



MEMORIAL TO THE VICTIMS OF  
**COMMUNISM**  
TRIBUTE TO LIBERTY



# Newsletter

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## Project Update

The National Capital Commission (NCC) concluded on-site construction in spring 2022. A site visit of the completed plinth and gathering space was held on July 8<sup>th</sup> with Tribute to Liberty Board Chair, Ludwik Klimkowski, and senior NCC and Canadian Heritage officials (see photos below and on next page).

In parallel, work has been moving ahead on the fabrication of the Arc of Memory. The NCC has been working with Dymech Engineering, an established Ottawa-based company specializing in metal fabrication, to finalize plans for the design and construction of the Arc of Memory. Dymech's proposal was presented to Tribute to Liberty board members on July 11<sup>th</sup> and has been green lit to proceed. The Memorial is currently slated to be completed in late fall 2023, with a detailed schedule to be announced once the NCC's fabrication contract with Dymech is executed.



July 8<sup>th</sup> site visit with completed plinth and gathering space.



July 8<sup>th</sup> site visit with plinth and gathering space completed.



July 8<sup>th</sup> site visit participants including Tribute to Liberty Board Chair Ludwik Klimkowski, front row centre; Deputy Minister of Canadian Heritage Isabelle Mondou, front row right; Assistant Deputy Minister of Sport, Major Events and Commemorations at Canadian Heritage Emmanuelle Sajous, second row second from left; Vice-President of Capital Stewardship at the National Capital Commission Anne Ménard, front row left; Vice-President, Design and Construction at the National Capital Commission Pierre Vaillancourt, second row right; and various NCC and Heritage staff.

## R.I.P. Markus Hess, 1953 - 2022

On June 2, 2022, Tribute to Liberty very sadly lost its board member Markus Hess. Markus fought Communism and its evil for many years. Tribute to Liberty would like to recognize the contributions Markus made to this fight, including his work as a Tribute to Liberty board member.

Markus was born on December 23, 1953, to Pille and Gerhard Hess in Kitchener, Ontario, and grew up in New Dundee. Markus studied Mechanical Engineering at the University of Waterloo (Class of 1979) and was granted

15 patents during his professional career in a wide range of technologies including jet engine testing, plastic emulsion, skyscraper erection and ice crystal nucleation.

Much of Markus' life was spent advocating for the rights and freedoms of individuals. He was the founder of Black Ribbon Day, a global demonstration against human rights violations by the Soviet Union. Markus also initiated and organized the naming of the Freedom Arches at Toronto City Hall.

He served his community in various capacities. In addition to serving as a board member of Tribute to Liberty, Markus was a Chairman for the committee for the Peaceful Transition to Democracy, President of the Estonian Central Council in Canada, and Chairman of the Central and Eastern European Council of Canada. Markus was elected to the Congress of Estonia and served as a delegate to the Estonian World Congress.

Markus was recognized for his political contributions as the recipient of the Gold Cross of Merit from the Estonian Community in Canada, the Gold Cross from the Republic of Poland, and he was named to the Order of the White Star by the Republic of Estonia.



Markus Hess, 1953 – 2022.

## Tribute to Liberty Attends Opening of VOC Museum in D.C.

On June 8<sup>th</sup>, Tribute to Liberty Chair Ludwik Klimkowski attended the opening of the Victims of Communism Museum in Washington, D.C.

The museum, a project of the Victims of Communism

Memorial Foundation, features a detailed history of Communism and the heroic struggles of those who resisted it.

The \$40 million project is the first museum in the world dedicated to the victims of Communism. The museum has three permanent galleries and approximately 10,000 square feet in space in a Beaux Arts mansion in centrally located McPherson Square.

In a review of the museum, the *Wall Street Journal* states that the museum “delivers a short, shocking history lesson in brutality and deceit, along with inspiring studies in courage and a jarring relevance.” It “unsparingly illustrates the most murderous ideology of modern times.”

Lee Edwards, co-founder and chairman emeritus of the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, told *National Review*: “We see the museum as a cornerstone of the national education program and campaign. We see it as an important part of our mission to educate young Americans... about the history, legacy, and ideology of communism... We feel that once we have done that, we will have been able to make them understand that they will not want to vote for a socialist and that communism is not only bad but evil.”

The museum has been more than 30 years in the making, starting with an idea from Anne Edwards, the wife of Lee Edwards, who was the driving force behind the creation of the museum. The museum was funded by private donors and contributions from countries like Poland, Hungary, Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia.

For more information about the museum, visit [vocmuseum.org](http://vocmuseum.org).



Ludwik Klimkowski with Lee Edwards.



Opening of the museum by Lee Edwards, Andrew Bremberg along with several guests and dignitaries.



Tribute to Liberty Board Chair Ludwik Klimkowski with Ambassador Andrew Bremberg, President and CEO of the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation.

## History Unhidden *Ukraine Deportations*

*The following is a presentation given by Prof. John Jaworsky at the Commemoration of the June 14, 1941 Baltic Deportations, which took place at Nathan Phillips Square in Toronto on June 14, 2022. Prof. Jaworsky is Professor Emeritus of Political Science at the University of Waterloo.*

Thank you for the very kind introduction. I am honoured to be here today, at this ceremony. I am doubly honoured because, to the best of my knowledge, I have no roots in the Baltic region, and am here because the organizers of this event decided to honour those, in Ukraine, who are bravely fighting a ruthless opponent in a brutal war which followed the invasion of Ukraine by Russia on February 24 of this year.

There is something rather cold, almost clinical, about the term “deportation”, as well as another term used to describe the same phenomenon – “forced population transfer”. These terms, as well as the scholarly literature on this topic, do little to help us comprehend the essence of the human tragedies of those who experienced one of the greatest traumas that can be imagined.... to be uprooted, with little or no warning, from your home and native land, and transported, in atrocious conditions, to a far-away, forbidding, foreign territory.



The testimonies of those who survived deportation provide us with valuable insights into these tragedies. And an important role can also be played by the arts – by novels and short stories, films, and music – which try to provide us with a better understanding of what lies behind the cold and clinical term “deportation”.

Still, memories fade. Even those who were small children in June 1941 have passed away or are now very elderly. Some of those who were deported, however, wrote about their experiences, or were interviewed, or tried to pass on an understanding of what they experienced to their children and grandchildren. We thank them for this, although we also recognize that some deportees were so traumatized that they had no desire to talk, or write, or be interviewed, about their terrible experiences.

Some recent events, however, remind us, in a very unfortunate way, about these events of the now quite distant past. Here I am referring, of course, to recent developments in Ukraine.

I won't dwell on the historical background to these

developments. But it's worth noting that Western Ukraine, like the Baltic states, experienced the repression and deportation of much of its population after it was occupied by the Soviet Union in 1939. On a personal note -- my family was affected as well. My late father's elder brother, a reserve officer in the Polish armed forces, was one of the victims of the infamous Katyn massacres. His wife, a schoolteacher in poor health, was deported and died working on a collective farm in Central Asia, in Kazakhstan. My late father was arrested in 1939 and spent 2 years in the Soviet GULag. Fortunately, in 1941, as a former citizen of Poland, he was released and allowed to leave the Soviet Union as part of the Polish Anders Army. And my mother, a resident of Ukraine's capital city, Kyiv, was deported to Germany as an “ostarbeiter” (Eastern worker). I won't dwell more on my family's experience, but unfortunately it was by no means unique... And here Ukraine, especially western Ukraine, and the Baltic states, have much in common.

I am well acquainted with the theme of deportation in the context of Ukraine. Beginning in the 1990s, for example, I made many trips to Crimea before it was occupied by Russia. Here it was my great privilege to meet and get to know many of the children and grandchildren of the Crimean Tatars who were all deported, with no exceptions, in 1944, as one of the so-called “punished peoples” of the Soviet Union. Generally deported to Central Asian republics such as Uzbekistan, they were allowed to return to their homeland, Crimea, just before the Soviet Union collapsed. They have been strong supporters of Ukraine's independence, and as a result, they have been harshly persecuted in recent years by the Russian administration.

Ukraine was the scene of many other deportations. As in the case of the Baltic states, there were deportations from Western Ukraine after WWII. In addition, there was a massive population transfer, after WWII, between Poland and Ukraine, and an internal deportation, within Poland, whereby Ukrainians were uprooted from their traditional lands in the Carpathian mountains and resettled in former German territories transferred to Poland in the wake of WWII.

But it is recent developments in Ukraine, and the current war between Russia and Ukraine, which is the main reason for my presence here today. As a result of this war, Russia has now occupied additional Ukrainian territory, in addition to what it occupied earlier, in 2014. At this point, a total of some 20% of Ukraine's territory is now held by Russia.

Unfortunately, we don't always have good and reliable information about conditions in the newly-occupied territories of Ukraine. We do know, however, the following....

In these occupied territories, those who openly support Ukraine and actively oppose Russia's control of these territories, have in some cases simply disappeared. Others have been harassed and, if they continue their activities, they are persecuted, detained, and then often imprisoned in Russia.

We also have a new and distinctive form of deportation. Ukrainians who live in cities or towns besieged by Russian forces, and desperate to get away from brutal and indiscriminate Russian bombardment which has killed or wounded many civilians, are often unable to reach territory held by Ukraine. If detained by Russian forces, these Ukrainians, usually women with young children, are told that they can only avoid the fighting if they agree to go to Russia. After undergoing humiliating searches and difficult conditions in so-called "filtration" camps, these women and children are then deprived of their passports and arbitrarily sent to destinations, in Russia, often far from the border with Ukraine. Conditions there are better than they were in Stalin's Soviet Union, but the circumstances are similar. Large numbers of Ukrainians find themselves stranded, against their will, in a country which is destroying their homeland, and where they are expected to assimilate. In mid-May of this year, Ukraine's human rights ombudswoman stated that Russia had relocated more than 200 thousand children during the current war, and more than a million adults found themselves in Russia against their will.

International humanitarian law classifies the forced mass deportation of people during a conflict as a war crime, and "forcibly transferring children", in particular, is considered to be genocide, the most serious of war crimes.

Please also keep in mind that the Ukrainians who have left Ukraine for other parts of Europe, or for North America, are not, of course, voluntary migrants. If conditions allow, and let us hope that is the case, the great majority of those who have left Ukraine and have gone abroad will return to, and will help rebuild, their native country. In fact, many of those who left Ukraine in the last few months have already returned to Ukraine, although the fighting there continues.

As for Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, they have done a great deal to help Ukraine during its current time of

troubles. In fact, on a per capita basis, Estonia and, I believe, Latvia and Lithuania as well, have done much more than Ukraine's supporters elsewhere in the west. The Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian diasporas are also doing what they can to assist Ukraine, and we hope that this will continue. On behalf of the Ukrainian-Canadian community, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your support. Thousands of Ukrainian soldiers, and thousands of civilians, have already died and will continue to die during this bloody war. But I am confident, as are my fellow countrymen here in Canada, and in Ukraine, that we will prevail. And Ukraine, I am sure, will remember those who stood with Ukraine during its greatest time of need.

Slava Ukraini!

## More Memorial Site Photos

