
Interview: Istvan Csurka



If we paid only half our debt, we could feed Hungary

Istvan Csurka is a leading political figure in Hungary and was a co-founder and former vice chairman of the ruling Hungarian Democratic Forum party (MDF). He has been an outspoken opponent of International Monetary Fund policies. He was interviewed in Los Angeles on Nov. 27 by David Kilber. Lorant Szasz translated the interview from Hungarian.

EIR: How do you see the political situation in Hungary at this time with elections coming soon, and what do you think will be the results of the election?

Csurka: The main problem is the disarray. Nobody knows what's going on. Although it seems from the outside that everything is okay, if you go behind the scenes, the problems are there and everybody knows it. The uncertainty of Hungarian life is that the players are there but not in their own face. What they show is different than what they are playing.

The government appears to be nationalistic, but it's not true. Although I was the co-founder of the ruling party (MDF) which won in the first election in 1990, the ruling party is not democratic. They are playing that they are democratic and nationalistic, but they are not. The so-called opposition, the SzDSz, is not democratic either, but they are making a show of being democratic. They are representing the old guard of the communists. They call themselves the Free Democratic Party.

There are certain other parties which are really the followers of the old communist regime. These are not equated with the SzDSz, the Free Democrats, but really are the followers of the old regime. They are conducting campaigns and are very dangerous.

EIR: What do you think the results of the election will be?

Csurka: I don't know. The mandate of the government and the Parliament will expire on May 2. Until then they don't have to call for new elections. Mr. Antall, our prime minister, is very sick. If Antall dies, then the elections could be earlier. [Jozsef Antall died on Dec. 12, after this interview took place—ed.]

Nothing is decided. You know the European situation in Bosnia and so forth. Because nothing is decided, it is

dangerous politically for everybody. What you mentioned about Russia, Lithuania, and the Bosnia situation makes everybody nervous and makes everybody wonder what will happen. I cannot say when the elections will be.

The most dangerous problem is the pessimism of the population, which was brainwashed for the last 40 years. They probably don't even want to vote.

Another big problem is that the media is not free. Roughly 90% of the media is still in the hands of the old regime and the liberals. The new liberals coming from the West have a lot of control. Because of that it is very difficult to say who would win the election. It is approximately equal now between the liberal side and the nationalist side.

EIR: Is there a fear of a communist takeover in Hungary? As we saw in Lithuania and Poland, as a result of the economic disaster caused by International Monetary Fund (IMF) policies, George Soros, and other looters, the communists were able to take over the government again. Is that an immediate danger in Hungary now?

Csurka: I'm optimistic that there is no immediate danger of a communist takeover. If there is, it would be slight and not much change from the Antall regime.

EIR: Lyndon LaRouche recently referred to George Soros as a front for British intelligence. He has worked with the IMF for a long time going back to even during the communist period. Soros and other speculators have moved in to loot Hungary. What has been the effect of IMF policy in Hungary and what role has Soros played?

Csurka: The fact is that we are under the control of the IMF. What kind of relationship they had between Soros and the IMF—I don't know the facts. I would just guess. We have inherited a \$21 billion debt load through the IMF system. With this kind of load on the Hungarian economy, it is almost impossible to exist. We are paying approximately \$2 billion in interest per year, with this capital going from Hungary to the IMF and the lenders. It is almost impossible to maintain a stable economy. I don't see how we can solve the problems with this kind of pressure on our society.

One of the biggest problems is that the agents of the IMF

are inside of our banking system, too. And those guys are reacting from our side, harshly, against these issues coming out. Those are their people. What would be really good for Hungary is to ease or reduce the \$21 billion debt. That would be a good solution, but those people, the insiders, don't allow it.

EIR: In the privatization process now ongoing, there have been a lot of international speculators coming in to buy up everything. Could you say something about that?

Csurka: It is as you said. The problem is really the privatization and corruption. The original plan of the government was to pay back the loans and interest and to finance that out of the privatization. What happened in Hungary under the privatization is they put industries on the market at certain prices. Unfortunately, the selling price was always underpriced. Everything was underpriced. Because of this, the foreigners and certain groups inside Hungary grabbed everything almost for nothing. That was the old *nomenklatura* and the new *nomenklatura*. They pushed us to privatize, and with the rapidity of the privatization it happened that almost everything became the property of foreign interests. So it means that it was a "free robbery," as you expressed it.

EIR: Lyndon LaRouche has called for an end to IMF policy in eastern Europe and, instead, an economic development program emphasizing large infrastructure projects. This idea is in the tradition of the 19th-century German economist Friedrich List, who I understand was collaborating with Szechenyi against the free-trade, free-market policies of Adam Smith and the British. How do you see the question of economic program for the Hungarian Renewal Movement? How do you see the importance of a program to develop Hungary in opposition to the IMF policy?

Csurka: The present regime, the Antall government, says to our people, "Just be patient. When everything is privatized, everything will be okay. It takes a long time but everything will be okay."

Let's change things now and let's not wait. We have to change the system. We have to have a certain so-called "third way" approach to privatization. It means to bring up our generation to be knowledgeable in economics and not to follow some kind of western theories applied to an entirely different society. Our style must be good for our people.

EIR: What do you think of the infrastructure program of Istvan Szechenyi's infrastructure program [a 19th-century Hungarian economist and political leader who was especially interested in infrastructure and national physical economy]?

Csurka: I am a great follower of Szechenyi. Take for example, the \$2 billion paid yearly to western lenders. If we could just keep \$1 billion of that, we could create 100 smaller Hungarian industries and we could feed, at least, our nation. So I am for the rearrangement of the loans. The Szechenyi infrastructure idea is my idea also.

Georgia

'We must first tell the truth about the crisis'

by Shota Rustaveli

Editors' note: Shota Rustaveli is the national poet of Georgia, the ancient nation in the Transcaucasus region. This poet and philosopher lived in the 12th century; to this day, his name is linked with the fate of Georgia. EIR received this article from a prominent scientist and political figure in Georgia, who had a vision of his country today, as Rustaveli would see it and tell of what he saw.

Once I went back to my country. . . .

Many years, centuries had passed. . . .

What had happened in Georgia? How is my country now? It is very interesting for me and . . . for you as well, my unknown listener in the West or the East. So, let us "look" together, at what we "have" in Georgia now—December 1993. . . .

First of all you must know, that long ago my country was the richest land in the Caucasus region, and not only in the Caucasus. We had good economic and political relations with different parts of the world. At the beginning of the 19th century, Georgia "joined" the Russian empire, and after this . . . our potential progress ceased. We remained just one of the regions of "Great Russia," and this continued until the late 20th century.

Let us stop and explain the era of "revolutions," after which came the very short period of our independence (1918-21). Then Georgia was one of the "Soviet Republics," then came the time of perestroika, and then—civil war.

At last, we achieved independence, but, of course, it was only on paper. We started to make a model for our state, on the basis of the remains of the "broken Soviet empire." You know what that is! When I look at all these things, I always think about: Who did this, and why? If we can find any answers to this, maybe we can find ways to help somebody in Georgia and, I hope, not only in Georgia.

What do I see now? In Georgia there is a real collapse! Every side of life is destroyed. Do you want to know by whom? I can tell you, but a little bit later.

First of all, let us look at our situation globally, so to speak. Formally, Georgia is member of different international organizations, so we have many possibilities to build an economic and political foundation for the future, to have our