



TRIBUTE TO LIBERTY News

Commemorating the Victims of Totalitarian Communism

Summer 2009

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, and to educate the public about Communism's crimes.

*Board of Directors:
Alide Forstmanis, Chair
Reet Marten Sehr
Gerry Kokodyniak*

*Honorary Chair:
Charlie Coffey, O.C.*

*Honorary Patron:
Philip Leong*

*Founding Partner:
The Open Book Group*

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



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Tribute to Liberty Spring Party

On Thursday, May 28th Tribute to Liberty's Spring Party took place in Toronto at the Paddock restaurant. The evening was an informal gathering where guests mingled and learned more about Tribute to Liberty and about each other—the communities and individuals involved in the project of having a memorial to the victims of totalitarian communism built in Ottawa.

Supporters and representatives from a wide range of communities attended the party. Among official representatives were: Mr. Olexandr Danyleiko, Consul General of Ukraine in Toronto; Ms. Alina Opyd, Vice-Consul of the Republic of Poland (Toronto); Mr. Laas Leivat (and his wife Ellen Leivat), Estonian Honorary Consul General (Ontario); Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon, President, Polish Canadian Congress; Mr. Walter Friesen, Treasurer, International Mennonite Memorial Committee for the Former Soviet Union (IMMC-FSU); Mr. Joseph Cermak, President, SOKOL Canada & Member of The Open Book Group; Mr. Kyung Bok Lee, President, The Council for Human Rights in North Korea; Mr. Ismael Sambra, President, Cuban Canadian Foundation, Mr. David Levy, Human Rights Affairs Director, Cuban Canadian Foundation; Mr. Frank Jecmen, Masaryk Memorial Institute; and Mrs. Alice Huynh, Falun Dafa Association of Canada.

Tribute to Liberty Board Member Ms. Reet Marten-Sehr read greetings from Hon. Jason Kenney, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration & Multiculturalism, and Hon. Peter Kent, Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas), as well as a message from Mr. Charles Coffey, the project's new Honorary Chair. The text of both greetings is included below.

Tribute to Liberty Board Chair, Mrs. Alide Forstmanis, announced that Tribute to Liberty and The Open Book Group have agreed to submit a single proposal to the National Capital Commission (NCC) under the name of Tribute to Liberty with a formal relationship with The Open Book Group and the integration of key players of The Open Book Group into Tribute to Liberty. "Our objective is to work with the NCC to resolve as quickly as possible any questions they might have regarding the proposal, so that land for the monument can be allocated, and a ground breaking can take place November 2009," Mrs. Forstmanis said.

She continued, "The reason for wanting the ground breaking ceremony this November is to make it possible for older victims of crimes of communism to experience recognition. Also, it will come on the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. Once land has been allocated a design competition will take place. When we get to this stage, details of the competition will be announced."

Mrs. Forstmanis also spoke of the need to raise funds for the project: "Further, Tribute to Liberty will now concentrate on serious fundraising—approximately \$1.5 million is needed, according to NCC guidelines, for a major monument in Ottawa."

Greetings from the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism

I am pleased to extend my warmest greetings to those taking part in the Tribute to Liberty spring party. On behalf of Prime Minister Stephen Harper, I would like to commend the members of Tribute to Liberty for your unyielding stance against the injustices of Communism.

I am proud to live in a country that embraces diversity and champions the values of democracy, freedom, human rights and the rule of law. As you all gather here at this event, remember that all the work that you have done to spread awareness of the historical injustices committed by

Communist regimes has given a voice to those who have been silenced and otherwise forgotten. Through these efforts the atrocities committed and the sacrifices endured will live on in the memories of our future generations and will serve as a warning to help to ensure that certain acts of government will not be tolerated.

Your organization is a champion for democracy and espouses all the values of Canadian society. For this, I would like to thank you, and I wish you all great success in the years to come.

*Sincerely,
The Honourable Jason Kenney, PC, MP
Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism*

Greetings from the Minister of State of Foreign Affairs

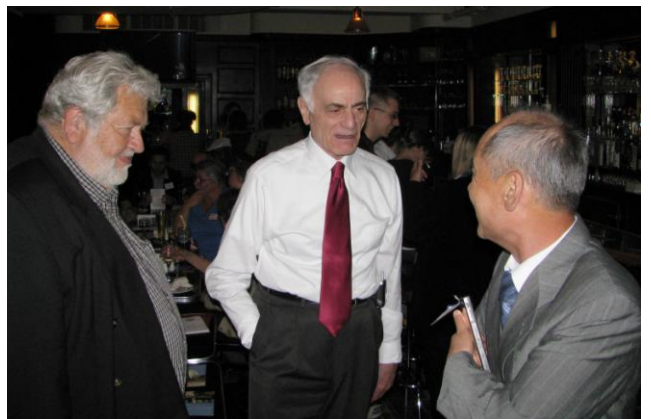
I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations and warm wishes to all of you on the occasion of tonight's event, which is dedicated to the "Victims of Crimes of Communism."

As your organization marks twenty years commemorating the liberated and united people of Europe, it is quite befitting that you are attempting to establish a memorial in our nation's capital that will forever embody the memory of those that survived the oppression of those regimes. I extend to you my greatest respect for the sacrifices of you and your fellow citizens that persevered through the dark times of this particular ideology.

The quote that your organization chose in its newsletter by the great poet, Alexander Solzhentisyn is particularly poignant in its argument for democracy as a true path to freedom, when it states: "Let the lie come into the world, let it even triumph, but not through me."

I look forward to continuing our strong relationship with your members and I wish you all happiness, health and success.

*Sincerely,
Hon. Peter Kent, PC, MP
Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas)*



NCC Proposal Update

At the end of June 2009 Tribute to Liberty re-submitted its proposal to the National Capital Commission (NCC). The joint proposal includes contributions from Founding Partner The Open Book Group, and also takes into consideration several recommendations the NCC brought forward in March 2009. Tribute to Liberty and The Open Book Group are now working with the NCC to bring the project to the implementation stage.

Philip Leong Named as Honorary Patron

Born in Macau, Philip Leong attended the Salesian Catholic school system and became a Catholic. He went on to complete his education in Canada at the University of Saskatchewan, earning a degree in economics and political science and furthered his education in finance, eventually being awarded the designations of Canadian Investment Manager (CIM) and Fellow of the Canadian Securities Institute (FCSI).

In 1984, Philip began his banking and finance career in Asia, where he became one of the youngest Chief Traders at that time. His talents in financial markets in Asia brought him to Canada in 1987 where he has become one of the top money managers on Bay Street.

Philip has been a highly respected member of the Chinese community for a number of years. Despite his busy schedule as one of Bay Street's top Investment Managers, Philip has consistently made time to support cultural events and activities in the Chinese community. As a recognized and respected community leader, the Government of Canada often consults Philip for advice in areas such as supporting new immigrants to Canada. In addition to his time, Mr. Leong generously contributes to settlement services, charities, and Chinese cultural events.

In 2000, Philip was made President of the C.A.M. (Chinese Association of Mississauga) where he is currently a Director. Philip is also Chairman & Director of the Chinese Canadian Intercultural Association, a position he has held since 2001.

Philip has always been highly interested in public policy, especially when it involves human rights and freedoms. This interest led him to create and personally fund "The Liberty Foundation," which has a double mandate: first, the promotion of international freedom and democracy, and second, to help new immigrants settle in Canada.

Recognizing that a strong education was a key factor for his success, Philip takes an interest in giving others the same opportunity to pursue an education. Philip contributes the largest individual scholarship at the University of Toronto, a grant to MBA students at the Mississauga campus. He also has set up a scholarship with the Overseas Compatriot Affairs Commission with the Government of Taiwan, for university students.

Since 2007, Philip continues to donate to the surgical centre at the Toronto General East Hospital.

Philip is not only a philanthropist, but his interest in promoting

and preserving Chinese culture has resulted in him becoming a collector of fine Chinese art. Philip is currently in the process of having his collection displayed in local museums.

Tribute to Liberty is excited to have Philip as the Honorary Patron for having a memorial to the victims of totalitarian communism built in Ottawa.

A Quote to Remember

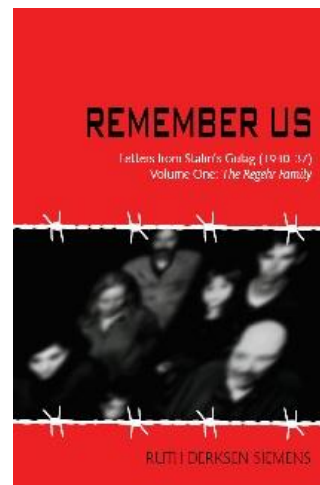
Warsaw, Moscow, Budapest, Berlin, Prague, Sofia and Bucharest have become stages in a long pilgrimage toward liberty. It is admirable that in these events, entire peoples spoke out — women, young people, men, overcoming fears, their irrepressible thirst for liberty speeded up developments, made walls tumble down and opened gates.

-John Paul II

History Unhidden

Letters from Hell

"Remember us!" is a father's plea for his family in a Gulag prison camp. "Do not forget us!" he writes to his readers in a small Canadian prairie town. Yet, writing letters to the "West" during Stalin's regime was a criminal offence according to NKVD documents. Millions were sentenced to Stalin's Gulag of over 2000 prison camps. The survival rate was one winter.



An entire family was arrested in their home village of Altonau, Ukraine in 1931. Father Jasch Regehr, mother Maria (Bargen) Regehr and their six children were declared "enemies of the State" and exiled to northern Siberia. They were assigned a space 5' X 5' in a three-story barrack. From this crowded place they wrote letters to their family in Canada.

Little Lena Regehr is only eight years old when she is arrested with her family for crimes against the state. But she too is guilty and sentenced to prison in Stalin's Gulag.

From her cramped barrack, Lena writes a letter to her Aunt Liese. The large, carefully crafted script of a young child bears witness to Lena's age. Her childhood innocence has been shattered. Her father is dying and she is hungry. Lena's

descriptions of her surroundings appear almost "normal". Her prison camp has a doctor, a store and post office. But behind the façade of normality, Lena and her sisters scavenge for potato peelings in the garbage behind the officers' quarters. Prison guards read her letter which can only be sent to locations inside the Soviet Union. When she walks outside, she is watched by guards with dogs. Her "school" is where the children of kulaks are re-educated – where a new ideology replaces their former values. It is here that Lena is questioned: What do your parents talk about? – Do they complain about communism? – Do they write letters? – Who do they write to? It is also in this place where Lena and her classmates are told to bid farewell to their mothers who are accused of heinous crimes.

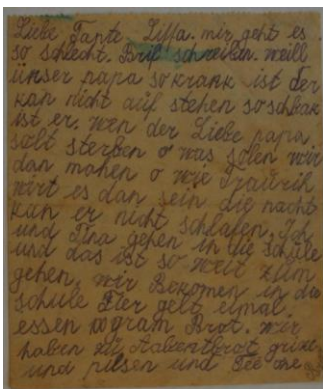
After 25 years in the prison camp system, Lena and her surviving siblings were released in 1956. However, she only felt truly liberated when she left Russia in 1989. With her daughter Ludmila, and two granddaughters she finally lives in freedom in Cologne, Germany.

Lena's Letter (1931)

Dear Aunt Liese,

I really do not like writing letters. Our Papa is so sick he can no longer get up. If our dear Papa should die, what will become of us? How sad that would be. He just cannot sleep during the night. Tina and I go to school and it is so far to walk. For those that pay, the school provides 1 meal a day -- 100 grams of bread. For supper we have porridge and mushrooms and tea, without bread or sugar. Today, in the store, they actually had flour and sugar for sale. Our Tina went to the Soviet very early this morning and earned 1 litre milk. Now maybe we can cook rice soup, and that tastes so very good. Write me a letter too.

Greetings and a kiss from your dear niece, Lena Regehr



The plea to "Remember Us" must not be forgotten. A total of 463 letters written in the 1930s have been preserved. One-third of the letters are from prison camps in the Gulag; the remainder are from southern Ukrainian villages during the Holodomor (1932-3). The website www.gulagletters.com provides more information about the letters and the book. The trailer of the documentary film can also be viewed.

(Submitted by Ruth Derksen)

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 totalitarian 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 _____

City _____

Province _____ Postal Code _____

Phone (____) _____

Email _____

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

\$50 _____ Other _____

Please make cheques payable to: Tribute to Liberty
Please mail contribution to: Tribute to Liberty, P.O. Box 84558,
2336 Bloor Street West, Toronto, Ontario M6S 4Z7

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