



László Rajk, Martin M. Simecka

Dilemma '89: "My father was a communist"

The Slovak author and journalist Martin M. Simecka and Hungarian architect and former samizdat publisher László Rajk are not only former dissidents of the younger generation, but also the sons of well-known persecuted communists. László Rajk sr. was the most prominent victim of the Rákosi show trials of 1949; the writer Milan Simecka sr. began his career in the Czechoslovak Communist Party and became a dissident after 1968. In the first debate in the Eurozine series "Europe talks to Europe", held in Budapest, they discussed the still unanswered questions surrounding the involvement of their fathers' generation in post-war communism, and the failings of today's debate about the past in the former communist countries. Moderated by Éva Karádi, editor of *Magyar Lettre Internationale*.

Éva Karádi: There is an interesting common feature in both your biographies that has provided us with the title of our conversation: "Dilemma '89: My father was a communist". Martin Simecka, how well do you know the circumstances in which your father became a communist?

Martin Simecka: I know them very well because I spoke to him about it all. After my father was expelled from the party in '68 he became a dissident, and so he had time to reflect on his past. He became a member of the party as early as '48, as an eighteen "year-old. His personal motivation was very typical for the younger generation in Czechoslovakia in the early 1950s. The Czechoslovak First Republic was extremely leftwing: there was a strong social democratic party, a communist party and powerful leftwing intellectual movements. Many members of the intellectual elite — the writers and artists — were either communist or very leftist; it wasn't *unusual* to be intellectual and leftist, or even communist. In this respect, Czechoslovakia was different to Hungary or Poland. In the '48 elections the communist party won about 60 per cent in the Czech Republic and about 30 per cent in Slovakia, which was still a lot.

There were two profound reasons behind being a communist. One was the very common feeling that the Red Army had liberated Czechoslovakia at the end of the Second World War, and that it was the Russians who had brought liberty. The second was that Edvard Benes, who was president from late '38 and then in exile in London, himself supported the idea that the Soviet Union is our friend, after Great Britain and others had betrayed Czechoslovakia with the Munich Agreement in '38.

My father's mother was killed by an American bomb and his father died before the War, so he was an orphan. The state took care of him, gave him a grant to attend university. "Look," he told me, "I thought the communists were good people because they helped me." That was a personal reason, perhaps the main reason, for him joining the Party, alongside the typical conviction of

Czechoslovakian intellectuals. He was from a social democratic family, not communist but social democratic. That was the classical step towards joining the party in '48.

So I know very well how and why he joined the party. However I *don't* know very much about the 1950s, when he was already a member of the party. He wasn't high up, but nor was he just an ordinary member: he was at the university. There's a gap here where I'm not sure what happened, because I didn't ask him much. I now regret that.

EK: László Rajk, your father became a communist earlier: he participated in the Spanish Civil War in the late 1930s. Were there other arguments for becoming a communist at that time?

László Rajk: My father would have been exactly one hundred years old this week. You could say that in terms of generations, my father was the one who took care of Martin's. My father was very active in colleges and education for young people, which was a common idea in different communist parties. But naturally the story starts much earlier and is almost the mirror of Czechoslovakia. In Hungary, Social Democrats were only semi-free. It was an official party but was not favoured, as it was in Czechoslovakia. Anyone who subscribed to any kind of leftist idea, especially communism, had to be prepared to be arrested, imprisoned or even tortured. In Hungary it was not a career choice.

It is also important to remember that while the birth of Czechoslovakia provided an impetus for the nations of Czechoslovakia, for Hungary the Treaty of Versailles was an absolute shock. Hungary lost two thirds of its territory and two thirds of its population to the former Yugoslavia, Romania, Slovakia and Austria, and to a lesser extent Slovenia and Croatia. My father was born before the First World War, in other words before the Treaty of Versailles, in Romanian Hungary, in Transylvania. That was a very different start in life. It now seems that people who came to Hungary from Transylvania before the Versailles Treaty were drifting towards nationalism, towards a kind of social consciousness on a national basis, whereas those who came over after the Versailles Treaty, in the 1920s, were drifting towards a leftist ideology, again because of a social consciousness. Very little research has been done on this, but it seems to be a phenomenon that holds true for my family. My father's elder brother became a fascist, and not only that, an Arrow Cross member. This was at the time that my father was fighting in the Spanish Civil War, in the International Brigades. So it is a typical eastern European family. From university onwards, my father was connected to, and actually a member of, the communist party.

EK: Where did he study?

LR: Again, this is a typical Transylvanian family story. There were eleven siblings (eight brothers and three sisters). In the traditional Transylvanian family, the eldest brother comes over to Hungary, never marries, stays a bachelor and pays for the younger brothers to come over. The eldest brother died and the next one took over, so in fact it was the Arrow Cross brother who paid for my father's studies! He went to university, then to Paris, then back. He became a typical cosmopolitan communist, a professional revolutionary. He was well known internationally, especially after the end of the Second World War and the liberation. My father immediately became a VIP within the nomenklatura. He was a real communist hero, one of the very few Hungarians

who actively resisted the German invasion and Hitlerism. Immediately after the War one could see not so much a dividing line within the communist party, but a line of composition. On the one side were the communists who had returned from Moscow, the Muscovites, and on the other the very few who had been active at home and risking a lot. Let's call them the national wing of the communist party.

EK: And also some with western background?



LR: Yes, that's right, some with western backgrounds as youngsters. The two types were deeply different, even their personalities and their attitudes were different. Also, as an artist I have to tell you that my father really was a very handsome man: tall, with a deep voice, with beautiful spoken Hungarian, that special Hungarian from Transylvania. He was the real stuff of the communist party. And there was a lack of "stuff" at the time. He was *the* most popular person in the communist party. And then came the enigma, the show trial in 1949. It was the first show trial in the Soviet bloc. Then came the Slánský trial a year later, then the Kostov trial in Sofia, the trials in Romania, everywhere... To cut a long story short, it started with the usual paranoia of the Muscovites, about spies and the Cold War and so on, and ended up in the second half of '49 as a very simple but dirty power game against Tito, with my father being hanged as a spy for Tito.

EK: You both have the same name as your father. In your case, László, it had a special meaning during the dissident period, when you were a samizdat publisher. János Kádár, who had a particular role in the liquidation of your father, was quoted as saying that the only reason you could oppose the system openly was that he wasn't prepared to arrest someone with the same name twice. But I know that you, Martin, also share the same name as your father. You are actually called Milan. This must mean something.

MS: No, it was actually very prosaic. My mother decided that I should be called Milan, after my father. Then, when I began to write in the early 1980s, my father said that it sounded pretty stupid to be called Milan Simecka Jr. and that I should come up with something else. My girlfriend at the time, now my wife, is called Marta. So that was it, very prosaic, it had nothing to do with politics.

EK: Could you tell us something about your relationship with your father. Young men usually fight with their fathers and go other ways.



MS: My father was also tall, very handsome, very charming and popular. He died in 1990 of a heart attack, after the revolution, by which time he was an advisor for Vaclav Havel. When I was 14, my father was expelled from the party. He lost his job at the university and became a dissident. Because of my father, I was banned from studying at grammar school and university. There was no chance; I was just not allowed to study at all. We had long talks about who was guilty for the fact that I couldn't study. My father tried to explain, but he didn't need to try very much. It was clear that it wasn't my father's fault but the system's. The communists told my father that if he would just stop writing or stop talking, if he at least changed his mind...

EK: They were blackmailing you...

MS: They even said to me that if I announced that I didn't share my father's opinions — I didn't even need to do it openly or publicly — then I could study. As children we knew that this blackmailing was going on. In a case like that you *can't* fight with your father much because there is such a common experience, such pressure from outside. On the other hand I was lucky, because my father did feel guilty that his child couldn't study. So he took me to the meetings of the group of Czech and Slovakian intellectuals and writers who in the late '70s had formed around people like Ludvík Vaculík, Ivan Klíma, Vaclav Havel. There were about twenty writers, all of whom were banned but published abroad. I was the youngest, 22 years old, in this circle of writers whom I loved. I later became a member. We had meetings every few months, debating all day and publishing samizdat. It was my private university, much better than any communist school.

However there's another story. Almost all of these writers and intellectuals except Vaclav Havel and Karel Pecka were former communists who had become dissidents after '68. So there were huge debates about the past. It wasn't easy. There were people like Karel Pecka and Zdenek Rotrekl who had both spent ten years in prison in the 1950s. After '68 they became colleagues and friends with people who were actually in power in the 1950s — or at least people who were leading intellectuals at the time, a younger generation that didn't know or even *think* that there were dissidents in prison then. So there were some hard discussions, where these older prisoners debated with the new prisoners — in 1981 my father was in prison for one year, Vaclav Havel was in prison for five years — about who was guilty and who bore greater responsibility. It was pretty hard. There were some who tried to defend themselves, who argued that they didn't know and that they were young, that they meant well and that it was just the time. My father never said that. He tried to understand, maybe not apologize, but to understand and explain. But still...

When I return to that time and remember those debates, my conclusion is that friendships were in a way *too* close. You can't tell your friend that *he* is responsible for your imprisonment. I had to live another twenty years to understand that I did not understand very well what was going on in the 1950s; that I had false impressions of that time. Even of my father. He explained how it was during the Slánský trial in '52. He was 22 at the time and listened to the trial on the radio. "I wondered what was going on," he told me, "but I didn't realize that it wasn't true. I believed that what was on the radio was true." He first started to have doubts in about '53, when Khrushchev held his "secret speech" after Stalin's death, and after the death of Gottwald in Czechoslovakia. That's when the first doubts started appearing. But until then... no.

LR: At the same time I experienced several... not metamorphoses, but auto-da-fés of communism. The first was after the rehabilitation of my father from '53. Other communists visited my mother and confessed that they believed he had been betrayed. The next wave was after '56, when people came out of prison, and when my mother and other people returned to Hungary having been deported to Romania. That was in '58. Another auto-da-fé occurred in '60 when people started to say that, yes, those people who fought in the streets against the Stalinist regime in '56 were right and we were wrong. Then again after '68 in Prague, when communists became disillusioned and admitted that things couldn't go on as they were. So my life was a kind of pilgrimage from one auto-da-fé to another.

Later I realized that people in the leftist or quasi-communist hemisphere had a really tough time. Starting with the Spanish Civil War, when the leftist French government withdrew the International Brigades from Spain and arrested people who had been fighting for the Republic at the French border. But I think the major shock was the Molotov–Ribbentrop pact. For a communist this must have been an utter shock. To remain a communist in such circumstances must have been very, very difficult. Not only to remain a communist, but to believe and convince yourself that the Molotov–Ribbentrop pact was a good thing. So at the same time as all these auto-da-fés, these people had a habit of convincing themselves that they were wrong as individuals, that *the others* were right and that *they* were wrong. This is certainly the road to complete disaster and frustration.

Another important thing to know is that in my family, and in a lot of families around mine, imprisonment brought with it a kind of status. Those who were imprisoned during the Horthy period before the War, and then during the Stalin period, were the really high-ranking ones; they really showed morality. Those who were imprisoned after '56 and received sentences of only 10 months were called small-timers; they were the low-ranking heroes. In Hungarian families, prison of course meant something bad, but it wasn't something to be ashamed of. On the contrary: it showed that one's family was really good. This distortion of morality is a very important phenomenon in human life. When democracy arrives, it's very hard to adjust back. To start believing that one should be ashamed of having been in prison. I would say that this partially destroyed my soul, my way of thinking.

MS: In Czechoslovakia after '68, many young intellectuals were in prison or had been punished in some other way. And as you say, this is a source of enormous satisfaction. But I think it creates another even greater problem, because it becomes much more difficult to ask questions. This was also the case with my father. I felt sorry for him: he came home from prison very ill, and died as a result of that illness. It was difficult to say to him, "Well, yes, you were in prison, you were a dissident, but still, how *was* communism in the 1950s? After all, you were a high-ranking party member, you belonged to a special class." After '68, many who belonged to this generation felt they had suffered enough. The dissidents around Vaclav Havel — he was the exception in that he had not been a communist — enjoyed great credibility and became a powerful voice in society. But precisely because they *were* dissidents who had been fighting against communism after '68, their past was almost forgotten.

In a debate of the past there is no place for morals. It's not about apologizing, it's about knowing the truth. It is difficult to talk about the 1950s and the communist past with former communists, because many have suffered enough. They don't feel a responsibility to tell the truth. Somehow they think that they have the right to be silent, or to explain that they are good people, or used to be, just sometimes in the wrong way. I have a problem now that I didn't have with my father until '89. But then he died. If my father were alive I would ask him what it was really like when he was a young communist in the 1950s. Was he responsible for students who were expelled from university? What really happened when he was a member of the Party? Did he vote for something, perhaps not the death penalty, but something that destroyed other people's lives? How was it? I have to say that I don't know.

My father taught philosophy at the Art School in the late 1960s. Students of his, who are now famous artists in Slovakia, have told me that my father pressed them to join the party and that they refused. It wasn't pleasant to hear

that. It was a picture of my father that I didn't know. It's very rare that former communists, especially in Czechoslovakia, talk honestly about the past. Pavel Kohout has written a huge memoir that's mostly about apologizing or explaining how stupid he was. But there's nothing much about the real impact he had on other people's lives as a young and fairly high-ranking communist. Ivan Klimá's memoir is the first book I have read that is really honest about the past.

LR: What you're describing is a fascinating phenomenon, which exists beyond our little post-Soviet island. I mean waving the Little Red Book and so on. It seems to me that there's a reluctance to face the immediate past that brushes over almost everything: stupidity, cruelty, awfulness. It is a general European phenomenon. I never heard, for example, Daniel Cohn-Bendit saying, "I was a bastard, a stupid, narrow-minded, short-sighted idiot." In fact he says the opposite.

This is becoming a generational problem. I would say that your father's generation and the '68 generation in the West overlap. One could argue that in eastern Europe we didn't have the generation that posed the famous question to their parents about their role in the Third Reich. We don't really hear these questions from our own children, and probably that's the problem. There is no catalyst for us to face the past. In any case this isn't only a socialist problem — it's a European problem.

MS: The one big difference between Cohn-Bendit and my father is that Cohn-Bendit did no harm to anybody because he never had the chance. That's the difference between communists in eastern Europe and communists in western Europe. In the West, of course it's disgusting, but it's not about being guilty or responsible, but just about your own stupidity. The debate in Europe is still not clear. This bias towards communism still exists. At a Eurozine conference in Vilnius in May 2009, Timothy Snyder gave an amazing lecture comparing Communism and Nazism. Some steps are slowly being taken at the political level, for example the OSCE resolution in July 2009. In western Europe, it would have been impossible ten years ago to put Communism and Nazism on the same level. Now that is slowly happening. It is not about judgment, but about the responsibility of the generation that still has some memory of the period to explain how it was. Especially the 1950s. We can talk about Kádárism or how it was after '68, but it's nothing compared to Stalinism, although the roots are the same. One can only discover the real substance of communism through Stalinism, and not through Kádárism or the normalization of Czechoslovakia, not even Poland in the 1980s.

I miss that. Even though a discussion might now have started in the Czech Republic, especially after the Kundera affair, which, when we published it in *Respekt*, had an enormous impact and sparked off discussions about the 1950s.

But there is another problem. Since '89 I have spent almost my entire life surrounded by former communists, who are always charming and nice people. My wife Marta comes from a communist family: her father was editor-in-chief of the communist paper in the 1950s and in Moscow during the Second World War. We are all from these communist families. Our families were victims of the *other* communists, the *bad* communists. Even today I have a problem saying that I am anti-communist. I don't like the word. I had a huge quarrel with Adam Michnik about the Kundera affair, and he told me: "What's happened to you that you now belong to the anti-communists, that's the worst thing in the world." So it's still there, this leftwing intellectual

mafia in Europe, if I can put it like that. There is a deep link, not only of shared experience, but a view of the world, the commitment to social equality and freedom, which of course many communists had at the beginning. It is time to debate the issue from a new perspective, especially now when the Left in Europe is starving from a lack of ideas and no longer defends freedom.

EK: I remember shortly after '89 there was a big conference in Paris about what was going to happen to the Left in the East. Whether the dissidents who did so much to change the system were on the Left or on the Right. We are still occupied with these problems. Now we are also facing the far-Right. The question is: what system are you opposing? During the dissident period there were leftists, or '68ers in the West, who had a similar attitude, nice people you could talk to. But now their children — your children — have grown up, and they have lots of problems with this brave new world. Some sympathize with Marxism and leftist radical movements. What about the dilemma of '89 from this point of view. Have the aspirations of the dissidents been realized, or have they also made some mistakes? What are we to make of Left and Right today?

LR: There are two fundamental elements in the political changes that are rooted in the past and which none of the post-communist countries have been able to handle. These are privatization and the nomenklatura. Each country has tried a different method of privatization or semi-privatization and none have been successful. None. I wouldn't say all of them were unsuccessful, but I would say that none were successful. I wouldn't leave this element out when talking about the nomenklatura and how they survived, how they parachuted themselves into the new era. These are two key questions that influence contemporary political life and will continue to do so in the future. The lustration law in the Czech Republic or the non-lustration law in Hungary, the opening of the archives in Germany or the late opening of the archives in Slovakia: all these are political issues today. None of these countries were able to draw a line under the past and say "now we are starting something new". The past is constantly being used by campaigners and politicians, negatively or positively, it doesn't matter. It is ridiculous that this is happening twenty years after the changes. After all, '68 in Czechoslovakia was a little over ten years after '56 in Hungary. Two decades is a long time.

We are still digging into these things. I don't have an answer. I just know that these are two fundamental issues. Hopefully the response of the new generation will be not to question us, but to say "OK, you go and stand in the corner and talk about the past, we'll deal with the present."

MS: I think they *will* ask, but it won't be very pleasant to answer. How could we create such a mess after '89?

Firstly, the dissidents weren't prepared for the change because they had so many of their own problems finding ways to survive under communism. They were more obsessed with their own soul than with the regime. Of course this was important for the human rights agenda, which proved crucial in '89, but now this agenda has collapsed. In Hungary, the dissidents might have thought more politically, or more deeply, but in Czechoslovakia I remember very well that although there were many debates, little thought was given to questions of how to rule the state or how to change the economy, how to change the system. Most of the debate was about how to *resist* the current system and not how to create a new one. So when '89 came we were just not prepared.

Secondly, there is the question of political orientation. When we started creating a party from the revolutionary movement in Bratislava, we didn't have a debate about whether we were on the right or on the left. We did tests — you know those tests — and according to all of them we were on the left. But we had to decide to be on the right, because to be on the left was stupid. You had to privatize, you had to transform the system, you had to distance yourself from the communist party. It was very difficult to be a rightwing politician and at the same time internally be on the left. Many former dissidents have since changed their minds completely. For example, my friend Milan Uhde became a *very* rightwing politician and chairman of parliament in the Czech Republic. Others became very left, like Petr Uhl. Many were somewhere in the middle, but everybody had some problem. I don't think we can make the dissident movement entirely responsible for today's regime. Their influence in Europe weakened very fast, until you almost didn't see any former dissidents in politics except some exceptions like Havel.

Talking of lustration and the confrontation with the past, I still think that the Czech route — first the lustration and then the opening of the files — was the best one. Poland didn't do this at the beginning of the 1990s and nor did Hungary — that's why it's a political issue now. In the Czech Republic, lustration isn't a political issue anymore because all politicians have been lustrated. You can go into the files and you know all about their past — unless they worked for the KGB, that is, since we have no files from Moscow. In Poland it began to get political about five years ago when they started opening the files. In Hungary the real political issue has yet to come — if the files have not been completely destroyed, that is. So in my experience, the sooner the better. It is also especially good for former dissidents, because it ceases to become their issue: they don't need to point out who the bad guys are because everybody knows. They no longer need to fight, it's up to the public.

Adam Michnik says that if you open the files it will mean a mess. He thinks that they should be locked up for half a century until everyone is dead. Another of his arguments is that these are *their* files, created by the communists, the secret police. Do we really want those to form the basis of our history? This is a strong argument rhetorically, but the fact is that generally the files were not falsified: you can trust them 99 per cent. Another thing is that the situation in Poland was quite different from that in Czechoslovakia, because the Polish secret police infiltrated a huge part of *Solidarnosc* in preparation for the change. I suspect that that in many cases files could have been falsified in anticipation of the change. This is not the case in Czechoslovakia, because up until the very last moment the Czechoslovak secret services were completely convinced that the regime would survive another twenty years. Michnik feared that there were a lot of cases that could have been devastating for the image of *Solidarnosc*, with so many heroes later revealed to have been agents.

EK: Perhaps it provides an opportunity to concentrate on what politicians are doing now as opposed to thinking about things they did forty years ago.

MS: It depends on the social atmosphere. In the Czech Republic no politician can survive if he used to be an agent of the secret police, except in today's communist party. But in Slovakia they can. It differs from society to society.

Question from the audience: Why did the majority of people not respond to the dissidents? Why did they not respond to Charter 77? You said that your father was expelled from the party and so became a dissident. The historian Zbynek Zeman has said that he feels that many of the '68ers became dissidents

not because they stood for something, but because they were purged. Therefore it was very hard for them to define themselves as dissidents. How do we define dissent if it is not a question of standing up for a particular view?

MS: The years immediately after '68 were crucial for the whole of Czechoslovak society. Half a million members of the Czechoslovak communist party had to go through screenings. There was a quite sophisticated system where everybody was asked about their attitude to the Soviet "help" in '68. It was a crucial existential moment. Many people said, "Well I didn't really understand the occupation and the circumstances, but yes, I think it was help." Everybody was made to lie. The crucial question was whether or not you lied. If you did you were "theirs". You might be expelled from the party but you kept your job and your children stayed at school. Sometimes it was enough if you just stayed silent. But those who decided to say that it was an occupation, that they were against it and still were — those people knew very well that they had made a life-altering decision. Those who later became dissidents had already decided at that moment. On one hand one can say that they were pushed into the new existential situation, after which they began to question themselves about their own communist past. My father was an expert on that, he had long hours of discussion and wrote a book about it. How could we have failed in the 1950s, how could we have become communist? He saw this failure as an existential problem of the world and society. These people were not pushed at that moment in '69 and '70, they decided.

Of course there were hundreds who, because of their involvement in '68, had no chance at all. My father told me at that time that even if he had lied he wouldn't have had a chance. But hundreds of thousands had that chance and they used it. They survived... and they became cynical. That is why they didn't take part in Charter 77. For them, it would have been against their decision in '69 and '70 to take part in Charter 77. At that time Czechoslovakia wasn't so bad for many people, they had their jobs, they had their children, everybody was cynical, nobody *believed* in the system. The dissidents were sometimes unbearably honest. It's hard sometimes to share ideas with people who are prepared to go to prison — you can't follow them, they are too exceptional. Society in general was too cynical. In '89 it was different. It was a time of change. For many people it was much easier at that time to sign the petitions and to come to the square and to belong to the majority.

LR: A very good, very successful Hungarian painter admitted in '91 or '92 that he wouldn't have become a dissident had he had the chance to exhibit. It seemed he was pushed by the regime to become a dissident. But then I asked him whether it was the nature of the regime that it did not accept progressive painters. Whether the nature of the regime, instead of cradling new talent and giving him the chance to exhibit and make a career, was instead to push a talented young painter to become a dissident. Yes, this was the nature of the regime. Many people didn't become dissidents voluntarily but were pushed. But that is the very nature of dictatorships.

MS: The more I learn about Hungary and Poland and about the past, the more I see how deep the difference was. These decisive moments, even the character of dissent. I didn't sign the Charter, for one reason that was for me crucial. Charter 77 tried to communicate with the regime. They pointed to the Helsinki Pact and talked about human rights, holding the regime to its agreements at the European level. Charter 77 was in favour of legitimizing the regime. For my generation, the regime was something external. I lived a completely different life — the regime was just an evil that I had to live with, but had nothing to

say to. That was the difference between my father and myself. I belonged to another generation. They wanted to change the regime because they were used to changing the regime in the 1960s. I never wanted to change the regime because I never thought about it as something that I would be *able* to change. The only thing that I cared about was my own freedom and how I could survive... how I could live on an island of freedom. My father's generation wanted to change it not so much because they still felt it was their own, but more because political engagement leaves such a mark on your thinking.

Carl Henrik Fredriksson: You said there is no place for morality when it comes to dealing with the past — it's not about saying "I was young and stupid". So it seems that in your opinion it's about the facts rather than reconciliation. But what would that achieve? Is there a purpose in that? Or is it just about the truth — full stop?

MS: No, otherwise I wouldn't care so much. I think that the younger generation — my son for instance, who is 25 — has no chance of understanding history. The 1950s were exceptional, communism and Nazism were exceptional regimes. It's still important to talk about the past, about personal experience, about how it was in detail, and not only to rely on archives. I think that it's the responsibility of those writers and intellectuals who are still alive to talk about the past openly, as Ivan Klíma has done. Through their experience you can understand what it means to lose your freedom. That danger still exists. You can lose your freedom every day. I believe that the younger generation is not aware of the dangers. It is not systematic, it is perhaps not about life and death, but it can be. So what I am calling for is to give the younger generation at least the chance to understand the past and to prevent them from making the same mistakes.

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