



TRIBUTE TO LIBERTY News

Commemorating the Victims of the Crimes of Communism

Spring 2009

Tribute to Liberty is a Canadian organization whose mission is to establish a memorial to the Victims of the Crimes of Communism in the National Capital Region, and to educate the public about Communism's Crimes.

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Tribute to Liberty in Budapest!

Between the 6th & 8th of March representatives from Tribute to Liberty travelled to Budapest to attend the inaugural seminar of the Estonian-based Foundation for the Investigation of Communist Crimes.

Alide Forstmanis, Board Chair, and Carolyn Foster, Project Coordinator, met with 40 individuals representing various organizations and institutions that educate the public about the Crimes of Communism. Most of the conference participants were from Europe, especially Central and Eastern Europe—Alide and Carolyn were the only Canadians in attendance.

The conference began on Friday evening with a reception and screening of *The Soviet Story* at the Terror House on Andrassy Avenue. The Terror House is the former headquarters for the Hungarian Nazis, and later, the State Security Police, and is now a memorial museum to the victims who were tortured there by these two regimes.

The rest of the conference consisted of two days of talks and discussions on the historical background and current issues of the Crimes of Communism. This part of the conference was held at the historic Gellert Hotel in Buda.

The topics covered at the conference were:

- The Europe-wide international network of research institutions for the investigation and evaluation of Communist crimes in Europe
- The debate over the historical record of Communism in the European Union
- Separate historical memories: the different perception of Nazi and Soviet crimes
- Communist regimes, crimes against humanity and human rights violations in a post-Communist world: legacies, present issues and prospective cooperation projects
- The imperfect world of *realpolitik*: the lessons of World War II
- Communist crimes and international law: legal and quasi-legal issues
- Communist crimes towards religion in the Soviet Union during the Krushchev period (1959 – 1964)
- Current crimes and human rights violations in Asia
- Cuban society: current issues and future problems from the European perspective
- Residual effects of Communism and problems of reconciliation and transitional justice in Central Europe

On the final day of the conference Tribute to Liberty made a presentation about its project of having a memorial built in Ottawa to the victims of the Crimes of Communism. The European audience present was intrigued by and appreciative of this Canadian contribution to the international effort to educate the public about the Crimes of Communism.

A highlight of the conference was at the Saturday evening banquet when Viktor Orban, former Hungarian PM and leader of the opposition party, Fidesz, spoke. Mr. Orban spoke eloquently about the urgency of the message that Tribute to Liberty, and similar groups, are trying to communicate about what happened during Communism.

There were three important outcomes of the conference. The first was the composition of a letter sent to Swedish Prime Minister Mr. Fredrik Reinfeldt and Foreign Minister Mr. Carl Bildt concerning the anniversaries of the peaceful, democratic struggle for a free and reunited Europe—Tribute to Liberty was a signatory along with the other participants of the conference.

The second outcome was Tribute to Liberty became a partner with the *1989 – 2009: The 20th Anniversary of The Liberated And Reunited Europe* international initiative. (See article in this issue for more about this initiative.)

Third, Tribute to Liberty and its work are now known internationally; the goals Tribute to Liberty is trying to achieve are now placed in the context of the international movement to reveal the truth of the Crimes of Communism.



Opening Remarks by Mart Laar.



Alide Forstmanis Addressing the Conference.



The Danube.

NCC Proposal Update

In early January 2009 Tribute to Liberty submitted its proposal to the National Capital Commission (NCC) to build a memorial in Ottawa to the Victims of the Crimes of Communism. The NCC is the government agency that oversees the use and development of National Capital Region lands.

Tribute to Liberty met with representatives from the NCC in late March to discuss the proposal, and is now working with the NCC to bring the project to the implementation stage.

Tribute to Liberty Advisory Council

Tribute to Liberty's Advisory Council began meeting in February 2009. The Council's role is to bring to the table the range of perspectives and experiences from people affected by the Crimes of Communism to ensure that the memorial has the most fulsome expression of the struggle for liberty that opposition to the Crimes of Communism has represented. The Council will play an integral role in engaging these communities in support of the project, and in support of our longer term objective of educating Canadians about the historical record and what we must learn from it.

The Advisory Council is made up of representatives of the many different communities in Canada whose members trace their roots to countries affected by Communism. For more information about Tribute to Liberty's Advisory Council please email info@tributetoliberty.ca.



The idea behind the *1989-2009: The 20th Anniversary of the Liberated and United Europe* project is to unite international groups and activities during the year 2009 under a non-nation specific, common banner, in order to honour the victims of Communism, and to raise awareness of the liberation of the Communist-controlled and/or occupied countries of Eastern, Central and Baltic Europe, the subsequent democratization process, and the transition to free markets and EU memberships.

The project was initiated by the Institute for Information on the Crimes of Communism in Stockholm. Tribute to Liberty became a partner of the project in March 2008.

The project is a means of expressing the common issues and motives of the struggle for liberty. In addition, it is a way to communicate that the issue of Communist oppression and/or

occupation has shaped, and continues to influence the recent history and the current reality of half the European continent.

The fall of the Soviet Empire and the end of Communist oppression in Eastern, Central and Baltic Europe must be recognized as a historical, Pan-European, and world-important phenomenon, shaped by a common cause and a common historical experience.

The creation of a common banner allows organizations in Europe, the United States and elsewhere to jointly take part in activities and to benefit from the communicative strength of a well-publicized, coordinated and united international effort.

Mark Your Calendars!

Tribute to Liberty Spring Party

Tribute to Liberty will hold its spring event on May 28th at the Paddock restaurant at Queen and Bathurst. The event will be an informal evening—a chance to socialize, learn more about the project, and to become involved. The Honourable Peter Kent, Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas) is scheduled to speak. All who are interested in Tribute to Liberty's project of having a memorial built in Ottawa to the victims of the Crimes of Communism are invited!

Date: Thursday, May 28th
Time: 6:30 pm
Place: The Paddock
178 Bathurst Street (at Queen Street)

RSVP with Carolyn at info@tributetoliberty.ca by May 20th.



A Quote to Remember

The main thing is never to act against your conscience, not to put your signature on documents you do not believe in, not to vote for those who you think should not be elected, not to approve decisions, not to applaud, not to pass on lies, not to broadcast them, not to write them, not to put them down on paper, not to pretend. Let your creed be 'Let the lie come into the world, let it even triumph, but not through me.'

-Alexander Solzhenitsyn

The Soviet Story DVD Now on Sale

The DVD of the critically acclaimed *The Soviet Story* is now on sale.

The Soviet Story relates the history of Soviet terror and Soviet-German relations before 1941. The 2008 documentary has been called “the most powerful antidote yet to the sanitisation of the past.” (*Economist.com*)



To order your copy visit www.sovietstory.com/buy-dvd/

History Unhidden

The Man Who Coined the Term “Genocide”

Little is known about the man who created the concept of “genocide” (*genos* is Greek for family, tribe or race and *-cide* is Latin for killing). However, Raphael Lemkin not only coined the term, but the Polish-Jewish scholar worked tirelessly during his life to have the concept recognized, and the act criminalized. He was especially interested in the Armenian Genocide, the Holocaust, and also the Ukrainian Genocide. Yet, when Lemkin died in New York City in 1958, only seven people attended his funeral.

Those who in recent times have lobbied and fought to have the Holodomor—a particularly blatant example of the Crimes of Communism—recognized as a genocide, are standing on the shoulders of Raphael Lemkin.

Lemkin was born in 1900 to a farming family in what is now part of the Grodno region of Belarus, but at the time was part of Russia, and then Poland. He studied law in Lviv and became a lawyer, later emigrating to the U.S.

Much of Lemkin's family perished in the Holocaust; however, he did not limit his lobbying to recognition of the Holocaust as genocide. After the fall of Nazism he understood and focused on the threat of Communism, and wrote and spoke in-depth about the genocide in Ukraine.

Lemkin's essay, “Soviet Genocide in Ukraine,” written in the 1950's, is one of the earliest writings on the topic written by a non-Ukrainian. Lemkin calls it the “classic example of Soviet genocide” and talks of “the destruction of the Ukrainian nation” in a much broader sense that goes beyond the one,

horrific experience of the Holodomor.

In his essay he writes: *As long as Ukraine retains its national unity, as long as its people continue to think of themselves as Ukrainians and to seek independence, so long Ukraine poses a serious threat to the very heart of Sovietism. It is no wonder that the Communist leaders have attached the greatest importance to the Russification of this independent[-minded] member of their 'Union of Republics', have determined to remake it to fit their pattern of one Russian nation. For the Ukrainian is not and has never been, a Russian. His culture, his temperament, his language, his religion—all are different. At the side door to Moscow, he has refused to be collectivized, accepting deportation, even death. And so it is peculiarly important that the Ukrainian be fitted into the Procrustean pattern of the ideal Soviet man.*



The term “Crimes of Communism,” came into usage after Lemkin’s time, but from what is known of him and his writings, it seems he would have had something to contribute to this field of study, and to the cause of educating the public about such crimes.

Resource Spotlight

Annals of Communism web site:
www.yale.edu/annals/

The Annals’ web site contains a wealth of documents covering the history of the USSR, ranging in topics from the last days of the Romanovs to the collapse of Soviet bureaucracy in the Brezhnev period. It has been called the most important publishing project in the world, putting together in one collection previously inaccessible documents for all to access. The documents are published by Yale University Press.

Tribute to Liberty Needs Your Donation!

At its height Communism ruled one-third of mankind, with its victims in the staggering range of 100 million. It has been called “the most colossal case of political carnage in history” (*The Black Book of Communism*). Communism is still with us, both in the effects of its past crimes and, despite its tragic failures, in current political regimes. The reality of Communism’s crimes should not be forgotten, rather, they should be brought out from the darkness into the light.

Tribute to Liberty is undertaking this task by establishing a memorial to the Victims of the Crimes of Communism in the National Capital Region, and by educating the public about Communism’s Crimes.

Our organization needs your donation. The cost of building a major monument in Ottawa is upwards of \$1.5 million. Your donation will help make happen this essential mission of bringing the truth about the Crimes of Communism into the light.

In order to meet our timeline goal of holding a groundbreaking ceremony in November 2009, on the anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, *we need to receive your donation as soon as possible.*

Thank you for your support—with the help of your donation we will bring the truth about the Crimes of Communism into the light!



Tribute to Liberty Contribution Form*

Name _____

Address _____

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Phone (____) _____

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Donation Amount: \$1000 _____ \$500 _____ \$100 _____

\$50 _____ Other _____

Please make cheques payable to: Tribute to Liberty
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****Tribute to Liberty is in the process of applying for charitable status; currently we cannot issue tax receipts for donations.***