



TRIBUTE TO LIBERTY News

Commemorating the Victims of Totalitarian Communism

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Fall 2011

Tribute to Liberty is a Canadian organization whose mission is to establish a memorial to the victims of totalitarian Communism in the National Capital Region.

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Tribute to Liberty News is published four times a year. If you would like to add an email address to our subscriber list please email info@tributetoliberty.ca.

For more information about Tribute to Liberty visit: www.tributetoliberty.ca



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Message from Tribute to Liberty Chair of the Board

First I would like to wish all of our supporters a happy and safe holiday season, and a very Merry Christmas—it is fast approaching. I would also like to stress Tribute to Liberty's need to raise funds to begin the next phase of the project—the design competition. Christmas is traditionally a time of thoughtful giving. If you are reading this newsletter you are likely interested in and supportive of this project. Please consider donating to the Canadian memorial to victims of Communism—it is a worthwhile cause and needs your support. Tax receipts will be issued promptly.

The *Pathway to Liberty* campaign allows donors to make a dedication or tell a story of a victim of Communism. You can visit it on our website: www.tributetoliberty.ca

And on another note: Gerry Kokodyniak and Reet Marten Sehr are stepping down from the Tribute to Liberty Board of Directors. Replacing them are Peter Kardasz and Robert Tmej. Tribute to Liberty thanks Mr. Kokodyniak and Ms. Marten Sehr for their time and effort spent on the memorial project over the past several years. We welcome our new board members and look forward to their input.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Alide Forstmanis

Tribute to Liberty Attends Canadian - Polish Congress Fundraising Event

Tribute to Liberty Board Chair Alide Forstmanis was invited to attend the September 24th Canadian – Polish Congress fundraising banquet, held at the Polish National Union Hall in Burlington. Mrs. Forstmanis gave a brief speech about the memorial project, to inform people and ask for their support.

Other honorary guests included MPs Wladyslaw Lizon, Peggy Nash, Ted Opitz, Mike Wallace, Stella Ambler and Blaine Calkins, as well as past MP Jesse Flis, representatives from CPC branches and other organizations.





Mrs. Forstmanis speaks at the Canadian – Polish Congress fundraising event in September.

Tribute to Liberty Requests a Change to the NCC’s Policy Regarding On-Site Donor Recognition

Many of Tribute to Liberty’s donors and potential donors have asked why there can be no donor recognition at the memorial site. According to the National Capital Commission’s (NCC’s) *Comprehensive Commemoration Program and Policy for Canada’s Capital*, “Donor contributions to the commemoration, whether financial or other, shall not be acknowledged in any manner as part of the commemorative site.”

Tribute to Liberty recently participated in an evaluation of the NCC’s commemoration program and raised the issue of on-site donor recognition. The NCC responded by saying they would look into the issue.

Tribute to Liberty is hopeful the NCC will change its policy regarding on-site donor recognition as it wants to be able to recognize donors at the memorial site.

Update on Tribute to Liberty’s Canadian Heritage Grant Application

Tribute to Liberty has applied for funding through *Commemorate Canada*, a component of Canadian Heritage’s *Celebrate and Commemorate Program*.

The application is under review and the outcome and amount of funding is TBD.

“*Commemorate Canada* provides grants and contributions to eligible recipients for celebrations and commemorations of national significance” (Canadian Heritage website).

History Unhidden

The Vietnamese Community in Canada - Escape from Communism

Before 1975, one could argue that Canada did not have a community of Vietnamese people. Some of the reasons for this may have included the following:

1. Vietnamese people usually clung firmly to their roots and rarely left the country. Even those who chose to study abroad opted for more popular destinations such as France, the United States of America, England or Australia.
2. The climate in Canada is cold and often inhospitable for those used to warm tropical environments.

After the events of April 30th 1975, Vietnamese people left the country en masse to seek refuge from communism, the diaspora led people all over the world. During that time Canada opened its doors to refugees and many Vietnamese. It was from this that those who came to live in this free democratic country coined the saying “Canada’s lands are cold but Canada’s love is warm.”



As more and more people immigrated to Canada the Vietnamese population increased to 150,000 at the beginning of the 21st century. By now, the number may have reached up to 200,000. Excluding European-Canadians, the Vietnamese community has the fifth-largest population in Canada, after those from China, India, the Philippines, and Jamaica.

The Vietnamese community in Canada:

- Owes its origin to refugees that sought a safe haven from communism. A massive exodus occurred in

Vietnam following the Communist attacks of April 30, 1975.

- Is still young, having been first established after 1975.
- Still suffers from strict communism in its native country. The communist regime does not allow for freedom of religion, politics, culture, thought or media.
- Continues to be affected and stereotyped by the actions of Communist Vietnam.
- Has chosen the original pre-communism Vietnamese flag, three horizontal red stripes on a yellow background, to be its logo, an action shared by other immigrant Vietnamese communities around the world.

To show appreciation for their adopted homeland, Vietnamese-Canadians work hard in their chosen careers, strive to fulfill their responsibilities as citizens, respect the laws of Canada and contribute to the positive growth of the country in general. These core values and beliefs are dutifully passed on from one generation to the next. As a result, Vietnamese-Canadians of all generations can be found in many fields, including science, literature, media and athletics. Those individuals fortunate enough to live in Canada continue to help those still living in hardship in Vietnam through financial donations, medicinal aid, etc.



Vietnamese-Canadians have never forgotten the crimes perpetrated by Communists in Vietnam since 1945. Millions of innocent lives have been lost. The systematic change in land ownership laws in 1956 resulted in the deaths of over 200,000 people alone. To this day, activists who are not killed for voicing their opinions are thrown in prison by the Communist party.

The Vietnamese Community in Canada has contributed greatly to Tribute to Liberty in the hopes of erecting a memorial to the victims of Communism in Ottawa. The Statue Committee of the Vietnamese community was established in Toronto in 2010. The committee has published many articles in Vietnamese newspapers and magazines, as well as appearing on local Vietnamese television to ask for donations. Furthermore, an event was held on May 29, 2010 to raise awareness and funds for the cause. So far, the Statue Committee has contributed

\$26,842 Canadian dollars and \$730 US dollars to Tribute to Liberty.

The Vietnamese community in Canada may be relatively small compared to other communities, but it has rallied to the cause of building the memorial in Ottawa. The memorial will serve as a reminder of the suffering caused by Communist regimes, as well as serve as a warning to avoid such mistakes in the future.

Submitted by Phep Nguyen

A Quote to Remember

A citizen of a Western democracy fondly imagines that totalitarianism lies utterly beyond the pale of normal human aspirations. And yet, totalitarianism could never have survived so long had it not been able to draw so many people into its fold...Furthermore, Communist society strips the individual of his responsibilities. It is always "somebody else" who makes the decisions. Remember, individual responsibility can feel like a crushing burden...The attraction of a totalitarian system, which has had a powerful allure for many, has its roots in a fear of freedom and responsibility.

-Tzvetan Todorov

Resource Spotlight

The Baltic Initiative and Network
coldwarsites.net

“The main objective of the Initiative is to strengthen mutual understanding between the countries around the Baltic Sea through an exchange of information on the Cold War period. The idea is that history should be told from the historically valuable sites at which events took place. Relevant sites include, for example: military installations and towns, prisons and prison camps, partisan bunkers, execution sites, secret police offices, sculptures and architecture or simple squares or buildings where memorable events took place” (Initiative website).

An Excerpt from the *Pathway to Liberty*

Brick #01224 - Donated by Mrs. Ngo Thi Thanh and Mrs. Nguyen Thi Kham

We would like to express our gratitude to the government and the people of Canada for accepting the Vietnamese boat people refugees into the country. Sincere thanks to Canada, a land of hope that has granted us freedom and the chance to a new life filled with opportunity. May this memorial remind us and future generations of the hardships of the past, the trials of those who fled over oceans to escape Communism, and of the promise of Canada, the land of refugees.

Visit www.tributetoliberty.ca for more stories and dedications.

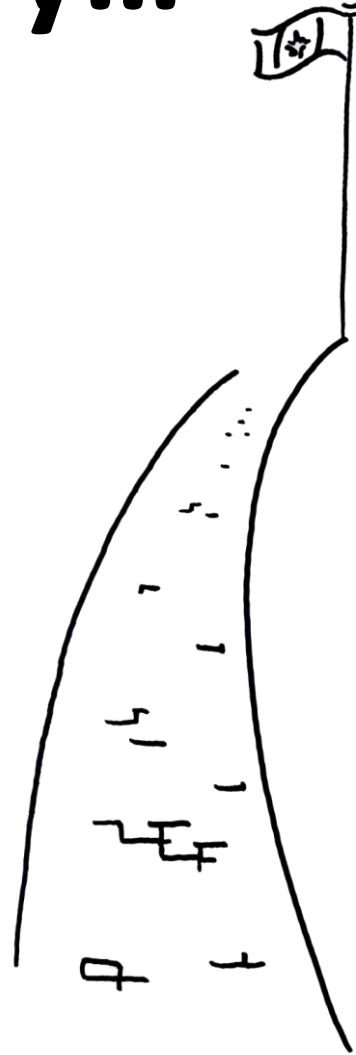
Tell Your Story...

And help build the Memorial to Victims of Communism in Ottawa.

A donation of \$100 buys a brick for the virtual Pathway to Liberty that leads to the Memorial.

Each brick can be donated with a story of a victim of Communism, a message or a dedication. Donate today at: tributetoliberty.ca.

For more information about Tribute to Liberty and the Memorial to Victims of Communism, visit tributetoliberty.ca.



Mail-in Contribution Form

**Don't forget to enclose your story,
message or dedication!**

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Province _____ Postal Code _____

Phone (____) _____ Email _____

Donation Amount: \$1000 _____ \$500 _____ \$100 _____ Other _____ **I wish to remain anonymous:** _____

Please make cheque payable to Tribute to Liberty and mail to:
Tribute to Liberty, P.O. Box 84558, 2336 Bloor St. West, Toronto, ON M6S 4Z7

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