



**GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION CENTRE
PRESS OFFICE**

Budapest '56 Freedom Declaration

With this manifesto we address the peoples and nations, the leaders of countries and influential personalities on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. In this endeavour we are guided by our shared determination to commemorate the heroes of 1956 and to cite the historic message of the revolution.

Half a century ago, violence, fear and vitriolic lies meant the last straw in Hungary, and a mere historical second – no more than a few days – was enough to bust the communist dictatorship already ripe for collapse.

It was a nation in quest of freedom that took a stand against a totalitarian regime backed by Soviet military presence, thus manifesting its human dignity. One single “No!” chanted in unison gave workers enough strength to take matters into their own hands forming workers’ councils and revolutionary committees; enough encouragement to villages to provide food supplies for Budapest, which was bearing the brunt of an armed struggle with no central command whatsoever; enough courage to young *lads* to halt the Soviet tanks and to college student girls to tend the wounded on all sides even amid the hail of bullets.

A nation surpassed itself in its struggle for freedom and set the world an example of death-defying courage and humanity.

The spirit of 1956 teaches us that if a country stands up to defend itself, if it conceives the cause of the homeland as something shared, it is able to transcend all divisive vested interests, stand together as a nation and set an example to the whole world.

International public opinion, especially the youth, sided with the Hungarian cause whole-heartedly. For them the Hungarian Revolution was a fundamental experience, that of freedom. The word *Hungarian* became synonymous, first and foremost, with freedom and democracy in people’s consciousness around the world.

Then came the reprisals: hundreds of Patriots were executed, thousands jailed, tens of thousands vilified, hundreds of thousands, mostly young people, forced to flee. Persecution awaited those who stayed behind and solitude was to be the lot of those who fled, despite the affection and esteem that relieved it in their respective host countries.

With our manifesto we wish to pay homage to well-known and nameless heroes. Albeit the revolution lasted but 13 days, with the rear guard action drawing out to a month and a half, directly or indirectly it left its mark on everything that happened in Hungary, Europe and the whole world in the course of 50 years. Although the revolution was crushed, freedom eventually prevailed in the whole region.

Our manifesto, drawing on 1956, is an expression of our certainty and profound conviction that freedom is invincible, that all people and nations are born free and long for freedom all their lives. Freedom and humanity, the freedom of thought and the humanity of action, complement each other.

Our manifesto calls for shared responsibility and concerted work: to be born free is a gift, but to live free and respect the freedom of others is our common responsibility and common duty.