

Yesterday at the University of Tartu auditorium, President Toomas Hendrik Ilves and Professor Norman Davies, Professor of History at Oxford University, held a public debate on the interpretation of history within the framework of the "President's Clamorings".

According to President Ilves, history is not just an abstract phenomenon, but its interpretation affects the politics and relations of countries even today. "Estonian people are worried because our harsh history is not well-known," the Head of State said. "However, what is actually important is that by restating history the interpretations are also used as foreign policy tools," he pointed out.

According to Professor Davies, European social memory is problematic, "Every country recollects World War II in its own way, trying to forget the terrible crimes that the country has committed. This is understandable." Davies said. "However, for some reason, the countries that are not directly guilty of anything also want to deny or forget crimes." Davies added that this sometimes results in an unwillingness to criticize the Soviet Union.

Speaking about the European Union, both Ilves and Davies stated that, in addition to all the other benefits, the Community is especially suitable for small countries. "The European Union provides a forum where small countries have a better chance of survival and having their say than in previous times," Davies said.

However, President Ilves and Professor Davies recognized that the European Union's development is dominated by national governments who have their own interests—if we look at the current financial crisis, they do not have a common mechanism to solve a common problem.

The "President's Clamorings" day of debates was organized by the President's Academic Advisory Board in cooperation with the University of Tartu. The video recording is available on the Internet at: video.ut.ee .

During the first half of the day, Janar Holm, the Secretary General of the Ministry of Education and Research and textile artist Irina Gross gave presentations. This was followed by a discussion by Jaan Tallinn, Mart Ustav, Pille Kaisal and Ilmar Raag about their schooldays,

which Minister of Education Tõnis Lukas also participated in. The debate between President Ilves and Professor Davies was moderated by historian and diplomat Margus Laidre.

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