

Dear friends!

We have gathered here today to commemorate two events that have shaped the destiny of the people of Estonia. One of those took place in Moscow, 68 years ago, and the other here in Hirve Park, 20 years ago. The first of them, the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, swept our country and – almost – our people from the face of the earth. With the second one, the restoration of our statehood was started.

The MRP and everything related thereto probably offers a clearer exposure of the nature of totalitarianism than any other isolated case. Two criminal gangs came together and divided others' property between themselves. After which, well aware that their actions lacked every legitimacy, they pronounced it all confidential.

Why the confidentiality, why the secrecy? For the very reason that their actions had been deliberately improper, deliberately unfair, wrong from the beginning, and were therefore to be covered up. This is the eternal problem of victories achieved by force and falsity, by cheating and terror. You cannot be among the righteous if your means of getting there have been unlawful.

This is true about all dirty deals, all dirty actions. Including everything that the CPSU and the Soviet power apparatus did in Estonia between 1940 and 1991. *Ex iniuria non oritur ius*. No justice is born of injustice.

Hence the fear of exposure, fear of secrets revealed. The fear that still in the 1980s compelled them to imprison people who spoke the truth about that old dirty deal. The Soviet power knew all too well that what is acquired by injustice will remain illegitimate forever, however they might try to justify themselves.

Dear friends.

We are here also for another reason. This is where Estonia's return to freedom and the world of justice and lawfulness began. The process against which the total lawlessness of the Soviet Union failed to hold was started right here. And therefore it is baffling to read even today that the brave people who gathered here 20 years ago were some few dissidents of no consequence; that the actual events took place elsewhere. I fail to understand. When those who tell the truth are dissidents, then who are those living in lies?

If we look 20, 19, 18 years back in time, we can see that it is here our liberation began. This is where it was first said – the empire is naked. And after you, also others began to say that the naked empire was false and – on the whole – criminal.

Yet today I would like to talk about what is to come. Even in this day and age, we can see attempts to belittle everything that Estonia and other nations had to endure under the communist regime.

It would not disturb me that much if it were belittled by neutral bystanders. We could argue with them. But why are the former CPSU members, including former party leaders, constantly justifying or belittling the sufferings that the communists have caused to others? This is beyond me.

For us, this day will ever mean the same: Communism is equal to Nazism, the hammer and sickle are a match to Hitler's swastika. This is our challenge to ourselves, living here, in the territory of the division of the spoils of two totalitarian systems.

A great poet of the 20th century, the Nobel award laureate Yosif Brodsky, who was also persecuted by communists, has written in an essay: "In a one-party system, joining the party presumes in any case a falsity above average." I would not be that categorical. But I do believe that when certain subjects are discussed, the former communist party members should be aware of a moral dilemma.

In Germany, where the population at the time was 70 million, nearly 8 million were members of the NSDAP. This is all in all a larger percentage than that of Estonians in the Estonian Communist Party. But can we imagine a former Nazi, in democratic Germany, dictating to a child whose parents have suffered in a concentration camp, how he is supposed to describe their sufferings? No, we can't.

Can we imagine a former member of the NSDAP venturing that in fact, many people survived the Holocaust? Or an ex-Nazi offering an excuse that, had he not joined the NSDAP, Hitler's evils would have been much greater?

This is our dilemma. The people who gathered in Hirve Park wanted to restore our place in the Western cultural space – together with the freedom of speech that it is based on. None of us wants to live in a state where limits are set on free speech, on expressing and spreading one's opinions. This is why we are not silencing anyone, forbidding no one to tell their truth.

Yet ethics must not be forgotten. Those justifying themselves must not abuse the Estonians' gentleness of mind, our wish to forget the atrocities and move on. Rather – to paraphrase Jacques Chirac – they could take the chance to be silent. But no – they are still prodding, burrowing, looking for excuses. They are surprised when the victims, their family and relations take offence. Or annoyed if the prodding produces a response.

Ladies and gentlemen.

The events of recent years have convinced me that Estonia – as well as other countries that have been subject to crimes against humanity – needs a monument to the victims. A recent sociological study indicated that more than 60 per cent of Estonians have been affected by those crimes. Thus, those whose families have not been repressed are a minority.

If such a considerable part of our citizens have suffered under Communism, we simply cannot let this be forgotten, we must not let it be belittled. I invite everyone here, and elsewhere in Estonia, to consider how we could commemorate those hundred thousands of Estonian

citizens, who fell victim to the criminal activities of communists, in a most reverent and imposing way. I say citizens, because – as we should know – also Estonian citizens of non-Estonian and Russian nationality were among those hated most by the Soviet Union.

Our response to those who deny and belittle the crimes committed in the past is positive: a worthy memorial to the innocent victims of the murderous regimes of the 20th century.

Thank you.