



MEMORIAL TO THE VICTIMS OF
COMMUNISM
TRIBUTE TO LIBERTY



Newsletter

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Project Update

The memorial construction is progressing and we are pleased to report that the National Capital Commission has promised that the memorial's plinth, the Wall of Remembrance, and landscaping will be completed this Fall.

Material for the 4000 bronze rods has arrived, and fabrication will take place over the winter months. The fabrication will be documented via videos and photos on our website and social media, as will the construction at the site. We expect to publish some photos of the memorial construction and fabrication progress in our upcoming Fall newsletter. The memorial is expected to be unveiled soon after it is assembled; this is expected to happen in the spring of 2020.

We are very pleased to be at the final stages of this project and are excited to witness its final progression!

Message from the Chair

I always felt that building the Memorial to the Victims of Communism in Canada would confidently mark our presence in the history of this beautiful country. However, is having the place of remembrance and commemorations enough? I don't think so. We all within the Board of Directors of Tribute to Liberty believe that education is the most important component. That is why I was delighted to be invited and to participate in the conference on Trade, Freedom and Democracy in Taipei, Taiwan this past June. The event in Taipei took place on the eve of the 30th anniversary of the Tiananmen Massacre on June 4th, 1989 and the first semi-free election in Poland, on the same day, that eventually led to the collapse of Communism in Central and Eastern Europe. In the speech I gave at the conference I attempted to compare both events and shed some light on the overwhelming hypocrisy of the Western Nations when dealing with China today.



30th Anniversary of the Tiananmen Square Massacre.

On the evening of June 4th I was delighted to see thousands of young Taiwanese people cheering the original organizers of the protests in 1989. They gathered in Freedom Square in Taipei, free to assemble and demonstrate, and free to express their voices. At least in Taiwan it appears education has done its job and we have new generations who know and confirm #CommunismKills.

Yours,
Ludwik Klimkowski, Tribute to Liberty Chair

Captive Nations Summit

Every third week of July since Congress unanimously passed the 1959 Captive Nations Resolution, the United States officially recognizes the struggle of those nations held captive by Communist dictatorship. Every year, the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation in Washington D.C. holds a summit where living witnesses to Communist crimes deliver testimonials to Members of Congress and policymakers. This year, on July 15, 2019, community members of Cuba, North Korea, Venezuela, Nicaragua, China, Tibet, Vietnam and Laos were invited by the Foundation to deliver a report on human rights abuses in their respective homelands. Tribute to Liberty board member Christine Chi Dang attended the summit.

Members of the Congressional bi-partisan Victims of Communism Caucus heard first-hand from victims of Communism, and shared their strong stance on and support of the people's struggles for basic human rights, freedom and democracy. Among those who delivered remarks at the event were Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX), Co-Chair of the Victims of Communism Caucus Rep. Jeff Duncan (R-SC), Co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus on Vietnam Rep. Alan Lowenthal (D-CA), Organization of American States Sec. Gen. Luis Almagro, Ambassador of Venezuela to the United States of the US-recognized interim government of Juan Guaido Amb. Carlos Vecchio, VOC Trustee Amb. Paula Dobriansky, and Hong Kong Watch Chairman Benedict Rogers. In addition, it is noteworthy that at this year's summit an exiled Vietnamese blogger, Mother Mushroom, was selected to be the recipient of the 2019 Victims of Communism Human Rights Award presented by the VOC Foundation on Capitol Hill.

Blogger Mother Mushroom, aka Me Nam, Nguyen Ngoc Nhu Quynh, was wrongfully arrested in October 2016, a day after the Vietnamese community in Toronto organized a fundraising event in support of Tribute to Liberty's Memorial project. Since her imprisonment, her name has been added to the list of Victims of Communism to be memorialized on the Memorial's Wall of Remembrance in Ottawa. She was sentenced to 10 years for merely exercising her right to freedom of expression against the Vietnamese Communist government's human rights violations, police brutality, wide-spread corruption and environmental issues. With relentless efforts from Tribute to Liberty board member Christine Chi Dang, the imprisoned blogger was released early after having served two years in one of the most notorious prisons in Northern Vietnam. With the support of the

U.S. Embassy in Vietnam and the U.S. Department of State among other international human rights organizations, on October 17, 2018, Mother Mushroom was escorted directly from prison to Noi Bai airport in Hanoi and boarded an airplane where she was reunited with her elderly mother and her two young children for a life of exile in the U.S.A. This 2019 Victims of Communism Human Rights Award is the 8th award that this renowned blogger has received thus far for her bravery and human rights activism.



Christine Chi Dang and Mother Mushroom.

The Award laureate's keynote speech and reports from several victims of Communism in other captive nations effectively alarmed all those attending the summit of the crimes against humanity and Communist criminality. Simultaneously, a photo exhibition of "Victims of Venezuela's Dictatorship" – a vivid photo collection from award-winning photographers – was also organized to remind us all that the past is not yet past; Communist crimes are still rampant in many parts of the world.

2019 Black Ribbon Day

On August 23, 2019, about 100 guests representing many different communities gathered at a somber commemoration of the 80th Anniversary of the infamous Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (the Soviet-Nazi Alliance) at Queens Park, Toronto.

The event was organized by Hon. Kinga Surma (Etobicoke Centre), Associate Minister of Transportation, and her staff.

The commemoration started with a silent minute for the victims of Communist and Nazi regimes, and Siona Neale-Majewski beautifully sang "All Praise Be To

Thee” composed by Mozart and arranged by Tom Price.

Speakers at the event included:

- Hon. Kinga Surma, Associate Minister of Transportation
- Marcus Kolga, President CEEC, Fellow at MacDonald Laurier Institute, Film producer, Human Rights Activist
- Ted Opitz, former MP and retired Canadian Forces Lieutenant-Colonel
- Hon. Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education



Hon. Stephen Lecce addresses the crowd.

All speakers spoke of the need not to forget the evils, pains and hardships that the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact brought to millions of people. The secret protocol divided Europe into spheres of interest, and kept half of Europe under Communist rule for almost 50 years. To avoid repeating past wrongs every new generation must be informed about the evils that have taken place. To help remember and help honour the victims, the National Memorial to the Victims of Communism is about to be built in Ottawa. Approximately 1 in 4 Canadians has roots in former or still Communist countries.

Mr. Opitz read a statement from Hon. Andrew Scheer, leader of the Conservative Party. The following is an excerpt:

Many of those fleeing Soviet communist persecution and oppression made Canada their home. Often arriving alone and with little means, these remarkably strong-willed and hard-working individuals made incredible contributions to our society.

We must strongly condemn any whitewashing of the atrocities committed by the Nazi and Soviet regimes, and the spread of hate, propaganda, and disinformation.

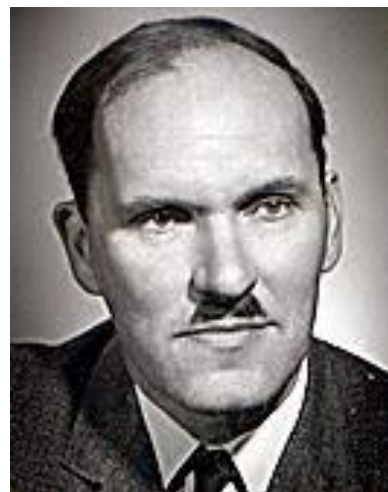
On behalf of the Conservative Party of Canada and Official Opposition, I commend those organizing and

participating in Black Ribbon Day observances today. I join with you in remembering the victims of Soviet and Nazi terror in Europe. It is our duty to educate future generations about the atrocities of the past in order to ensure that these murderous ideologies never have a chance to rise again.

History Unhidden Tribute to Victor Szyrynski & Jadwiga Szczebiot

As the years go on, far too many of the millions upon millions of the victims of atheistic Communism are being forgotten. Their names known unto God alone, their stories never to be heard again in this life. But for a precious few, their stories are known either personally or through their families and friends. Their stories not only honour the sacrifices made for the cause of freedom and faith, but also serve as a warning to vigilance for future generations about the evils of Communism, lest history repeat itself.

One such person who faced the tyranny of Communism and through the grace of God survived is Victor Szyrynski, a proud Polish patriot. Nazi Germany invaded Poland on September 1st, 1939. As part of the secret agreement with the Nazis, seventeen days later the Soviet Union began their own invasion of Poland. Poland was divided between these two totalitarian regimes.



Among those affected by the invasion was Victor. At the time he was a young doctor in Wilno, at the time part of Poland, but today known as Vilnius, Lithuania. Victor was also an intellectual free thinker so dreaded by the all controlling Communist state. Before the war Victor even published some of his poetry.

Dr. Szyrynski was arrested about a year later on charges of practicing anti-Soviet activities for acting as a liaison for the underground Polish resistance network. Fortunately Victor didn't meet the fate of those murdered by the Communists at Katyn. From Wilno he would be transported to Moscow and the Lubyanka Prison for about a year. He was later moved to Butryki prison also in Moscow.

Enroute to Moscow the prison train made a replenishment stop at Glebokie. One of the prisoners was a priest. He discretely asked some local Poles to obtain some Communion hosts so that the priest could say Mass. A young girl guide complied, crawling under the carriage to sneak the hosts through a hole in the floor boards.

In the Lubyanka prison Victor faced sleep deprivation, meager food rations as well as aggressive and lengthy interrogations at the hands of the dreaded NKVD, the predecessor of the KGB. Dr. Szyrynski found the fortitude to endure his captors because God had assured him in a dream. This grace gave Victor strength so that "...it was easy to look into my interrogator's eyes with no fear. It made the cold nights in the prison warmer."

The NKVD tried to break Szyrynski not by physical violence but by the intense questioning day and night. He never surrendered the desired information about the Polish resistance network. Victor was sustained by his Catholic faith and deep Polish patriotism. His professional background allowed him to foil the psychological interrogation techniques.

To buoy their spirits, Dr. Szyrynski and his fellow prisoners would recite Polish literature. The intellectuals in the group also taught each other from their respective areas of knowledge.

The Sikorski-Majski agreement was negotiated which secured the release of tens of thousands of Poles held by the Soviets. Dr. Victor Szyrynski joined the Polish forces fighting under British command in the Middle East and Africa. Working as a psychiatrist he helped the cause of freedom in many ways including working with Polish orphans.

It was in the Middle East that Victor met his future wife, Jadwiga Szczebiot. She was working as a nurse in a military hospital. By providence this young Polish nurse was that same girl scout who years earlier smuggled the Communion hosts through the floor in the train in Glebokie!

Under the Stalin regime thousands of people were sent

to Siberia where many died of starvation, hardship and the cold. Jadwiga and her family were deported to the Gulag shortly after that Glebokie train encounter.

Fortunately the July 1941 Sikorski-Majski pact also freed Jadwiga. But from Siberia she faced a long trek to freedom from the Soviet Union. Making her way to the Caspian Sea she was on the verge of death from dysentery. Fortunately an unknown person saved her life by bringing her to a Red Cross hospital. Jadwiga passed through Iran then made her way to Palestine.



Jadwiga trained as a nurse and obtained her Baccalaureate from the Polish Volunteer Secondary School organized in Nazareth. In 1944 she again met her future husband, Dr. Victor Szyrynski.

Like for so many others the Communist takeover of Poland made it impossible for the couple to return to their homeland. So, Victor and Jadwiga emigrated first to England. Then in 1948 they moved to Ottawa, Ontario. Eventually Dr. Szyrynski became the head of the Ottawa General Hospital psychiatry department.

In Ottawa Victor and Jadwiga were active in the Polish community, the Royal Canadian Air Force Reserve, the Polish scouting movement, and their parish. In 1969 they hosted then Karol Cardinal Wojtyla in their Ottawa home. Victor and Jadwiga would maintain a correspondence for the duration of their lives along with several visits in Rome with the man who became St. John Paul II the Great!

Submitted by Barbara Stachulak