



# TRIBUTE TO LIBERTY News

Commemorating the Victims of Totalitarian Communism

Volume 3, Issue 3  
Summer 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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## Message from Tribute to Liberty Chair of the Board

As those of you who follow Tribute to Liberty's activities and accomplishments know, our fundraising challenge continues.

I want to be frank with our supporters and donors and those interested in our project: we continue to work away at fundraising by promoting the project with potential donors and affected communities; however, we are not making the progress we had hoped for, or which the project timeline demands.

Why is this? The reasons are many and complex, but I will mention two of them here. First, the subject matter of the memorial is difficult for many to grasp or come to terms with. Many people do not appreciate the need to commemorate these victims, nor do they understand the full nature of Communism and its crimes—there are many who would like this issue to simply go away. The history of this project is a history of resistance—to exposing Communism for what it is, and further, to allowing a small, new organization to quickly take flight and achieve the important task of building the memorial. We meet this challenge by continually reaching out to individuals and communities, to educate and persuade.

Second, as I alluded to above, Tribute to Liberty is a small, young organization that has had to continually “prove” itself to communities and the general public. Who are we and why should we be trusted with this project that is important to so many? To this I point out our success—in particular, winning approval from the National Capital Commission (NCC) to build the memorial on federal land, negotiating for a choice piece of land for the memorial in downtown Ottawa, and establishing ourselves as a registered charity. These were not easy goals to accomplish.

Since August 2010, with the NCC approval, allocated land and charitable status in hand, we have gone out to community leaders to enlist their help in fundraising, and to individuals who are capable of making large donations. I would love to be able to report to you that we have had big successes this past year, as we had during the first two years when we received approval, the land and the charitable status. Instead, I will share with you some information about our financial situation.

Over the course of the three years of the project we have raised just over \$100,000. Most of this has gone to operational costs, the bulk of which is spent on a consultant who coordinates the project for the board, the members of which are volunteers and do not have time to look after the administrative and communications work the project requires. The consultant has generously charged a “pay-what-you-can” monthly fee which has varied over the years. I assure you Tribute to Liberty works on a very streamlined operational model. While we cannot reduce our operations to zero, we need to start building up the funds required to begin the design competition.

And now I have a question for our supporters and those interested in the project: if you have not already donated, why not? If you believe in this project and want to see the memorial built, please realize that all that is holding it back is a lack of donations flowing in. To embark on the next stage of the project—the national design competition—we need to have approximately two-thirds of the cost of constructing the memorial in place, roughly \$700,000.

I would like to end by saying that I welcome feedback, input, questions, etc. from anyone

who is interested in what we are doing. And again, please donate! Our Pathway to Liberty campaign allows donors to make a dedication or tell a story of a victim of Communism. Visit it on our website and donate today: [www.tributetoliberty.ca](http://www.tributetoliberty.ca)

Sincerely,  
Mrs. Alide Forstmanis  
alide1@rogers.com

## **Tribute to Liberty Invited to Speak at Institute for Liberal Studies Summer Seminar**

The Institute for Liberal Studies invited Tribute to Liberty Board Chair Alide Forstmanis to speak at its annual Summer Seminar, held in Orono, Ontario at the beginning of August. The event is held on the property of the Jaworski family who came from Communist Poland in the early '80s. Peter Jaworski runs the Institute for Liberal Studies.

Alide spoke for approximately 40 minutes about the memorial project, and answered questions for another 20 minutes following her presentation.

Tribute to Liberty's attendance at this event was an opportunity to reach out to Canadians who are passionate about liberty, which the memorial represents.

## **Memorial Project Mentioned in Prime Minister's Statement on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Construction of the Berlin Wall**

Prime Minister Harper spoke of the memorial project in his August 13<sup>th</sup> statement marking the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the construction of the Berlin Wall:

*Fifty years ago, the world saw Germany divided in two, with Berlin severed by the construction of the Berlin Wall, with the West retaining its rights and freedoms and the East succumbing to Communist oppression.*

*The Berlin Wall became symbolic of division in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century – an imposing cement slab that became an integral part of the Iron Curtain between Western Europe and the Eastern Bloc. It also became a symbol of tyranny and evil as many innocent people fleeing communism were gunned down in their attempt to find freedom on the other side of the Wall in West Berlin.*

*During the Cold War, many apologists for the Communist regime tried to convince the world that their ideology was superior. Fortunately, talented and courageous artists, writers and ordinary citizens were able to expose that what went on behind the Wall ran counter to all the ideals*

*the West had fought for and the truth began to trickle out.*

*Canada is proud to have stood with those who opposed all that the Berlin Wall came to represent. We are also proud to have welcomed, over the years, people who escaped Communist oppression, including those who fled the Soviet Union's brutal crackdowns in central Europe in the 1950s and 1960s.*

*Today, we continue to see the consequences of the dire legacy of communist totalitarianism and blind ideology, which continues to divide North from South Korea. Like the East Germany of the past, the North Korea of today continues to forcibly prevent its population from building better lives at home or abroad.*

*In the 2010 Speech from the Throne, the Government of Canada announced support for the establishment of a National Monument to the Victims of Communism. This monument shall stand as a reminder that all political systems are not the same, that our democracy and our freedoms are to be cherished, exercised and protected.*

*Today, a piece of the Berlin Wall can be viewed in Canada's War Museum, a reminder of all Canadians who served in West Germany to defend freedom and democracy during the Cold War.*

*Let it also be a reminder that Canada remains a vigorous defender of freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law on the world stage today.*

## **Tribute to Liberty in the News**

Tribute to Liberty has received wide media coverage over the past few years by actively pitching story ideas and talking to journalists. Articles and interviews have appeared in major dailies as well as community and campus papers. Most recently, Tribute to Liberty was featured on Sun News TV, the Saigon Broadcasting Television Network and in the *Ottawa Citizen* and *Maclean's*.

## **History Unhidden *The Jaworski Family Story***

The decision was made. It was November of 1984, and we thought we were never going back to Poland. We would see what life would bring us in the foreign new world. The free world. Our children will have a better future there, we thought. And they would eventually forgive us for probably never seeing their beloved grandparents again.

In a foreign world without knowledge of the language, we would stand on shaky legs. We were 31 years old, at the same time very young and old to start our lives over from the beginning. But in August we had made this decision.

As a young married couple we lived in prosperity

according to Polish conditions. We had a townhouse and a car, which amounts to luxury. My husband Lech was a dentist, and we could afford to have me devote myself to raising the children, rather than working professionally. To tell you the truth, it didn't really matter; even when I was working as a part-time high school physics teacher, if I saved every penny of my earnings I would have made enough for exactly one shoe. Lech joked that he would have to finance the other one.

In Poland, after graduating medical school everyone had to work full-time, which meant working every day for seven hours at a state-run practice. The Poles had the luxury of having doctors and dentists in health centres on each subdivision, and even in every school.

Doctors and dentists were on state salary, the lowest-paying occupational group, as were teachers. The socialist system forced highly-educated people to work for pennies. At the same time, it also forced them into the black market. A popular saying was that doctors, dentists and teachers would earn extra anyway. Teachers would moonlight as tutors, and doctors accepted patients privately in public clinics after hours.

We wanted to live honestly, and so soon after Lech graduated we opened a private dental office with money we received from our parents. It was terrible drudgery. He would work practically for free in a school for seven hours during the day, and then privately until night.

Even with a decent income life was difficult. The stores were empty. Clothing, furniture, food... literally everything we had to somehow "earn". Without knowing the right people, you weren't able to live. We bought everything in the black market for big money.

We were young and we wanted to live life to the fullest. We invited friends to garden parties, where once we roasted a whole piglet. At a time when food was rationed, such feasts were not welcomed by jealous neighbours. We were informed that officials had started to take an interest in us.

We survived martial law. We saw tanks in our streets, and soldiers with weapons at every intersection. Once at night a friend knocked on our door who was being chased by the police for "illegal" activity. Of course we let him hide in our home, we had been witness to civilians being brutally beaten by the army. In the midst of feeling a terrible fear, there grew in us a desire for rebellion. Why is it like this? People were living like slaves in their own country. Is this what awaits our children? We couldn't stand it any longer.

We established contacts with our fellow classmates who worked for Solidarnosc. We also wanted to do something. I remember how at the bottom of the stroller I would first place pamphlets, then linen, then my tiny daughter Agata. My son Peter was a year older and was taking his first independent steps. We would walk together and distribute pro-freedom pamphlets to people we knew.

One day Roman, a fellow physicist, knocked on our door. In Poland, a knock on the door was always something that made you nervous. You never knew if it was a friend, or a police officer. But it was Roman, who worked at the underground radio station, Radio Free Poland. He asked if he could hide a radio transmitter in our house. That way, it would make it more difficult for the authorities to shut down the radio station. If they found one transmitter, there would be others, and the show would continue. We knew we were taking a big risk, but we could not refuse. Maybe it would be our small contribution in the fight for freedom and a better life for our children.

At one point my fear of being discovered for pamphleteering overwhelmed me. What if they have suspicions? Quickly, I took all of the remaining pamphlets and burned them in the backyard. I was sure to burn every last one.



Our closest friends had already fled Poland. They wrote to us, telling us how different life was in the West. I got letters from Canada. They smelled of freedom and adventure.

After martial law was lifted, we applied for passports to leave Poland. At the time, nobody managed to get passports for the whole family. The policy was that either the children or one spouse had to stay in Poland to guarantee a return. Most would bribe the officials.

To this day we don't know why we got passports for all four of us. I think the officials did not believe that we -- with a house, a car, with a life of "prosperity" -- would not return.

It's November, and we've crossed the border into a free country. We get a message from Lech's mother: the police would like to have a meeting with him. What was this about? Did they know about the pamphlets? But I burned them all. Did they find the radio transmitter? Did they want to talk about the backyard parties? Or was it just about a simple parking ticket?

We still haven't found out. We never returned. We lacked the courage.

*Written by Marta Jaworski, translated by her son, Peter.*

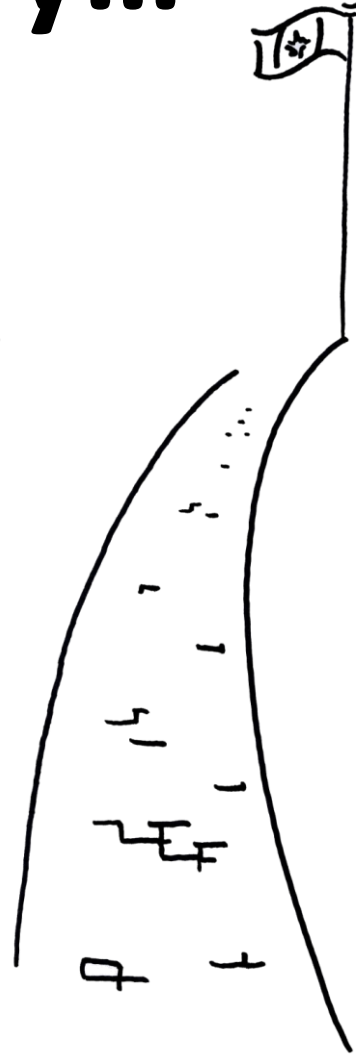
# Tell Your Story...

## 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](http://tributetoliberty.ca).

*For more information about Tribute to Liberty and the Memorial to Victims of Communism, visit [tributetoliberty.ca](http://tributetoliberty.ca).*



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### 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

**Tribute to Liberty is a registered charity. Charitable Number: 814999660RR0001**