

## PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE ATTENTION

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### POLISH ACTIVIST, HISTORIAN, AND JOURNALIST ADAM MICHNIK TO SPEAK AT THE LABROSSE-LEVINSON LECTURES

**OCTOBER 10, 2006. Charlottesville, VA . . .** The Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture and its Center on Religion and Democracy are pleased to announce that Polish activist, historian, and journalist Adam Michnik will deliver The LaBrosse-Levinson Lectures on “*Democracies, Dictatorships, and Intellectuals.*” The three public lectures will be held in the Dome Room of the Rotunda at the University of Virginia, on Wednesday, November 8, Thursday, November 9, and Friday, November 10, all at 1:00 PM. Mr. Michnik’s first lecture is entitled “Religion and Totalitarian Challenges;” his second, “An Intellectual in the World of Dictatorship;” and the third, “Democracy: Between Relativism and Absolutism.”

All lectures will be given in Polish, and translated by Irena Grudzinska Gross, Professor of Modern Languages and Literatures and Executive Director of the Institute for Human Sciences at Boston University.

As one of Europe’s leading public intellectuals, Mr. Michnik is uniquely positioned to address the role of intellectuals in democracies and dictatorships. He was a co-founder of KOR (Committee for the Defense of Workers), the organization of dissident intellectuals in Poland that paved the way for the Solidarity trade union in the late 1970s. He spent a total of six years in prison from 1965 to 1986 for his vocal opposition to the communist regime. Mr. Michnik was a participant in the Round Table Talks that eventuated in the end of Communist rule in Poland. In 1989, he was elected to Poland’s first non-communist parliament. He is the founder and editor-in-chief of *Gazeta Wyborcza*, the largest daily paper in Poland.

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Mr. Michnik has authored scores of essays, articles and books, including *Letters from Prison and Other Essays* (1985), *Letters from Freedom* (1998), and *The Church and the Left* (1993). He writes frequently for his paper, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, as well as for such publications as *Der Spiegel*, *Le Monde*, *New York Review of Books*, and *Washington Post*.

Recognized by nations, universities, and foundations for his lifelong struggle for democracy, he has received many prestigious awards, most recently: Press Freedom Hero, International Press Institute (2000); the Erasmus Prize from the Royal Palace, Amsterdam (2001); Joaquin Garrigues Walker Award from Salvador de Madariaga Foundation, Spain (2001); Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur, France (2003); Dan David Prize, Tel Aviv University (2006); Honorary Senator, University of Ljubljana (2006).

Located at the University of Virginia, the **Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture** is an interdisciplinary research center and intellectual community at the University of Virginia committed to understanding contemporary cultural change. Over the past eleven years, the Institute and its Center on Religion and Democracy have organized a number of lectures from which senior scholars, public intellectuals, and dignitaries made major statements on some of the most pressing issues of our time. Adam Michnik follows a number of distinguished LaBrosse-Levinson Lecturers, who include Lionel Jospin, Samuel Huntington, Robert Kaplan, René Girard, Danièle Hervieu-Léger, David Brooks, and Todd Gitlin.

Additional information can be obtained from Marilyn Roselius, Event Coordinator at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture, via phone (434-924-0998) or email <marilyn@virginia.edu>.

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