on the map as one moves in from its perimeters. Europe also signifies in a broader sense a specific historical culture that emerged as one of the cultures on the globe during the course of mankind's development. Along with its variety of elements

¹⁸³ CIS = Commonwealth of Independent States, the association of the former members of the Soviet Union, envisaged by Yeltsin and his circle in December 1991.

and all its multiplicity and range of tones, this culture has been bound together by common convergent development.

Among its many constituents during the course of its history were the Hungarian people and Hungary, whose culture was part of it and who found their place and role in this wider native land.

The Hungarian community was cut off from its natural environment for the four-and-a-half decades after the Second World War. After the attempt that ended tragically in 1956, it was only in the spring of 1990 that the way was cleared for us to occupy our rightful place in the community of free European nations. Our task then and now is nothing short of restoring democracy, instituting a smoothly operating social market economy, establishing new forms of political partnership with our immediate neighbours, identifying every opportunity for pan-European, regional and bilateral co-operation, and integrating into the political, security and economic system of the new Europe.

Our integration into Europe is taking place along several lines at once. With the signing of the treaty of association with the European Communities in December 1991 and the emergence of the associate relationship our political and economic integration with Western Europe has taken a decisive direction. We want to prepare ourselves for membership by studying the development taking place inside the EC, for we, along with the other two member-states of the Visegrád Three will presumably be joining the Community as it exists at the end of the century, not the 1991 Community.

I am convinced that the role and responsibility of NATO for maintaining the security of the world and Europe has only changed in character not that the wall dividing Europe has fallen. The Western world must realise that the disintegration of the Soviet Union and winding up of the Eastern military bloc on Hungary's initiative by no means ender either NATO or the American presence in Europe superfluous. In fact it has never been more important for the defence and security systems to remain firm, and for the Western European Union, as one of the major organisations of European security, to constitute the European pillar of a united NATO. We must beware that the bad old reflexes are not strengthened in Europe by the apparent passing of outside threat – reflexes that make the great European nations feel uncertain of each other, and managed in past centuries and this to turn our Europe, so often proclaimed to be shared into a battlefield and graveyard for heroes. The Hungarian government has placed its relations with NATO on a new footing in the recent period. The establishment of the North Atlantic Co-operation

Council and the guest status granted us in the North Atlantic Assembly offer excellent opportunities to develop a comprehensive system of security policy and military co-operation.

For Europe, which was most affected by the division after the Second World War and suffered the consequences of it for decades, the endorsement of the Paris Charter marked the peak of the Helsinki process. However, the conflicts that have ensued since the signing of the charter, with their increasingly tragic consequences, make it imperative to build up the CSCE process further and perfect the system of institutions. It is an urgent task for us, in my view, to reinforce the conflict-averting and crisis-managing ability of the CSCE process, to make it capable of ensuring civil political control over the armies, and last but not least, of guaranteeing human rights, including minority rights. This last is a fundamental security question too, moreover one for the whole of Europe.

Finally, we consider as an important task our legal integration within the framework of the Council of Europe. The Hungarian legal system is continuously adjusting to and harmonising with the legal system in the Western European countries. The assignment is not a simple one, for this process has taken place in Western Europe over a period of decades. We, by comparison, have a fraction of the time available to perform the task.

Recognizing the opportunities that institutional co-operation with countries traditionally in contact with each other can afford us, the Hungarian government has taken new initiatives to launch and reinforce regional co-operation in Central Europe. Conspicuous among these are the increasingly close and deep co-operation among the Visegrád Three, and also the Central European Initiative.¹⁸⁴

It is of the utmost importance for Hungary that a consistent implementation of the transformation in the successor states of the Soviet Union result in the development there of the institutional system of democracy and a welfare market economy. First, there remains a danger that political changes in the territory of the former Soviet Union will lead to defeat or loss of ground for the forces for reform. Secondly, it must also be recognised that the internal conflicts in the territory of the former Soviet Union can always escalate, which would represent a grave danger to Europe and the whole world.

¹⁸⁴ The Pentagone, later called Hexagone (see item 21), an organisation promoting economical, political, and cultural co-operation, created in 1989, was re-named in 1992 Central European Initiative. It now has eighteen member states.

In connection with the Yugoslav crises, Hungary has issued numerous indications and warnings in the last year and a half. The timing of the crisis is integrally connected with the weakening of the region. Very decisive measures are required, and everything must be done to end the civil war. One possible course is the application of the embargo, which can be expected to some extent to further political change and promote with appropriate sanctions the security of the republics whose independence has now been recognised. It is essential to ensure the presence of peacekeeping forces in areas that have not yet become theatres of war, including Voivodina, where we have a particular responsibility, of course, for the fate of the Hungarian minority. In giving unambiguous support to the sanctions, we cannot at the same time forget that the main burdens of them are borne by the neighbouring countries, which are already coping with grave economic and social difficulties, including to a large extent Hungary, which has already received a large number of refugees.

I think the circumstances mentioned confirm the truth in the statement that the transformation in the former communist countries is accompanied by extreme dangers. The situation arising with the outbreak of conflicts which have been suppressed for decades is exacerbated by the fact that society does not easily accept the inevitable hardships of the transitional period; it is unprepared for the realisation that the collapse of communism does not mean the instant introduction of a welfare society, and that the transformation may in fact be accompanied temporarily by a fall in the standard of living. I do not think I need to enlarge on this problem to you here in Germany.

We all know it is no easy task to reconstitute the general human, political, economic and social values after over forty years of dictatorship. There has never really been a historical case of the kind of transformation we must carry out in our region today.

Despite a deteriorating external economic environment, the Hungarian government has managed through its activity over the economy running and to stabilise and then significantly improve the country's financial position. Foreign interest in investing in Hungary has been motivated substantially by two facts; our position as the place in the region where the system of legal institutions for a market economy has developed most, and the country's political and economic stability. Despite the grave social conflicts and the significant level of unemployment impeding the process, the efforts so far have brought economic expansion within an attainable distance.

Maintenance of foreign investors' interest and support from our particularly important economic partners will remain a key issue for the Hungarian economy in the future. I would like to seize this opportunity as well to express sincere gratitude for the constant support received from the Bavarian government and the Bavarian economy.

The co-operation between the Free State of Bavaria and Hungary is undergoing a hitherto unprecedented development based on friendship and identical systems of values. The value of the goods turnover in 1991 approached DEM 2 billion. The bulk of the Bavarian firms investing in Hungary operate profitably there. Of course there can arise problems that cause inconvenience to our Bavarian partners, but I can assure you my government will do all it can to remove the remaining obstacles to the growth of foreign investment by perfecting the legal regulations.

Sigismund of Luxembourg, Hungarian King and Holy Roman Emperor, was obliged in 1431 to pawn one of his crowns here in the Nassau House to ease his liquidity problems.¹⁸⁵ I am sincerely glad to say I have not received instructions from my government to perform similar transactions during my present visit. I would like to hope this already reflects to some extent on the performance of the Hungarian economy and the diligence of the Hungarian workforce.

¹⁸⁵ Sigismund was the King of Hungary (1387–1437), and Holy Roman Emperor in 1414–1417. He was the first who started to organise a line of defence at the southern border of Hungary against the Ottoman Empire. Due to the expenses of such an enterprise, he was always in debt. To ease his liquidity problems, he pawned Hungary's north-eastern towns to Poland.

MESSAGE TO THE PARIS CONFERENCE ON ANTI-SEMITISM

The message, dated 24 June 1992, was sent to the Paris Conference organised by the UNESCO and the Wiesenthal Centre.

I have learnt with great pleasure about the conference organised by UNESCO and the Wiesenthal Centre, because I am deeply convinced that anti-Semitism, like all discrimination on racial, religious or any other basis of background, is incompatible with the system of democratic values, and can have no place in democratic societies.

This fundamental truth has been reinforced and made tragically memorable in Hungary's case, as in those of many other countries, by dire historical experiences. Several hundred thousands of our compatriots were ejected from the body of the nation at the time of the Second World War, were deprived of all their possessions, humiliated in their human dignity, deported, and robbed of their dearest treasure, their lives. All this bears down as a dreadful burden on the victims' contemporaries and posterity alike. A reckoning must be made not only for the survivors and the descendants of the victims, but for ourselves, that we may take part with cleansed souls in building the renewing Hungary of today.

We are aware that an end to hatred and prejudices will not come from one day to the next. But neither in Hungary nor in any other state that adopts the democratic system of values does freedom mean freedom to indulge in incitement and hatred. The good relations established by the Hungarian government agencies with domestic and international Jewish organisations provide a further safeguard, in addition to the effective laws, to ensure that we respond appropriately to all anti-Jewish manifestations that come to our notice.

I consider it especially important that the energies of peoples who during the change of system grapple with an immeasurably great task should not be diverted against one group or other among the country's citizens. I therefore think that great responsibility attaches to all who resort, either unthinkingly or intentionally, to anti-Semitism or any other form of negative and unjust discrimination.

The Hungarian government, motivated by its sense of historical responsibility and as a sincere advocate of democracy, gives its utmost support to preserving and fostering Jewish intellectual and cultural values, which belong to the common heritage of society. I think the general situation is well shown by the fact that since it became possible for everyone in Hungary to decide freely where, in which country to live, the Hungarian Jewish community has not availed itself of the chance to emigrate to a greater extent than other sections of the population.

My government considers it important that compensation for injustices perpetrated in past decades should extend also to individuals robbed of their freedom or lives between 1939 and 1945. We know that nothing can now replace a lost family member, but we wish to contribute to healing the painful wounds of the past and bringing about social redress. Hungary is so far the only country in our region to offer legal redress of this kind for injustices suffered during the Second World War.

We cannot forget our innocently murdered compatriots and we keep in mind their deeds and their deaths. Our martyrs of 1944, like the fallen of the 1956 revolution or those executed after it, are symbols of the Hungarian will to live.

The Hungarian government also intervenes in its international relations to combat discrimination against peoples or religious and ethnic groups. We are delighted that, after a forced break of more than two decades, we can now build up flourishing relations with the State of Israel. It is our belief that both the Jewish community in Hungary and the Hungarian-speaking citizens of Israel as a whole can play the role of a bridge between the two countries.

Signs of rising social intolerance, including some manifestations of anti-Semitism, have been visible in the last two years in many parts of the world, Eastern Europe regrettably being among them. In my view we must all speak out together against this. It is important that we do so while ourselves set an example of sensibility, tolerance and improvement, since the peoples of our region, including the Jewish communities, have gone through such grave trials and still face such hard tasks. We must not let the legacy of recent decades, and on many issues perhaps of several centuries, turn our peoples against each other again.

Allow me in this spirit to wish you great success in your work at the conference, and I trust this important forum, too, will contribute to better understanding among nations and the identification and elimination of the causes of prejudice.

WHAT EUROPE MEANS TO US

Hungary was the first country among the formerly communist-dominated countries to host a session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. Thus on 30 June 1992, in the Parliament, Prime Minister Antall acted as host to the participants, who included Mme. Lalumière, Secretary-General of the Council of Europe. The speech is full of insightful observations, including an urgent call to give more support for the nations that grapple with the grave problems of the economic transition.

It is a special honour for Hungary to be the first country in the former communist bloc to host a session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. We are especially delighted to welcome parliamentary delegates from various European countries in the building of the Hungarian National Assembly, in the chamber where the Lower House of Parliament used to convene, and where members found themselves face to face with the historic issues that challenged our relatively small country over the past century.

What I want to talk about is what Europe means to us. The issue of Europe, the vision of a United States of Europe, the definition of the boundaries of Europe are also on the agenda of this session. When talking about Europe, we take Europe as a broad concept embracing vast areas in a geographical, cultural and political sense, but first and foremost in terms of security.

When talking about the boundaries of Europe we have to consider various components such as geographical aspects, the ethnic groups that have emerged in this area over hundreds or even thousands of years, and finally culture and mentality. Our Europe is defined by these three factors: geographical, human, and cultural – the last one encompassing and conveying mentality. This mentality, this capacity for renewal, is without parallel in the history of the great civilisations. What distinguished the culture of the peoples of Europe from that of other civilisations was its significant internal intellectual cumulative capacity together with its openness. It never became isolated; thanks to its geographical position, it became a receptor of information and an absorber of knowledge coming from different directions.

The question confronting us today is what to do with our common heritage, and where to draw the boundaries of Europe. If on the one hand we say that Europe is equivalent to Western Christianity and the lay culture that evolved from it, then on the other we should rediscover Byzantine culture, which may, by virtue of its monolithic Caesaro-papism and its incomparable richness of emotions, complement European rationalism and, by exploring the depths of the soul, give fresh impetus to our Europe, in spite of the reservations we might entertain in a political sense. South-Eastern Europe is also a region of contact and co-operation with Islam.

On the other hand, the notion of Atlanticism, the idea of the unity of the Atlantic region, emerged in the 19th century. Atlanticism is an integral part of the modern European outlook, co-operation and exchange of ideas. To accomplish the unity of Europe with Atlanticism in the West and co-operation with the Eurasian region are objectives to be achieved in conjunction.

It gives me pleasure to learn that the value of all that Hungary has recently achieved in creating democracy and a market economy, and in setting up a modern European framework of institutions in general, is recognised in Europe. It also gives me pleasure to hear that recognition has been accorded not only to our views on human rights, but also to the handling of minority rights in Hungary.¹⁸⁶ We start out from the guaranteeing of human rights, but then proceed to seek a solution to the minority issue within our borders as well as beyond them. And I hasten to add that neither the handling of human rights issues, nor the handling of minority rights issues should be regarded as an internal affair of any country.

While touching upon these issues, I should also say a few words about the transition. Has the transition been accomplished?

At the outset we were doubtful and sceptical. We wondered whether the efforts intended to bring about reform and then transformation in these countries would not endanger international stability and the process itself.

Then, at a later stage, we felt that the world was much too enthusiastic about the events that had taken place and believed that victory had been attained,

¹⁸⁶ After the Treaty of Trianon (see note 68), Hungary actually became a nation state (96.6 per cent of the population is Hungarian), with small and dispersed national minorities like ethnic Germans, Slovaks, Romanians and Gipsies. People with Polish, Ukrainian, Rusyn, Bulgarian, and Armenian background are also active in respect of the preservation of their traditions and cultural heritage. In 1992 a law on the cultural autonomy of the non-Hungarian minorities of Hungary was already under preparation. It was passed in 1993, giving substantial financial support for local minority self-governments and their umbrella national organisation.

that dictatorship was over, and that a new society and economic pattern, one capable of bringing us into unity with the West, had come into being.

And precisely when optimistic sentiments overwhelmed people, both inside and outside the country, more and more problems started to emerge (to no surprise of ours, of course, since we had no illusions), and people in our region became engulfed by disappointment. For this very reason it is crucial for our region that the period of disappointment should not last long and that we should have the strength required to achieve victory in a struggle, a victory that is still far from being a sure thing. I strongly hope that Hungary will not come to grief, but several areas of our region are at risk of disintegration, at risk of instability, and there is a risk that extremists might emerge besides those political forces that seek to establish democracy.

Central Europe has always been a critical area, one exposed to various dangers. Its control or neglect, its autonomy and independence are not only a European issue: they are a world issue. As a result of its having shaken off the Warsaw Pact, the western part of Europe is not fully aware that interdependence and solidarity remain vitally important even today as the foundation of our security. Let me stress in this context the need for the continued existence of NATO and the importance of the presence of the United States. Precautions should also be taken to prevent old reflexes, nationalistic reflexes, from getting the upper hand in our Europe, fomenting enmity between small and large countries that have been the birthplace of European culture and European civilisation. Conflicting notions opposed to the European idea should not be allowed to wax stronger in the heart of society, or even on its fringes.

Besides the social and economic problems that are generally felt, grave difficulties are posed by the predicament of Yugoslavia, the quandary of the former Soviet Union, and the problem of finding a solution to the political and constitutional controversy in Czechoslovakia. Central and Eastern Europe is a turbulent area. I wish to make it clear that what I consider to be the gravest error in international, European or regional policy is that instead of pursuing strategically minded preventive international and military policies, the world has been pursuing reactive foreign policies for decades now. Partly owing to their internal structure, free nations, parliamentary democracies, have been opting for defensive policies, reactive policies, responding to events rather than preventing them; it has been very rare for them to utilise their preventive potential in conflict situations.

Let me conclude by saying that while our situation today seems more tolerable than it seemed yesterday, while we are pleased to welcome you here and while we are pleased to know that the era when the old Iron Curtain was standing as a barrier between you and us is over, it is to be admitted that there does exist a social kind of iron curtain, and an economic iron curtain might also come into being quite easily, a fact which poses a much more serious danger to the entire world economy than we think. The problems of the Central and Eastern European region are world problems, and if this region remains in poverty, if its reconstruction is postponed, then it will be impossible to create once again an affluent society or a prosperous economy in the western part of Europe or in the Atlantic region.

For this reason I earnestly request your assistance and understanding in order to help Hungary remain a stable country, a role model in recent times in a truly turbulent region.

THE NEED FOR STABILISING THE NEW DEMOCRACIES

Prime Minister Antall, in his address at the CSCE Summit (Helsinki, 9 July 1992) emphasised the need to pay more attention to the new crises in post-communist Europe.

Helsinki, the city where the CSCE was born almost twenty years ago, has inscribed its name in history again, for it has successfully fulfilled the very high expectations formulated by our foreign ministers in March. We all agreed that the CSCE must focus its energies on the urgent tasks of the present, and in close co-operation with other European and transatlantic organisations, particularly NATO, the Western European Union and the Council of Europe, create the mechanisms for monitoring and resolving the grave crisis that appear in the initial stage of the post-communist period. We have every reason to hope that the success of the CSCE in the future in contributing to resolving the questions presently before it can match its effectiveness in the years of the peaceful elimination of communism.

For Europe, particularly the countries currently struggling with the difficulties of transformation and obliged to face the reincarnation in various forms of the forces of the past, need every possible means, co-operation and support in order to ensure that the result of the changes consolidate and to prevent a relapse of any kind in matters of security policy and those touching the existence of parliamentary democracies. To recognise and support this objective should be the prime task for the forces of European democracy and for all organisation able to lend support in this struggle and back up those who have resolved and begun to eliminate the dire heritage of the past in the Central and Eastern European and Central Asian states of the CSCE.

It would be a mistake to interpret the initial advances as clear evidence of ultimate success, for the changes in Central and Eastern Europe so far merely offer a chance, they do not amount to a guarantee of success. Success requires substantial further efforts, timely recognition of the dangers, and adequate responses to them. Failure to make these could result in a highly perilous situation in which the forces of totalitarianism and aggressive nationalism, which

still exist and are moving to make a counterattack, may attempt to regain or acquire power. We can only pursue the struggle against these forces with any hope of success if we know we have the unconditional support behind us of the democratic forces of Europe and North America, including the American military presence in Europe. Regrettably, this support has still not been fully accorded so far: looking back on recent years, we must conclude in several cases that the action taken was not coercive enough or came too late.

One of the most tragic examples of this is the conflict raging in the territory of former Yugoslavia. A year ago, when the conflict was clearly threatening to explode, the hesitant steps taken by the democracies left the way open for a misunderstanding on the part of the Serbian nationalist forces, which assumed that preservation of the territorial unity, the 'stability' of Yugoslavia was more important to the world than the aspiration of the republics and peoples of Yugoslavia to assert the right of self-determination and minority rights, and to shake off communist leadership and nationalist oppression. If the world and the countries of the CSCE had acted then with their present decisiveness – although in some cases that, too, is still insufficiently co-ordinated – the war, the death and injury of tens of thousands, the flight of several hundred thousand refugees and the inconceivable destruction could certainly have been averted.

As Oscar Wilde remarked, experience is the name everyone gives to their mistakes. The inferences to be drawn are that we must now, at last, act with decision and foresight over the South Slav crisis; that means availing ourselves of every means to resolve the crisis, which under all circumstances include securing the protection and the rights, the autonomy of the national minorities.

We must be doubly attentive in future to the problems that contain in themselves the chance of similar conflicts and crises breaking out. We must concentrate our efforts primarily and principally on averting the conflicts, and there is no better means of doing so than swift and decisive development and defence of democracy, human rights and the free market economy. Stability and security can only be expected to reign in Europe if we manage to bring about the stabilisation of the democratic systems, if we make it plain that groups which trample on our fundamental values will not be tolerated and will be rejected by civilised Europe. We must also make it plain to the governments and peoples struggling with the difficulties of transition and frequently facing dilemmas that their adherence to these values bring tangible results in the foreseeable future: development of the economy and the creation of welfare, and

the emergence of a democratic climate in which nothing endangers the dignity and self-fulfilment of their citizens.

If crises do break out, on the other hand, we must act decisively at the earliest possible stage by marking comprehensive use of the required means, including sanctions. Democracy has no credibility unless it is prepared to defend itself and its values. The governments and peoples of the new democracies are ready to do so, but they are not capable of doing so alone; the effective and extensive support and co-operation of the Western democracies is essential. I am sincerely glad that the danger of "armies without political control" that I spoke about in 1990 at the signing of the Paris Charter has been included in the resolutions passed by the parliamentary assembly of the CSCE. The big question is whether we can find, alongside the reinforcement of our region's security systems, the right model for transforming the deformed economic and social structure of the former communist states, whose problems differ from those in either the advanced industrial or the developing countries. Otherwise the advocates of political democracy will be unable successfully to oppose the domestic forces which utilise social tensions. An economic and social explosion in our region will affect with undeniable severity the whole system and equilibrium of the world economy, and the international, economic and financial systems that have developed in recent decades.

Hungary takes as special honour the decision by the CSCE community to hold its next summit meeting in Hungary. We consider this to be a decision of a symbolic kind, embodying the recognition of the achievements so far in the democratic transformation, but at the same time an expression of confidence that Hungary will be capable of consistently accomplishing and fulfilling the change of system it has begun. I can promise that my government and the Hungarian people will prepare for your reception in accordance with the traditional Hungarian hospitality, and let me say farewell by saying: See you again in Budapest in 1994.

ACCOMPLISHING CO-OPERATION IN CENTRAL EUROPE

Following the democratic transformation in the region, the so-called Pentagonale, a forum for co-operation between Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Italy, and Austria, came into being as a result of an initiative from the two countries last mentioned. This forum became the Hexagonale in the summer of 1991, on the accession of Poland. One year later, on 18 July 1992, the heads of government of the member countries convened in Vienna under the name of the Central European Initiative (CEI). The new designation referred to the objectives of the new organisation rather than to the number of its members.

Let me first express my gratitude to the Chancellor and Government of Austria for organising this meeting, which has extraordinary significance today. We are living in an age of transition, and although in history times of transition have always proved the longest, I do believe that this present period of transition has a special relevance in our lives. In this region, where the organisation known as the Central European Initiative is pursuing its objectives, we can clearly see the consequences of this transition, positive and negative alike.

This transition is easy to trace if we bear in mind why we supported the initiative of Italy and Austria in creating the Pentagonale. We considered it very important to have an organisation in Central Europe in which there was a NATO and an EC member – Italy – and an EFTA country – Austria – that enjoyed the status of full neutrality. Three Warsaw Pact countries wanted to join the organisation, together with Yugoslavia, which was non-aligned. We thought it was important that – following Czechoslovakia and Hungary – Poland should also join the club. Thus an organisation came into being which fulfilled its function under the name of the Hexagonale. We applaud the fact that now we talk about the Central European Initiative, not only because we would soon have difficulties with the Greek numbers, but also because the new name denotes the essence and objectives of the new organisation.

In our opinion, it is necessary to point out that the CEI, as a regional organisation, should define its possible and potential boundaries, as well as the

sphere where sub-regional areas could also join in some field, along with the partially connected regions of other countries.

We think it is also extremely important that, in order to ensure the further development of the Central European Initiative, we should make it plain that only those can be admitted to this organisation who undertake to uphold the norms defined by the Council of Europe. In other words, that they are parliamentary political systems, that they are democratic countries where European law and order is respected, that they have a Parliament consisting of freely elected representatives, and that the Government is responsible to that Parliament. It is very important that the Central European Initiative should be an organisation of parliamentary democracies; that should be the entry ticket.

It is important that in our region the right to national self-determination should prevail, together with respect for human rights and minority rights. We can no longer talk about the right to national self-determination without considering the representation of human rights and minority rights as an organic part of it. This is also what we stressed when speaking about the former Yugoslavia: we can accept a country organised according to the right to national self-determination if this is also connected to respect for human rights and minority rights.

In the region of the Central European Initiative we attribute special importance to stability in the way that it also means security. We can imagine stability and security only if security is not just referred to as military or political security, but also as economic security and financial security, since only on these can social security in our region be based. If we are unable to provide Central and Eastern Europe with economic and financial stability sooner or later, then social problems may break the framework of democracy asunder. And if we cannot sustain political democracy, then we can no longer talk about security and stability in the region.

Our foreign policy, in harmony with the convictions of the representatives of the member countries, aims to accomplish good co-operation with international organisations. We would especially stress the importance of the United Nations. As a non-permanent member of the Security Council, we are doing everything we can to help the UN play an active, preventative role in international conflicts. It is not by chance that representatives of international political organisations and economic–financial organisations are here today, because they want to contribute to the stability of our region.

The European banks are able to play a very important role in our region; their activities are co-ordinated by the EBRD. We consider it equally important

that all the financial organisations of the world, ranging from the World Bank to the International Monetary Fund, take the circumstances of these countries into consideration. We must see clearly that in order to realise economic security in our region, a new economic model must be devised, a model for transforming command economies into market economies. The unique features of these countries should not be mistaken for the features of industrial or developing countries. When talking about the former communist countries, we must talk about distorted industrial countries, where, unlike in the developing countries, certain infrastructures were built and where a paternalistic state provided, albeit on a low level, services in education, healthcare and other areas that the population became accustomed to and continue to require even in the new circumstances, and which are therefore a source of internal social tensions.

Developing this third model is very important. It is not at all a third way, neither in a positive nor a negative sense. It signifies only that we need to have the adequate means and methods to meet the criteria for a developed country.

Finally, I would like to stress that – as well as having economic and financial stability in the countries of the Central European Initiative – we have to increase the attention paid to the special aspects of security that are important within the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe also. We must declare that given the various aspects of European security, it is very important to maintain NATO and the political and military presence of the United States in Europe. Hungary would consider it a fatal mistake if the US commitment in Europe decreased or if certain isolationist views prevailed. We also consider it very important that all European organisations and the regional organisations alike express their commitment to Europe, as well as the maintenance of NATO and the American presence in Europe.

The issue of Yugoslavia has raised aspects of these economic, social and political considerations for which we may all feel responsible. In my opinion, Hungary warned the world, continuously and in time, of the approaching disaster in Yugoslavia. The disaster has come, and we are all responsible for it. Responsible are those countries which were trying to implant illusions, and those governments which did not recognise in time that we no longer live in the times of the first or second world wars, but the period of the new Europe, when we all have to stand up for basic principles and must take the necessary steps in time when dangers similar to those in the former Yugoslavia emerge. We stated the importance of national self-determination and minority rights

then, and watched with concern as the former Yugoslavia rushed headlong into civil war.

In my opinion the refugee issue is not only a humanitarian, but also a social and stability issue. Bosnia-Herzegovina has become a point for violent confrontation, and if we are unable to stop the civil war there through joint efforts, then the consequences for Europe will be incalculable. Furthermore, we can also say that emerging difficulties there might affect the Middle East and the Muslim world. Destabilisation may occur to such an extent that the Balkans may once again become the powder keg of Europe, against which we shall have to act decisively. Further sources of danger may emerge in Europe if we cannot manage this conflict, while bearing in mind that this relatively small-scale conflict may lead to a much larger conflict. The refugee issue does not simply mean that there are people fleeing because of war or political reasons, people to whom the Geneva Conventions apply. Hungary has always been in the front line when assisting the refugees and when handling the refugee problem. However, this is not only a refugee or a welfare migration problem, because there is an attempt going on in the area of the former Yugoslavia – including Bosnia-Herzegovina – that aims ethnically to homogenise whole territories and to deport entire ethnic groups. When we wish to prevent this, we do not act against refugees but want to prevent the emergence of a precedent, so that no political leaders get carried away and think that they can initiate the deporting of populations at the end of the 20th century and that the world will consent to the ethnic transformation of certain territories. This is the issue in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and people are facing this danger elsewhere, too, in Yugoslavia, and this is what we have to bring to an end.

These were the issues I wished to address. I should like to stress that Hungary wants to be an active member of the Central European Initiative, just as she was an active member of the Pentagonale and the Hexagonale. We fully support all those economic and infrastructure-related projects in this region that mobilise economic resources all the way from Poland to Italy and that help to bring these countries and peoples together through new investments and infrastructures, and to boost the whole region.

Thank you for your attention, and I would like to wish our new members great success. I would like to welcome the representatives of Croatia and Slovenia, and would like to express my delight at Bosnia-Herzegovina's becoming a member of the Central European Initiative. I trust that our organisation will expand with new members, and that no new members will discourage our future operations.

31.

OPENING THE RHINE–MAIN–DANUBE CANAL

József Antall delivered the following address at the Opening Ceremony of the Rhine–Main–Danube Canal in Nurember on 25 September 1992. He called attention to the imminent danger of the unilateral diversion of the Danube, planned by Slovakia, which was indeed carried out a month later. The controversy was later taken to the International Court at The Hague. The issue has continued to plague relations between Hungary and Slovakia ever since.

Thank you for your gracious invitation, and for entrusting me with the honour of speaking on behalf of the Danube countries, conveying gratitude to the builders of the canal, and expressing our common desire that this waterway system may be a bond linking the peoples of Europe. Our region has embarked in a new direction after the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the collapse of the communist systems. But no one can believe for a moment that the threatening danger has passed once and for all. The fragile political systems are fighting to survive and transform themselves under grave economic and social circumstances. A civil war is being waged around us; uncontrolled armies and politicians tied with the past, taking advantage of the social tensions, may represent a danger in this region at any time, and threaten the western half of Europe and the free world with a revival of totalitarianism.

It is a particular pleasure for me that we are meeting here in Nuremberg, in this charming ancient city, which has always maintained close relations with the Danube countries in the economic, political and cultural fields alike.

The Danube, as a great river, is a determinant of the development process of civilisation in Central and Southern Europe. The ancient relics of our culture and later the masterpieces of craftsmanship all give evidence of the role of the Danube as a link, where it is particularly valuable that the 'travelling' was done not only by goods and those trading in them, but culture, in other words mentality. This mentality bound our historical Europe together even when it was shaken by wars and disrupted by newer borders.

The name of Hungary's great innovator in the Age of Reforms, Count István Széchenyi, is associated with the regulation of the Danube. One especially famous part of his work was to render the Iron Gate on the Lower

Danube navigable. But his name is also linked with his support for steam shipping in Hungary.

But just as weighty as the heritage of the past are the tasks that face us. Today the canal links territories that have undergone two economically different processes of development. Whereas the present annual goods traffic on the Danube is of the order of 80 million tonnes, it has been about 200 million tonnes on the Rhine. This difference in scale is enhanced by the fact that the navigable length of the Danube is about three times that of the Rhine.

On the Danube in the territories of Germany, Austria, Hungary, the Czech and Slovak Republic, Croatia and the State Federation of Serbia-Montenegro, there are stretches hard to navigate that curtail the real competitiveness of shipping. In transport and haulage, economic and environmental considerations together should determine in future what transport system it is appropriate to develop. But establishing the right and proper proportions between water, air, road and rail transport is certainly among the fundamental tasks in every country's transport policy.

I am sure I can express as a common ambition our objective of ensuring an optimal route for shipping as laid down in international agreements, with attention to both ecological and economic criteria. For this, we must evaluate our forces realistically and accomplish all this in a way and at a pace that does not damage our natural resources: using constrained solutions and providing co-ordinated navigation conditions along the whole length of the Danube stage by stage, as opportunities permit.

It would not be correct for me to disguise the fact that grave tensions exist between Hungary and Czechoslovakia, or rather Slovakia, which is becoming a sovereign state, concerning their common stretch of the Danube. Although we strive unambiguously for good neighbourly relations, I must nonetheless mention the international legal and ecological-cum-navigational problems that relate to the building of a hydroelectric power station on the Danube.¹⁸⁷ We can only regret that the federal government of Czechoslovakia and the Slovak Government have not found even now the path towards a common position. Hungary declared the state treaty concluded on this subject in 1977 null and void, yet Slovakia continued and still continues the construction. For the commissioning of the Danube power station, they have chosen a technical solution that will alter the navigable course of the Danube – using a solution outside the terms

¹⁸⁷ See note 76.

of the state treaty – and unilaterally divert the Danube, which was designated a frontier river in the peace treaties of 1921 and 1947, onto the territory of Slovakia. For our part we consider this a border violation, an infringement of the international agreements, and a new source of conflict that will undoubtedly exacerbate the problems of our tension-fraught region. Because of the abrogation of the 1977 treaty and the alteration of the border, we initiated preliminary negotiations with the Czechoslovak federal government and the Slovak government towards a joint reference to the International Court in the Hague.

The other question relating to the Danube hydroelectric power station is the deliberate alteration of the natural environment. We invited the Czechoslovak government to begin exploratory talks on the questions at issue and on the involvement of experts from the European Communities.

Thirdly, I must mention that the new situation will produce new conditions in shipping. It is in our common interest to examine this and find the legally, technically and economically most suitable solution. In all these respects the position of the Republic of Hungary has been laid down in a resolution by Parliament.

I would like to emphasise that we have not spoken against hydroelectric power stations in general, but we are confronted here by a plan that is dangerous from the ecological point of view, neglects the guarantee elements and incidental installations, fails to be profitable from the economic point of view, a plan inherited from the communist governments and imposed upon us when our sovereignty was lacking.

It is my conviction that this ceremony symbolises new systems of relations; it is our common task to remove every shoal and obstacle to the development of these, and in this I ask for the assistance of all those present here and of all European citizens.

I wish every success to our German friends, and we consider it splendid that German unity should have been accomplished in spite of every difficulty. Without that we cannot speak of the unity of Europe and we are therefore filled with pride that we too were able to contribute to it in the difficult weeks of 1989. Despite the bitterness of day-to-day life and the vexations confronting ordinary people, to posterity this period will signify pages of gold in the history of Germany.

AT THE MADRID MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL DEMOCRAT UNION

The speech by Prime Minister József Antall, one of the Vice-Presidents of the European Democrat Union, was delivered at the meeting of the leaders of the International Democrat Union (IDU) in Madrid, on 2 October 1992. It was one of the first expressions of the intention of Hungary to join an expanded NATO.

Hungary is a small country of ten million inhabitants in the heart of Europe; its people have dwelt in the Carpathian Basin for 1100 years, and its statehood is a thousand years old, existing ever since our first king, by adopting Christianity, made us part of the great family of European nations and European countries. Hungarian constitutionalism, the system of Hungarian political thinking that still applies today, has developed over a thousand years. Many attempts have been made during those thousand years to destroy it, many attempts have been made to annihilate the Hungarian people's feeling for the law and terminate our sovereignty, but we have never submitted to that. On the most recent occasion this led to the Hungarian revolution and struggle for freedom that broke out on 23 October 1956 and was crushed by the tanks and forces of the Soviet army. Then came further decades, when hundreds were sentenced to death and executed in the period of reprisals up to 1963, after which the regime was obliged to find a form that the Hungarian people were capable of tolerating. This included the fact that the internal restrictions were eased, but it also included the fact that by raising foreign loans it ensured the population within the Soviet bloc a relatively higher standard of living than our economic activity should have allowed, so bequeathing a grave legacy to the political system of today.

Something must be said about Hungary's position in relation to international conditions. Everyone now sees clearly that when the political system that came to power in the Bolshevik coup of 1917 really reached a stage of crisis after more than seven decades and there really opened up a possibility of the collapse of the communist system, the world was still entirely unprepared for this, just as the world was unprepared for the collapse of the Soviet Union. This has

serious repercussions on our international political life today. These include the transformation of the whole region, the disintegration of the federations of states found on the maps of recent decades, the civil war in former Yugoslavia, or the hopefully peaceful division of Czechoslovakia, producing a new kind of co-existence between the Czech state and Slovakia, or the independence of the Baltic States. We Hungarians consider that the world together has produced these achievements. The communist political system, as a world system, could not keep pace. Under these circumstances came the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and Comecon, in which Hungary and our government played a leading part. The withdrawal of the Soviet troops from two countries, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, has taken place, and we hope the same will happen in the near future in the case of Poland and of Germany, and of the three Baltic states. Hungary considers it important that European integration should continue, that the transatlantic concept should apply, and that the presence of American troops in Europe should be guaranteed. There cannot be a European security system without the participation of the United States, its presence in Europe, the maintenance and modernisation of NATO, and in connection with NATO, the development of a European defence system. We are striving for stability in our region, for an end to the civil wars, and for good neighbourly relations with all our neighbouring states, even if tensions inevitably arise on national minority or other issues.

Finally, I would like to emphasise that East-Central Europe is extremely important from the security point of view. NATO cannot be handled in isolation, because the NATO participation of Greece and Turkey means that it is wedged between the southern borders of the former Soviet Union and the highly sensitive Middle Eastern region. For this reason we consider it of the utmost importance that this security zone, in which stable principles of military and security policy apply, should cover not only the western half of Europe but the region of Central and Eastern Europe as well. The uncontrolled armies with their nuclear and conventional weapons will represent a danger to us all until we are able to resolve these questions. I think that now, when world communism has collapsed and the Soviet Union has disintegrated, we still cannot talk of everything being settled and merely rest on our laurels. There still remains the danger of these military and political forces, the surviving communist apparatuses, sending our region and so the whole world up in flames. We would not like an iron curtain to be drawn up again, either in the form of a bipolar system of political security or as a result of divergent socio-

economic structures. There is a particular danger that instead of armed forces confronting each other defiantly, we may be faced with an iron curtain of social problems, economic problems, and welfare in general. I think that this is the field in which the government and the opposition should apply the concept of solidarity.

I express my thanks once again in Hungary's name that after membership of the EDU we are now receiving membership of the IDU. You are receiving into your ranks a small country that has fought since the birth of its statehood, for a thousand years, not only for its independence, but for human liberties and the realisation of human values. In recent years it took upon itself the risk of transformation, marching in the vanguard of Eastern European transformation, and assisting the cause of European unity, including the unity of Germany, and of that we are proud. This friendship, this commitment and these values we offer to you, to the great common family of our parties.

AT THE IPU HUMAN RIGHTS SYMPOSIUM

The Prime Minister's address at the Congress of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (Budapest, 19 May 1993) placed the issue of human rights in the context of Hungary's foreign policy objectives

On behalf of the Hungarian Government, let me welcome all the participants of the IPU Human Rights Symposium to the home of Hungarian legislation. It is always our pleasure and honour to greet the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and the delegates discussing human rights or minority rights. By these I mean those people who express their views all over the world and do their best to ensure the implementation of these principles everywhere.

As we approach the end this century the demand for human and minority rights has become a general and basic requirement in the countries of Europe and throughout the whole world. However, we must sadly state that, although ideologically we entirely agree with this development, in Hungary there are still forces and political efforts which contradict such ideas.

This also relates to the fact that nowadays, after many extensive wars in this century, which shocked the entire human race, as well as the storm of the Cold War, which affected all of us, weapons are still being fired and wars still rage in this critical and neurotic part of Europe.

I wish to stress that the Inter-Parliamentary Union has played a decisive role in Hungarian political thought, and in the minds of Hungarian legislators for a century. It was always taken into consideration that diplomacy is not only between governments, and not only ambassadors know how best to serve international co-operation, it is not only government officials who can co-operate within the framework of popular democracy and tourism, but international co-operation between legislators is also of special significance. The international and diplomatic co-operation of legislators and their role in the legislative process make it vital that you express your views on every basic issue. What you say carries much more weight, since it is said by the legislators themselves and co-operation is said by the legislators themselves and co-operation is effected by legislators.

It is for this reason we are proud that the Hungarian legislators have been involved in the activities of IPU since 1889. One of the initiators of the

foundation of the IPU in Paris was Dénes Pázmándy,¹⁸⁸ and we can continue with the names of Albert Apponyi,¹⁸⁹ Albert Berzeviczy,¹⁹⁰ and others, who have played an important role in the history of IPU during the last century.

When dictatorships, totalitarian systems and the lack of sovereignty were dominant, Hungarian participants were unable to involve themselves in the activities of IPU. That is why we consider it very important that, on the basis of the experience in the last century, you, the representatives of truly freely elected Parliaments, accept Hungarian members of Parliament.

It is of special importance that in 1990 the members of the freely elected Parliaments from the former communist countries were allowed to attend IPU sessions. A former member of this Parliament, Ferenc Deák,¹⁹¹ stressed that a parliament is not a parliament just because it has sessions where interpellations are answered. The essence of parliament, and its legislative process is that it consists of legislators representing the nation, standing above all else, and they embody the sovereignty of the nation. The Hungarian Parliament is a freely elected parliament. This organisation holds its session in the hall of the former Lower House of Parliament. It is with pride that I declare this fact.

The issue of human rights is another point. It was not accidental that this issue was brought to the forefront exactly 100 years ago, when the centenary of the French Revolution was celebrated.

When this organisation was founded in 1889, it committed itself to the slogan of liberty, equality and fraternity.

We may have positive or negative opinions concerning various periods of the French Revolution; however, we must not forget the French Revolution with its treble slogan gave a new direction to the world. In 1804 the ideological and legal basis of modern civilisation was established with the *Code Civil*. Consequently, one hundred years later, the Inter-Parliamentary Union was established and from the outset it committed itself to the protection of human rights. For us the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the protection of human rights are synonymous with each other. The Inter-Parliamentary Union is in

¹⁸⁸ Dénes Pázmándy (1848–1936), member of the opposition in the late 19th and early 20th century.

¹⁸⁹ Albert Apponyi (1846–1933), great landowner, conservative politician. Minister for Culture and Public Education in 1906–1910, the author of a controversial Education Law. A talented orator, speaking many languages, he was the Head of the Hungarian delegation at the Paris Peace Conference in 1920, and later represented Hungary at the League of Nation in Geneva.

¹⁹⁰ Albert Berzeviczy (1853–1936), historian, expert on cultural policy. Minister for Culture and Public Education in 1903–1905, president of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1905–1936.

¹⁹¹ See note 64.

close co-operation with the UN. And when the UN was established – as in its legal predecessor, the League of Nations – that ideological basis, and the principles and issues of human rights were decisive factors. It is no accident that the development of the world, as well as its positive and negative phenomena, gave special significance to human rights issues in the 20th century. Considering the events which brought us to this century it should have seemed a natural progression that constitutional states would come into being everywhere. Instead we witnessed the establishment of two versions of totalitarian political regimes, Bolshevism or Communism and Nazism. It showed that although everybody was aware of the moral and political values of human rights, different totalitarian systems could still develop in which the totalitarian state was opposed to the rights of the individual. On the basis of the experience in the 20th century, it is of utmost importance for us to keep the issue of the protection of human rights to the forefront at all times.

It was not accidental either that, following the collapse of Nazism and Fascism, and also during the last few years, the entire world stressed the importance of human rights. The representation of human rights has become a strategic issue in world policy. Not only in relation to the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the UN, but also in the protection of human and minority rights, we, Hungarians, have always done our best to spearhead such ideas. Let me refer to the fact that the Hungarian League of Human Rights was founded in Paris between the two world wars. It was not by chance either that the League of Human Rights, in its capacity as the representative of Hungary, took a stand against Nazism and all other totalitarian efforts between the two world wars. In the period following World War II, in a reorganised form, representing Hungary, which was behind the Iron Curtain, it raised its voice to protect human rights. In 1988–89 the Hungarian League of Human Rights established its organisation in Budapest as well. When in 1989 the Budapest organisation was established as the Hungarian Organisation of the League (I participated in its foundation), it became a very important opposition organisation at that time. There were many people in its leadership and among its officials who are still prominent in Hungarian public life.

Today, as you gathered here to prepare the conference in Vienna, in order to further proceed in this direction, not only the Hungarian Government and the Hungarian Parliament, but also the entire Hungarian population welcome your efforts.

Let me say a few words about the foreign policy objectives of Hungary.

The foreign policy aims and foreign policy strategy of Hungary include participation in the maintenance of peace. Following the collapse of totalitarian political systems, in a world full of conflicts – by which I mean the territory of East-Central Europe, the Baltic region, and the former Soviet Union, where two world wars broke out – neither Hungarian foreign policy, nor the foreign policy of other countries can have a more important objective than preserving peace in Europe, and thus contributing to international peace. This is why we were active in upholding the spirit of Helsinki, and welcomed the Paris Charter. When the former Soviet Union collapsed and new states were established – the former subordinated states became independent and sovereign – Hungary tried to move towards European integration and win associate membership of the European Community. Similarly, within the framework of the European security co-operation, we represent the political aim according to which the permanent military and political presence of the United States of America and North America, should be ensured in Europe. We consider the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation to be the basis of European security. NATO is one of the elements which guarantees international peace and the balance of European security. These are our main objectives, and the regional organisations in which we participate are related to primary efforts.

This is why we support the Central European Initiative in the same way as any other chance of co-operation. From the point of view of Hungary, the starting point should be, following the collapse of the bipolar world, a definite movement towards a multi-polar world, even if today the power and responsibility of the United States of America are currently decisive factors. We still feel that – in agreement with the United States of America – it is in the interest of the world that a multi-polar balance and security system be established. It is still our objective to include the states of the former Soviet Union in this region – including also Ukraine, which has the highest population and potential in the region – so that the neighbouring countries, and those slightly further away, play an important role in the maintenance of the balance.

The South Slav situation is especially critical. It was no coincidence that Hungary was one of the first countries to realise the genuine importance of internal tensions in Yugoslavia and the Southern Slav political crisis, and did its best to help the world handle the situation. With sadness we were compelled to point out that international diplomacy was ill prepared for this. The same held true for military experts and governments. Finally, especially by violating human rights and minority rights, the crisis has become an ulcer attracting the

attention of the entire world; however, it is becoming increasingly difficult to define the possible steps of action the world should take.

Here, I would like to add in this foreign policy statement that Hungarian parliamentary parties agree on all basic issues of foreign policy. When we speak about the basic directions of Hungarian foreign policy, it means the common policy of the basic political forces of the Hungarian Parliament at present, and I hope also in the future.

Naturally, there is no such consensus on the internal situation of Hungary, since if there were, ours would not be a genuine multi-party system. We represent a real multi-party system, since there are political arguments and internal political struggles between us, and we are far from agreement on issues of policy. The six political parties, which form the Parliament in Hungary, represent the political power which implemented the peaceful transition and the changes in this country. It is only one year at most to the next general election. We can say that Hungarian internal policy competitions and political battles are but one area, and they have become very intensive. Our objectives and aims – and I think these are the objectives and aims of most responsible parties – are to maintain the operability of the country and to ensure its continuity in the future. At the same time, the operating abilities must be adjusted to election battles, which is a result of a multi-party system.

This may cause difficulties in political democracies which have been in existence for a long time, and of course, it causes serious conflicts and difficulties in the present situation in Hungary. I still believe that the Government, the coalition and the opposition will act responsibly, and will observe this year and the forthcoming period from the view point of the long-term development of Hungary and will do their best in its interest.

This should also hold true for economic policy. It is still a matter of debate how the different countries in this region will emerge from the transition process. During the transition period of Hungary, it must be taken into consideration that we are turning a centrally planned economy into a market economy. This is a historical change without a precedent. We have to change from a socialist, monolithic state, based on state monopolies, to a new free market system. From a historical perspective, this involves the difficulty of turning scrambled eggs back into raw eggs. We must follow a historical path which nobody has taken before.

Right-wing totalitarian systems established their political dictatorship based on a private economy and no changes took place in ownership and

other structures, unlike the changes witnessed during the communist dictatorship. Three years ago we returned to political democracy first and then moved towards a free market economy. Difficulties and a fall in the standard of living accompany the transition. The transformation of ownership takes place at a time when the world economy is struggling with recession and its purchasing capacity is decreasing. The insolvency of the former Soviet Union, and the other former socialist countries also effect Hungary. The economic collapse that took place in this region might have contributed to our political and military security, but its direct impact has undoubtedly been very negative.

In spite of this fact the rate of inflation fell by 10 per cent last year, that is a considerable achievement. It is also an achievement that when this Government took over, the foreign exchange reserves of Hungary were below 800 million USD, and now they exceed 5 billion USD. We are also pioneers in privatisation since in the UK, France, Italy and Austria only certain state sectors had to be privatised; privatisation in Hungary, however, extends across the entire economy of the country. Since the last years of socialism the level of private ownership rose from approximately 10 per cent to 45 per cent in three years. For the four-year term of our Government we promised 50 per cent. It seems that we will be able to achieve this.

To sum up, I hope that despite the difficulties of the transition, the recession in the world economy, and the internal political conflicts, stability can be achieved in Hungary.

This is very important not only from the perspective of the political system, legal protection, or the protection of human and minority rights, but also for the entire Hungarian economy. It is very important to ensure the influx of capital into Hungary and the security of investments. However, it is a fact that during recent years more than 50 per cent of Western capital flowing into this region – including the Soviet Union – was invested in Hungary.

I have tried to outline for you a picture describing the difficulties which result from the geo-political situation of Hungary. We are aware of the dangers, and of our responsibility for domestic peace. We are also aware of the serious problems facing the Hungarian economy.

Finally, I would like to request that you should never ignore minority rights whenever you speak about human rights. Ensuring human rights for each individual – an enormous task on its own – must not be confused with the rights of minorities. It must also be our basic objective to ensure the rights of

minorities. If both human and minority rights are provided, there is a good chance to maintain peace and stability in the world. The violation of minority rights endangers international legal security, thus affecting stability not only in Hungary, or in this region, but throughout the whole world.

In future common results can only be achieved by bearing in mind these principles and this ideology. I wish you success, strength, and constructive co-operation in achieving this end. Thank you for your attention and I wish you good luck and a pleasant stay in Hungary.

THE ATLANTIC IDEA IN HUNGARIAN POLITICAL THOUGHT

The Tenth Workshop of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation was held in the building of the Hungarian National Assembly in Budapest on 3 June 1993, the first time for a NATO meeting to be held in Hungary, and the first time in a former Warsaw Pact country. The Prime Minister put co-operation between Hungary and NATO in an historical perspective. He reiterated his conviction about the importance of prevention in foreign policy.

I welcome you here in the former Upper House of the Hungarian National Assembly, in this hall decorated with historic coats of arms. I welcome the Chairman of this renowned NATO organisation, all the senior NATO officials present, all the military, and, of course, the politicians, the last group being mentioned last because it includes myself.

It is my view that today is an enormously important day for Hungary, for it is the first time that we have the opportunity of hosting a meeting, a conference of this type, with the Hungarian foreign minister and the Hungarian defence minister flanking the presidium.

(I) Let me also emphasise the fact that the Hungarian government's commitment to the Atlantic idea and to NATO is nothing new; it is part and parcel of Hungarian political and foreign affairs philosophy. Permit me to remark also that I will touch upon several issues in a rather subjective vein before dealing with those highly topical issues which are in the focus of the present conference.

The first issue I want to talk about concerns the changes that Hungarian foreign affairs philosophy has gone through. Hungarian foreign political thinking has been asserted in this region for centuries within a defined historical framework. What always stood in the foreground of this foreign policy concept was the notion that there should be a stable support in the western half of Europe, as a factor acknowledging the eastern area as an active factor, and that it should provide security to the country and the whole Central European zone – if

need be with recourse to other foreign policy factors. The Papacy served as one against the Holy Roman Empire, and the predominance of the Byzantine or the Ottoman Empire, or later Russia, served as the other. Hemmed in between such powers, our region has had to face the constant threat of instability, the constant risk of fragmentation, perils which Hungarian foreign policy struggled to keep at bay for centuries, in alliance with other countries of this region, sometimes, of course, at the cost of war.

The other question is that when Hungary lost its medieval statehood and uninterrupted independence, Hungarian foreign policy was able only once or twice in a century to exhibit the intentions drawn from these classic, long-term foreign-policy objectives derived from geographical factors and tied to the European sphere of ideas. These could be observed in the 17th and 18th centuries, at the time of the Rákóczi War of Independence (1703–1711),¹⁹² or in the 19th century (in 1848–49), the period of the great national revivals, the movement for German unity, the movement for Italian unity, and the reorganisation of Europe. But the fact that for centuries we did not possess state sovereignty to the full – and for long centuries we did not possess it at all – rendered it inevitable that Hungarian foreign-policy thinking should fade to some extent, and sometimes become provincial, and that on more than one occasion this foreign-policy thinking should lack a recognition of the main foreign-political lines of force in the world. For this very reason, we employed (after 1867) the expression, in both a domestic and a foreign-policy sense, that “we lost our way somewhere.” This does not apply simply to Hungary, but also to the great powers and world powers that brought about these exigencies in the East-Central European zone, from the Baltic to the Balkans, or even to the Near East.

To conclude this brief review, which I could continue to expound at length, I must refer to the fact that Hungarian foreign-policy thinking between the two world wars also embodied a clear recognition of what the European zone signified, what the small geographical units signified, what the geographical structure of Europe signified, and what the great zones from America to Russia signified. Variations in political thinking follow from all that, even in these days.

An outstanding figure in this thinking was Count Pál Teleki, the Hungarian Prime Minister,¹⁹³ who recognised these distinctions of foreign-policy thinking deriving from those geographical regions and expounded them in the

¹⁹² See note 89.

¹⁹³ See note 2.

lectures he delivered in Oxford, in Cambridge and elsewhere. “The force of the political, the power factor everywhere in the world depends on how man as a historical factor, as society, can adapt in harmony with the geographical factors,” Pál Teleki said in a lecture delivered in Berlin in 1926.¹⁹⁴ This concept, of course, was not new, for it had been clearly outlined already in Tocqueville’s work *Democracy in America* – published in Paris in 1835 and as early as 1838 in New York, and it must not be forgotten that in Hungarian in 1841 – that the extensive great world powers of the coming century and the subsequent period could be the United States and Russia, and what this leeway could mean for them as opposed to the closed geographical scope of Europe.

This thinking entered into Hungarian foreign-policy thinking very early, alongside the provincialism which was exhibited more than once in official Hungarian foreign policy in the past centuries. For there has always been another line in Hungarian foreign-policy thinking, with wide international interest, thinking in world terms, and recognising these dimensions. This applied also between the two world wars, when the system of the peace treaties signed in the environs of Paris drew a new map in this region. In the process that set in after the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the Ottoman Empire, and led to the temporary isolation of Russia due to Bolshevism, this foreign-policy thinking was reflected in learned societies, foreign-affairs societies, in studies and in outstanding works. At the same time official Hungarian foreign policy on the one hand was floundering in the peace system, and on the other hand, once the shackles of the peace system had been somewhat loosened, there appeared the influence of the Axis powers, there appeared fascism, Hitlerism, and of course as a spectre looming in the direction of the Central European region, Bolshevism.

When we compare Hungarian foreign-policy thinking with these problems, it must clearly be seen what responsibility is borne not only by the small countries but by the large ones as well. For the direction taken by Italy, which counted among the victors in the First World War, was not random. Neither was the fact that in the artificially created Yugoslavia, from Serbia to Slovenia, efforts became possible whereby Yugoslavia itself came to have a German-oriented government, and Croatia slid towards the model of a German vassal state. At the same time, the shock of Munich created a defeatist situation in the Czech lands, too, while Slovakia went in the same direction as Croatia,

¹⁹⁴ Pál Teleki, *Európáról és Magyarországról* [On Europe and Hungary], Budapest (Atheneum), 1934, p. 7.

which meant being a Hitlerite vassal state. One could talk about the Ukrainian nationalist movements, one could talk about Romania, which went over from leaning on the Entente countries to supporting Hitler, or about Poland, which was strongly opposed to Hitler's Germany, but which pursued a less decisive policy against Hitler's forces in 1938–39 before summoning up the strong resistance in the Second World War. Under these circumstances, in spite of an expressly anti-Hitler, anti-Bolshevik, expressly resistant Hungarian foreign-policy stance, and in spite of all the sympathy for the Anglo-American side, Hungary, through the acceptance of Central European reality, through strong German intellectual and cultural traditions, but without a Hitlerite commitment, found itself in the situation of entering the Second World War. But the Hungarian governments never stooped to the express service of Hitlerism, so long as Hungary could enjoy part of its sovereignty, in other words, until 19 March 1944, until the German troops marched into Hungary.

(II) Permit me to say a few more words about how a new situation developed in 1944–45. Hungary was under Soviet occupation between the end of the war in 1945 and the communist seizure of power in 1948, but there developed the minimum structure of parliamentary democracy, even though the Soviet occupation, the special support given to the Communist Party and many other phenomena that foreshadowed the dictatorship were decisive as well.

Yet how were the politicians of that period thinking then? How were we young people – and I can say this already in a personal sense – thinking, who were opposed to the communist political system? What experiences did we possess specifically in connection with the Atlantic idea, the United States and all the other aspects to which it is still worth referring today as historical realities? Let me refer first to a book that I myself was only able to lay my hands on later, Harriman's *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin*, which appeared in New York in 1975. Harriman recalls the October of 1945, when we managed to accomplish that there should be a free election in the Budapest local government elections, and went on to succeed in holding a general election. This is how Harriman recalls it: "Budapest was jubilant. Jack McCloy and I wanted to reach the building of the American mission, but we could not get through the door. A vast crowd was celebrating victory with the Stars and Stripes flying overhead." I was one of the crowd, a participant and witness myself. "I was overcome by a sense of humility when I realised that those people regarded the

United States as the guardian of their liberty.” I can confirm it was so, and we were waving American flags. “They were expecting so much from us,” writes Harriman, “and it was so little that we could do. I am sure that what happened there outside the American embassy building persuaded me that we should be pressuring the Russians to keep their promises. I simply refused to accept the view that we had to abandon that place, and allow Eastern Europe to become the Russians’ sphere of influence, where they can do as they think fit.”¹⁹⁵ That is how Harriman remembers the event that I had the chance to experience directly at the time. What reading experiences did we have in those days? There was Elliott Roosevelt’s book about his father, and General George Marshall’s book about the Second World War. We had the opportunity to get to know these books, one after the other, because between 1945 and 1948, the works of Walter Lippmann and Wendell Wilkie and numerous other books appeared in Hungarian, so that we grammar-school students could lay our hands on them. These were the times when Walter Lippmann’s book *American Foreign Policy, Shield of the Republic*, which appeared in Hungarian in 1946, had a decisive effect on our thinking – and not just on ours but also on that of the politicians who thought about these questions at the time.

What was published in Hungary in 1946? In Walter Lippmann’s book there is a chapter entitled “The Members of the Atlantic Community”.¹⁹⁶ The NATO Treaty was signed in 1949 and the Supreme Command was established in 1951. Walter Lippmann outlines in the book he wrote in 1944 (and here I do not want to make publicity for Walter Lippmann or Harriman, but to present the influence they exerted on Hungarian thinking in that period), he clearly shows that the Atlantic Community is a decisive political and strategic factor in the whole region: “British–American co-operation implies the co-operation between the United States and the British Commonwealth, and without this British–American co-operation, without the geographical and historic experiences of this co-operation there would be no headway in the coming era. But it does not and may not imply a scheme of bringing the world under the yoke of English speaking nations. This will be clear to us Americans when we have a look at the state of affairs in Russia and China.” He describes clearly what the situation developing after the collapse of France in 1940 signifies, and what the whole situation in Western Europe signifies. “From this it follows of its own accord that although France is a European, continental state,

¹⁹⁵ Averell Harriman, Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin, New York, 1945, pp. 510–511.

¹⁹⁶ P. 160 in the Hungarian edition, from which the quotations have been retranslated into English.

it is above all a member of the same community to which the United States belongs." He also refers to Spain and Portugal. "But for other nations as well it is a matter of life and death that they belong to our Atlantic security system." He lists Holland, Belgium and the other states, and then declares, "The inland sea is the Atlantic Ocean."¹⁹⁷ Looking through his list of nations that belong to the same security system, these territories correspond precisely to the part stretching from the Old World to the New, and the Atlantic Community came into being almost from the moment of the discovery of America. Our tragedy was that when the Mediterranean and these areas became enclosed, and the new developed world came into being in the western half of Europe and then America, we became in a sense Europe's backyard. Those who took a continental approach to foreign policy, primarily Germany and Russia, considered this to belong to their direct sphere of influence. France continued to show interest, but from the political thinking of the Anglo-Saxons, who relied on the sea, this continental approach was regrettably omitted, or I might say understandably so. What could we Hungarians think when that outstanding observer, the foreign-policy adviser to several American presidents, wrote in 1944, before the end of the war, "To encourage the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe to organise the erection of a buffer against Russia would be tantamount to making a commitment that the United States would be unable to fulfil. For the erection of such a buffer would also assume that the buffer states could rely in their relations with Russia on the armed support of the Atlantic Ocean powers. Since this area is inaccessible to American power, such a commitment would be unstable and impossible to fulfil."

This was the statement that made it clear to us what was meant in that military situation, in the period after the Second World War, by a commitment, on the part of both the United States and war-torn Western Europe. Lippmann asks what should be done. "Does this mean that Poland and the Danubian and Balkan states have no prospect of independence, and that they are inescapably doomed to become satellites of Russia or be absorbed into the Soviet Union? We cannot today [in 1944] give a categorical answer to this. But it is likely that these states would have no prospect of independence if America and Britain tried to reorganise them so that they became the Western alliance's advance guard against Russia. In those regions the Russians have overwhelming military preponderance." According to Lippmann, "If this should happen, it would

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

no longer be a case of the degree to which we can ensure the independence of these states, but of whether Russia will allow them at all to continue existing as independent states. But these states are not even united, so that if, for example," he writes in 1944, "Poland and Hungary should attempt in spite of their liberation by Russia to join some kind of front line against Russia, the Czechs, the Bulgarians and perhaps even the Romanians would be likely to come to terms with Russia. What role would await America and Britain in this case? Would they supply arms to Poland and Hungary?" And he continues to analyse these questions.

We can also say that in the light of all these things, the book that appeared in Hungarian in 1946, but was written in 1944, concludes that the small states are protected by law, not power. "A satisfactory settlement of the destiny of the states on Russia's western border seems to depend on whether they are prepared to pursue a policy of neutrality, and whether Russia would respect that neutrality in this region. A solution of this kind would best serve the interests of the United States. It would not bring us or the members of the Atlantic Community into conflict with Russia, but it would provide the one form of security for Poland, the Danubian states and the Balkans that we can offer to them. Apart from that, it would give security to Russia as well. This security would rest on the fact that the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe, after the disarmament of Germany, could no longer become the vanguard of a Western coalition."

This is what is said in Lippmann's book, and it very seriously affected our whole political pessimism, our thinking between 1945 and 1948. Then there ensued in our region between 1949 and 1956 – to a very grave extent to the time of Stalin's death in 1953 – the toughest of dictatorships, which matched the Russian one, and then there ensued the revolution of 23 October 1956. It is not fortuitous that this idea of making the region neutral was the basis of the Austrian State Treaty, and the starting point for any possible reunification of Germany, and that a neutral Hungary was our political programme in 1956, in which we saw the solution between the still relatively very strong Russia and the developing, strengthening NATO countries. Let us remember that the Pleven Plan still failed. And how many actions there were that had a detrimental effect on our region. The fact that we favoured neutrality was, of course, causally connected with the Warsaw Treaty signed in 1955 and with the Austrian State Treaty. In fact this was the only course that Hungary in that period could choose and attempt to follow. It took the desperate step

of withdrawing from the Warsaw Pact, legally clarifying the situation, and declaring something that we were able to refer back to in Moscow in June 1990. This concept of a neutral Hungary and the neutrality of the region were strongly present in the minds of the peoples in this region right up until 1988–89.

(III) The crushing of 1956, then the period of reprisals up to 1963, the downfall of the Prague Spring in 1968, then the Polish political movements and the military coup of 1981, although in a fluctuating mood, nevertheless created in this region a situation that made it apparent that neutrality could remain a programme for a time as a maximum, together with the reform-communist tendencies. But after 1989–1990, when the emergence of the new political and military power relations became clear with the Soviet defeat in Afghanistan, it became obvious in the whole region that President Gorbachev was unable to undertake direct military intervention in the event of each action, since they had also acquiesced already in the Jaruzelski solution in Poland. This made it clear to us that neutrality might be a mood for the time being, but it could certainly not be a political programme any longer. The European Communities and the Western European Union had already advanced further to a point where its declared neutrality represented a problem for Austria itself. We saw what Finlandisation, this often ambiguous word, meant, and how its significance kept changing over time, with Finnish neutrality, too, being modified as a result.

Under the circumstances in which the turning point from the national roundtable talks to the new election took place in Hungary, then, following Poland, which was already on this kind of path, the events of the turnaround also occurred in the other East-Central European and Balkan states, and then German reunification etc. came. With all that it became obvious that the problems of our region could no longer be handled on the basis of the political principles of neutrality between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Taking all these things into account, negotiations ensued that took us further in this field. Allow me to refer to the Political Consultative Body of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation, where by the irony of fate it fell to me to open the session as the rotating chairman by inheritance from the previous regime. I declared in Moscow: “Here I would like to emphasise that Hungary welcomes the new Soviet stance acknowledging the importance of American military commitments in Europe. We believe the military presence of the United States to be a stabilising factor

that will continue to have a definitive positive influence even after German reunification. During the process of forging European unity, it is expedient to rely on stable Atlantic co-operation, which proved in the course of two world wars that Europe and North America are inseparable, regardless of which nation stands on which side." On the basis of all this, perhaps it is not a miracle that Hungary already declared all these things in Moscow in June 1990, when the Warsaw Pact was still alive and Mr Gorbachev and his government were sitting opposite. Perhaps I can add just this much to the historical tableau: Havel was on the right, and on the left were De Maizière, Mazowiecki and Jaruzelski, and opposite was Iliescu – I could go on listing the names. But when Havel and I or Mazowiecki and I looked at each other, we felt that if history had taken a less fortunate turn, if NATO had not been strengthened, then it would not have been impossible for NATO to hold sessions with people like Messrs Togliatti and Thorez sitting on the consultative panel, which, I suppose, would have been a much less favourable scenario. I may perhaps also recall that at the press conference which followed the session where the Warsaw Treaty was dissolved, Soviet vice-president Gennadi Yanayev, substituting for Gorbachev at the session where the dissolution of the Pact was signed but which the Soviets did not perceive to be solemn enough (and Mr Yanayev's subsequent career is well known), expressed his hope that NATO, as an organisation created with the problems of the Cold War in mind, would not much longer survive the Warsaw Pact. According to news reports, Yanayev "noted there had been some indications of this recently. Hungarian PM József Antall, however (I apologise for making reference to myself, but accuracy requires me to do so) pointed out the significant difference between NATO and the Warsaw Treaty, which, dissolved, had now become a thing of the past. The former [NATO] is based on collective decisions made by member states, a statement which did not apply to the now defunct Warsaw Pact." In the same year, on October 28, 1991 at the North Atlantic Council in Brussels, I was able to remark: "I must say that European integration is inconceivable without transatlantic co-operation." And I repeated that two world wars proved that, and expressed my conviction that "NATO is the cornerstone of European stability for us."

I have mentioned all this not because I want to quote myself, but in order to remind you how consistent we have been in pointing out, on behalf of the government of Hungary, the significance of NATO. Things have changed since then, but even today, after the collapse of international communism, after the break-up of the Soviet Union and the creation of successor states, NATO

continues to bear responsibility, and it should continue to remain the most important political and military stabilising factor.

This does not conflict at all with our stance in favour of European integration; it does not conflict with the fact that we are now in a relationship of association with the European Communities, short of a few ratifications, but recognised as such. We were the first [among the former communist countries – the editor] to become a full member of the Council of Europe. And may I mention that in 1990 in Helsinki I was first to suggest that if we were able to breathe life into the West European Union it might become an adequate organisation acting as an intermediary with our region, perhaps even in a partnership framework, and in that manner the West European Union (which at that time was still intended to play a very minor role only) might have the opportunity to play a role in the co-operation with the East-Central European region. After all, we were, at least formally, still a member of the Warsaw Pact at that time. As a consequence, European integration, and, more specifically, the West European Union, as the European arm of NATO, constitutes a basic principle of Hungarian foreign policy. The other basic tenet, relying also on the American arm, is the grand overall unity, which has for centuries been symbolised by the transatlantic idea; and NATO is the contemporary embodiment of transatlantic co-operation. NATO is destined to be a stabilising factor.

On the basis of what I have said so far I think it is only logical that we have in the current critical period given the go-ahead to the continuous operation of AWACS planes in our airspace, and also that we pursue an unusually active policy in relation to a Russia on its way to renewal. It is a fact that we sent our greetings to Mr Gorbachev even at the time of his arrest in the Crimea, and we telephoned Mr Yeltsin when he was surrounded with enemies at the time of the coup (August 1991). It is a fact that now as well as in every crisis we are supporters of the renewal of Russia, supporters of Russian reformist endeavours, and we assured Mr Yeltsin personally, and at a much earlier time (on 16 March 1993) than many world powers did, of our solidarity in the recent hard days. We have clearly asserted the significance of neighbouring Ukraine, with its population of 55 million.

It is our conviction that in our world of today NATO, the Atlantic region, the Atlantic Ocean as an inland sea, should continue to take priority. On the other hand, it is to be noted that another centre, the Pacific region, came into existence after the Second World War, or even before that. Although the Pacific region is further away from our world, we need to keep it in mind with

its high-powered economy and military strength – not to mention the crisis regions which will also have an impact on our world in the future.

While we strive to deal with major security conflicts, we should not forget the social tensions arising from the North–South dilemma, nor the significance of various sorts of intellectual, religious and political fundamentalism. The frequent reliance of such phenomena on religious fundamentalism is an indication that social and political fundamentalism may in the North–South conflict manifest itself and assail the world as the Bolshevism of the 21st century.

(IV) Another issue that must certainly be mentioned is the question of the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Under the changed political circumstances, brainpower and nuclear materials freed from research could get into hands that constituted a mortal danger to the world, and coupled with the vision of political fundamentalism, could be a nightmare for the next century.

I should also like to touch briefly upon the importance in our view of establishing and maintaining good neighbourly relations with the countries across our borders, within the framework of the security system outlined. We cannot agree to demands or requests which are contrary to facts or common sense, but we are going to adhere to each and all of the international conventions, including the peace treaties ratified by Hungary, the Helsinki Final Act, the Paris Charter, and all the other international agreements, and we are firmly committed to doing so.

In this context it is absolutely necessary for us to settle all unresolved issues. Transition is necessarily attended by serious side effects, social and economic problems, which we are bent on resolving. This is also a security issue. To resolve this issue we of course ask the world for assistance, for adequate economic policies. This requires a balanced regional policy. With regard to the issue of Yugoslavia, in the disintegrated republic, after the grave mistakes committed, rash decisions should be avoided. When certain political groupings or political forces have committed themselves in the course of negotiations, and we see them making progress, then we should not make rash decisions about the settlement of political issues. We should guard against taking rash measures which might embarrass politicians who have perhaps made concessions, perhaps relinquished their former positions, in an effort to solve a difficult situation. Besides exerting force, besides bringing to bear economic, military and political pressure, we should pursue consistent policies; we should, however,

always bear in mind the capacity of the region to endure hardship in economic and political terms, and strive to preserve the fragile structure of the political balance of forces. If all these aspects are given due consideration, the resolution of issues can take place in the foreseeable future. Ethnic conflicts should, however, not be allowed to keep on being a source of further disagreements. Most importantly, the major world powers, or, if you like, even the medium-size world powers, that is to say all the powers concentrated in NATO or (despite its internal crisis) in the CIS countries, should make a joint effort in our region, for the lack of co-ordination would be fateful in international affairs. The only thing even more fateful than that would be if NATO were unable to stand firm on both legs, the American and the European, and did not offer adequate assurance to this region, including Russia itself, to ensure that it is not threatened by dangers.

For this reason, in concluding my speech about the political relations and co-operation between our region and NATO, I should stress that preventive thinking should be given precedence in international affairs and in military policy. Tragically, reactive international and military policies have been to an enormous extent typical of our times, and even more tragically, typical of democracies. The kind of reactive international policy, which simply registers things that happen and only draws conclusions and starts taking measures after the event, is doomed to fail or, at least, to entail endless suffering for peoples. That is why I have given you an overview, looking back over decades, of what the disadvantage of this kind of thinking has meant in our thinking. In sum, it is a preventive, prophylactic way of thinking which helps the world progress, and it is this kind of thinking which has been a matter of general consensus in modern science, modern medicine and public health in this country ever since the days of Ignác Semmelweis.¹⁹⁸ It is such preventive medical thinking which should be adopted in foreign and security policy.

¹⁹⁸ Ignác Semmelweis (1818–1865), obstetrician, gynaecologist, often called “the saviour of mothers”. He invented the method of ablution with chlorinated water to prevent what was so common in his times, death in childbirth

AT THE SUMMIT MEETING OF THE CENTRAL EUROPEAN INITIATIVE

At the Meeting of the CEI Heads of Government (Budapest, 17 July 1993) the Hungarian Prime Minister commented upon the possibilities for the European Community to play a more constructive role in ensuring the rights of national minorities in dealing with the crisis in the former Yugoslavia. He also saw lessons from the transformation in Central Europe which can apply to Russia.

Opening speech by Prime Minister József Antall at the CEI Heads of Government

Allow me to welcome the participants of the CEI Meeting, all the delegations here and let me welcome Mme Lalumière, General Secretary of the Council of Europe, and the Vice-President of the EBRD. As current Chairman of the Central European Initiative we are welcoming you here in Budapest and we trust that this meeting will represent a stage in the history of the CEI as well as in that of the peoples of the region. We can say that the countries of the Central European Initiative constitute near one million square kilometres in area and also represent a population of 150 million people. If we regard this issue from this angle, we can immediately point out that these frameworks, the size of the area and the population, emphasises and makes co-operation important. At the same time, let me also stress what I already spoke about last night that when the Pentagonale was established with the participation of five countries and when it transformed following the decision of Venice into Hexagonale, an organisation comprising six countries, the historical conditions were different. We, who here in Hungary had a chance to study the concept of the Italy-initiated organisation as opposition politicians, we firmly supported it. We continued to do so after we took power. What did this represent at the time? This meant that Italy, a member of NATO and the European Community, neutral Austria – also a member of the EFTA –, the former Yugoslavia as

a non-aligned country, as well as us, Hungary, the former Czechoslovakia, and later Poland within the framework of the Hexagonale, were still members of the Warsaw Pact. Thus this represented a special organisation in which countries affiliated with different blocs and military political organisations were able to co-operate with one another. For us who lived in a state socialist planned economy it was extremely important to be admitted to an organisation with countries with an advanced market economy. A historical turn then materialised, and free elections were held in these countries. Changes occurred in the structure of the states as well. The constituent republics of Yugoslavia emerged as separate states and later the Czech Republic and Slovakia separated. Now we constitute an organisation with a new composition. This is one of the essential elements I wish to stress. The second is the changed historical situation and the third is the issue of the Yugoslav crisis.

The Hexagonale and subsequently the Central European Initiative was unable to play a successful goodwill role, nor could it prevent the outbreak of this war and the conclusion of this terrible and bloody tragedy. We can all remember well the penultimate session we held precisely in Dubrovnik, we felt the tension, the special security measures, although that lovely city was still unaffected by fighting. The question may be posed as to what an organisation is worth which could not make a contribution to this and was unable to solve this issue within the framework of its own member countries. Let it, however, be some consolation for us that much more powerful, older and well established organisations wielding greater authority and sphere of competence than us – including the UN, NATO or the European security organisations – were also unable to make headway in this region on this serious issue that the Yugoslav problem represents. Thus, now when we have convened here and as I am about to cede floor to the heads of each delegation, we must speak about the response we can give to this new challenge in which we now live. What can we say at a time when our countries that do not belong to different political military organisations and to economic structures co-operate, but irrespective of this, they are our own countries, and what objectives can the Central European Initiative set itself and what further plans shall we draw up to deepen or expand this co-operation. Thus, it can be said that we have indeed reached a crossroads: what shall we do in the future within the framework of this organisation?

*Contribution by Prime Minister József Antall
at the Summit Meeting of the Central European Initiative*

On behalf of the Hungarian delegation I have already dealt in my opening speech with the Central European Initiative. I have said that under the new conditions we must find a place for this organisation, clearly formulate its frameworks, the possibility of its potential expansion or the promotion of this organisation. However, before tackling this issue let me sum up the three priorities of Hungarian foreign policy.

The first is the maintenance of peace and security in Europe, an integral part of which is constituted by the maintenance and strengthening of NATO. We intend to expand relations between NATO in this region to as broad an extent as possible under the prevailing circumstances. An integral part of this is also formed by the American military presence in Europe. We hold the view that the changes that have occurred over the past few years have not made the role played by NATO unnecessary, nor can the importance of the American military presence be called into question, and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, and its disintegration into successor states, does not in any way make it unnecessary, quite the contrary, we intend to see its new role strengthened. The second priority of Hungarian foreign policy concerns its relationship with the European Community. In this field we consider it a major achievement that Hungary, together with the Visegrád Group of Countries, managed to conclude an associate agreement with the European Community, and added to it a complementary provision that refers to a regular membership. Thus, Hungary strives to attain full membership of the European Community. Until that happens it will seek to co-ordinate all its foreign policy moves and the outlining of its stances at all international forums with the policy of the European Community. As a matter of course, the guaranteeing of European unity and stability is a precondition to that. The third priority is to ensure and maintain settled relations with the neighbouring countries. We are of the view that relations between the individual countries cannot be restricted to problems affecting the minority issue, nor can political relations be stabilised by skirting questions that affect minorities. We consider it gratifying that in the Copenhagen documents of the CSCE, the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, in 1990 we all signed the provision, the agreement under which the cause of national minorities is not an internal affair. Just as the question of human rights cannot be regarded as an internal affair, minority rights connected

with human rights cannot be considered as a domestic affair either. Therefore it is a matter of course that the protection of the minority issue is stressed simultaneously with that of human rights in the individual countries. Regional co-operation is important and for this reason we advocate groupings involving a smaller group of countries or a type of regional co-operation that our organisation represents. The geopolitical and security policy situation of Central Europe is fragile, this is a point we must allude to by all means, since we must think not in terms of months or years, but as we approach the end of the century we must take into consideration the progress of the coming decades.

From the point of view of the region of the Central European Initiative it is of outstanding importance to see what goes on in the territory of the one-time Soviet Union, whether the successor states can truly observe their national sovereignty and independence, if the Russian reforms make further headway and if the democratisation and conversion to a market economy of the states formed on the territory of the one-time Soviet Union is a success and in what ways the control of this vast army is ensured in this area. For all of us, it is an important fact, that a considerable part of the armies now stationed on the territory of the one-time Soviet Union are not under direct governmental control and in a certain sense they form a state within the state. For this very reason, we are committed to maintaining relations with the countries that stepped on the road to independence, and supporting the Russian reform as we have done in the past.

I think, it is worth speaking about the Yugoslav crisis here. All the more so because our government has from the start done its very best to ensure that the war should not break out in Yugoslavia and in this case when we speak about a war of nations, this is more than just ethnic difference. This is simply a case, when the borders of countries recognised as independent and internationally sovereign are not respected and a war of peoples is under way. Regrettably, the major Western powers of the world could not co-ordinate their positions over the past two or three years, they failed to raise their voice when the first serious developments occurred and thus in a certain sense the start of the crisis in Yugoslavia is also the common responsibility of the world. Therefore Hungary considers important the solution of the Yugoslav crisis not only as a country neighbouring on the one-time Yugoslavia and its successor states, stressing that observance of the embargo ranks as a major burden for us. The losses we have incurred should be reckoned in terms of billions of dollars. The territory of the one-time Yugoslavia constituted a major market outlet for Hungary in

transit turnover, gas and oil shipments and other issues as well, and the impending of this and the acceptance of the embargo constitute a major burden for us today. A more decent burden for us, which we readily undertake, is that from the very first moment both Croatian and Bosnian or ethnic Hungarians fled to Hungary; I think we have also set an example on the refugee issue as well

In conclusion I wish to state that the maintenance and the further development of the Central European Initiative can only materialise if we do not expect more of it than what such an organisation is capable of achieving. All international or regional organisations wield as much influence or power as is lent to it by the participating states. Earlier much has been said about the powerlessness of the United Nations. In that case it was not the powerlessness of an organisation, it was a case of how much power and influence the participating states accorded to this organisation. For our part, we hold the view that the Central European Initiative must be upheld as a major political club or as a political forum where we can co-ordinate and discuss the various issues. The second point I wish to make is that we can represent a co-ordinated position at international forums, wherever possible, for instance in the Security Council where some of our states as non-permanent members can represent the problems of our region, and now we are included among these states. Economic co-operation can only result in continuous progress and we support the conclusion of free trade agreements. The question, however, that arises, is what actual economic relations and trade ties we can maintain with one another. In this field, following the collapse of the Warsaw Pact and Comecon, two organisations, which were forced upon us, we have been unable to find so far the means with which we could have essentially strengthened our trade and external economic relations. As a matter of course, this does not apply to Italy or Austria, I have primarily spoken about the member states of the former Warsaw Pact. We consider it very important to treat the practical issues together such as transport and energy and so on and so forth, I hope I do not need to list the infrastructural developments, since Italy as the initiator of this organisation defined precisely these goals, and it has, together with Austria, represented them right from the beginning. Now we must present and describe the CEI as truly not just an organisation of the representatives of governments, or simply as an international organisation where heads of government and foreign ministers meet, but which extends to a broader field of co-operation, including that of parliaments, and cultural co-operation, and if possible, co-operation between various interest protecting organisations. I hope that at the end of the debate,

I can put forward to you the declarations that were meanwhile formulated and co-ordinated. At the same time I would like to express my thanks to you for accepting our invitation, and also thank you for the words of esteem that you have pronounced so far about the hospitality and the staking of this conference. I hope that you have expressed these words not only here and now, but you will also feel the same way when you return home.

HUNGARIAN FOREIGN POLICY GUIDELINES

The annual conference of Hungary's ambassadors is held in Budapest each summer. The Prime Minister usually delivers a speech at these several-day meetings. In July 1993, József Antall could not participate. He nevertheless briefed the ambassadors on the priorities of Hungarian foreign policy through the following 'message' read on 20 July by Pál Tar, Hungarian ambassador to Washington. It can be seen as the Prime Minister's testimony on foreign policy, intended to be observed by successive governments. The full text of the message appeared in the daily Új Magyarország on 21 July 1993.

I earnestly request you to excuse my inability to accept the invitation and the honour to inform the leaders of Hungarian diplomacy personally about our domestic and external political aspirations, and to share with you my views. The permanent deputies of the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs Péter Boross and Foreign Minister Géza Jeszenszky will do this for me. (As a reminder, I might add that the current constitutional order does not provide for a separate office of deputy prime minister. The permanent deputies of the Prime Minister are currently Home Affairs Minister Péter Boross, Defence Minister Lajos Für, Foreign Minister Géza Jeszenszky and Finance Minister Iván Szabó.)

(I) *The Guidelines and Main Priorities of Hungarian Foreign Policy*

(1) The consistent assertion of Euro-Atlantic policy in the areas of politics, economic and security policy, and the political line on the issue of Hungarians beyond the borders.

Our most important aim is to achieve accession to the European Union and NATO within this decade. By way of its reforms accommodating it to the new conditions and without affecting the general security role of the UN, NATO is the most important guarantee of international and European peace,

including the international commitment and the European military, political and economic presence of the United States of America. The Western European Union (WEU) will relate to this, should it be genuinely invigorated. As the military organisation of the European Union, it could also be the firm European pillar of NATO. Hungarian government policy expressed this in the summer of 1990, but did not obtain an adequate response. At the time, we deemed it would provide some sort of possibility of association for Warsaw Treaty member states.

(a) The European Community and EFTA Member States adapting to it – through maximum use of our association agreements – can be of good service in preparing our full membership in Brussels and with individual governments if we make thorough diplomatic efforts to this end, and ensure legislative and institutional preparations at home. The acceptance of Maastricht is a matter of course, but no one should doubt that this may result in various problems even in the case of Member States (single common currency, parliamentary control and other matters of detail). There is no other option for Hungary but accession to the European Union; its advantages eclipse all disadvantages – disadvantages mostly resulting from not achieving full EU membership.

(b) With regard to NATO, all possible means of strengthening relations have to be applied, including bilateral agreements, the establishment of new forms of organisation, direct military contacts (authorisation of overflights, including, under appropriate legal conditions, AWACS flights), and parliamentary co-operation. We must convince NATO Member States that our aspirations would not jeopardise their relations with Russia, and we must similarly prove to our neighbours that this is not directed against them, and that it serves the purposes of the forces of reform in the region.

(2) The maintenance of good relations with our immediate neighbours and the countries in the second region beyond them, such as Russia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria and others. The priority of our constitutional commitment to Hungarian minorities is an indispensable element of our relations with our neighbours, this, however, does not imply that the issue trumps all others.

(a) Obviously, our relations with Ukraine are outstandingly important among our neighbours. It is one of our fundamental interests to support and secure the acceptance of Ukraine as a great power in the context of Europe, not only as a buffer state but as a countervailing force. We should strive to develop

both our political and economic relations with Slovakia, Romania and Serbia in a good direction, in the interest of which we will do all we can, as we have done previously. We believe we have very fine relations with Austria, Slovenia and Croatia. It is one of our tasks to share our information and opinion concerning the region with the leaders of neighbouring countries and with those leaders of the great powers who take a stand on the issues of the region, as we have done in the past. We have to do this whether it is accepted or accepted belatedly (a good example being the Yugoslav crisis).

(b) We have a special relationship with Russia. There can be friendly and, to a certain extent, potentially allied relations with the forces involved in reform policies. We primarily support the policy of President Boris Yeltsin. This is our aim in respect of both diplomacy and commerce, particularly acknowledging its long-term equalising role in the Eurasian region and its beneficial influence on the Balkans, primarily in the Orthodox cultural sphere. However, we must not forget that certain political forces bent on restoring the old order, the armed forces in the Commonwealth of Independent States not under government control, certain phenomena of demoralisation and corruption, as well as certain political and military reflexes, traditional aspirations in Central Europe and the Balkans may pose a serious danger to not only our own region, but the whole of Europe.

(c) Close relations should be maintained with the Member States of the Visegrád Group, which have concluded association agreements with the European Community (perhaps Slovenia and, after concluding a peace agreement, Croatia may also join). The obvious and close political partnership with Poland is a fundamental Hungarian interest. In our keeping well-intended relations with the Czech Republic, we have to take account of the legacy of the almost seven-decade coexistence of Czechs and Slovaks, its mutual advantages, its common political and philosophical heritage (the Beneš political mentality¹⁹⁹). Our clear and resolute position must therefore always be immune from illusion, we must never overestimate occasional differences between them.

¹⁹⁹ Eduard Beneš (1884–1948), Czech politician, together with T. G. Masaryk the maker of Czechoslovakia in 1918. President of the Republic in 1935–1938, then in 1945–1948. His presidential decrees issued in 1945, based on the concept of ‘collective guilt’, deprived the three million German and 800,000 Hungarian citizens of all basic rights, including citizenship and private property. The Potsdam Conference permitted the expulsion of all the Germans, but not of all the Hungarians. The latter were exchanged with as many Slovaks from Hungary as were found ready for re-settlement. The Decrees of Beneš are part of the Czech and Slovak legislation up to the present day. Beneš’ attitude was the very opposite of Central European solidarity.

(d) In a multi-polar world, Japan, China, India and the rising countries of Asia are to be appreciated from the points of view of world economy, strategic economic policy and within the framework of diplomacy. We must not underestimate their role in world politics, even when we experience a lack of interest and comprehension concerning the aspirations of our region.

(e) The political issues of the Near East have a direct bearing on us. This is made abundantly clear by its political, strategic and energetic symbiosis with Europe, the many centuries of interdependence in the Mediterranean. It must not be overlooked that the region is one of the most dangerous crisis areas of the world due to political fundamentalism pointing beyond religious interests. This receives additional stress with regard to the North–South conflict, its social and demographic dimensions. The fall of the Iron Curtain is not only a political, human and military achievement, but also a source of new concern due to the easiness of travel and migration in the world, where a social iron curtain can generate new dangers. Migration based on demographic changes can lead to the danger of the repetition of the historical period of migration, the original reasons of which the philosopher Bertrand Russell so vividly pointed out. It seems highly expedient *to pay particular attention to political fundamentalism, for it is an issue which may potentially be the neo-Bolshevism or neo-Fascism of the 21st century.* [Editor's italics] It is in this context that we have to mention that, apart from handling relations with the Arab world, particular attention should be focussed on the role of Turkey. Through its European civilisation structures and institutions, Turkey has a particular influence not only within the Islamic world, but also in the Turkic-speaking states of the former Soviet Union. Finally, it should be noted here that it is time Israel was not treated purely as the reborn Zionist state, but as a country of Western Asia and the Near East, the Near Eastern geographic position of which cannot be disregarded in spite of its special relations with the world Jewry (it is mistaken analysis to identify Israel with the World Jewish Congress).

(f) Black Africa and the South African Republic cannot be regarded as areas that could be neglected by Hungarian diplomacy. The few diplomatic outposts we have left in Africa in the course of the austerity measures must not be seen as places 'sheltered from the winds', as islands of political peace, where our diplomats can settle in, biding their time in their comfortable posts. We expect them to operate, while connecting to the major streams of international diplomacy, in accordance with the economic potential of Africa's raw-material sources and ecological significance. The political role of expanding communist

political systems accorded to the area by former Soviet diplomacy and also by Chinese diplomacy no longer suits the region. Though the social and demographic basis of this has not ceased, its psychological loss of ground has become obvious even in the eyes of left-wing forces.

(g) I will not dwell on the details of the tasks of those serving in Latin America. No doubt, the possibilities of co-operation in economic policy and economic diplomacy have to be found in this region, too, without schematically making this region look uniform. Not denying the necessity of equalisation, Hungary's priority is Northern America in both political and military terms. Nevertheless, apart from our economic policy aims, the tasks of our diplomatic missions include the maintenance of contacts with Hungarians in the region.

(h) Similarly, I will not go into the details and the scopes of activity of international organisations, such as NATO, EC and EFTA already referred to, and other regional political organisations. We have discussed and evaluated these several times before. As far as the UN Security Council is concerned, Hungary has already signalled in the appropriate time and form that according to its opinion the permanent membership of Germany and Japan in the Security Council, which accords with current tendencies of world development, and the necessity of changing the structure shaped over half a century ago, is justified. Regional organisations (CEI, the Visegrád Group, etc.) can never mean lasting antechambers to NATO, 'waiting rooms' to the EU or alternatives to them. Our position in this regard has to be maintained as against not only Western diplomats objecting to admission, but also as against provincially minded Hungarian politicians and critics and their organisations, as well as against sceptical remarks by some leaders in the member countries concerned.

(II) Foreign Policy Requests and Requirements vis-à-vis the Diplomatic Service

(1) We do not wish to differentiate between the responsibilities of the various mission leaders. Each one of them is responsible for the development of relations with the recipient country, for serving Hungarian national interests and the issue of constitutional and political loyalty to the Parliament and Government based on free elections. Conduct to the contrary, open or concealed

efforts of this kind and their manifestations may lead to personal consequences. We have made no secret of this, and it will be enforced as long as the Cabinet sworn in remains in office.

(2) We consistently require of all our diplomats, the higher and lower ranking officials of the Foreign Ministry, a knowledge of international law, diplomatic history and the principles and practices of international relations; the related skills; a familiarity with the domestic situation of Hungary and the recipient country; a general inquisitiveness as well as knowledge concerning a constantly changing world; and, last but not least, a general erudition that enables communication with accredited diplomats in a given country, which earns respect in the recipient country and facilitates the representation of Hungarian culture.

Since it is self-evident, I do not wish to touch on the command of languages, but I certainly regard the knowledge of English and French as well as the first and second languages of the recipient country as necessary. As regards your reports and accounts, we require and demand honest and pointed formulations – if in the possession of evidence. This has never injured anyone. The Cabinet and the Foreign Ministry cannot accept formal and ‘sterile’ reports packed with commonplaces, meaningless or muffled ideas – however they might seem to serve survival or individual interest. I do not want to compare diplomats employed earlier and recently; there are competent and less competent ones in both categories. Our criteria are uniform, we require performance of the above on your part and on the part of the staff you direct accordingly.

(3) In order to dispel all misunderstanding, let me make it clear that we wish to ensure the establishment and enforcement of a unified mission system, wherein the ambassador has the decisive and controlling role. Good co-operation should be established with related ministries (Ministry of International Economic Relations, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Culture and Education). Conflicts in this regard will ensue in inspections and repercussions. It is, however, most important that, within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the co-ordination of administrative tasks and the functioning of the Ministry as a unified office must be most resolutely implemented under the direction of the Permanent State Secretary and the Deputy State Secretaries with powers of inspection. Under the legal provisions defining his scope, the Permanent

State Secretary is responsible for the administrative functioning of the Ministry (naturally, beside the political direction implemented by the Political State Secretary, whose scope is specially provided for.) Maintaining continuous and permanent communication contacts with the Minister, the State Secretaries and their deputies cannot be eluded. This is the only way of ensuring the appropriate functioning of the headquarters and the missions.

(4) Hungary seeks to implement a foreign policy based on six-party consensus, as we have reiterated several times. This is true with regard to all the fundamental national, nation policy and strategic issues, which does not mean, however, that there can be no differences in stress between the various parties. Nevertheless, we regard it inadmissible that certain parties and their representatives should take their stand against the fundamental interests of the Hungarian nation, that they should bring discredit to it, involving themselves in self-scourging activities abroad that smack of masochistic reflexes at their best. It cannot be tolerated that, when the government seeks to implement its foreign policy, either responsible leaders of parliamentary committees or their members should indulge in comments serving party ends, in unfounded statements or in strengthening them by subsequent commentaries. I should honestly be pleased to acknowledge that you at least counterbalance by silence the vague, often aloof or mistaken judgements that have been made several times with regard to the most delicate matters of our country (Yugoslav crisis, Soviet coup, Yeltsin's most recent difficult situation, etc.). The Cabinet has never taken advantage of its negative experiences in this respect.

(III) *Domestic Issues*

I do not intend to discuss our domestic issues in detail – these will be illuminated by Interior Minister Péter Boross. Your task is to represent the internal political life of Hungary in a realistic way as opposed to the extreme manifestations occurring in the foreign press, and to counterbalance those. The Government is not going to tolerate any conduct to the contrary, it insists on this until it remains in office. I do not wish to go into the question of the coming election – a matter belonging not to political analysis but predictions. For a realistic analyst, however, it is enough to compare the situation of our country

with those of our neighbours in terms of foreign policy, military policy and economic policy.

Finally, by way of advice, let me call your attention to the fact that before the 1990 elections both the Hungarian and the foreign press, and even diplomats, voiced predictions that proved wrong. This may well occur again. I would regard it fortunate if our own diplomats would not fall into this error. My minister colleagues will inform you about further issues.

“WE WANT TO PLAY THE ROLE OF THE MEDIATOR”

INTERVIEW IN *DIE WELT*

The interview was published in the 16 August issue of the German daily Die Welt. The highly original answers covered – among others – the Balkan crisis, Hungary’s neighbourhood policy, Turkey as a moderate Moslem country, Russia, and the Right in Hungary.

Q: If Hungarian foreign policy has a list of requests, what in your view takes top place?

A: Our country’s admission to the European Community. Germany has offered to support this endeavour.

Q: How does co-operation with Bonn look like politically speaking?

A: We consider German–Hungarian co-operation in the field of security policy also most important. I am speaking about the hotbeds of crisis in this region – and in the current situation the Balkan crisis takes top place. However, the territory of the onetime Soviet Union should be mentioned as the second potential crisis region. In addition, there are other potential flash points in other parts of the continent that could flare up at any moment: ranging from the Baltic region to Turkey. A joint German–Hungarian security concept is of vital importance on these questions. Germany as a major continental power is capable of giving proper assessment to the problems in our region.

Q: Of the Central European states, Hungary is situated closest to the flashpoint that has evolved in the one-time Yugoslavia. Hungary is the only European state which has in two years seen five new states – Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Ukraine and Slovakia – emerging on its borders. How do you assess the security policy position of your country?

A: A Pan-European security system would be one possible solution. However, we have no intention of giving up the idea of seeing NATO play a greater role in this region. I cannot visualise that NATO, which has commitments in the region of Greece and Turkey, should ignore the zone that lies in between. During the Gulf war they used our territory to secure supply lines. The AWACS planes that monitor the crisis in the one-time Yugoslavia are active in Hungarian airspace. We consider NATO as a cornerstone of the European security structure. And we also expect the United States to show an interest in Central Europe.

Q: *What is the situation like with your neighbours?*

A: Hungary strives to improve relations with its neighbouring states or to maintain the already existing good ties. This applies to security policy as well. Let me refer to the military agreement that Hungary and Romania concluded. But I wish to make it clear that a precondition to establishing good relations with our neighbours is the correct treatment of the local ethnic Hungarian minorities. This is a question of principle to us – because one-third of the Hungarian nation lives outside the borders of the Hungarian state. Regrettably, we have serious problems in this field, for instance with Romania and Slovakia.

Q: *Is there no imminent danger that two security zones might develop in Europe – a privileged zone for NATO member states, and another zone, that of Central and Eastern European states, who must exist at their own risk?*

A: NATO membership would be beneficial for Hungary. But it will still be a while before we get there. NATO is not yet ready to accept us, either. When we are certain of being admitted, we shall apply for membership. As a matter of course, this depends on a decision of the Hungarian Parliament. In my view, it would do no harm for some states of Eastern Europe to be admitted as members of NATO. From time to time one can hear arguments that Russia would regard a further expansion of NATO as an act of provocation. I cannot share that view. The case of Yugoslavia shows to us that much could have been avoided with preventative action. Instead, the world has pursued a foreign policy line that followed events, instead of shaping them.

Q: *How do you view the future of the onetime Yugoslav region?*

A: The crisis in Yugoslavia has been mishandled right from the outset. In the period of transition from Gorbachev to Yeltsin, the West pursued a “Russia-centred” policy focusing its attention on Russia. This was the situation during the time of the Moscow coup in August 1991. The West concentrated its efforts on Russia, and ignored the significance of developments in Yugoslavia. The foreign policy pursued by Western states lacked any co-ordination, and old reflexes often resurfaced.

Many illusions were fostered toward the leadership of the old Yugoslavia. Timely and decisive action by NATO and the West European states could have prevented the disaster which struck. Mutual killing and destruction, and a sense of revenge have reached a point where the awful experiences will have an impact on events even for decades to come, should even an agreement be reached.

Q: *What will happen to Serbia?*

A: This is a question involving the concept of a Greater Serbia. Namely, Serbia lays claim to all those territories where Serbs live. They demand that all these areas outside Serbia, where a Serbian minority lives, be closely linked to Serbia.

On the other hand, Serbia will without doubt want an outlet to the Mediterranean. Whenever a peace settlement is drawn up we must reckon with the fact that the Serbs will strive to have an Adriatic port. The question, however, can only be solved in Belgrade.

In this respect the question arises as to what conduct the West should display towards Croatia, a rival to Serbia in this region. Croatia is a state which can maintain democratic order and prevent a destabilisation of the region. It must not be forgotten that the relative success of Slovenia was possible because Croatia served as a ‘shield’ for Slovenes in the face of the theatre of war and Serbian aggression. Therefore any policy that wants to weaken Croatia is erroneous.

Q: *And what about the situation in Bosnia?*

A: For me it has been beyond any doubt from the start that if the conflict extends to Bosnia-Herzegovina, the problem will become complicated, if not totally unsolvable. In that respect you have, in addition to the Serbian and the Croatian issues, the Islamic question as well.

We must not forget about the historical lessons stemming from the 1878 occupation of Bosnia – at that time Austria–Hungary marched in. In those days many Bosnians welcomed Austrian–Hungarian supremacy. The Bosnian-Herzegovinian regiments in World War I were among the best troops in the Imperial and Royal Army. It was not by accident either that World War I broke out in Sarajevo. The problem of Bosnia-Herzegovina is so complicated because foreign policy and ethnic questions clash there. One should add the fact that a Moslem, Islamic community is involved there, and this gives rise to concerns in Greece and other states. The question of Albania and Kosovo are connected with this. Turkey alone has two million residents, Moslems resettled from Bosnia [following World War I – the editor]. If Islamic states and not only the Islamic fundamentalists become actively involved in this issue it could lead to further global complications.

Q: Turkey as an Islamic state and a member of the North Atlantic alliance has long shown an interest in Bosnia.

A: Turkey played a special role – not only in that region but in the whole Islamic world; primarily in modernising the Islamic world, and secondarily in building ties between the Islamic world and the West. Turkey's particular weight, which lessened after World War I, again increased following World War II both in the political and military arenas. This does not only apply to Turkey's membership in the Western alliance, but also to the influence that Ankara exerts on the Turkic (Turkoman) republics of the one-time Soviet Union – thus on Central Asia.

Incidentally, I could easily visualise certain factors that have an interest in destabilisation, provoking either directly or indirectly assassination attempts on members of Turkish communities in Western Europe. The worsening of relations between Europe and Turkey, the West and Turkey, could lead to a strengthening of fundamentalism within Turkey. It is important for this reason that Germany – the country which has always clearly and appropriately assessed the position of Turkey – should give a correct assessment politically, in addition to the state of human rights and the problem of racism. Maintaining good relations with Turkey is in the prime interest of Germany – and in this way this problem applies to the whole Central European region. We must not allow operations conducted against Turks resident in Germany – in my view these are acts of provocation – to jeopardise our relations with Turkey.

Q: How do you assess the role played by Russia in the Balkans and in the region as a whole?

A: The group rallying around Yeltsin is in my view not interested in seeing Russia appear again as a major military power in Eastern Europe or the Balkans. But I am firmly convinced that there are forces in Russia which regard the withdrawal of troops as a provisional and not as a definitive fact. These forces want to maintain or wish to regain their military positions from the Baltic States to our region. This has always been part of the traditional Russian big power mentality.

We have always held the view that Russia should be involved in conflict resolution. The prestige enjoyed by the Russian army and church in Belgrade must be put to good use with the Serbs.

Thus in the short term the involvement of Russia is necessary by all means. For instance for ending the war in the former Yugoslavia. In the long run and strategically speaking we must always be aware that Russia must not be given an opportunity to build a long-lasting base here in Central Europe or in the Balkans, which in line with old reflexes or longstanding interests would again jeopardise independence in this region. If the pro-reformist forces were to weaken in Russia this could become a very real threat.

Q: Do you consider closer co-operation between Eastern European states situated between the Baltic States and Bulgaria as desirable or possible?

A: I consider co-operation between states in this region as very desirable. But we would disapprove of any institutions that would emerge as an alternative to the EC or NATO in this region. This could only lead to a point where the EC and NATO member states would look upon this region as a kind of buffer zone. We consider it right that Yeltsin and the pro-reformist forces are given assistance.

However, we consider it completely erroneous to see such measures become concentrated on Russia alone. Regrettably there are still remnants of thinking left over from an era when the world was still bipolar. The other states of the East should also receive assistance to a similar extent. If this region, which is directly adjacent to the West, were to become destabilised – and without an Iron Curtain at that – the West would also suffer damage. Western assistance must therefore be split up so as to let it focus on this

interim zone. We must also be aware of the significance of Ukraine which is a European medium-size power.

Q: Could Hungary become a spokesman for or interpreter of the interests of the other Eastern and Central European states with the West?

A: We have hitherto also made an effort to shape our policy in such a way as to apply it to the interest of the whole region. The expansion of Pentagonale and the establishment of the Visegrád group of countries can be partly traced to the initiative of Hungary.

We were the first state to recognise Ukraine. Hungary established diplomatic ties with the Baltic States back at the time of the Moscow coup. We strove then and we continue to strive to monitor the whole area between Finland and the Balkans. We have made this clear in all our talks conducted with the West. The speedy dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and Comecon also materialised on a Hungarian initiative. Thus we presented an alternative in this region. And we strive to maintain this role in the Council of Europe and the EC. As a matter of course, we must also understand that there is rivalry between the individual countries. It is hard to imagine that Poland, the Czech Republic or Romania would relinquish such a role to Hungary alone. We need successes to make that come true – and the approval of the West, the EC and NATO.

From another aspect – geographically – Budapest is already a centre of this region. The past and present stability displayed by Hungarian politics and the economy are good indications to show that Budapest can become such a base. It is not by chance that in the past three years half of all foreign investments in the region have come into Hungary. Thus Hungary can assume a bridge-head role in this region and also towards the CIS states. Besides, several minor states have emerged here. This fact has led to the point where Hungary is now among the bigger states of this region.

This does not mean that Hungary will adopt any kind of ‘big power’ attitude. We see our role clearly and unequivocally. We want to play the role of a mediator.

Q: One sometimes hears adverse reports about Hungary's domestic political situation. These reports speak of anti-Semitism, or the disintegration of your party, the Hungarian Democratic Forum.

A: The difficulties, strife and differences of view in Hungarian domestic polity are primarily associated with economic and social problems. One part of the population believed that Western living standards could immediately be attained in Hungary following the change of regime. Many opposition parties viewed politics as an area in which only the popular matters belonged to them. The politicians and MPs of the Hungarian Democratic Forum find it hard to take unpopular measures. There are political charlatans who exploit the discontent of the population.

I have always taken a stance against left and right-wing movements. While extremists demonstrated throughout the world, in fact there were clashes that claimed human lives – from Los Angeles to Germany, from Spain to France –, nothing happened here in Hungary. Nobody was slain here, and not a single house was burnt down.

This applies to the question of anti-Semitism as well. The largest Jewish population east of France lives here in Hungary; it has its own grammar school and rabbinical training school, and several kinds of cultural institutions. Of course, anti-Semitic passions can emerge in any country. In Hungary, acts of this type have always been on a lower scale than in any of the other states of the region. Therefore it is unjust to conduct a smear campaign against Hungary. In my view all such right-wing trends are supported by those political forces that served the goals of the old communist regime. It would be desirable to conduct an investigation one day as to who is behind these events.

Q: *What do the one-time communists do now?*

A: People are inclined to forget about things. They consider what is good as something natural, while they identify the evil and the bad things with the current government. During the communist regime a sense of security prevailed at a low level for two decades. This is now exploited by the communists' successor parties. The example of Lithuania is well known.²⁰⁰ Similar endeavours are observable in other countries as well. One-time communist party leaders have found their place in the Hungarian economy. People who for decades advocated Marx's *The Capital* are today owners of capital. They criticise the govern-

²⁰⁰ In Lithuania the hero of the independence movement, President Vytautas Landsbergis's Sajudis party received only 20 per cent of the vote in the October 1992 national election. The Democratic Labor Party (DLP), comprised mainly of ex-communists, won with 44 per cent. Observers explained the results by the dissatisfaction of the voters with the economy.

ment without inhibition. Yet I believe that the Hungarian people are mature and wise and they will not help the communists to come to power again.²⁰¹

Neither right-wing nor left-wing radical parties have ever been able to seize power in Hungary without external assistance. Radical ideas are alien to the Hungarian people. When an authoritative Hungarian university professor was asked before World War I if he was ready to take the leading post of a radical party, his answer went like this: "To found a radical party in Hungary is as foolish an idea as opening a store selling pork in Mecca."

²⁰¹ That proved an illusion. In the 1994 May election Antall's Democratic Forum – after the death of its erstwhile leader – received only 12 per cent of the popular vote, while the ex-communist Socialists scored 33 per cent, but owing to the electoral system, gained absolute majority in seats.

THE THREAT OF POLITICAL FUNDAMENTALISM

THE BUDAPEST SESSIONS OF THE IDU AND THE EDU

On 1–2 September 1993, the International Democrat Union (IDU) and the European Democrat Union (EDU) held their sessions in Budapest. These two organisations united the centre-right conservative and Christian democratic parties of the world and Europe respectively. The Hungarian member parties were the Hungarian Democratic Forum and the Christian Democratic People's Party. Participants in the Budapest sessions were, among others, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, Mayor of Paris Jacques Chirac, Austrian Foreign Minister Alois Mock, and the leader of the Spanish People's Party, future prime minister Jose Maria Aznar.

Prime Minister Antall, one of the Vice-Presidents of EDU, gave an address at the session of the IDU Executive Committee on 1 September and the opening address at the EDU session on 2 September.

The Hungarian-language versions of the addresses were published in the Hungarian Democratic Forum newsletter MDF Hírlap in its issues of 8 September and 15 September 1993 respectively.

Address at the Executive Committee of IDU

It is a great honour for us Hungarians, for the Hungarian Government, for the Hungarian Democratic Forum, and for our coalition partner, the Christian Democratic People's Party to be able to greet you here in Budapest. The fact that a session of the EDU, the European Democrat Union, is to be held here does not mean that this meeting of the International Democrat Union is regarded as a lesser event.

Naturally, the EDU is the organisation of those European parties that in recent decades have played a major part in bringing about European integration, performing an outstanding role in doing so. We believe that these parties

have been especially important because the Iron Curtain in Europe is now successfully destroyed. We Hungarians are proud to have had a leading role in this, the role of champion jockey at least. I have to add, too, that the possibility of an economic and social welfare Iron Curtain replacing the one-time military one fills us with foreboding, as it would render stability in Europe impossible.

While we do not deny the importance to us of the EDU and of European integration as an immediate issue and goal, I want to make it clear in this place that co-operation between all the democratic parties throughout the world, from East to West and from North to South, is of especial importance for us. It is especially so because it means also that we are committed to the Euro-Atlantic idea. We can never picture European integration without it. Two world wars bear witness to the fact that, to whichever side history may have driven a country, the symbiosis of North America and Europe has been crucial not only to the survival of the democratic order but also to world peace.

This is the reason why we consider the Euro-Atlantic idea and the maintenance of NATO to be on a par with the idea of European integration, and to be of outstanding importance. The continued existence of NATO, of all the security organisations in the world, is the most important guarantee of peace and security. No one should entertain the illusion that the collapse of world communism and the disintegration of the Soviet Union have rendered the role of the NATO less important. On the contrary: maintaining and strengthening NATO, while redefining its new role, are fundamental issues in our age.

All voices and ideas postulating that bloc politics has come to an end and that NATO should therefore be sacrificed are mistaken. In June 1990, on the occasion of our proposal that the Warsaw Pact be dissolved, we stated in the Kremlin that NATO and the Warsaw Pact could not be judged in the same light. This we repeated when we put our signature to the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact. NATO was created through the alliance of sovereign states and is an institution of our time that should be maintained. As a matter of fact, we hold that the boundaries of NATO ought to be widened. We have long maintained that reformist forces in Russia, and President Yeltsin himself, should in no way see this as being contrary to the interests of Russia, of a renewed Russia. Our organisation, the IDU, should therefore start out from the idea that European integration should be strengthened in conformity with the Euro-Atlantic idea.

The third area in which we have to build ties is that part of the world experiencing renewal in the Far East, namely the newly industrialised countries in

Asia. These countries have joined the mainstream of the world economy and have achieved rapid development over the past decades. Today they are not just economic players; these countries have taken on an increasingly large share of the responsibility for addressing major world problems, either as peacekeepers or as important partners in world security. In our multi-polar world they are the third factor.

To these must be added the fourth issue, that of North and South. It is the duty of our organisation to show understanding towards North–South issues, in order that the tensions caused by social and demographic problems in the Third World, in the southern hemisphere, be manageable also in the 21st century. Unless we find a way to do this during the last decade of our century, at the turn of the millennium political fundamentalism will proliferate everywhere in the world. This political fundamentalism could manifest itself not only in the Islamic world but also in other cultures, and will, as the 21st-century equivalent of Bolshevism, pose a grave threat to our world. This much I wanted to tell you of what the IDU means for our parties.

It is of especial importance for Europe, where Christian culture is decisive and where Christianity, even in its profane version, is a fundamental source of European values not only in the religious but also in the cultural sense, to live together not only with overseas cultures separated from European culture and those based on European culture, but also to enable our democratic parties to have an impact on other great cultures of the world. I am thinking here of Japanese, Chinese, Hindu, Islamic and other cultures. A former president of India, Mr Radhakrishnan, in his excellent works on the philosophy of history and culture, has summarised parallels in the Oriental and the Western ways of thinking. To us this signals that there is a potential in the fields of human and cultural values for our democratic parties to give adequate responses to the great challenges of the world irrespective of world view and cultural differences, in co-operation with each other in a multi-polar world.

I wish you to carry on your activity in this spirit and for us to co-operate in this spirit. I need not say how great an honour and joy it is for us to have been a member of the IDU since 1992, as well as of the EDU since 1990. Our further efforts will be focused on transforming this region along genuinely democratic lines. I do not conceal from you that there are very significant dangers threatening our country and the entire region. I may even say that should we prove unable to resolve these problems, they may jeopardise the entire world. You should not forget that two world wars began in the region extending from the

Balkans to the Baltic. This is an intermediate region in Europe between great empires, one in which there are flash points such as the Balkans, as we have said on innumerable occasions already. The Baltic region may be no less critical a point in the coming years.

We can therefore have no other goal than to support the reformist forces in Russia. We must also support the independence, the independent character, of the former member states of the one-time Soviet Union – for example, Ukraine and in general those states in Central Asia that have an independent character. We may thus be able to avoid the emergence of negative movements that may – through demagoguery – turn to fundamentalism to resolve social problems.

Opening address at the session of the EDU

It is a great honour to be the first head of government in East-Central Europe to be able to greet you, the leading figures in the European democratic parties, as a host. This I also do as chairman of my own party, the Hungarian Democratic Forum, in conjunction with Chairman Surján, leader of our coalition partner the Christian Democratic People's Party, who will speak separately.

We live in a period of history when global conflagrations and new ideological and political systems have followed one another within the space of a few generations, when the constantly changing world presents us with new challenges each year, and when the events now taking place around us oblige us to be constantly prepared, level-headed and ready to make grave decisions. This is the situation in which we must evaluate our activity: the road that is behind us and the road that stretches ahead of us.

There are moments in history that never return. There are events that can be prepared for, but when the moment comes, it must be seized. One such moment was the creation of German unity amidst the division of Europe. We are proud that Hungary, appearing on the international political scene with the heritage of 1956, was able to assist in the creation of German unity, and German unity meant the creation of European unity also. I think that the serious moments we have experienced in the case of the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, as well as the present situation which has certainly become extremely grave and critical, serve as a warning to us that sometimes crucial, tough decisions must be taken, and that there is no time for hesitation.

The European Democrat Union, of which Hungary has been a member for three years, has undertaken the far-from-small task of combining in one organisation all those in our continent who profess Christian and conservative democratic values, and of providing a framework in which our common thinking can be applied in practice. We are often accused these days of not being modern enough, of not being able to keep pace with the development of the world. To this we can reply that conservatism from the contemporary perspective means nothing other than an outlook on life and a mode of action that builds on the past to shape the present and that recognises its roots in the past. It is an orientation that is liberally tolerant of those who think otherwise, according them fullest spiritual and intellectual freedom. Christian thinking and the Christian outlook on life must be present in this attitude naturally; the Christian realm of ideas really needs no explanation. In other words, the conservative way of thinking excludes dictatorship, totalitarian systems and violence. Nothing can demonstrate the correctness of our arguments better than the fact that today some 60 million people in Europe share these ideas, and that in most European countries our parties are either in government or constitute the strongest part of the opposition.

Yet it is difficult today to speak of noble feelings and principles, when the pace of the reforms already begun and the security of the transformation are impeded around us by inhuman butchery, ethnic intolerance and exclusionist tendencies, by economic recession that is apparent in the world and – owing to the fall of the Soviet empire – in our region especially, and by frequent changes of government brought about in many places by the democratisation of society.

So it is not fortuitous that the issue of security needs to be addressed first of all. The only feasible way to do this is to speed up the European integration process, to resolve the crises that have already surfaced, and to neutralise those still lurking beneath the surface.

I want to emphasise that the principle of prevention has almost as great an importance in diplomacy and in foreign policy as it has in medicine. There is nothing worse than a foreign policy that merely registers and follows, dragging along in the wake of events. We know that the Central European countries must find remedies for their domestic problems themselves, but in doing so they need support. It is necessary, above all, to aid the three-phase extension of the European Community. This means the integration first of the EFTA countries (Austria, Sweden, Norway and Finland) followed by that of the Visegrád

countries, and finally by that of the other European countries. The EDU can play the role of catalyst, as it were, in this process, as it did in the case of the countries of Southern Europe.

It is in our common interest that the South Slav crisis be resolved as soon as possible, and that similar conflicts should not break out in other parts of Europe. We know that this region, stretching from the Baltic to the Balkans, served as the starting point for two world wars. The Balkans and the Baltic have always been flash points in our region of Europe. We must therefore pay enhanced attention to such phenomena as the minority question and the situation of the Soviet successor states. The West could hope for nothing better than to have reassuringly stable Central European countries in this region that ensure peace in the zone in a north–south direction as well. This justifies the efforts now being made by the most developed Central European countries to bring about an expansion of NATO.

I think that today – when the reformist forces in Russia led by President Yeltsin are still dominant in Russia’s political life, and we trust that they will continue to be so – is the opportunity to which I referred earlier: we must now do our best to prepare the agenda for the enlargement of NATO’s borders first in the political, then in the legal and organisational, and finally in the military sense. Let us accept Yeltsin’s statement; let us accept the correct Russian position on not opposing the NATO membership for these countries. As a matter of common sense, it is in the Russian reformers’ own interests that there should be stable states in the centre of Europe, and that there should thus be no encouragement, no easy temptation, for adventurism on the part of military or political leaders inside Russia with restorative intentions. We often emphasise that the Euro-Atlantic concept, which points beyond the borders of continents, means the unity and security not only of Europe, but also of the world. Bearing this in mind, we can say that when we think in regional terms we are at the same time considering the interests and development of the world. For regions and organisations are not organised for their own sake. On the contrary: the sum total of integration schemes and organisations that take regional interests into account constitute the guarantee of peace for the future.

The events of the 20th century have presented us with new challenges on countless occasions. This is what is happening now as well, when our task is to unite all democratically minded persons, in view of the slow development or even stagnation that can be seen in a number of countries. In some places the achievements, the values of democracy and freedom, have been put in jeopardy.

Impotence and inaction at the turn of the new century, the beginning of the new millennium, could cost the lives of hundreds of thousands of people, and it is therefore imperative that we tailor our goals to global values and interests. We must all of us step up our efforts in our own countries to prevent extremists, whether from the left or the right, from coming to the fore. This is all the more important since no one can doubt that right-wing and left-wing extremism feed each other and live off each other, and we well know that they are frequently in close contact with one another in the political underworld.

We need a common will and cohesion for this. The EDU has been in the forefront during its fifteen years of activity. Let us set an example to the world again on the occasion of this meeting: the democratic and Christian democratic parties – people's parties that follow a modern, conservative way of thinking – are worthy of people's trust, because they are capable of finding a way out of the most difficult situations. At a time when the Bolshevik model for the modernisation of the world has failed and when all other radical left-wing or liberal models are doomed to failure, let us have confidence that we can play a great part in accomplishing the modernisation of the world in the 21st century by driving back all kinds of political fundamentalism.

POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

THE LEGACY OF NATIONAL LIBERALISM

Under the auspices of the Liberal Forum Foundation, representatives of the national liberal trend within the Hungarian Democratic Forum held a conference on 12–13 October 1991 in Miskolc, where the Prime Minister gave the following address on 12 October.

It is not my task to offer a full and comprehensive analysis of national liberalism, as there are eminent experts on national liberalism, and liberalism in general, attending here. They are capable of formulating and analysing liberal values and the meaning of national liberalism, with respect to both the past and the future. I want first of all to point out that what makes the Hungarian Democratic Forum special is that the ideas of national liberalism, those of the popular–national trend and those of Christian democracy appear side by side within it. Therefore, all these values must be handled together within the Hungarian Democratic Forum; they must be acknowledged together and they must also be represented together in daily political life. As a political party we say nothing unusual through these trends, nothing at variance with European and universal human values, and we do not try to bring together incompatible ideas and trends. On the contrary, we have created a balance and an order in those values that in part have common roots and in part provide a suitable ideological and philosophical background in daily politics.

We can say that liberalism, which we seek to define at our conference as a trend represented within the Hungarian Democratic Forum, involves a value system that is now characteristic of Europe as a whole. It may be appropriate to quote the words of the former British liberal party leader David Steel, who said that the British Liberal Party could never be as strong or as big a political party as the British Conservative Party or the British Labour Party. And why? The reason is simple: because both the Conservative Party and the Labour Party have become liberal. And why? And I could go on like this. When I spoke to Mr Anders Björck, Speaker of the Parliament of the Council of Europe and a Swedish conservative, he said, when this question arose, that he, too, was liberal. I have spoken to many politicians representing other parties,

working in other parties and yet confessing themselves liberals, and colleagues and friends, too, could give lists of others. I have also met similarly leading liberal-minded politicians in the Northern conservative parties, in the Western European Christian democratic parties and also among Social Democrats subscribing to a modern, up-to-date form of social democracy. They said, too, that they represented liberal values. All this makes it clear that from the 19th century onwards liberalism has been connected to democratic endeavours to the extent that when we speak about liberalism we basically mean the rule of law, the democratic rule of law, and free market economy. When we define these two basic concepts, we see at once that it was by no means paradoxical to quote the British liberal politician. The thing is that the above political movements are all suffused with the ideas of historical liberalism. These ideas have influenced certain liberal norms for various political parties, and these liberal norms are manifest in both politics and the economy, as well as in other spheres. The term 'liberalism' was first used in Spain, from where it has spread in Europe over the past 150 years. This is interesting, because in Spain it did not feature as an especially dominant political idea. Despite this, Spain has given great political thinkers and important political personalities to the world; it is enough to think of Madariaga.

It is quite natural that within liberalism various trends, various political and economic schools can be distinguished. It would not make much sense to list them here; obviously you are going to deal with them during these two days. I do think, however, that we may say that Hungarian historical liberalism asserted itself from the conservatives on the one hand, to the centralists on the other. Its four pillars were Széchenyi, Kossuth, Deák, and Eötvös.²⁰² And there were also a number of other great names, among them Kölcsey and Wesselényi,²⁰³ for Hungarian political mythology – Hungarian historical mythology that brought about Hungarian democratic renewal – features many protagonists. This is well indicated by the statues in public places and by street-names. It means that the whole of the Hungarian national renewal, political renewal and the demand for modernisation were all connected with this period. The period from 1825 to 1875 – an era encompassing the Age of Reforms, the Revolution and War of Independence of 1848–49, the decades of neo-absolutism, and the Compromise of 1867 with its advantages and

²⁰² For those 19th century leading figures see notes 62, 63, 64 and 41 respectively. Eötvös and his followers, who were in favour of a centralised administrative system, were called Centralists.

²⁰³ See notes 67 and 113.

disadvantages – equalled five decades of Hungarian modernisation. These years witnessed the struggle of classical liberalism, the adjustment of political goals to political possibilities. This great common historical legacy cannot be monopolised by individual political parties of the present or past, because it is part of our nation's history. One can remain loyal to this vast national and political legacy, one can use it as a starting point, but no one should monopolise it. And when speaking of national liberalism, we need to call to mind this entire political ideology and sphere.

We may debate whether national liberalism exists at all. We may debate whether the adjective 'national' may be added to liberalism, whether the concept tolerates such a qualifier.

This is in part a matter of opinion, and in part a matter of taste. In my opinion, the concept of national liberalism is an accurate concept; we are right to speak about it, just as contemporaries did speak about it. Eötvös, for instance, spoke about national absolutisms; he said that national absolutism in Britain or in France brought about the system of institutions that modernised the state. Here, in Hungary, there was no national absolutism, so it was necessary to create it additionally, in the period of modernisation and liberalism. In Hungary we have always had a time lag like this.

Why do we accept the phrase 'national liberalism', and why do we emphasise this concept? Why did we do so decades ago as well? Because in the 19th century, when it first appeared, national liberalism was part and parcel of the emergence of the nation-state, especially in this region of the world. It was not interpreted as exclusionist at the time; it designated instead an inclusionist state; within the ambit of the concept of individual states, it was noted as an attribute of an independent, sovereign state. It is therefore not accidental that in his works József Eötvös modified the triple watchword of the French Revolution, 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity', to 'Liberty, Equality, Nationality'. Equality, a really broad concept, may generally be interpreted as the idea of solidarity, of civic togetherness, of European togetherness if you like. Fraternity is the hardest to define, and the least possible to interpret unequivocally in the course of history. This may have contributed to the fact that Eötvös replaced it in the 19th century with the idea of nationality, thereby making it concrete. So when we speak of national liberalism as being a determinant of our political heritage, and when we consider this ideology to be relevant in our age, we do so precisely because when Hungarian liberalism was born, it became closely linked with the national idea, with the idea of national renewal. I therefore

hold that this interpretation and use of the concept of national liberalism is justified, first and foremost in the historical sense. Furthermore, it is important that in this country the idea of independence, the issue of national sovereignty, has always received great emphasis. Contemporaries did not regard these two ideas as contrasting.

It is a fact that the national idea is consistent with the associative idea, with all ideas that connect peoples and nations, and even with the minority question and a modern approach to the nationality issue. Those interpreting the adjective 'national' as exclusionist or as indicative of exclusionism should not forget that this was a generation which placed special emphasis on the associative idea in order to promote co-operation between peoples and nations. Eötvös himself especially stressed that association had a future, that association would unite peoples, and that association would be the general principle by which the world would be governed in the future. When justifying the Dual Monarchy in the age following the Compromise of 1867, he said that the meaning of dualism lay in winning our independence to the greatest possible extent and in gathering our strength, so that association, which was bound to follow, would find a more modern and better organised Hungary.

The national idea and the idea of association, therefore, do not stand in opposition to one another: on the contrary. And we must add that the national idea was not antagonistic to the common political credo to which contemporaries in general subscribed, partly deducing it from freedom of conscience and partly holding it along with European values. We find references to this in the correspondence between Tocqueville and Eötvös. Also, when Tocqueville read the German version of Eötvös's work *The Dominant Ideas of the 19th Century*, he acknowledged him as a representative of the same political credo. This signals also that European Christian values do not clash with liberalism. There may be trends that contrast and there may be collisions in certain concrete historical formations. The representatives of classical political liberalism, however, have never found themselves at odds with those values that were deduced from the basic principles of Christianity and that became genuine European Christian values. Such values as Christianity, European standards, liberal thinking and social sensitivity are indeed integrative, rather than mutually exclusive, values.

And here we arrive at the next question, the relationship between liberalism and the social idea.

Liberal ideas actually provide potential for economic competition through liberty of the kind that is compatible with equality before the law. Economic

competition, in its turn, naturally brings with it inequality of wealth. These facts have obviously brought about social problems and have elicited social sensitivity. If we look at the great thinkers and leading representatives of liberalism in Hungarian history, we can observe social sensitivity in Széchenyi, a representative of conservative liberalism, and we can also observe it in Kossuth. We need not go into detail on the extent to which social sensitivity manifested itself in Kossuth, from his liberation of the serfs to his publications in exile. It also appeared in Deák's overall views on law and justice and *vis-à-vis* criminals on the issue of prison conditions, as well as in Eötvös's work *Poverty in Ireland* and in his attitude to Hungarian healthcare policy. This generation placed special emphasis on the interconnections between the economy, public education and public health. A great personality of liberal thought, Imre Madách,²⁰⁴ in the London scene of his dramatic poem *The Tragedy of Man*, describes all the bad and disastrous consequences of the lack of a social balance. As is well known, in the scene of the Phalanstery he shows all that we could sum up under the heading of state socialism, to which we were subjected in an experiment over the past decades. The great liberal contemporaries, Kossuth, Eötvös and others, saw eye to eye with him. They recognised what the socialist idea meant, even though they only had to face it theoretically. They held that socialism as a political idea and as an ideology was contrary to the idea of liberty. Eötvös himself depicted communism and socialism as ideas whose realisation was not impossible provided that the state was granted absolute power. Formulating his thesis in line with his own political philosophy and attitude, Kossuth went on to put the emphasis on this point when he said that self-government was a safety valve against revolutions.

We can safely say, then, that liberalism in Europe represented an outstanding period in the development of European political thought. Having emerged in the Renaissance and spanning European history, it placed personality in the focus of man's interest and highlighted the individual. All this peaked with the idea of the rule of law and the free market economy. In a certain period, it was linked to the national idea through the issue of national independence and sovereignty. And we can also safely say that it was linked to social sensitivity and to social thinking also, at a time when its one-sidedness became obvious. On

²⁰⁴ Imre Madách (1823–1864), poet, dramatist. His work *The Tragedy of Man* appeared in 1860. It describes the history of mankind in dramatic scenes from the Creation to the Space Age. The London scene can be applied to his own age of capitalist development, whereas the scene of the "Phalanstery" presents a future where sterile reason and science rules.

the one hand, historical liberalism turned in the direction of Social Darwinism, a separate critical category, while on the other it appeared in the form of pragmatic political parties. The activities of the Hungarian liberal parties after the Compromise, especially in the period following the fusion of 1875,²⁰⁵ are typical of this. Later on, smaller liberal parties appeared on the scene, where they represented the lower middle classes and certain intellectual circles. They were active mainly in urban areas and had more radical and less radical elements. After the Second World War, liberal thinking enjoyed a revival, and as I have already said, scored a genuine, historic victory. In Western Europe, where its basic demands have been realised, it has practically pushed itself into a minority position. In working democracies, in freely and well functioning societies, the liberal agenda proves insufficient as it is, because the rule of law and the market economy have been achieved. Therefore, the great difference after the Second World War in Western Europe can be summed up in the fact that the Western European political parties, such as the CDU – the German Christian Democratic Party – and the CSU, embraced the Christian element, the social element and the liberal element. But we can also observe the development of the Social Democratic parties taking that direction, especially from the 1960s onwards, in an accelerating Europe; alongside the earlier social democratic priorities, they turned towards the market economy. Anyone who talks to Social Democratic politicians in Western Europe can hear how they, too, acknowledge the significance of the private sector. They do not even think of pressing for the state sector. They repeat the same ideas, the same thoughts, with social overtones though, as those laid down in the basic principles of liberalism. Consequently, the Christian democratic, conservative and other political parties all accept liberal values; moreover, the Western European Social Democratic parties, too, have changed along these lines. If we look at the liberal parties themselves, they are generally small, elite parties with a small membership in the West, and they also aim to adopt and emphasise the social element. Giscard d'Estaing's political circle, for instance, and all similar trends have as good as rediscovered the social element and have aimed to highlight it again, because they sense that everything is based on that sort of balance. If we sum it up this way, we can see, I believe, that undertaking liberalism, this sort of national liberalism, means for us the undertaking of liberal values, and this is

²⁰⁵ Support for the party of Deák and Andrásy, the makers of the Compromise, weakened, and in order to provide a parliamentary majority it fused with the moderate opposition led by Kálmán Tisza, forming the Liberal Party (Szabadelvű Párt).

very compatible with the characteristic Hungarian popular–national heritage, which can in no way be identified as un-European or as some sort of rusticity. The representatives of this kind of Hungarian popular–national heritage were Gyula Illyés, László Németh and István Bibó,²⁰⁶ and one can name others, too, who have not been un-European. When we examine Christian democracy, the post-Second World War Christian democratic renewal receives epoch-making emphasis and is distinguished from the pre-war Christian movements precisely because the liberal element is accepted in its political programme. All those Christian parties and Christian democratic parties which today play a leading role in Europe are programme parties, i.e. they generally qualify themselves as programme parties, rather than ideological parties, and proudly acknowledge their Christian, social and liberal elements.

After the Second World War, a well-functioning system of political democracies emerged in Western Europe precisely because the various political parties were able to agree upon certain minima. Such minima or shared elements include the liberal element, which is embodied in the rule of law and the market economy. Another is the social element, which today the social democrats and even the liberals adopt with greater or lesser emphasis in the wake of [German Economic Minister, later Chancellor] Ludwig Erhard in the practice of a social market economy.

In East-Central Europe, popular–national thinking has left a specific legacy behind it. Its roots can exactly be traced back to the predominantly literary and intellectual movements of the 19th-century, the popular–national ideas professed by poets such as Petőfi and Arany.²⁰⁷ A new version of it, characterised by social sensitivity and a strong commitment to national independence, was created in the 1930s, and always received especial attention because of the lack of this independence.

After the fall of the totalitarian dictatorships, the renewal of liberalism has been facilitated by a new emphasis on liberal ideas and values, because it is always the missing elements that become politically topical. In a totalitarian dictatorship there is a dearth of liberal values, with the result that liberalism here receives greater emphasis in all political parties than in other places where these can be taken for granted. When we speak about national values (and some tend to ascribe a nationalist threat or suchlike to the mere use of the

²⁰⁶ For those prominent members of the popular–national school of thought, see notes 111, 110 and 23 respectively.

²⁰⁷ For the two great 19th century lyrical poets, see notes 102 and 97 respectively.

word 'national' or to the stressing of the national issue), it is clear that it may seem redundant to large or medium powers that have enjoyed unquestionable independence. It is, however, natural to emphasise it in those countries where national independence was non-existent in the 19th or the 20th centuries. It is quite natural that a popular–national ideology has a place there. The point is, however – and here I wish to conclude the matter from the standpoint of the HDF – that no popular–national ideology is acceptable that refuses to undertake unquestionably those basic values of liberal democracy that manifest themselves in the rule of law and the market economy.

We also proclaim the ideas of Christian democracy, and we safely confess to be liberal Christian democrats, because we can accept Christian democracy provided it considers the parliamentary system as its own and adopts those values in its political programme that we have mentioned as liberal values. Naturally, we have to place great emphasis on those values that the Christian democratic parties have created in the first place in Europeanism, in the idea of European unity. For it is a question of fact – and I do not direct this remark against social democracy or any other political ideology – that the European idea, the idea of European unity, was created by Christian democrats, such as Robert Schuman, Gasperi, Konrad Adenauer, and Monet, all of whom highlighted certain European Christian values in contrast to nationalism. This is, then, a Christian democracy of the kind that undertakes liberal values and puts great emphasis on the idea of European unity. This is what we have adopted within the Hungarian Democratic Forum. This is an aspect of the popular–national idea that we can subscribe to; this is an aspect of the Christian democratic ideology, in the classical sense of the attributive construction, which we can always espouse. Likewise, what we perceive of as national liberalism in our statutes signifies the degree of national commitment we take upon ourselves. There is no need to stress liberalism separately, for its basic values are well known. We undertake what makes us committed to the national idea and committed to European integration. We wish to serve national independence and sovereignty, willing to give up as much of it only as is necessary for association, for integration. It is sovereign determination that has created the structure of the community, including the European community, towards which Europe and Hungary are progressing.

The three ideologies that are laid down in our statutes are complementary and balance one another well. The HDF is called the Hungarian Democratic Forum, rather than some liberal, national or other party, or simply a Christian

democratic party, because as a people's party and as a wide political movement it regards all these correlative and convergent values as its own. This is natural, and nothing can prove it better than the fact that the union of European democratic parties has adopted these political trends together and admits such political parties among its members. The HDF was the first Hungarian party to be admitted to EDU, the European Democrat Union, followed by our coalition partners.

This, then, is our programme; this is what we have to keep to, this is the ideological trend we represent. And this bears strongly on the minority and nationality issue. In the newly liberated East-Central European region, this issue bursts forth with an elemental force as it did in the 19th century. Back then, political forces appeared that asserted their interests and achieved national independence after the regime of the Holy Alliance, clashing on minority issues. Great imperial regimes always suppress such forces, but they burst forth again and again.

We have no solution other than asserting the associative idea in conjunction with self-government, whether personal, regional or cultural. This is why it is imperative that we Hungarians are in the forefront of granting our minorities such rights, because we want Hungarians beyond our borders to be granted the same rights, and this policy we wish to assert in our common European homeland.

I wish this two-day conference to be conducive through the Foundation to the work of preserving, further developing and modernising liberal values, in union with the two other trends. I believe that the majority of our members adopt all three ideological trends together and regard them as their own common values. These are not conflicting trends; they belong together, and we should recognise them as congruous, cohesive forces in our party, forces that weld us together. Our political opponents should be aware of this.

THE PROSPECTS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

József Antall gave the following address at an event held in Budapest to mark World Environment Day (motto: "For Our Earth, a Strategy for the Preserving of Life") on 21 October 1991, placing this burning issue of our time in its historical and economic perspective.

I believe it will be useful to say a few words about how the notion of environmentalism was born, and how the importance of mankind's relationship with the environment, of the relationship between humanity and nature, has made itself plain to us. The significance of all this has been determined by the process of industrialisation. Over the last two hundred years, while the snowballing increase of the world's population has been taking place, one technological watershed has followed another, beginning in the 18th century with James Watt's invention. The Industrial Revolution, or rather, the chain of industrial revolutions from the steam engine through the petrol engine to the industrial application of nuclear fission, has in the course of two centuries completely changed the appearance of our world and has played a vital role in boosting the aptitude of the Earth for sustaining an ever increasing human population.

This must be admitted if we are to give a fair account of the process. The true significance of preserving the environment will only be clear if this is assessed in a historical perspective, if it is discussed in terms of the process characterised by industrial development and population growth. After all, the human race has gone through a period of unprecedented growth in these last two hundred years, a growth permitted by the technological, scientific and industrial revolutions. And at the end of the 19th century and in the course of the 20th this led to the emergence of the consumer society, in which production has been continually growing to satisfy consumer requirements in which and the ever-increasing consumption of goods has become the driving force of all economies.

The challenge to boost production was, therefore, provided by consumption, and for a long time it seemed that consumption would furnish an unending incentive to production and to economic development. Thus, although cheap

motor fuel had been available since the turn of the century, cartel agreements precluded the manufacture of low-consumption automobiles, and this attitude continued to determine our approach to oil production right up until the explosion in oil prices. Similarly, consumption used to be the main force determining development in respect of key commodities. This trend originated with mass production, such as the mass production of automobiles; just think of the cars mass produced by the American Ford Company. An illustration of the attitude to consumption thought to be characteristic of Americans is a story I heard from a man who had been a POW in Marseilles. When the list of inmates was being drawn up, the Hungarian POWs were astonished to see the American officer change his carbon paper after every three lines of writing, saying he was doing so to help keep the producers of carbon paper in operation.

The more society consumes, the greater the incentive to production. But we now realise that despite its undeniable economic importance as a decisive factor in 20th-century Western civilisation, this consumer society has produced severe side effects, evidenced in the destruction of the environment, as well as in ethical, political and other attitudes in society.

It was no accident that the role of the earth, of the environment, was recognised by historians precisely in the 20th century. Even history came to be studied in terms of changes in the environment. Thus, it may be significant that the one to propose a new explanation for the Great Migrations in Early Mediaeval Europe was the philosopher Bertrand Russell. He suggested that those migrations, which once transformed the face of Europe, were triggered by the desertification of the Asian heartland, an interpretation that added a new dimension to the discussion of mankind's relationship with its environment. In recent decades we have witnessed the same phenomenon in Africa. And we have woken up to the fact that areas once rich in natural resources may turn into deserts. Once-familiar regions may come to look quite different, and I seem to remember having rather contradictory feelings in connection with the 'Land Flowing with Milk and Honey' that I heard about at Sunday school: pictures of the desert-like Palestine of my childhood made it hard to believe that what then looked an arid wasteland had once been a verdant and pleasing country. And, conversely, we are today seeing that Middle Eastern regions that were deserts in my childhood are again fertile lands, just as they used to be.

Awareness of the significance of man's relationship to the environment has in the 20th century become an important notion heightening our sense of responsibility for the Earth. Neither is it any wonder that the idea of environmental

protection originated in North America, in the United States and Canada, where industrialisation and mass production had been most intense. It was no accident that the first protected nature reserves came to be established in the United States. And just a few miles from the stony wilderness of New York with all its filth, horror and splendour we find the magnificent conservation areas of New England with all their natural beauty. It is a matter of common knowledge that transcontinental railways in the United States contributed to the destruction of native American peoples and to that of the native fauna of the continent. In fact, recognition of these phenomena coincided with the process of industrialisation and the development of mass production and mass consumption. This in turn led to the birth of nature conservation and environmental protection in a broader sense, and in my view the latter should include the preservation of our architectural heritage as well, not only because buildings of historical value also suffer from air pollution, but also because the built environment is just as important a factor contributing to the quality of life as the natural environment.

I am convinced that if we are to go about the active protection of the environment in a realistic manner we must admit that production, the driving force of the consumer society, has played a crucial role in achieving the present situation whereby the population that society is capable of sustaining is larger than it ever used to be, and that mass production provides people with inexpensive food and clothing. Thus, it would be unrealistic to ask that environmental protection be opposed to production, and we should by all means try to avoid such an impracticable and biased approach. Indeed, sensible production is equivalent to the thing which some economists call 'modern social market economy' or, to use a somewhat unfortunate term, 'eco-social market economy'. Although the correctness of the term is open to debate, the aim is indubitably correct: equilibrium between production and environmental protection can only be maintained by an environmentally friendly social market economy.

This is the right course of action, the one we should take. For production should be maintained, and indeed expanded, but only as far as the rules of economy allow it. All wasteful production must be done away with. It is no accident that the major consumer societies have come to recognise this in the course of the past century, and have felt compelled to curtail wastefulness. It is no accident that there is such a big difference in fuel consumption between Soviet cars and modern Western cars; advanced economies need to reduce their energy consumption, for it cannot be expanded endlessly. Hence, economic

regulators should be set in such a way as to ensure that maximum output is obtained in the most economical way possible, with the minimum possible consumption of materials and energy. This is the only feasible course of action. Otherwise we might soon end up accused of being unrealistic when promoting environmental protection and environment friendliness. I recall a presentation given by the Austrian environment minister in Vienna long before our Government took office. He said that hydroelectric power plants defaced surrounding areas, that fossil-fuel plants polluted the atmosphere, and that nuclear power plants posed an unacceptably serious danger on account of the possibility of nuclear contamination. At that point a bored English peer took the floor and asked whether we should, then, revert to candles. Of course, we cannot do that, and we must stress that we are in favour of maintaining production, but maintaining it in the most economical way possible. Nevertheless, while the sustenance provided for the people should be maintained and not diminished, we should at the same time provide for the protection of our planet, our environment and the atmosphere as well.

It should be kept in mind that good thrift is multifaceted. It may suffice to mention the health effects that society is forced to face as a result of environmental pollution. Today, when medical treatment and prevention have curbed tuberculosis in developed countries, many a lung specialist has changed over to treating asthmatic complaints. But I might also cite genetic defects resulting from damage done to the environment. In sum, if you consider the total amount of money that needs to be spent on the treatment of new diseases caused by environmental pollution, on fighting excessive morbidity rates and on taking care of the victims, you will see that in terms of economic efficiency the protection of the environment cannot be regarded as an optional extra; it is indeed an essential part of economic output and economic efficiency. It was for this reason that during a recent visit to Százhalombatta, the centre of the Hungarian petrochemical industry, I told the Minister of Industry and the Minister of the Environment, both of whom were attending, that they should do their best to strike a balance between the requirements of production and the requirements of environmental protection.

Finally, in the context of environmental protection, and touching upon such issues as air pollution, soil contamination and the need to improve the quality of human life, I think we should stress the importance of monuments which attest to the development of mankind and the development of our globe, and we should duly protect whatever is worth protecting in our natural environment,

and also preserve whatever contributes to making our lives worth living in the built environment. I think that now, at the end of the 20th century, we have reached a stage where we can claim full knowledge of the pros and cons of industrial production, agriculture, and the vast processes of mass production. And if we really possess that knowledge, then it will be clear that pragmatic considerations must be accompanied by long-term perspectives provided by a strategy that serves the preservation of our human environment, for improving the quality of life is of vital importance to mankind.

Man is not a purely rational animal, suitable for being rationally supplied with food, rationally made to work, and rationally controlled, on utilitarian principles, like a humanised beast. Humans are not like that; they have spiritual and emotional needs (this distinguishes them from many other animals), and art is just as vital for them as the exact sciences. All these things are essential ingredients of harmony in life; there is no harmonious soul without an association of rational and apparently irrational elements. Whenever rational arguments prove unfeasible in politics or in other areas of life, the power required to strike the balance is often found in seemingly irrational and moral principles.

Mass production, consumer society and the protection of the environment will all, I think, be needed to help us preserve our balance, and to ensure that the 21st century will be tolerable. Unless the harmony required is established before the end of the 20th century, it will be hard to predict what the 21st century will hold in store for the world, and especially Europe, this small continent, with the consequences ensuing from the population explosion and the North–South crisis. With this in mind, let me wish you every success with the present action, and let me ask the media to watch closely in order to help this environmental strategy prevail; please take every opportunity to give it publicity and exercise constructive criticism in this area as well.

COLLEGIUM BUDAPEST – RESPONSES TO THE CHALLENGES OF TODAY

This speech was delivered at a festive meeting of Collegium Budapest on 16 June 1993, with the then Hungarian head of state President Árpád Göncz, his German counterpart Richard von Weizsäcker and a group of distinguished scientists from all over the world in the audience.

Located in the Buda Castle District since 15 December 1992, Collegium Budapest is a college for academics. Similar colleges have operated in Princeton and Berlin for 60 and 12 years respectively. Scholars invited by Collegium Budapest work in their own field during their stay, and are offered the opportunity to meet Hungarian researchers.

Prime Minister Antall's talk provides a thoughtful summary of the forces that created Central Europe, and lists several of the challenges that face the developed world, including religious, political, and social fundamentalism, which emanate from the social conditions of „third world” countries.

May I extend a warm welcome to you all here in the Buda Castle District, in the building that once served as the City Hall of the Free Royal City of Buda. Constructed between the Middle Ages and the 20th century, the complex of buildings on the Castle Hill is one of the most coherent architectural examples of the European and Hungarian cultural tradition and has deservedly become part of the World Heritage.

The Castle Hill and this city are symbols of historical continuity and of the creative genius of the peoples who have lived here over the centuries. Celts, Romans, Germanic peoples and Hungarians equally have left behind invaluable artefacts buried in this area. In the 13th century, Buda Castle, symbol of the ancient Kingdom of Hungary and of the Hungarian state, deservedly became the royal seat, taking away this function from such ancient cities as Székesfehérvár, Esztergom and Óbuda. We have preserved it to this very day. The Buda Castle District was not only a fortress and the dwelling place of the king and his court, but also a lively city inhabited by Hungarians, Germans,

Italians, Frenchmen, and other peoples as early as the mediaeval and Renaissance periods.

The city was destroyed many times during its history. Between 1541 and 1686, it was occupied by the Ottoman Empire, which built an Islamic city on the ruins of the former mediaeval Christian town. When Buda was reconquered from the invaders, it returned to its Christian roots. Many non-Hungarians who participated in driving out the Ottomans settled down in Hungary after the battles. On the mediaeval and Renaissance ruins a Baroque and Classicist city emerged, only to be seriously damaged once again in 1849, during Hungary's War of Independence against the Habsburg Empire. During the Second World War, in late 1944 and early 1945, the Castle District was held by the Germans for six weeks as a fortress and suffered incredible destruction. Although the fighting during the 1956 Revolution and War of Independence spared the major part of the Castle District, it caused significant damage in Pest. Today is a special occasion to commemorate the Revolution of 1956, because it is the anniversary of the execution of the prime minister during the Revolution, Imre Nagy and his associates.

But history is not just struggle, destruction and rebirth, but also a continuous flow and interaction of religious, intellectual and cultural trends and heritages. Buda, and Budapest as a whole, has served as a meeting point of the European and the Eastern spirit and intellect. On the one hand, no Islamic buildings are to be found in Europe north of Hungary, while on the other, Hungary is the easternmost bastion of Catholicism and the Reformation. With its Finno-Ugric linguistic heritage and its links with the Turkic and Iranian languages and cultures, the Hungarian nation has roots deep in the Eurasian cultural heritage.

Hungary has been not only an intellectual and cultural meeting point of Europe, but also a geographical dividing line throughout the history of European civilisation. From the 16th century on, differences in the development of European nations prevented the unity of the continent. The part of Europe where Hungary is located faced new historical, economic and social perspectives in those years. It became the part of an Eastern empire. For 150 years, Hungary was the northernmost and westernmost stronghold of an Ottoman Empire stretching as far as Egypt and Persia. In the meantime, the Atlantic community was born in Western Europe, as was large-scale capital concentration that laid the historical foundations for today's private-property-based market economies, a system our region had no chance of adopting at that time.

The countries in our region were unable to compete with them until state intervention and capital concentration took place later on. It is not surprising, then, that the combination of private capital and the creative force of individualistic thinking inherent in the economic, political and cultural institutions of Western Europe and the Atlantic region were able to accomplish everything from schools to railways, things that were possible in our region only with the support and guidance of the state.

Unfortunately, the nature of the state not only determined and influenced the present and the future of the economy, society and politics of our region, but also shaped the way people think. What Western Europeans and Americans perceive as the struggle of the individual is considered the job of the state by people in Eastern Europe. In this part of Europe, people expect many services from their governments that are typically expected from the private sector elsewhere. What is more, East Europeans tend to blame the government even for things no government is responsible for in any parliamentary democracy. Central Europe represents a unique blend of West European and Eastern influences. On the one hand, the impact of Western Christianity is apparent, with a way of thinking that has evolved in parallel with religion since the Renaissance, or, more precisely, independently of religion but still adhering to Christian and European cultural values. On the other hand, another way of thinking, one surviving from the old Byzantium, is also discernible in East-Central Europe, in the form of the Eastern Church and Greek Orthodoxy. The influence of these religious traditions is felt right across the Balkans and Russia.

These cultural values and traditions require thorough scholarly investigation. What exactly do we mean when we talk about the European, or more specifically the Western European, cultural tradition from Antiquity through the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and the Reformation periods and the Enlightenment to the 19th and the 20th centuries? To what do we refer when we speak of the liberal state founded on the rule of law or of the welfare-state model? What does internal development mean within the framework of political pluralism? What do constitutionalism and a market economy as historical objectives represent on a philosophical level?

But we must not forget about the Byzantine cultural tradition and heritage, either. The close relationship between church and state, i.e. between 'ideology' and government during the period of Caesaro-papism later became the model for the 'party state'. And we must not forget the Byzantine world's interest in exploring the human soul and the irrational, an interest that has made a major

contribution to the more rational and pragmatic culture of Europe. In a sense that attitude surpassed individualistic philosophies. Russian thinkers and authors such as Dostoevsky and others embarked on fathoming the uncharted depths of the human soul long before Sigmund Freud.

If one accepts the principle that man is both rational and irrational, one must also acknowledge that society as a whole is characterised by a combination of rationality and irrationality. Consider, for example, economy, a highly pragmatic and rational area, and economics. In some cases, scientists fail to understand how and to what extent irrational factors influence economic growth, economic crises, recessions, and the point at which recessions turn into upswings. What is the role of unplanned, irrational – or, in today's terminology, psychological – factors in these processes, for which we always provide a rational explanation afterwards? As you see, our way of thinking is not only an excellent subject for academic research, but may also serve as a useful asset in political issues or in economic and foreign policy in general.

I think the question raised by the great English historian and philosopher Arnold J. Toynbee (which has almost become a journalistic commonplace), namely, the nature of the challenges of the present, how to respond to them and why these responses are necessary, that is extremely relevant these days. The world was waiting for the fall of international communism and the disintegration of the Soviet Union for decades, and people prayed for us, the enslaved nations, and kept alive memories of us. However, when international communism and the Soviet Union did collapse, the rest of the world was not prepared for the wave of anger and problems that remained beneath the surface during the communist era but that were now unleashed. Many people seem to have forgotten that this part of Europe has always been a buffer zone between empires, both European and Eurasian, a theatre where they fought their arduous battles against one another, and a region that they used for bargaining.

Today, when empires no longer exist in our region, the dreams and aspirations people have been nursing for centuries have come to the surface, along with the attitudes that have turned these nations against each other. The world was not prepared to handle these tensions, either. Even today, the solutions offered are very often nothing more than clichés that may not even be applicable. But if you look at the greatest challenges of today, the conflict of North and South is becoming increasingly dominant in the background of the dynamics of the developed and industrialised nations in the Atlantic region and of those of emerging Eastern countries in the Pacific region at various levels of industrialisation.

As a result, one of the greatest challenges facing the developed and industrialised nations is to integrate countries whose political arenas were overshadowed by state socialism over the past decades and to solve their internal crises. It is unquestionable that most of the former communist countries are different from Third World countries, which typically have underdeveloped infrastructure and no or very little industrial activity. By adopting Lenin's version of Marxist ideas, Communist countries created an economic, social and political model based partly on the structure of developed and industrial countries, and partly on a parody of them. However, we must bear in mind that the communist countries, after all, established an industrial structure, a social, cultural and infrastructural system, which was effectively controlled by the political dictatorship. This structure has collapsed, and not only do we have to build parliamentary democracy on its ruins, but we must also create the framework for the market economy.

At the end of the 20th century, West European countries and North America also face a number of problems owing to the inflow of people with entirely different attitudes and with origins outside Europe and North America. Not only does this tendency make integration difficult, but it also gives rise to ethnic and religious tensions. That is why we should extend the scope of our study to great Eastern civilisations such as China, Japan, India, and the Islamic countries, and carry out comparative analyses using scientific methodology. The existence of the communist political systems and the Iron Curtain enabled the developed Western nations to isolate themselves and to unite in the face of the threat from the communist world. The labour markets of these countries were swelled during the economic booms by millions of workers coming from completely different civilisations and having different cultural backgrounds. These workers had an immense role in rebuilding Europe and in boosting the development of the industrialised European and American nations after the Second World War. The fall of international communism and the Soviet Union and the dismantling of the Iron Curtain gave way to the emergence of a truly single world economy, which is probably unprecedented in history. However, we find ourselves in a worldwide economic and political situation that, in many cases, lacks the principles for solving crises while struggling with the conflict of asserting the human rights that everyone in the developed industrial countries believes in and with migration from developing countries with their hundreds of millions of poverty-stricken inhabitants.

That is the great challenge of today, when we are striving to spread democracy and human rights and will continue to do so in the future. We must face

the threats posed by poverty and people's dissatisfaction with their social conditions in this global village, and we must be prepared for the religious, political, and social fundamentalism that is bound to follow as a result. By the turn of the 21st century, mankind may reach a crisis similar to the one that had emerged a century before, after the birth of industrial nations, and led to widespread intellectual, political and economic clashes during the 20th century.

Should we fail to protect our world – where technical and scientific development has reached unprecedented levels, giving to mankind such effective methods as nuclear weapons –, this vision may project a rather pessimistic scenario for the future. It is impossible to come to terms with this crisis and therefore we must act. These are the great challenges of our time that we must respond to, and only if we succeed in doing so can our culture and civilisation survive and prevail. Creative intellectuals and thinkers, those who can look beyond the issues of everyday politics and keep their eyes on the horizon, have a special role in this process. They are the ones who are able to examine these challenges using scientific methods.

This is why I really appreciate that scientists working under the auspices of Collegium Budapest have, in about one year, already managed to analyse difficulties in many areas, including art history, sociology, economics, and many others. Their observations may prove extremely helpful not only for Hungary, but also for other Central European countries in understanding the present and shaping the future. In this region, we must examine the process of political transition, the lack of capital and investments, and the ethnic and minority issues that turn nations against each other. We must offer a promising vision of the future in an attempt to arouse all those who grew up in communist countries and who expect more from the state than it can provide in a democracy.

Let me assure you in the name of the Hungarian government and of myself that we address current issues using an analysis that concentrates on historical continuity and we try to bear it in mind during everyday policymaking.

In our view, Hungary's development can only continue if we preserve the country's stability, and continue to foster democracy, constitutionalism and a welfare-oriented market economy with a view to integration with Europe. We are looking to achieve more than the signature of a treaty of association: we wish to become full members of the European Community by the end of the millennium. We are of the opinion that our regional security and the imbalances in the world require the reshaping and extension of NATO's organisational structure and responsibilities so that the organisation can respond to

the new challenges. Our need for security does not stem from some unjustified fear or from cowardice, which has never been characteristic of Hungarians. Our 1100-year history in the Carpathian Basin, and the 1000 years of Hungarian statehood have provided us with ample historical experience to understand Europe, the Balkans, the Middle East, and the Far East. This is why we think that politicians need the support of economists, jurists, scholars focusing on history and on the history of science, and other researchers who are looking for the best vantage point here in the Danube Basin, at this major stop along the 'highway of the peoples', to explore the problems of East and West, and North and South.

We must study the reasons behind the differences in the philosophy and the mentality of European and Eastern civilisations, and science and logic are much more effective in this area than any secret services could be with all their efforts combined. This is the mission of Collegium Budapest, this is what Hungary, Europe and the world expect from you, ladies and gentlemen, you who work under the auspices of this institution. You are in a position to observe closely the joys and pains of a historical transition, and to gauge the chances for the birth of a better future.

HUNGARIAN HISTORY

THE LEGACY OF ST STEPHEN

In 1992, the feast of Hungary's King Stephen the Saint on 20 August – a national and a state holiday – received a special character and emphasis on account of the 3rd World Congress of Hungarians, which had taken place in Budapest shortly before. In the crowd gathered to celebrate at the statue of St Stephen near the Church of Our Lady (the Matthias Church) in Buda's Castle District there were a great number of Hungarians from beyond the present borders of Hungary. The President of the Republic, several cabinet members and leading personalities of public and religious life also attended the celebrations, which took place in an especially warm atmosphere.

There is no harder task than to speak in the shadow of our holy king, St Stephen, founder of the state, in a historic city; to speak in the environs of the Coronation Church, not far from the Royal Castle; to speak on Castle Hill that has embodied the statehood of Hungary for eight centuries, and to do so as a representative of a nation that is among the oldest in Europe and that has dwelt here for 1100 years without having anything to be ashamed of. A martyr-nation that has given its life for freedom has lived and died here throughout this millennium. It may well be that this does not appeal to everyone, and many may feel that this is boasting, but I can refer not only to ourselves. It is not only we who feel this way, but also many historians, chroniclers and great politicians of the 20th century who have confirmed that the Hungarian nation, situated here, at this strategic point in East-Central Europe – one might say at its most perilous strategic point – has managed not only to survive, but also to do service to the whole of European civilisation, to Europe and to the world. The price we paid for this has partly been our destruction and partly our dispersal and flight.

Scarcely five centuries after our settling here, there were five million people living in this country, of which more than 80 per cent were Hungarian, at a time when the population of England was just two and a half million. Then came a war of 150 years that was not just a war against the Turks, for the invaders did not spare Hungarian villages and Hungarian fields. In other words,

this country was a battlefield for a century and a half. All this was compounded by an epidemic of the plague. Consequently this population of five million had declined to scarcely more than two million by 1715. There were scarcely more than two million of us then. Do we need any greater proof that this country struggled boldly and heroically for Europe, for itself and for its survival? In this country the spades of archaeologists uncover strips of wall that in happier countries still rise today as cathedrals.

The country became a land of marshes, but retained its spirit, its will to live. It continues to do so now. Considering the unity of the three great national holidays that strongly determine the life of our nation – 20 August, 15 March and 23 October – the Hungarian Parliament has selected 20 August, the Feast of St Stephen, founder of our state, which is the oldest feast we have been able to look back on since the canonisation of King Stephen 900 years ago. What else can this signify but historical continuity, that historical continuity for which we have been reproached so often?

Our history, our Holy Crown, the royal insignia are no mere symbols; they are important documents of our nation's power of endurance. The Admonitions of St Stephen,²⁰⁸ excerpts from which you heard just now, amount to more than the programme of a wise ruler. So, too, does Ferenc Kölcsey's *Parainesis*, written much later, in the 19th century, in which he formulated his thoughts for his nephew. These express fundamental principles of the Hungarian state and Hungarian government that are comparable to the programmes for rule and governance in any country from Byzantium to the West. We can be proud, too, that alongside governmental wisdom in the admonitions of our first king, we also find the expression of human sensitivity and humanity that could be interpreted in modern terminology as social awareness.

What does St Stephen mean for us today, in 1992? He means primarily our national independence, the foundation of political and social life. A millennium ago, after preparations made by his father, Prince Géza,²⁰⁹ who is appreciated much less than he deserves, St Stephen discerned the principles that enabled the new Hungarian state to survive and endure in the European community of nations.

It was his firm resolve that Hungary should establish a decisive and ordered state power and that the country should build a society that conformed to the standards, the spirit, and the moral and spiritual norms of the age. He imposed

²⁰⁸ See notes 61 and 172.

²⁰⁹ See note 174.

harsh punishment on those who turned against the desire for renewal, punishment that today seems merciless, at times even inhuman, in our eyes.

It was a historical dispensation of justice, hard and just measures, which St Stephen applied to the consolidation of his power and to the foundations for a new Hungary. While in Western Europe the great powers of the time had already drawn their borders and founded their systems of power; and in the East, the Byzantine Empire still existed; simultaneously unknown peoples of the Great Migrations were coming in wave after wave upon Europe, St Stephen managed above all to create an independent Hungarian state in this most difficult geographical region of the continent. He created an independent Hungarian state that was a vassal to none, a state that owed allegiance to no empire. And this independent, sovereign homeland has determined our national programme for all times, one that implies no nationalism in any form, no chauvinism and no desire to rule over other peoples. In the course of a millennium, it occurred only rarely, and then only for dynastic reasons and for temporary periods, that the Hungarian nation, or the Hungarian nobility which then constituted the Hungarian nation, stepped beyond the country's borders.

What other peoples, what nations have incorporated into their constitutional law the concept that while it is their duty to defend the borders of their native land, they must not go beyond these borders? And this is the basis of Hungarian constitutional law and Hungarian constitutionalism. No false idea – no bait – enticed us to seek the prosperity of the country outside the borders of our native land of our own accord.

History and geography are without mercy. Geopolitics, geography and compelling circumstances forced us to enter into alliances and wars that the Hungarian people did not feel to be their own, did not wish to conduct, but nevertheless were obliged to pursue. Once forced to do so, we always struggled bravely. But let no one ever reproach us for having been on the wrong side, because we were usually forced to be on that wrong side. It was in defeated wars of independence and proud national revolutions that we wished to show our true intentions, and when we were abandoned and left on our own, we were forced to enter such state systems and political alliances as led, as a logical consequence, to our ending up on the wrong side. And then we were even punished for it, too! It will suffice to refer to that eternal symbol, that in the 1848–49 War of Independence the prime minister of the first independent Hungarian government, of the first representative Hungarian government, was executed by a bullet, out of mercy, instead of dying on the gallows.

This is a country whose first prime minister was, as a victim of tyranny, executed by firing squad, and on the same day thirteen heroic Hungarian generals died for their country at Arad. And this is the nation that afterwards sought the Compromise, after enduring a merciless absolutism sought a solution, sought the conditions required by her will to live, and this is the country that was then abandoned and punished by the loss of two-thirds of its territory and half its population. Indeed, as I said at the 3rd World Congress of Hungarians, Trianon²¹⁰ is a tragedy for all Hungarians, a national and a family tragedy that causes pain.

Do not expect us to accommodate ourselves historically on this matter, to turn into joyful participants historically. At the same time, just as we stand by our past with forceful and decisive historical awareness and give voice to our national pain, this same Hungarian nation acknowledges with moderation and prudence the requirements of the new Europe and of an ordered world. We therefore observe strictly the Helsinki and Paris agreements in which we renounced the forcible alteration of the borders. But we insist that all minorities, every member of the Hungarian minority, be granted human and minority rights. On this we neither accept any excuses, nor make any concessions.

Today we remember our first king, but we also remember the time when we were prevented from celebrating St Stephen's Day. What it meant when all that remained of the original feast were the fireworks, when our soldiers paraded in alien uniforms, when a transcript of the Stalin Constitution was the cause to celebrate. Now we have our own national armed forces again, in the form of the Hungarian Defence Forces and the Hungarian Border Guards. When, on the night of 23 October 1956, Hungarian soldiers came over to our side in Kossuth Lajos Street, the Hungarian Defence Forces won our trust forever. They stand by the true Hungarian national cause, and we are not ashamed to be proud that the soldiers who are now holding our national colours wear a modernised version of the uniform of the Royal Hungarian Bodyguard, which was established in 1760, and which was their standard uniform for decades.

It is not criticism that this country fears; it is not criticism that this government fears. All may freely express their opinion, and they do nothing else. Why does anyone pretend that freedom of speech, of the press and of assembly do not apply fully in this country? They certainly do apply. And sometimes even

²¹⁰ For the 1920 Peace Treaty, see note 68.

the Prime Minister is pleased to speak freely. But he is less pleased when leaders of the Hungarian Television acting in a vague, legally irregular structure, decide for him when he may speak on Hungarian Television and when he may speak in other places. And then, on more than one occasion, you have misunderstood the measures of the government, for you keep hearing the strange news that some untalented, mediocre bunch of people are doing their best to lead you into poverty from a flourishing communist economy.

Do not tolerate this! Let this day be, as so many times before, the day of recommencement. Let it be the day on which a new Hungary is born, a symbol of which is not only this statue but also this church, which was a stable for stray horses at the end of the six-week siege of Budapest and where even in the 1950s, here where you are standing, hard-working stonemasons were carving the stones that went into the repaired building. Whenever I passed by, I saw every day how even in an oppressed country the eternal Hungary was being built. For those who built, created and acted in those days were serving eternal Hungary, rather than the regime, or Mátyás Rákosi²¹¹ or Stalin, even when others were acting as accomplices or collaborators. Rather than working for them, we worked because we had faith that there would be a Hungarian revival, and that the time would come when there would stand here, in the place of the old stonemasons, in the place of the stray army horses, a Hungary that would be not only at peace, but also independent and free. And it is not just the mother country of today, not just the mother country that awaits the return of her sons from all parts, but also the time when they may come from beyond the borders of the country, come to the mother country without deserting the land of their birth. Let it be known that on the basis of the present census the proportion of Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin, even though we are a decreasing nation, is the same as it was at the time of the 1910 census: the number of Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin as a whole has not declined.

I greet those who have come from within and beyond the borders of the country, whether from the Historical Hungary of old, the country of St Stephen, or from faraway lands beyond the Carpathians, for example the Hungarian Csángós from Moldavia, or those whom a whirlwind carried as far as Kazakhstan, or those who fled to distant America as refugees from our failed struggles for freedom, or those who left after wars for Western Europe, the United States or Australia. From this historic place I greet all Hungarians scattered

²¹¹ See note 97.

across the whole world. The fact that St Stephen was our king, founder of the state, cannot be questioned by anyone from New Zealand to Canada, Sepsiszentgyörgy to Kőszeg, because he is our common ideal and symbol of national independence, of belonging to the Christian European community, and of a renewed Hungary. We need this moral strength, of good neighbourliness, of European cohesion, and of international solidarity. We need those who have something in common with this country and this political system; those who are faithful to freedom, democracy and the parliamentary system on the basis of Hungarian constitutionalism, and those who find alien all the extremist, barren ideas that destroyed this country whether from the left or the right.

Let no one seek to imbue us with a sense of guilt, because this people is no guiltier than any other, and in fact there is more on the positive side of our account than on the negative. The only ones who want to imbue us with a sense of guilt are those who want to rob this nation of its self-confidence and faith, those who have rejected the cathartic experience represented by the most recent transformation of 1989–90, and those who in an dishonest way, by constant denial and denigration, want to make the people forget what this country is now rid of: foreign occupation and the chains binding us to foreign occupation. They want to set all this at naught, so that they can reckon with a nation of little faith, a nation with a sense of guilt, one that is far more easily subjected to any kind of manipulation.

And now, to conclude, whatever will be said I shall get it anyway, but I do not want to speak merely about the 15 million Hungarians. Before the First World War, when no one yet disputed either the purity of his work or of his criticism, Dezső Szabó,²¹² one of the great connoisseurs of the Hungarian soul, said of Endre Ady,²¹³ the greatest connoisseur of the Hungarian soul, that it is the eternal Hungarian who goes on a huge spree when he should be building, sulks when he should compete, acts the proud gentleman when he should make a compromise, and dreams when he should be earning his bread. *On a Straight Road* is the title of the volume, and let us progress along that straight road, and we should not dream when we should be earning our bread. Let us rejoice that we need not make compromises. Now is the time to build here, as there are such times in the life of every nation. We have had our share of struggles. There are times when we have to build, and such a time has now come.

²¹² Dezső Szabó (1879–1945), author and political writer from Transylvania, had a strong intellectual appeal.

²¹³ See note 70.

And I say to you on this St Stephen's Day that there should be a constructive Hungary, a new, creative Hungary and a Hungary with a will to live here on this day. Let us leave now for the series of celebrations, but let us never forget the words of the oath of the Hungarian cadets: "For our homeland until death." Let us keep to that!

THE WORLD MEETING OF HUNGARIAN CALVINISTS

The 2nd World Meeting of Hungarian Calvinists was held in Debrecen in June 1991. The gathering was attended not only by Hungarian Calvinist believers from the neighbouring countries, but also by those who had moved away to distant lands, mostly to America, and who now came back with their leaders and pastors. József Antall addressed them at a rally in the Nagyerdő Stadium, Debrecen.

In the name of the Hungarian Government, the Hungarian State and the Hungarian nation, in the name of those who live here, and in the name of the nation of which you are all members wherever you happen to live, let me welcome you on this day, when not only Calvinist Hungarians living in the mother-country, but also Calvinist Hungarians dispersed throughout the world have come together to meet.

Here I must express my deep respect to all members of the Hungarian Calvinist Church, to all members of the community of Calvinist Hungarians who, in the history of Hungary, have always assumed a leading role with regard to their outstanding national commitment. The birth of the Reformation coincided with our national tragedy. In 1567, no more than forty-one years after the Battle of Mohács,²¹⁴ the Calvinist Church was organised. That century and the centuries that followed endowed Calvinist Hungarians with a sense of national commitment, the power to be independent and the faith needed to hold on to their national identities and remain steadfast even in the most adverse of circumstances.

What did Calvin and Calvinism mean for our Europe and for the world that swarmed forth from it to distant lands? Europe created something great in its universality, in its faith, in its common European identity. In the Renaissance, it shaped a world that was to determine its culture by means of freedom of thought and of the human mind.

When the Reformation began, when Luther, Calvin and all the others came to the fore, something new was born in Europe, namely that work and business

²¹⁴ See note 91.

– making money if you will – gained moral and legal acknowledgement. When, in the 1540s Calvin argued in a letter that charging an interest and making money from financial management was not immoral, he created the economic order of modern Europe. He laid the foundations of modern financial and market economy and he did so without excluding Europe from it, without letting Europe and the highly important economic resources that raised it up fall into the hands of others. He thereby helped create modern society founded on work and business. This extraordinary contribution by Calvin and Calvinism to Europe we must never forget. But Calvinism means not only justification for charging interest and acknowledgement of its moral rectitude, but also a comprehensive conception promoting education, solidarity and social care. This conception comprised those clearly articulated Calvinist values that came to be universal European values for all of us, even for those who lived or live not in a Calvinist or Protestant tradition, but in a Catholic one. Owing to their general acceptance, they even paved the way for a Catholic renewal. So they have become part and parcel of our universal European identity.

Similarly, as we recall past events, we must not forget that quite apart from the great universal values, the Reformation, by insisting on the vernacular and by translating the Bible into national tongues, provided the very means of creating modern nation-states, thereby giving rise to national literatures and cultures, which in turn determined for centuries the development of modern times. This is equally an important contribution.

I must pay respect to all these achievements when I address this 2nd World Meeting of Calvinist Hungarians, a common celebration for all Hungarians. The first World Meeting took place in 1938, when, with the Eucharistic World Congress attended by Cardinal Pacelli, later Pope Pius XXI, Catholicism had its own celebration. I am sincerely happy that this Second Meeting is taking place as the country is preparing for a papal visit, and that the Pope is planning to come here, to Debrecen; at this point let me express the particular appreciation of our Government for this, too. I do not think that this is a sheer coincidence. What else does it mean, but that Hungarians regard Catholicism and Protestantism in an ecumenical spirit and that the values I have broached are our common values.

I should like to give special attention to the outstanding unifying role of Hungarian Calvinists. Hungarian Calvinists have performed the most exemplary service in unifying Hungarians dispersed outside of Hungary. I must stress the fact that the Hungarian Calvinist community had to undergo many

tribulations, as all Hungarians living beyond the borders also did. We must never forget this. We must be careful to bring up the younger generations so that they hold on to their roots, so that they do not forget the call and the spirit of solidarity of their native land.

The Hungarian Calvinist Church should therefore relentlessly continue its mission for renewal here in this country and for the steadfastness of Hungarians beyond the borders, so that we can preserve that part of European culture we have contributed to its universal values. For this nation has no intention of merely requesting, demanding or begging from the world: it has made its contribution throughout the ages. It contributed what was dearest to it – its very life – for before the Reformation, before that particular 1567 Debrecen synod, the number of Hungarians was double that of the English population. Hungary lost much of its population in the defence of universal European culture, the freedom of Europe; fewer than two million out of the former five million Hungarians were left by 1715. This is the moral foundation justifying our conviction that Europe and Christianity do not merely constitute a future political programme for us, but are our very own history.

Solidarity, tolerance, mutual respect, and commonly held values are what bind us together. Through their Church organisation, Calvinist Hungarians have given us an example of what democracy and pluralist European mentality mean. These are values to be safeguarded; we must hold on to our universal European and Christian values together.

Finally, let me report a story from twenty years ago. At an international scholarly conference overseas two Hungarians were arguing in the break between sessions as their foreign colleagues listened. One of the Hungarians, after some reflection, said: "Hungarians are terribly divided; I often think it would have been better for them to have remained Catholic, like the Poles, for then they could have fought all the foreign despotisms as a unified nation, not pitted against each other." Then the other Hungarian scholar replied: "You are seriously mistaken; what makes Hungary a nation, its culture particularly valuable, genuinely European, is that we carry all Europe within us; without Protestantism, the Calvinist Church, the nation would be the poorer; our Hungarian identity, the one you and I endorse, would not be what it is without both Catholicism and Protestantism represented in it." In the heat of the argument, one of the foreigners said: "Gentlemen, these debates take place among us, too. Catholics plead their case, the Calvinists and the Lutherans do likewise. There is nothing special about it." One of the Hungarians then replied: "You people

can never fathom what it means to be Hungarian.” The one who was arguing that Hungary should have remained Catholic was a Calvinist and had studied at no lesser a Calvinist stronghold than Sárospatak. The one who advocated a strong Hungarian Protestantism was a Catholic. I must admit that I was that person. No one will ever understand us; no one will ever fathom what it means to be a Hungarian, if he does not appreciate our Churches and the frames of mind they represent, nor will we, if we do not do likewise, each of us standing up for his or her outlook, serving Hungary, Europe and our culture in a universal way.

Bearing this in mind, sensing the solemnity of this celebratory meeting, being aware of the fact that Calvinist Hungarians have always enjoyed a proportionally higher representation in Hungarian scholarship, literature and politics, I wish you all further inspiring experiences in Hungary. Without the Calvinist community, Hungary would undoubtedly not be what she is. The great citadels of the world Calvinist community are The Netherlands, Switzerland, Scotland, North America, and other countries overseas, but the easternmost bastion of the Reformation is historic Hungary, i.e. present-day Hungary and Transylvania. This is the easternmost outpost of Calvin’s teaching. Pride yourselves on this, and be fully aware of the responsibilities this calling entails for the world and for Hungary.

ISTVÁN SZÉCHENYI AND THE HUNGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

In 1991 we commemorated the 200th anniversary of the birth of Count István Széchenyi, the great politician and reformer, “the greatest Hungarian” and the founder of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. József Antall gave the following speech at the general assembly of the Academy on 6 May 1991. This was the second time that Antall as Prime Minister addressed the members of the organisation, now presided by Domokos Kosáry.

This is not the time for me to recount the lifework of István Széchenyi.²¹⁵ The President of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences has already done so in a much better and much more competent manner than I myself could do. I agree profoundly with what he said that such festive occasions and commemorations centring around one person never justify exclusive concentration on a single individual and historical interpretations based on the life of that person. I think that what he referred to is true, namely that István Széchenyi, Lajos Kossuth, Ferenc Deák, and József Eötvös – to list only the greatest four, not even to mention Lajos Batthyány, Miklós Wesselényi²¹⁶ and others – laid the foundations for the birth of a modern Hungary through their ideals and their activity.

These four giants created what modern Hungary is based upon in terms of its institutional system, political thinking and intellectuality. There were personal and political differences of opinion between them, but we cannot say that they were enemies or opponents. What we can say is this: they were part of the same process of transformation that for the Germans was unification and that for the Italians was the Risorgimento. For us Hungarians this process of transformation ran its course in the half century between 1825 and 1875, when these four historical figures became the founders of modern Hungary.

Of the four, István Széchenyi taught us that there is something above political parties and above daily political conflicts of interest. There is something

²¹⁵ See note 62.

²¹⁶ See notes 63, 64, 41, 82, and 113 respectively.

that is not part of the workaday world, something that is a mixture of dream and reality, something that spans Hungarian society in its entirety. In his works *On Horses*, *The National Club*, *Credit*, *Light* and other books, Széchenyi attempted to address all the challenges of Hungarian history. He knew – and this is a lesson for all of us – that when the country enters a new era, it is essential for the sake of the transformation to have property relations in order. This was an idea that he never forgot, not even during political battles, the idea that you cannot have transformation without creating transparent property relations and creditworthiness.

Although the word ‘infrastructure’ was not known, he proposed one of its most important elements: trade and transportation. He realised that trade and transportation are the means by which the public can influence the shaping of the economy. He also knew that cultural education and science were the best means of calling attention to the importance of the human factor, by focusing on the cultured and educated human being. If we read Széchenyi’s works, we get the feeling that he says things that are instructive for us all even today; it is just that he writes in the language of the 19th century. This is pleasing, because we know that our history has been shaped by giant intellects whose ideas are valid even today. But at the same time, the fact that their thoughts are still apposite may also fill us with sadness and bitterness.

On the 200th anniversary of the birth of István Széchenyi we have to preserve the patience and the impatience with which he approached issues, and we have to relate to issues with this same approach.

The four giant intellects and statesmen that I mentioned earlier were leading personalities throughout their age. Their fate was not like that of Lajos Batthyány, who died a martyr, or like that of Sándor Petőfi,²¹⁷ who became a living legend through his literary creation as a young man. They lived through decades of difficulty and left their mark on an entire era.

They give us a real choice of outstanding statesmen; everyone can pick and choose whom they favour. We can pick Széchenyi, the great creator and great dreamer, who planned and executed what he dreamed. But amidst the dreams he constantly warned his nation to keep to reality. Or we can pick Lajos Kossuth, who rose to lead the nation, Kossuth, without whom, as Artúr Görgey himself admitted, we never would have had a national war of independence. Or we can choose Ferenc Deák, great statesman of the reformist era and also

²¹⁷ See note 102.

master of negotiating lasting compromises. Or József Eötvös, the modern political thinker who raised and answered questions that became major issues in the 20th century. His in-depth analyses of topics such as socialist ideas and communism make excellent reading in understanding ideas and movements of the past centuries.

I hope and trust that this year and in the next few years we shall not have to choose József Eötvös, who contemplated issues at a time of fierce repression; that we will not need another Lajos Kossuth to fight new wars of independence; and that we shall not be forced to conclude Ferenc Deák's compromises. Of course, we shall need all these great thinkers and statesmen, but despite all our difficulties and crises, I hope that we stand poised at the onset of a long and fruitful era of growth, one in which we shall have the opportunity to create and prosper in the spirit of Széchenyi. He shall be our guide during this process of construction. His legacy is a guarantee for the making of progress in practice.

I think that besides two such eminent, expert statesmen as Lajos Kossuth and Ferenc Deák, Széchenyi and József Eötvös were not simply everyday politicians. Sometimes they were more, sometimes less. But their intellectuality was needed in order to be able to answer all the questions that the nation as a whole had to face.

My task here today is not just to recall the past, not only to talk about István Széchenyi, the great founder, but also to suggest his contemporary significance. The President has already quoted a passage from Széchenyi's work *Credit* about the cultured and educated individual, but now let me make reference to the dedication in that work. The idea that transformation is unthinkable without women, without the creative assistance of the ladies, is no coincidence; nor is it merely a hussar officer's gallant gesture.

Széchenyi knew that it was impossible to transform or revive the nation without women being aware of the necessity for this. The success of the transformation would not only require women's cultural education and literacy – which often surpassed that of men –, but also their sense of reality, their composure. We could even say the sober and instinctive creative sense found in women is necessary if a nation in crisis is to find its way out of trouble. In the spirit of Széchenyi, we must also turn to Hungarian women when we set about transforming this country.

Barely a year ago, on the day after my inauguration as Prime Minister, I had the opportunity to speak here about science and the Hungarian Academy of

Sciences, and I was granted the honour of having my extemporaneous speech published in *Magyar Tudomány* [Hungarian Science]. Thus I do not think it is necessary to talk in great detail about how we see and value the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The Government's position concerning the role of the Academy has not changed. We still believe that the Hungarian Academy of Sciences is an extraordinary national institution unlike any other academy of sciences in any other country. The more than 150 years of development that it has witnessed has given the Academy a reputation making it irreplaceable; it cannot be transformed into a scientific research ministry or downgraded into an ordinary scientific society. Its horizontal and vertical organisational structure must be preserved. However, it is essential that the Academy carry out internal reforms within that structure.

A year ago I had not yet had the chance to glimpse into the depths of government. But I was already aware that I would primarily be able to promise you freedom and not money. I can only reiterate that promise now. We can ensure unlimited freedom for the Academy. You are free as individual researchers and free collectively as an institution. However, the country's economic and financial situation is such that despite the best of intentions, we are unable to provide as much financial support as we would like and as much as an institutional system consisting of cultured and educated individuals would warrant. Therefore, in addition to guaranteeing your freedom, all I can do is to recommend that you find the best method of organisation under the given circumstances.

As the President rightly pointed out, neither Parliament, nor the Government is able to develop science on its own. All they can do is assist in organising the sciences. As József Eötvös said after the Compromise of 1867, science will develop with or without the support of Parliament. The power of the Government or of Parliament cannot advance this process, all they can do is provide organisational or modest financial support.

We agree that in addition to maintaining your autonomy, we have to find the appropriate means for co-operation between the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the universities. It would be more costly if the universities and the institutions of the academy were to work towards the same goal using the same methods, but in a diffuse, unco-ordinated manner. The academy is an umbrella organisation for scientists, which also maintains the most significant research institutions. In addition, it has an important co-ordinating role as well, to organise co-operation and competition between the researchers working for

university research institutes, companies and active in other sectors. This continues to be a task for the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, a task it will have to fulfil in the future as well.

As a historian, or rather as a former historian, I would also like to talk about the fact that in the course of its long history the Hungarian Academy of Sciences often recognised, but also often neglected great researchers. If we examine the list of researchers recognised by the Academy since 1825, we will find some of the greatest creators in the history of Hungarian sciences, but we will not always find all the appropriate names. This is a warning that the Academy must adopt a broad view when following the progress of researchers, so as to minimise the number of those overlooked and maximise the number of those whose work is recognised. Thus, when succeeding generations look back to draw conclusions, as we did when we compiled our volume on the Academy's 150th anniversary, or when the 200th anniversary arrives, we can be sure that during the elapsed decades, great researchers and great creators were appropriately recognised and there will be no need to recognise anyone subsequently.

In relations between science and politics, science must always have priority. Science must be the foundation and politics must not, and must not wish to influence the sciences. Every time politics has interfered with science, the result has been folly. Here I am not just thinking of Stalin's works on linguistics. It is also important to consider the relationship between the various branches of science, to see social sciences and the humanities as well as natural and applied sciences as parts of a whole, and to recognise that all of them are required to achieve our goals of educating individuals who are or who strive to be perfect.

Sciences must be studied together, and since the first scientist honoured was a great mathematician, allow me to quote Bertrand Russell, who once said: "When I was young and cleverest, I was a mathematician. When I felt for the first time that my mind was no longer as sharp as it used to be, I became a philosopher. When my thinking was no longer precise enough, I became a historian, and now that I am nearing the end of my life and am beginning to discover signs of senility in myself, I have become a politician..." I do not think we should follow this example.

Many things have happened in Hungarian politics during the past year. I cannot recount them now; I shall do so at another time and another place. But I would like you to believe that we govern this country with honesty, and that we strive to do so honestly as best as we can under the given circumstances.

The reorganisation of the Academy and the drafting of the new law on the Academy are in progress and we shall assist these efforts with the modest means at our disposal. At this time let me refer to a realisation that I have reached previously, but which has been reinforced in me during nearly one year spent in government, namely, that it appears to be easier for people to agree on divergent principles than on scopes of authority, personal questions or issues to do with livelihoods. When we talk about great principles and great ideas, often there are insignificant personal questions or issues concerning scopes of authority in the background. And intellectuals are always capable of expressing personal interests as ideas.

I think at a time when the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, the greatest and highest institution of the Hungarian intelligentsia, is about to undergo extensive organisational reforms, when it is in the process of regrouping and of redefining its role within Hungarian science, Hungarian public life in general and the country's transformation, it is important for the institution to push insignificant conflicts of interest and authority to the background. The Academy should make an attempt to visualise its role from the point of view of the nation as a whole. As political leaders we are often unable to view the world from this perspective because we are constrained by political interests. That is why it is necessary for the Hungarian Academy of Sciences to remain independent and to stay out of daily political battles. I think this much had to be said if the Academy is to remain true to its founder, István Széchenyi, and true to the ideas that have made him not only the author of books, not only a political leader, but the founder of great undertakings and institutions that pointed the way to the future.

THE HONOUR OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: HUNGARY'S MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS IN HISTORY

The 100th anniversary of the birth of László O'sváth, a former Head of the Minister's Department at the Ministry of Home Affairs, was held on 10 May 1992 in the auditorium of the Duna Palota (Danube Palace) building. It gave József Antall the opportunity to talk to an audience of 300 guests, mostly officials from the Ministry, on the significance of Hungary's Ministry of Home Affairs from Bertalan Szemere to Ferenc Keresztes-Fischer, namely from the Ministry's creation in 1848 until 1944.

One reason for today's gathering is to commemorate the centenary of the birth of László O'sváth.²¹⁸ Today's coming together also provides an opportunity to express our appreciation of the Ministry of Home Affairs established in 1848, when the first Hungarian Interior Minister, Bertalan Szemere,²¹⁹ took office in the Batthyány²²⁰ Government. The new Ministry became what it was supposed to be, namely a controlling body that supervised public administration and co-ordinated all related governmental activities, including the police. It was not merely a 'Police Ministry', as it was perceived to be by the general public in more recent history. We must keep this in mind in our attempts to re-establish the reputation of this Ministry. Let us also remember the surviving members of that older generation – the young titans of those early days –, and do them justice by acknowledging their dedicated and creditable work as civil servants.

The Ministry of Home Affairs performed well in the past. Whenever it was compromised, it was the result of serving foreign interests, and those who served such interests were either foreigners themselves or collaborators.

²¹⁸ László O'sváth (1892–1970), jurist, colleague and confidant of the Minister of the Interior, Ferenc Keresztes-Fischer. As head of the Minister's Department, he helped hiding the warm treatment of the mainly Polish refugees, who fled from the German armies.

²¹⁹ Bertalan Szemere (1812–1869), jurist, politician, member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Minister of the Interior in the government of Lajos Batthyány, Prime Minister in 1849. He fled Hungary in 1849 and supported the Compromise in 1867 from abroad.

²²⁰ See note 82.

This is why we can gather here today and express our commemoration in that spirit. Forget about personality cults: this nation has grown disgusted with them and seems to dislike commemorating individuals. Instead, let us simply restore public respect for those who deserve it by telling the truth about their deeds.

Bearing all this in mind and having listened to the memories and views of former Speaker of the Parliament Béla Varga,²²¹ who was involved in refugee affairs as an opposition politician, allow me, too, to express my thoughts and commemoration.

László O'sváth joined the Ministry of the Interior toward the end of the First World War, having accepted an invitation to do so from Gábor Ugron,²²² Interior Minister at the time. O'sváth's recruitment was a fairly common example of the highly useful contemporary practice of inviting officials from the county-level local government authorities.

During the inter-war years, O'sváth made a distinguished career within the Ministry, climbing his way up the ladder and passing through all the posts that turn an ordinary official into a genuine expert on public administration. It is important to stress this in view of the fact that the term 'expert' seems to be somewhat vague these days and is sometimes used as a synonym for various political terms rather than to indicate real expertise. Let us be clear about this: there can be experts in every profession, and public administration is no exception. The inter-war years were the golden age of Hungarian public administration as a profession, both from a theoretical point of view, i.e. in terms of public law, and in comparison with other European countries. It was during this period that Zoltán Magyary²²³ formulated the key principles of public administration, with relevance not only to Hungary, but also to other countries, and laid the foundations for the reform of the Hungarian public administration system, borrowing the most up-to-date management-training methods from the US and examining their applicability to public administration. The career of Károly Mártonffy,²²⁴ who later became a prominent figure, also be-

²²¹ See note 131.

²²² Gábor Ugron (1880–1960), scion of a famous Transylvanian family. Minister of Home Affairs in 1917–1918. In the 1920s came to support Prime Minister Bethlen.

²²³ Zoltán Magyary (1888–1945), jurist, professor, expert of public administration. As the member of the village explorer movement, he examined the structure of public administration of the region where he was from. He committed suicide with his wife on account of abuses suffered from the Soviet army.

²²⁴ Károly Mártonffy (1890–1979), jurist, university professor. He developed the theory and practice of civil service.

gan in this era. Gusztáv Ladik,²²⁵ another senior personality of public services, collected the most significant laws and regulations during these years. This period also saw the publication of a series of textbooks used in providing further training for high-ranking civil servants and village notaries. These famous books were all part of this process. Therefore, my point is that the inter-war period was an extremely productive era for both public administration and the related literature.

I also need to mention welfare policy. It is a highly popular subject these days. Many people insist that it should be, along with market economy, an advanced discipline and an important area of applied political science. During the era of state socialism, welfare policy was pushed into the background owing to the nature of the economy and the state structure. A few experts, however, made attempts at summarising the history of welfare policy. Andor Csizmadia,²²⁶ who of course himself came from the ranks of the old Ministry of the Interior, published a book on the subject in a limited edition in 1976. It was also during these interwar years that the 'Eger Norm'²²⁷ was renamed the 'Hungarian Norm', and that the Government became involved in welfare policy as part of government policy. The Government did not in the least go against the sociological literature of the time, which included the works of village explorers and Social Democrats such as Esztergár,²²⁸ but embraced it to some extent. As a result, welfare issues were dealt with in the general context of public administration.

In addition to all this, the Ministry of the Interior was also responsible for health policy. Thanks to the efforts of Béla Johan,²²⁹ the Ministry was more professional and effective in drawing up such legislation and related concepts in these years than before or since. As you can see, the Ministry defined its scope of activity on the basis of a wide theoretical background, a thorough

²²⁵ Gusztáv Ladik (1860–1959), jurist and civil servant, expert of public administration.

²²⁶ Andor Csizmadia (1910–1985), legal expert, university professor, member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. He organised the Institute of Sociography in 1948–1949.

²²⁷ The 'Eger Norm' originated from a healthcare and assistance programme for the poor, and was initiated by the Franciscan order. It was introduced as the 'Hungarian Norm' in bigger towns in 1927. The Minister of the Interior made it compulsory in 1936.

²²⁸ Lajos Esztergár (?–1978), Mayor of Pécs, member of the village explorer movement in the region of this city. He introduced the 'Pécs Norm' to ease poverty in the 1920's. Initiator of the idea of productive sociology in order to involve the lower layers of society in production. In his opinion, only those people are capable of making efforts whose primary needs are satisfied.

²²⁹ Béla Johan (1889–1983), physician, micro-biologist, State Secretary. During the First World War he produced sera for vaccination. He was head of the Institute of Public Healthcare from 1925 and he organised the healthcare system of villages.

knowledge of the related literature, and integrity. Therefore, the Ministry of the Interior was the successor of the Ministry organised by Bertalan Szemere in 1848 from the pre-1848 Governing Council. The Ministry subsequently operated under the supervision of the National Defence Committee and then under Szemere during his term as Prime Minister. It was again under Szemere when he served as Interior Minister in the last weeks of the 1848–1849 War of Independence.

The Ministry of the Interior was reorganised after 1867, and it became a significant co-ordinating body during the Andrassy²³⁰ Government and the dualist era as a whole. It operated along these lines during the inter-war period until the widespread reorganisation motivated by the economic crisis of 1929–1931. The Ministry of Labour and Welfare Affairs was merged with the Ministry of Home Affairs, turning the latter into a multifunctional ministry dealing in the 1930s with general public administration, the police, the armed forces, welfare policy, and health issues. As a result, the Ministry undoubtedly became one of the most powerful, if not the most powerful, governmental and political organisation of the Horthy era and the years of the Second World War. By virtue of its structure, which – in compliance with the Constitution if you like – greatly concentrated power and a number of fields of endeavour, the Ministry could assume a role we can be proud of today.

As a grown-up, I had the opportunity to talk to several officials from that era. I am certain that much less could have been achieved in the health sector had this not belonged to the Ministry of Home Affairs, and if the local government authorities had not acted on the instructions of the Interior Minister. Welfare-related efforts would also have been less effective had they had not been initiated by the Interior Minister.

The same applied to the refugee situation during Second World War, as the Ministry, among other bodies, was responsible for dealing with civilian refugees and related political issues. Of course, it would be unjust to credit the Ministry of the Interior with all the achievements during this period because the other Ministries, too, did a great deal of work. In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for example, a group of diplomats including Jenő Zichy, Antal Ullein-Reviczky²³¹ and others was attempting, in co-operation with the Ministry of the Interior,

²³⁰ See note 151.

²³¹ Antal Ullein-Reviczky (1894–1955), diplomat, leader of the press department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs between 1938–1943, minister in Stockholm in 1943–1944, involved with the effort to leave the war. He emigrated from Hungary after the Second World War.

to find a way out of the situation Hungary was in at the time, taking into consideration the consequences of world politics for the country. We must also remember the Ministry of Defence – Defence Minister Vilmos Nagybaczoni Nagy²³² is far from being the only example – and the soldiers who never stopped fighting for Hungary's independence in the midst of the Second World War, despite the discipline, the military regulations and the orders they had to obey.

Today we must do justice to those who wanted and were able to serve the good cause. Therefore I think that all Ministries should commemorate their great figures that did their best to serve noble ends, instead of remembering only those who left behind bitter memories. Allow me to share a personal observation with you concerning the rather strange associations that were attached to the Ministry of the Interior over the last few decades. Everybody belonged to the Ministry of Home Affairs, including uniformed policemen and detectives. When in my childhood I once rode my bike on the pavement, a policeman stopped me. When he found out that my father worked for the Ministry of the Interior as a counsellor, he gave me a good scolding and treated me with exceptional rigour, insisting that I set an example three times over by not riding my bike on the pavement, since I was the son of a Ministry official. That, too, was the Ministry of Home Affairs.

I remember how strange I felt when I was sitting between two policemen on the back seat of a Pobeda car on my way to the detention centre in 1957. They simply said 'Ministry of the Interior' whenever the car was stopped by other policemen, and on we drove. In my view, it was not the Ministry of the Interior. It is time we stopped abusing the names of government bodies. Let the Ministry of the Interior, the state police and any other organisation be proud of what they really were and are.

Having outlined the efforts of the Ministry of Home Affairs in shaping public administration, welfare and health policies in the inter-war period, let me now move on to the subject of the Ministry's role in the Second World War. Hungary had a very special role in the war, and the Ministry took part in the organisation of a number of tasks. Although Hungary did not enter the war in 1939, she increasingly came under the domination of the Axis Powers from that time on. She became involved in a co-operative relationship with Germany and later with Italy and Japan, until she was finally engulfed by the war in 1941 as an ally of the Axis. I have expressed my

²³² Vilmos Nagybaconi Nagy (1884–1946), General, Minister of Defence in 1942–1943. Enforced the fair treatment of the Jewish labour battalions.

views concerning this matter elsewhere, but thanks to the press they have often been quoted and attacked, in connection with the Soviet breakthrough along the Don and other events, despite the fact that I made myself perfectly clear back then. However, those who want to misunderstand you will always succeed in doing so.

In my view, there is no other way of studying and writing history than by striving for the maximum level of truth. I like quoting a contemporary of William Shakespeare who said: "Not even the Almighty can change the past, but historians can." Unfortunately, we can see many examples of this. As far as I am concerned, I learned the basic principles and facts of history at the Pia-rist Grammar School from, among others, Mr István Gál, my former history teacher, who is here with us today. It was Mr Gál who directed my attention to history, and he is also responsible, to some extent, for my becoming Prime Minister. Had he not redirected my early interest in zoology and biology, I would probably have had a more peaceful life, and I could have spared you, ladies and gentlemen, and the country this address in my capacity as Prime Minister. However, history and studying reality became so important to me that I dedicated the better part of my life to this discipline. After publishing a few hundred historical pieces with differing quality, I am proud to say that I can stand by each and every word, and none of my enemies has been able to turn any of my writings against me. Believe me, they have tried hard. This means that honest historiography does exist, and that holding on to your principles may be a good idea. Allow me to elaborate on that thought for a second.

We have no grounds to sneer at people who change their minds about something. On the contrary, we should welcome such changes. If a person discards a wrong-headed view he held in the past and takes a new position, he is no lesser a figure than Baron József Eötvös, who said that it was expedient to correct our mistakes by aligning our ideas with the facts. Of course, this does not mean that those who do stick to their views are suspect. I reject the idea that you first have to be a Marxist, subsequently make a career, and only after that become a democrat. I do not think you have to hold different views, or that you have to have belonged to an extremist group beforehand. However, if somebody does change his political views over time, he should let people know about such changes, explain why and how they occurred, admit that he was wrong in the past, and avoid pretence. In his own field, László O'sváth was a prominent example of consistency and what we may call the conservative political attitude in the positive sense of the term. Just think about the legacy he

brought from his father's house, the legacy of Áron Hegymegi Kiss,²³³ who was a renowned author on education.

I like taking opportunities like this to talk about more general issues, too, such as politics, public administration and government in Hungary, because I can feel that as our forefathers look down upon us from the other world, they are shaking their heads in disapproval at the celebration. Their puritan spirit would reject the idea of celebrating specific individuals unless such personal celebrations are used to serve the interests of the nation and the general public.

Let me now tell you about refugee policies during the Second World War, a topic which was neglected for a long time. Your booklets also contain some information on that issue. Let us see what Miklós Kállay,²³⁴ Hungary's prime minister between 1942 and 1944, had to say about it in his book first published in 1955 in the United States. Kállay dedicated an entire chapter to refugee policies and to the presentation of the other face of Hungary, as well as to the achievements of social organisations in protecting the country. He writes: "The Vatican, the U.S. and the U.K. were the largest supporters of the Hungarian Red Cross abroad. Let us commemorate those Hungarians whose contribution to this process was indispensable, first and foremost Minister of the Interior Ferenc Keresztes-Fischer²³⁵ who did his job and took political responsibility, in most cases with the consent of the prime minister, but sometimes, if it was necessary, going ahead with certain plans without previously informing the premier. Of the higher-ranking officials at the Ministry of the Interior, József Antall²³⁶ must be given special credit [...]. I have mentioned elsewhere Béla Varga,²³⁷ the parish priest of Balatonboglár, Member of Parliament and Vice-President of the Independent Smallholders' Party, who was in charge of co-ordinating official and non-official actions. I should name many others, maybe hundreds, even thousands. I hope there will be a time when they can be remembered and that their names will not be forgotten.

²³³ Áron Hegymegi Kiss (1845–1908), pedagogue, expert of ethnology.

²³⁴ Miklós Kállay (1887–1967), jurist, politician, Minister of Agriculture in 1932–1935, Prime Minister in 1942–1944. He did his best to take Hungary out of the German alliance, and that ended in the occupation of the country on 19 March 1944. Kállay was arrested and deported. After the war he finally settled in the USA.

²³⁵ See note 3.

²³⁶ József Antall Sr (1896–1974), jurist, as the head of Department IX of the Ministry of Home Affairs he was in charge of the refugees from 1939. Arrested by the Gestapo in 1944. After the Second World War he was an MP of the Independent Smallholders' Party and Minister for Reconstruction in 1946. Father of Prime Minister József Antall. For more details see his son's account in Document 1.

²³⁷ See note 131.

Apart from the Polish refugees, a large number of French, British and U.S. citizens had lived in Hungary and were stuck here because of the war. As internees, they enjoyed the same level of freedom as internees as they had before the war [...]. The following story is a good example of how free their life was in those days. When the Germans invaded Hungary on 19 March 1944, they captured most of the British citizens in the vicinity of the racecourse at Alag.”²³⁸

Let me now remember Ferenc Keresztes-Fischer and reflect on Kállay by saying that I hope there will be a time when even those not mentioned in his book will be remembered.

I myself have no problem personally here, since Miklós Kállay mentioned Ferenc Keresztes-Fischer and my father as early as 1955. However, I do not think this is only about him, so let me quote from my father's unpublished notes and memoirs, recorded in the 1960's on László O'sváth, some parts of which were quoted by Károly Kapronczay in the journal *História*:

“László O'sváth, ministerial director, the most confidential colleague of Minister of the Interior Keresztes-Fischer, played a very important role in the Ministry of the Interior, including the refugee issue. Not only had László O'sváth a reputation for fair and square dealing, but he was also a true Hungarian with a strong social empathy and a deeply humanist attitude. Behind the facade of O'sváth's modesty and reserved manner was a vast treasure house of professional experience and human wisdom. Being the Head of the Department of the Minister, he had a crucial role in personnel-related issues, as well as in defining the frameworks of our operation. Had it not been for our friendship and agreement on political matters, our efforts would not have been so successful. He is one of those figures who have been forgotten in today's Hungary, after suffering a great deal of injustice in 1944 along with Colonel Zoltán Balló, Major General Lóránt Utassy²³⁹ and some other colleagues. Without these people we would not be able to talk today about Hungary's minor yet indisputable achievements and good deeds. I have always felt that he, in his capacity as 'personnel chief', suggested to Keresztes-Fischer that I be appointed head of refugee affairs, although in the manner of the time all such suggestions went unrecorded. The way the Minister, and later

²³⁸ Miklós Kállay, *Magyarország miniszterelnöke voltam 1942–1944*, [I Was a Prime Minister of Hungary], Budapest, Európa, 1991, vol. 2, pp. 88–89. Its first edition was in English: Nicholas Kállay, *Hungarian Premier* (New York, 1954)

²³⁹ Colonel Zoltán Baló, Major General Lóránt Utassy: consecutive heads of Department XXI of the Ministry of Defence. They were in charge of the Polish military refugees in Hungary.

Pál Teleki, treated me suggested that I had an excellent reputation. I think I deserved this confidence right up to the German Gestapo prison. László O'sváth did a great deal for the success of refugee-related policies, providing all necessary means, offering advice and also helping me as a mediator on one occasion.' I think these are just the right words for appreciating those who were willing to face the difficulties of their time and show us the "other Hungary".²⁴⁰ Thus we can do justice to those who were formerly unknown by talking about their deeds.

Let me give you another recent example. My close associates, who are here today and were also present at István Bibó's²⁴¹ funeral, know all too well how people can be made to forget. The vast majority of the public in the 1960s and 1970s did not know who István Bibó was. Tragic as it is, his achievements were left completely unrecognised in his own time. How quickly a nation can forget if it does not commemorate its heroes! I do not wish to comment on the fact that János Kádár referred to him as 'Lajos Bibó' in a rather derogatory speech on 1 May 1957. This is why it is so important to honour those officials, soldiers and ordinary citizens who as members of the Government or of the opposition dared to take risks by smuggling refugees across the border and who made refugee policy an international issue.

Let me round off this topic by adding one more comment, given that there have been contradictory figures and that I myself have promised to insist on historical facts. After 1938 and 1939 there were 200,000 refugees from Transylvania in Hungary. Of these 200,000 refugees, 60,000 – from the southern part of Transylvania that was not re-annexed by Hungary – stayed on until the end of the war.

There exist contradictory data regarding the number of Polish refugees. Some sources immediately after the war quoted lower figures because, in principle, governments can offer compensation for returning refugees, and there were even lower estimates during the time of peace treaty negotiations. However, as a result of recollections, there was an increase in the estimated number of refugees from Poland, until an official estimate appeared in 1946 thanks to Iván Boldizsár,²⁴² who recorded 130,000 to 140,000 in the proofs of the Green Book of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

²⁴⁰ The article appeared in Volume 1986/5–6 in the journal *História*.

²⁴¹ See note 23.

²⁴² Iván Boldizsár (1915–1988). Writer, journalist. State Secretary in the Foreign Ministry in 1947. Between 1951 and 1969 he was editor of various papers.

Nevertheless, some sources say 200,000 and others say 70,000. In any event, the literature puts the number of refugees as somewhere between 50,000 and 250,000. I am happy, both personally and as a historian, to accept the figures calculated without any bias on the basis of the files of the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Defence, in co-operation with the organisations involved in the preparations for the peace treaty negotiations.

According to the Green Book, 100,000 Poles came to Hungary between 1939 and 1945. That is a realistic figure. Of those 100,000, almost 50,000 arrived before Hungary entered the war. These people left Hungary by way of Yugoslavia before going to Palestine and subsequently taking part in the Battle of Monte Cassino and D-Day together with the Eighth Army. Some of the others returned to Poland. For example, the commander-in-chief of the Polish Army, Marshal Rydz-Smigly, who had a reputation in Poland similar to that once enjoyed by Artúr Görgey in Hungary, stayed here for a while. He had been quick to realise that the invasion by the Germans and then by the Soviets meant that his army was greatly outnumbered. As far as I know, he returned to Poland under the partisan alias 'Bor Komorowski' to die a hero's death.

Those who came to Hungary – including British, French, pro-Badoglio Italians, Dutch and other nationals, along with Jews of various nationality – enjoyed protection. We should not be ashamed of the fact that some 40,000 to 50,000 German children came to Hungary between spring and autumn each year for a holiday. They came from the Ruhr region, which had been subject to severe bombing earlier. Refugees and holidaymakers equally fell within the ambit of the Ministry of the Interior. This was the result of the general political and humanist attitude, and the fact that politicians were clearly against Hitler, and of course communism, at that time. The Ministry of the Interior was also making efforts to prepare a democratic transformation of society. Let me remind you that the Ministry of the Interior supported the founding of the Hungarian Peasants' Association because the Ministry officials, led by Ferenc Keresztes-Fischer, were aware of the significance of this agency in the life of Hungarian farmers and in protecting their interests. Social Democrats were also involved in this process, but I do not wish to elaborate on this issue now.

These persons worked as officials, which is a good example of how far-sighted a politician Keresztes-Fischer was. Of course, the fact that the opposition parties delegated several officers to the Ministry required a highly professional attitude from senior officials such as László O'sváth. These opposition officers accepted the duties associated with their positions, but they also identified

with the ideology behind their tasks. Most of them worked for a relatively low salary but their commitment to their ideologies and political preferences helped them overcome their dissatisfaction. Also, remember that the Ministry of the Interior provided ongoing support to Hungarian writers and artists, including Attila József²⁴³ and Dezső Szabó, during that period. This support, of course, did not match the literary fund that proved to be a highly effective system later on but that did not yet exist at this time. This general support was also part of the Ministry's scope of activities.

In sum, Hungary's Ministry of the Interior – as one of the key ministries of the time – has set an example over the last century, or even the last 150 years, by demonstrating its integrity and openness to social affairs, and by showing the way on the bumpy road of democracy. That was the Ministry of the Interior whose heritage we can be proud of. It is part of the whole picture, however, that sometimes the Ministry had no choice but to enforce race-related and politically motivated laws and regulations that were the products of Nazism. The Ministry attempted to delay the implementation of such inhuman measures and tried to have them rescinded.

It is apparent that this process divided the senior level officials, but those who tried to save people from these regulations and prevent or minimise the abuse of their rights were clearly different from the rest. Their efforts were remarkable because these people lived and worked in an age when such actions involved significant risks. Do not forget that Interior Minister Ferenc Keresztes-Fischer was not the only official to be arrested by the Gestapo on 19 March 1944, the day the German occupation began. Along with the minister, the state secretaries and the administrative state secretary, too, were replaced, which was rather uncommon at the time. Among the new officials were László Endre²⁴⁴ and political state secretary László Baký,²⁴⁵ who were in turn dismissed by the Regent as soon as he regained some of his powers. These are also historical facts. And let me add that refugees would have been given much less assistance, that it would have been impossible to show the merits of the 'other Hungary' and fight cruelty, at least in some areas, in the face of the army obeying the orders of the government of the time, if Regent Miklós Horthy had

²⁴³ Attila József (1905–1937), one of the most important Hungarian poets of the early 20th century.

²⁴⁴ László Endre (1895–1945), theoretician and practitioner of Hungarian anti-Semitism. Member of the Arrow-Cross Party of Ferenc Szálasi during the German occupation as state secretary prepared the deportation of the Jews of Hungary. Hanged as a war criminal in 1945.

²⁴⁵ László Baký (1898–1946), police officer, supporter of the Arrow-Cross Party, MP, political secretary of the Ministry of the Interior after the German occupation. Hanged as a war criminal in 1946.

not provided his general support for these efforts, without knowing exactly what they involved. I would like to stress this without speaking up for Regent Miklós Horthy. This is not the first time I am telling you this. Some people in the audience still remember me using the very same words in the Kossuth Club²⁴⁶ in 1979, to the astonishment of many in the audience. My point is that this entire attitude, this political position, was only feasible if the Regent was also willing to accept the risks involved without being familiar with the details. Prime Ministers Pál Teleki and Miklós Kállay also accepted the risks, while László Bárdossy²⁴⁷ was less willing. Miklós Kállay described this period when the Interior Minister himself took responsibility for refugees, along with those senior officials at the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who provided assistance in those days. They co-operated by transferring wanted Polish refugees between the two ministries so that these individuals could hide from their pursuers. Let me comment that up to 19 March 1944 the Ministry of the Interior was able to do more for this cause, since the Ministry of Defence was in a more difficult situation. There are several witnesses to this in the audience, including Colonel-General Kálmán Kéri.²⁴⁸ After 19 March 1944, however, when the hands of the Ministry of the Interior were tied, owing to the new state secretaries, it was the Ministry of Defence that saved a great number of civilians, drafting them for military service and subsequently turning them into military internees.

As a tribute to the precision and the strict morality of public administrators and the defence officials in this country, let me finish my speech by telling you an anecdote on a relatively recent trial that took place last year. I am in possession of a document containing a list of Russian prisoners of war who escaped to Hungary from German concentration camps. It is known that Russian prisoners of war were not held in Hungary for long, especially before the country itself became a theatre of war, because to a certain extent Russian soldiers were handed over to the Russians after being captured. Some did not agree with this practice, knowing that this meant losing our most valuable exchange commodities, i.e. prisoners of war. Most political and army leaders of

²⁴⁶ Kossuth Club of the Society for the Dissemination of Knowledge was the scene of many talks and debates on cultural and other subjects.

²⁴⁷ László Bárdossy (1890–1946), jurist, diplomat, Prime Minister of Hungary in 1941–1942. Under his term Hungary participated in the war against Yugoslavia (1941), joined the war against the Soviet Union, later against the United Kingdom and the United States. He was executed as a war criminal.

²⁴⁸ Kálmán Kéri (1901–1994), Colonel-General during the Second World War. Although in October 1944 he went over to the Soviets, later he was imprisoned. MP of the HDF in 1990–1994.

the time disapproved of the Russians being handed over. There were only two kinds of Russian prisoners of war in Hungary: those who escaped from German concentration camps and those who were sent temporarily to Austria for construction work. The placement of these POWs was the responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior. They remained in custody even after the beginning of the German occupation. I have a list of the POWs held in one district, with their names and precise information regarding their boot sizes, whether they took size 41, 42 or 43. There are two women forced labourers on the list with sizes 37 and 38 respectively. Those of you who have been in the Army will know that there were always too many size 44 boots. While I was in the Army, there was always a shortage of size 42 and 43 boots. But the sizes of these Russian POWs were documented, so they could have exactly the right boots and clothing. During the negotiations on the departure of the Russian Army, I showed this document with all the sizes to General Burlakov, stressing how much attention we paid to the provision of boots having the right size. He was somewhat stunned at this precision.

Let us dedicate this day to the commemoration of the previously unknown, honourable civil servants mentioned by Miklós Kállay, and allow me to place László O'sváth, born 100 years ago, at the top of the list. László O'sváth was a figure of unquestionable integrity with an immense knowledge of his profession and a commitment to his country rather than to party politics. He was an example civil servants can look up to at all times.

CARDINAL MINDSZENTY RETURNS HOME

Cardinal József Mindszenty, Prince-Primate of Hungary, died in exile in Vienna on 6 May 1975. He was buried in the St Ladislav Chapel of the votive church at Mariazell, Austria, in accordance with his will, in which he also expressed a wish to rest in Hungarian soil once “the star of atheism over our homeland has fallen”. His mortal remains were brought home and ceremonially reburied on 4 May 1991 in Esztergom in the presence of almost the entire government and that of thousands of pilgrims. This speech was published in the weekly Heti Magyarország (The Week in Hungary).

In the name of the Hungarian people, of Hungarians everywhere in the world, of the President of the Republic of Hungary, of the Hungarian Parliament, and of the Hungarian Government, I bow my head before the ashes of Cardinal József Mindszenty, Prince-Primate and Archbishop of Esztergom. I also meet the wishes of the World Association of Former Hungarian Political Prisoners when I take leave of the Cardinal in their name. At the same time I express my thanks to Rome, to the United States of America and to Austria for giving homes, in his life and death, to József Mindszenty, the Hungarian cardinal condemned to exile inside and outside his homeland.

After fifty years of foreign oppression and dictatorship, Hungary is being reborn through burials, re-burials and remembrances of her dead. This is no accident, for the rebirth of the country is at the same time the remembrance of those who in past decades sacrificed their lives for Hungary's independence, for Hungary's national rebirth.

Prince-Primate Mindszenty has become an historic personality in Hungarian history, who through his activities of sacrifice directed attention to the dangers threatening the entire Central and Eastern European region. Historians may dispute his political stance and his views on constitutional law, yet there is no doubt that he is one of those paragons in Hungarian history that offer the greatest moral strength. As a young priest, he preached that “Sentiment in your heart is not enough for the doing of good; you must also be in command of purposeful strength.” The following lines were written at the time of his investiture as Prince-Primate:

“With his modern methods of organisation and his ironclad modes of implementation, he has become a paragon in faraway regions.

“A tower of strength, this man has a heart of gold within a very warm heart, a heart that can love very much. This is apparent from the book on which he has worked almost all his life, augmenting it from edition to edition, the book whose title and subject is his mother. This book is a veritable anthem to natural and Christian motherhood. It is an anthem written by a son to his mother and to all mothers. When Papal Nuncio Angelo Rotta came to know him as the character, priest and man that he was, he said that in working for the public good József Mindszenty was a soldier with a will of steel, and that in his feeling for the suffering of others he was a priest with a gentle soul.

“Rome came to know him in this light. Let the Hungarian nation and Hungarian history come to know him in the same way.”²⁴⁹

As early as 1943–44, Rome picked out József Mindszenty because it wanted to strengthen the body of bishops with a prelate who, in the period at the end of the war, at a time when a great transformation was expected, would be resolute and steadfast, who would stand up to any totalitarian regime and who would remain loyal in his faith both to his Church and to his country in the most difficult circumstances.

His intransigence, his lack of flexibility may have thwarted the saving of some religious institutions, yet the steadfastness of his character represents eternal ethical values. His intransigence was nurtured not by a narrowness of mind or by an inability to compromise, as his enemies would often say. In the period of the political negotiations following the Second World War, when the question of gaining time and searching for compromises came up, he once said in a private conversation, “In principle this would be correct, but I can undertake to make compromises and concessions only with a firm army behind my back. If I make just one compromise, the opportunism of many of us will be limitless.” He was facing unrelenting enemies, and others who surpassed him in flexibility eventually shared the same fate as he.

Now, when we take leave of József Mindszenty, when the country bids farewell to her great son who now returns to the seat of the ancient archbishopric, petty quibbling must cease at last.

May József Mindszenty’s ashes give strength to Hungary’s transformation and renewal.

²⁴⁹ *Új Ember* (New Man), 30 September 1945 issue. The article, in a Catholic weekly publication, was written by József Antall Sr.

In his major historical work on his personal model, Márton Padányi Bíró, Bishop of Veszprém, Mindszenty wrote the following lines in 1934, lines that apply to him also: “He is ashore now, he has reached safe anchorage... He took in the sails from the turbulent sea of life, a life that was rougher than that of most people. He made mistakes, too, for he worked. It is only the idle that make just one mistake all their lives. He stood the test of harsh winds. His memory lives on among the peaks of eternity, high above the dire waters of mortality. No weeds will overrun the path leading to his memorial, nor will that memorial fear the moss of time. The day will come when, together with his mistakes, his virtues, too, will be recognised, and his memory cherished by posterity with honour and with faith...”



The Prime Minister's mother,
Irén Szűcs



Senior József Antall with tennis parties in the 1930s
(on the right, senior Antall József, in the middle Irén Szűcs)



The wedding,
1952



1987 – in front of the ruins of the church
in Dörgicse



Members of the opposition Round Table in the trilateral discussions



Moments after József Antall was elected party president



At home with friends – György O'sváth, Pál Tarr and György Kiss



First round of the elections, polling booth, March 1990



Surrounded by reporters



Night of the election victory



József Antall and Miklós Németh in Parliament



In Parliament – moments before the change of government



On the way to the Prime Minister's Office
accompanied by Árpád Göncz and György Ósváth



Portrait from 1991



The Antall couple in the garden in the Prime Minister's residence, 1991



23 October 1990 – paying respect in parcel No. 301



With Giulio Andreotti, Italian Prime Minister, in the summer of 1990



With Manfred Wörner, NATO General Secretary, in the summer of 1990



Margaret Thatcher in Budapest – September 1990



The first freely elected Hungarian Prime Minister
with President Senior George Bush in the garden of the White House



With President Senior Bush in the White House in the company of their wives, October 1990



With Ronald Reagan, former US President



CDU congress, Germany



Catherine Lalumière, General Secretary of the European Council, gives a memorial plaque to József Antall



The first Visegrád meeting in February 1991 – Václav Havel, Lech Walesa



Re-burial of József Mindszenty, Primate, May 1991, Esztergom



Speech at the UN General Meeting, 1991



In the cemetery of Oroszi with Endre Marinovich, cabinet chief, in front of the memorial of the ancestry



Termination of the Warsaw Pact – signature of the document



With Akihito, Japanese Emperor



With Franjo Tudjman, Croatian President



With Henry Kissinger, former American Foreign Secretary



Pope John Paul II and the Hungarian Prime Minister



With Jacques Delors, President of the European Union



With Mikhail Gorbachev



With Zbigniew Brzezinski, former National Security Chief Advisor



With Hajim Herzog, Israeli President



With Hosni Mubarak, Egyptian President (1992)



Private discussion with Chancellor Kohl in a coffee bar



With Princess Lady Diana in Parliament



With Boris Yeltsin, President of the Russian Federation
at the signature of the Hungarian-Russian Treaty



With Lubers, Dutch Prime Minister



With Nicolas Sarkozy, French Budget Minister



Reception of Queen Elisabeth II in Parliament



Greeting of Hanna Suchocha, Polish Prime Minister at the EDU conference, September 1993



EDU conference, family photo with José Maria Aznar, Spanish, Jacques Chirac, French and Václav Klaus, Czech politicians



Jacques Chirac, Mayor of Paris in Budapest at the EDU conference



EDU conference, in Budapest, the last meeting with Helmut Kohl



At the opening ceremony of the Formula One race in 1993