



Project Update

Construction is underway on the memorial! Photos from the site show the construction of the foundational elements of the memorial. For a video message from Tribute to Liberty Chair Ludwik Klimkowski, click [here](#).



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In early November, Tribute to Liberty board members Alide Forstmanis and Robert Tmej attended a mock-up presentation for the memorial's Arc of Memory sculpture in Toronto. The event was attended by architect Paul Raff and staff, and National Capital Commission and Canadian Heritage staff. The architectural team for the sculpture is ironing out structural issues, with fabrication to begin in January.



Tribute to Liberty Board Member Receives Award

On November 18th at the Riga Castle, the President of Latvia awarded Tribute to Liberty board member Alide Forstmanis with the Order of Three Stars, Latvia's highest honour, for her many years of work on Tribute to Liberty's project to have the Memorial to the Victims of Communism built in Ottawa.



At the awards ceremony Alide had the honour of meeting Lidija Lasmane, a Latvian freedom fighter, dissident, and member of the anti-Soviet resistance movement during the occupation of Latvia.

Lidija Lasmane received the Order of Viesturs for her contribution to Latvia's national resistance movement and for defending the independence of Latvia.

The Soviet-regime punished Lidija for supporting Latvian national partisans from 1946-1954. From 1970 to 1972 she was punished for dissemination of anti-Soviet and religious publications and from 1983 to 1987 for anti-Soviet propaganda.

In 1983, Lidija was arrested by the Soviet authorities and sentenced to 16 years in a strict regime enforced labour camp with an additional 3 years in exile. She had been charged with maintaining contact with Baptists abroad and for being in possession of a copy of the 1975 Helsinki Accords and of having a list of the

Soviet Union's transgressions of them.

Lidija says: "I had grown up with my state, its spirit. I could not accept the occupation, it was in contradiction to my very nature. The superpower had no right whatsoever to conquer us."



History Unhidden *Death of a Revered Dissident*

At the end of October, revered Soviet dissident Vladimir Bukovsky passed away at the age of 76.

From the late 1950s to the mid-1970s, Bukovsky was a prominent figure in the Soviet dissident movement. He spent a total of 12 years in the psychiatric prison-hospitals, labour camps, and prisons of the Soviet Union. Bukovsky exposed the Soviet use of psychiatry against political prisoners and played a key role in undermining Communism in Eastern Europe.

The Guardian newspaper wrote this about Bukovsky in its coverage of his death:

"Bukovsky was always modest about his achievements. He once said that it was the stupidity of those who ruled the Soviet Union that brought about its downfall. And yet together with a small group of fellow dissenters – he put their numbers at between 3,000 and 5,000 – in the 1960s and 1970s Bukovsky managed to chip away at Soviet power. He spent 12 years in a succession of prisons, labour camps and

psychiatric hospitals. The KGB was his sworn enemy. They hated him and he hated them. Eventually, in 1976, they threw him out of the country.”



Bukovsky was a gifted writer and was “revered for his ability to document both the daily insults and grand oppression of Soviet prison life, and to convey with detail the soul-crushing effects of torture on both prisoner and jailer.”¹

After his release to the West in 1976, he spent his time writing and campaigning against successive regimes in his homeland.

Bukovsky was well known both at home and in the West. In 1977, *The New York Times* wrote that Bukovsky was, “a hero of almost legendary proportion among the Soviet dissident movement.”



Historian and former CIA analyst Richard Pipes said shortly before his death, “Vladimir Bukovsky was an outstanding dissident both in the Soviet Union and abroad, and a man who courageously identified and criticized the totalitarian policies of Moscow. He ought to be remembered as a true hero.”²

His autobiography, published in English in 1978, is titled *To Build a Castle*. He wrote in it:

“The great truth was that it was not rifles, not tanks, and not atom bombs that created power. Power depended upon public obedience, upon a will to submit.”

Bukovsky wrote many books and essays over the years. His most recent book, *Judgment in Moscow: Soviet Crimes and Western Complicity*, published in English in 2019, analyzes thousands of pages of top secret Soviet archives he stole in 1993.

The dissident movement of which Bukovsky was a part of “reflected the contradiction between an increasingly articulate and mobile society on the one hand and an increasingly sclerotic political order on the other. While never including more than a few thousand individuals, dissidents exercised a moral and even political weight far exceeding their numbers, and paralleled the self-proclaimed role of the nineteenth-century Russian intelligentsia as the ‘conscience of society.’”



Dissidence took a variety of forms: public protests and demonstrations, open letters to Soviet leaders, and the production and circulation of manuscript copies (samizdat) of banned works of literature, social and political commentary.

Soviet authorities attempted to repress these currents and activities by propaganda that discredited dissidents and their claims, confiscation of dissident literature, removal of dissidents from their jobs, prosecution and incarceration in mental institutions and prison, banishment to a provincial city or outlying region, or enforced exile with removal of Soviet citizenship.”³

¹ <https://www.vladimirbukovsky.com/obit>

² <https://www.vladimirbukovsky.com/obit>

³ <http://soviethistory.msu.edu/1973-2/the-dissident-movement/>