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### The Comatose Country

I agree with Churchill: parliamentary democracy at its worst is still a better option than state capitalism or social fascism at its best. At present I feel incomparably freer, and I see the future much brighter, than I did in János Kádár's country: in his Kapo-brothel, the prison that its most wretched inmates have still been hankering after. The long years of oppression killed their souls and destroyed their conscience, abolished their dignity, blurred their judgment and eliminated not only the last traces of their yearning for freedom but also their capacity to defend themselves, just as it happened in the case of a number of victims of Nazi concentration camps who, after having been incarcerated for years, ended up feeling a certain respect for the SS.

This is the Hungarian tragedy. This is Kádárism that would not go away. We are witnessing the pseudo-movements of a pseudo-society. The hatred-banquets of parasites feeding on the unburied corpses. In October and December 2006, we witnessed the failure of a series of political demonstrations, which were organized from above with the purpose of bringing down the government. However, the organizers lost control over the events, which swiftly changed into some kind of a chaotic youth jamboree. Then the whole thing culminated in a very interesting attempt to re-enact the misunderstood and distortedly recorded myth of the 1956 events in the manner of neurotic sleepwalking.

Hungarian society is mentally sick.

This sickness has been caused by a series of traumatic events that Hungarian society has experienced in its modern history. It all began with the outbreak of the First World War and the disintegration of the Monarchy, which then led to the Trianon Peace Treaty and Horthy's dictatorship first, and to the country's German occupation on March 19, 1944 followed by the reign of terror under the rule of Ferenc Szálasi's Arrow Cross Party later. Then came a three-year lull - an "interlude of peace" - until 1948, when the country succumbed to Rákosi's Stalinist tyranny almost without a murmur, which lasted until the outbreak of the glorious yet unsuccessful revolution

and war of independence in 1956. And then, after we had been successfully brainwashed for 33 years under the Kádár regime propped up by Soviet occupation, our cynical acquiescence to the lack of political morals finally became a chronic disease, constituting the unshakably perverted foundation of public morals homing in on absolute zero.

We have, to this day, failed to denounce the morality that developed in the country after the shameful crushing of the 1956 revolution – and then continued to go on for 33 long years that followed afterwards. We have not talked enough, either with each other or within ourselves, about all the damage that Kádárism and its preliminaries had done to us: how the consequences of successive instances of betraying the nation undermined, and are still undermining, the country's national unity, which had emerged in 1956 amidst the nation's glorious sacrifices.

The reason why Hungary is unable to overcome its current state of dividedness, and why the current moral chaos could produce unscrupulous political profiteers, is that during the hundred years of Horthyist-Szálásist-Kádárist connivance we have failed to tear up its roots. This cancer continues to rot and fester, driving the whole country insane. In some cases the symptoms show up in a spectacular fashion, for example on Kossuth Square outside the Parliament, but also inside, underneath the dome.

Mind you, I would not blame this on the voters. The simple folks, who have been defenseless subjects of the caprices of politics and business in the last ninety years, have not had the opportunity, the money, and the time to confront the lies of their Horthyist-Szálásist-Rákosiist-Kádárist existence, nor have they been encouraged to do so by the incredibly shabby political discussions in Parliament. Not to mention the latest lies. Therefore, the blame should be put squarely on the politicians participating in the so-called free political life of our democracy. That is to say, if they aspire to the title of a statesman.

The commotions in October and November 2006 were no acts of revolution; rather, they were political PR stunts that turned into something like runaway gun carriages: experimental pieces of street theater. But the brunt of the blame lies not with the participants. Quiet recently, a young girl in Austria escaped from her captor who had

detained and molested her for years. Well, we, too, have been molested, and not just for years, but for decades. And it is simply not reasonable to expect a freed prisoner to be able to figure out everything by herself: how and why she had been abducted, why she had to be in that cage for all those years, and what she had become through her forced collaboration with her captor. For this reason, I do not pass judgment on anybody. But to those, who can see the whole picture, who know the real causes and motives, who know what happened here, I say this: in the hope of picking up the votes of a few marginal groups, they should not rob an entire nation, which was kept in a dependent state for generations, of the possibility of clarifying its self-knowledge and its relationship with itself. I accuse all the governments that have been in power in Hungary since 1989 with the denial of this possibility. And they were my governments, too, as they came to power in free elections and in a democratic manner.

The reason why József Antall, Gyula Horn and Ferenc Gyurcsány, but above else Viktor Orbán, were able to divide this country, and why the Hungarian Socialist Party (with the assistance of the Alliance of Free Democrats) were able to stay in government this long, was that none of these governments denounced the pack of viscous lies that the various dictatorships (Horthyism, Rákosiism, Kádárism) had forced down people's throat in this country. They failed to present the naked historical facts and their terrible consequences to the public. They failed to start a dialogue about the increasingly worrying and fearsome symptoms of this national tragedy, not to mention the prospects of some kind of a remedy – developed in a consensual manner. On the contrary: the parties of both the left and the right only added new entries to a century-old catalogue of lies.

Hungarian society in the past seventeen years has not been allowed to discover its past drenched in the manure of dictatorships: the citizens of Hungary have been kept in the dark about the preliminaries that led up to their present circumstances. The parties and governments have been unable to unite the country by offering them constructive tasks that could mobilize the entire society. Quiet the opposite has happened. Out on a limb to sign up new clients and buddies, the parties have become the lobbyists of various industrialists and have, in general, been engaging in dubious

deals that smell like corruption, just as their Horthyist, Rákosiist and Kádárist predecessors had been doing.

There is nothing new under the sun, nothing new.

On top of that, the accumulated and suppressed rage of our humanity defiled by a thousand different ways of corruption under the Kádár regime has now been used by certain political elements to fuel their campfire, on which to grill the funny-tasting steaks of their careers. They are dripping the fat on the bread of the country... This was what happened in October and November this year.

Who should do what to put an end to this?

In the HSP's case, the political generation playing an active role under the Kádár regime should give way to the younger generation, continuously and without stopping. As for the Alliance of Free Democrats, they should return to their roots and inform the public of the deals, all of them anti-constitutional and unsupervised by the relevant legal bodies, which go on all the time in the background, both in the economical sphere and in politics. In daily practice, the political independence of the courts, the central bank and the Constitutional Court has been questioned by the public, while the media has become increasingly partisan. And they have the nerve to deny it.

Democracy should be reconstructed from scratch, which means that the theoretical frameworks should be filled with real content. The precondition of that, however, is to have political consensus about rational compromises for social peace, about national unity and willingness to make sacrifices. National unity could result from starting to organize a nationwide public dialogue, a series of peace discussions, in a more or less analogous fashion to the way in which similar discussion were held in West Germany after the years of Nazism. After the decades of Kádárism-Horthyism, it would be in our vital interest to conduct such a nationwide debate.

I would suggest that when we eventually get around holding this reassessment of our historical past, which we can no longer postpone, then we should go back not just to

1956, but to March 19, 1944. Beginning with Hungary's German occupation, an avalanche of monstrosities swept through the country, in the course of which all the social groups suffered serious injustices, whether they were poor or rich, proletarians or aristocrats, Jews or Christians. The appropriate treatment for such a series of cataclysms is not revengeful accusations against one another, but a confession. On all sides.

Lying in the face of the whole of society and betraying our principles or faiths on a daily basis in the hope of survival or success can, in today's Hungary, continue to be a more or less successful political strategy right until the moment that we manage to throw off the moral heritage of Kádárism. I trace the origin of the mess that we currently find ourselves in to our failure to radically break with our past spent in long servitude, which elevated the ethics of oppression to a tradition. This is the only explanation I can offer for the fact that neither the coalition of HSP-Alliance of Free Democrats nor the voters supporting the right-wing parties set any kind of ethical criteria for their respective leaders. Each side are dreading the possibility of the other side's managing to get into, or cling on to, power that they practically have no moral expectation whatsoever in connection with the best known politicians on both sides. What was János Kádár's most earnest wish, if it was not this? He wanted the politically active masses to start out from moral nihilism. Well, that is exactly where we now stand.

Our chance for a brighter future will come, when a focused and EU-aware new generation appears on the political scene, both on right and on left, whose members will be willing to fight the evils of Kádárism, Horthyism and Szélasism, or in general terms, the destructive idea of the cult of leaders. And perhaps under the aegis of this *environment-friendly* fight, which is waged for the eradication of the above-mentioned political insanity, they will be able to create a national unity of social solidarity with biblical purity, based on the traditions of October 1956. I put faith in the sensible aspirations of today's twenties generation: their professional qualifications obtained at western universities and their overall commitment to the principles of politically correct behavior may hold out some hope. The chances are that until such a generational and conceptual change is effected, our country will continue to sink deeper and deeper in decay.

I hope against hope that we are rapidly approaching the tipping point.

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