

TRIBUTE TO LIBERTY

News

Commemorating the Victims of the Crimes of Communism

Winter 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.

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

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

For more information about Tribute to Liberty see our web site: www.tributetoliberty.ca



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Welcome

Welcome to the first issue of *Tribute to Liberty News*. Our newsletter is a quarterly publication with Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall issues. Please email us at info@tributetoliberty.ca if you would like to add an email address to our distribution list.

We hope you enjoy the latest news about Tribute to Liberty and our project of having a memorial built in Ottawa to the Victims of the Crimes of Communism.

Message from the Chair of Tribute to Liberty

A memorial in Ottawa to the Victims of Communism is important and long overdue. Almost 30% of today's Canadians have a link to Communism. They are here because their forefathers or they themselves fled from it. However, too few Canadians know about the emotional and physical pain and hardships Communism has caused. On November 9, 2009, 20 years will have passed since the fall of the Berlin wall, which led to regained freedom for many East European countries. A memorial to all who suffered and endured pain, and still do, will be recognition by Canadians and the Canadian government of these long ignored and denied sufferings. This memorial is also meant for Canadians to value and be vigilant about their freedoms and liberties.

On behalf of the Board of Tribute to Liberty, I truly thank all project initiators, like Minister Jason Kenney, who suggested the memorial be built in Ottawa, and Ms. Zuzana Hahn and Mr. Joe Cermak, who passionately and uninterruptedly worked to inform the public about it.

Alide Forstmanis, Board Chair
Tribute to Liberty

Tribute to Liberty Christmas Party

Tribute to Liberty held its inaugural event on December 10, 2008 at the Faculty Club of the University of Toronto Mississauga. Friends and supporters of the project gathered to meet and discuss the project, and to enjoy some holiday cheer.



Reet Marten Sehr, a member of the Tribute to Liberty Board, gave a Power Point presentation about Tribute to Liberty. It included a call for support from all the communities in Canada that have been affected by Communism in their countries of origin.

Greetings from The Honourable Jason Kenney, P.C., M.P., Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism were read. Minister Kenney had been scheduled to attend the event until bad weather in Ottawa caused delays that prevented his participation.

Minister Kenney's greetings for the evening were: *Although I cannot be with you, I would like to extend my warmest greetings to those attending the Tribute to Liberty Christmas Party. On behalf of Prime Minister Stephen Harper, I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the members of Tribute to Liberty for spreading awareness about the many great historical injustices perpetrated by Communist regimes.*

I was proud to be a member of the parliament that unanimously voted to recognize November 22nd as Ukrainian Famine and Genocide Memorial Day. Recognizing the Holodomor, and other such atrocities, as acts of genocide expresses the fundamental values of democracy, freedom and the rule of law that all Canadians embrace. By increasing awareness of historical injustices and atrocities, we are able to help ensure that they will not be repeated. I hope that you can take this opportunity to reflect on the meaningful work that Tribute to Liberty has undertaken so far. Thank you for your efforts in shining a light on these dark periods of history that have affected so many.

Representatives from many of the project's supportive communities were in attendance, including Polish, Czech, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Cuban, Armenian, Estonian, Latvian, Mennonite, and Ukrainian communities.



Several dignitaries were present, including: Richard Krpac, Consul General for the Czech Republic; Laas Leivat, Honorary Consul General for the Republic of Estonia; and Andrzej Krężel, Consul for the Republic of Poland. Mr. Krężel spoke to the group, expressing his deep enthusiasm and support for the project. Tribute to Liberty plans on having another event in the spring.

NCC Proposal Submitted!

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.

Thank you to all who provided letters of support for the proposal—each and every letter submitted makes more evident the strength of purpose this project has.

Advisory Council Established

Tribute to Liberty is now establishing an Advisory Council. The Council's role is to bring to the table the range of perspectives and experiences from people affected by the Crimes of Communism—victims, observers, descendants, commentators—individuals who can ensure that the memorial has the most fulsome expression of the struggle for liberty that

opposition to the Crimes of Communism has represented.

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.

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. For more information about Tribute to Liberty's Advisory Council please email info@tributetoliberty.ca.

Web Site Launched!

Tribute to Liberty is very excited to announce the launch of the web site: www.tributetoliberty.ca. We hope to expand upon the site in the future, to develop it as an educational tool about the Crimes of Communism. Please visit!

We are currently building up the Resources page on the site. If you have suggestions for books or films that have educational value in terms of promoting understanding of the Crimes of Communism, please pass on your suggestion to info@tributetoliberty.ca.

Screening of Korean Film Crossing

On December 29, 2008 the first feature film on the refugee crisis in North Korea had its premiere screening at the Garden Church in North York. The screening was organized by The Council for Human Rights in North Korea.

Based on the life of a North Korean defector and his family, director Kim Tae Gyun's film gives an account of the hardships of North Korean refugees as they flee famine and persecution.



Alide Forstmanis, Board Chair of Tribute to Liberty, spoke at the screening. Her remarks that evening were: *On behalf of Tribute to Liberty I'd like to thank Mr. Kyung Bok Lee for this opportunity to raise funds for Tribute to Liberty. Further, I'd*

like to thank Mr. Lee and the Korean community for giving other communities a chance to get more informed about the poor human rights conditions in North Korea. Also, I'd like to thank Mr. Lee for his generosity and hospitality and for this real step in cooperating with other communities with a similar history and common goal.

Tribute to Liberty's objective is to have a memorial to victims of Communist crimes built in Ottawa within 2 years. The reason is many victims are elderly, in their 80's and up, and need to be able to experience Canada's recognition of their sufferings. Younger Canadians need to get informed about the Crimes of Communism. With a memorial in place and educational materials available ministries of education and school boards should have the means to include teachings about the Crimes of Communism in history curricula.

Let us never forget that three-quarters of all crimes against humanity have been committed by communist regimes.

A portion of the proceeds from the evening was donated to Tribute to Liberty to have the memorial to the Victims of the Crimes of Communism built in Ottawa. Thanks to all who attended for their generous support of the project!

Divine Performing Arts Raises Funds for Tribute to Liberty

A portion of ticket sales from the Divine Performing Arts 2009 World Tour performances in Toronto and Kitchener-Waterloo is going toward having the memorial to the Victims of the Crimes of Communism built in Ottawa. Thanks to all who attended for their generous contribution to the project!



The performances were presented by the Falun Dafa Association of Toronto and New Tang Dynasty Television (Toronto).

The Soviet Story Coming to Toronto

The critically acclaimed *The Soviet Story* will be coming to Toronto in Spring 2009, along with its Latvian writer and director Edvins Šnore.

The Soviet Story tells the story 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*)



For more information please contact info@tributetoliberty.ca. The film's web site is: www.sovietstory.com.

A Quote to Remember

The most encouraging thing about the Soviet regime was its failure. If it had succeeded...I would have known that there were no limits to the extent to which human beings could be terrorized and enslaved.

-Malcolm Muggeridge

History Unhidden

How One Canadian Soldier Saved the Lives of Thousands: A Story of Forced Repatriation Blocked

Why certain parts of history are well known and others are not is complicated and often involves a web of politics and power struggles that is difficult to untangle. One thing is clear, however: there are stories of both horror and heroism that need to be told. History Unhidden is one, small voice in the telling of what happened during Communism—the extent of the crimes, as well as the contributions of those who were willing to stand up for the Truth.

The story of how a Canadian soldier saved thousands of Slovenians from being brutalized by Tito's Communist partisans at the end of World War II is known by only a handful of Canadians.

In May 1945 Major Paul Barre, a 38-year-old Canadian soldier from Quebec serving with the Allied Military Government for Occupied Territories (AMGOT), was in charge of a civilian refugee camp in Viktring, Austria. There were 6,000 Slovenians in the camp who had fled Tito's Communist forces, seeking and finding refuge in the British held part of Austria.

These Slovenians—12,000 soldiers and 6,000 civilians in all—were seen as enemies of the state because of their wartime resistance to Tito and his Partisans; the refugees suspected that remaining in or being sent back to Yugoslavia meant certain death. However, these refugees were unaware of the Yalta Conference.



At the end of World War II the big three Allied powers drew up secret agreements as part of the 1945 Yalta Conference, which served as the basis for the forced repatriation of millions of soldiers and displaced citizens back to the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. In effect, these forced repatriations sent millions to their deaths, by execution or life in the Gulag. Within these millions was the group of Slovenians who took refuge from Tito with the British army in Austria.

From May 21–31, 1945 12,000 the Slovenian soldiers were repatriated (many by force) to Yugoslavia. Upon their return they were tortured and killed en masse by Tito’s Partisans. Plans to repatriate the 6,000 Slovenians civilians were about to be implemented when word got back to the camp in Viktring about the fate of those who were sent back.

It was then that Major Barre stepped in, and alerted the British General in charge of the operation of what was happening. After a call to their superiors for advice, the order was given to stop all deportations. The lives of 6,000 Slovenians were saved from the murderous hands of Tito.

Resource Spotlight

Foundation for the Investigation of Communist Crimes web site: www.communistcrimes.org.

The Foundation’s web site is visually striking, well-organized, comprehensive, strikes the right balance between information and scholarship, and contains both background context and up-to-date news about the Crimes of Communism.

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 _____

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.**