

Writer Tariq Ali criticises Soviet-era dissidents Havel, Michnik

Pakistani-born writer Tariq Ali, a leader of the 1960s anti-Vietnam war movement in Britain, was quoted Monday criticizing iconic Soviet-era dissidents Vaclav Havel and Adam Michnik for what he said was their unquestioning support of the United States.

'Great central-European figures such as Vaclav Havel and Adam Michnik have supported this war and it will be interesting to observe how they proceed to act,' Mlada Fronta Dnes daily cited Ali as saying in reference to the US-led war in Iraq, which he has opposed.

'It is baffling that one-time dissidents came to believe that everything the United States does is right,' said the 64-year-old London-based activist writer.

In 1968, Havel and Michnik were leading supporters of democratic reform in the then Czechoslovakia and Poland respectively, while Ali led a student march on London's US embassy that turned into a violent protest against the US war in Vietnam war.

After communism fell in [Europe](#) in 1989, Havel, 71, became Czech president for over a decade, while Michnik, 61, became one of the Poland's most influential journalists.

Ali was a guest of Prague Writer's Festival that last week featured several other 1968 figures, including poet Natalia Gorbanevskaya was one of the eight Russians who protested the Soviet invasion of the then Czechoslovakia in Moscow's Red Square Aug 25 of that year.

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