MEMORIAL TO THE VICTIMS OF COMMUNISM
TRIBUTE TO LIBERTY



Newsletter

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Project Update

The National Capital Commission installed temporary plaques for the front façade of the Wall of Remembrance and is set to replace them with permanent plaques in November. Planning for the east side of the Wall of Remembrance (victims and major donor names) is ongoing. Tribute to Liberty has requested a meeting with Canadian Heritage to discuss options.

Meanwhile, Tribute to Liberty has been the target of threatening emails sent to Board Chair Ludwik Klimkowski after a false and inflammatory article appeared in the online journal *Jacobin*. See the following pages for Tribute to Liberty's response and a related news release from December 2025.



The memorial in August with the temporary plaques and final text for the west side.

THREATENING EMAILS TO TRIBUTE TO LIBERTY INVESTIGATED BY YORK REGIONAL POLICE

September 3, 2026

On July 26, a United States based platform, Jacobin, published an article about Canada's Memorial to the Victims of Communism and Tribute to Liberty (TTL) that repeated misleading and inflammatory accusations associating the organization, its leadership and the commemoration of victims of communism with Nazis and fascism.

Among its most egregious false characterizations was the suggestion that Tribute to Liberty supported a 'Buy a Brick for Nazis' campaign.

The proposed Wall of Remembrance was intended to include names submitted by individual donors. Those submissions were subject to review, including by Canadian Heritage. A name submitted by a donor was not equivalent to that individual being selected, endorsed or approved by Tribute to Liberty for commemoration.

"Tribute to Liberty has never supported the commemoration of Nazis, Nazi collaborators or perpetrators of atrocities" said board member, Christine Chi-Dang, a leader in the Canadian Vietnamese community. She added that "recent irresponsible and politically motivated articles have caused serious harm to all of the communities represented by the Memorial, including my own."

Within hours of the publication of the Jacobin article, Tribute to Liberty and its chairman, Ludwik Klimkowski, whose grandfather was murdered by German Nazis, began receiving a series of threatening and abusive emails that closely echoed the article's central accusations.

The sender accused Tribute to Liberty of wanting to honour people who "worked for Hitler," repeatedly called Mr. Klimkowski a "fascist," an "SS man" and twice urged him to kill himself.

Mr Klimkowski notes that the "similarity between the article's allegations and the language used in these messages is deeply troubling."

The threats were reported to York Regional Police. Police investigated, identified the individual responsible and warned that further threatening communications with Tribute to Liberty could result in more serious legal consequences.

This episode illustrates the real-world risks that can follow when inflammatory and irresponsible accusations falsely portraying individuals or organizations as sympathetic to Nazism circulate publicly. The timing of these threats, and their striking similarity to allegations published only hours earlier, are deeply concerning.

For years, commentary surrounding the Memorial and the commemoration of victims of Soviet communism has repeatedly sought to portray Central and Eastern European communities as Nazi sympathizers, collaborators or defenders of fascism. Such sweeping accusations distort history and demean

Canadians whose families experienced both Nazi German and Soviet Russian occupation, deportation, imprisonment, execution and other forms of political repression.

The use of 'fascist' and 'Nazi' labels to delegitimize Central and Eastern European émigrés also has a longstanding historical and troubling precedent. Soviet authorities routinely attempted to discredit émigrés from Central and Eastern Europe by portraying anti-Soviet activists and diaspora organizations as fascists and Nazi collaborators. Similar narratives remain a feature of contemporary Russian information operations aimed at delegitimizing communities that challenge Moscow's historical narratives.

On March 5, 2022, Ms. Chi-Dang, Mr. Klimkowski and other members of the Tribute to Liberty Board were among the first non-elected Canadians added to the Russian government's sanctions blacklist (following Paul Grod's listing in 2014); a punitive response to their work commemorating the victims of communism and challenging Moscow's historical narratives.

Canadians whose families fled Soviet occupation and communist repression — alongside Vietnamese, Hong Kong, Uyghur, Tibetan, Cuban and other communities that experienced communist authoritarianism — have the same right as all Canadians to commemorate their victims without being collectively smeared as Nazis or fascists.

As witnessed by this incident, such irresponsible and hateful content does have real world consequences.

Tribute to Liberty and its board members are grateful to York Region Police for investigating the threatening emails and for warning the sender of them.

We unequivocally condemn these threats and call on journalists, publishers and public commentators to recognize the consequences and the normalization of violent speech that can result when such false accusations are made.

Contact: info@tributetoliberty.ca

MEMORIAL TO THE VICTIMS OF COMMUNISM
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DEFENDING MEMORY, DIGNITY, AND OUR COMMUNITIES AGAINST AUTHORITARIAN DISINFORMATION AND HATE

December 18, 2025

OTTAWA - Over the past decade, Kremlin-aligned activists and commentators in Canada have relentlessly spread disinformation targeting Central and Eastern European diaspora communities and impacting the millions of Canadians whose families have been victims of communist authoritarianism. Their objectives have been to discredit, dehumanize, and deny the traumas and historical experiences of Canadian families who fled Soviet repression.

In some cases, this extremist rhetoric has escalated to the point of accusing all of the millions of Canadians who identify as victims of Soviet Russian ethnocide of being “enemies” of Canada. This is deliberate incitement of hate, designed to fracture our social cohesion and turn Canadians against one another.

The Memorial to the Victims of Communism was created to honour the memories, experiences, and suffering of the millions who fled well-documented totalitarian communist tyranny, not only in Europe but also across Asia and other parts of the world. This includes the harrowing journeys of Vietnamese refugees who escaped communism in the aftermath of the Vietnam war, risking everything in search of democracy and freedom. Their stories of survival and resilience, alongside those fleeing Eastern Europe, collectively form a proud and essential part of Canada’s national fabric. Such diverse narratives of suffering and triumph must not be erased or demeaned by those who traffic in hate on behalf of authoritarian regimes.

Yet the inhumane attacks against these Canadian communities continue to grow, largely unchallenged, threatening the dignity and security of our communities and undermining the preservation of our cultural heritage.

“For Vietnamese boat people, the echoes of separation, loss, and trauma resonate deeply as they witness the dismissal of other histories connected by similar threads of repression and exile,” said Tribute to Liberty board member Christine Dang.

“The failure to confront these hateful narratives has prompted discussion within TTL about the steps necessary to defend our communities,” said Board Chair Ludwik Klimkowski. “In consultation with Heritage Canada, an indefinite delay of the installation of the Wall of Remembrance has been adopted to pre-empt further Kremlin-aligned attempts to weaponize the memorial for political harassment and disinformation.”

This decision was made reluctantly, after intense discussions, and only in response to the need to protect our communities, their historical experiences, and their contributions to Canada from an escalating wave of hateful, Kremlin-aligned narratives that circulate in national and online media with impunity. Canada must never be allowed to become a haven for extremist hatred, whether from the far right, far left, or foreign authoritarian actors.

To confront this growing threat, the Government of Canada must urgently commit meaningful resources to public education about the crimes of communist regimes and the histories of all communities affected by them. This includes the Vietnamese who fled communist terror, the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe who fought to liberate their nations from Soviet oppression, and others whose suffering has been denied or erased. Ottawa must also hold accountable those who incite hatred against the millions of Canadians—of every background—who are descendants of these victims. These interconnected histories are an important part of our diverse national fabric and must be fully integrated into the Canadian Museum of History and the Canadian Museum for Human Rights.

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History Unhidden
The Hungarian Revolution of 1956

"*Budapest is no longer merely the name of a city; henceforth it is a new and shining symbol of man's yearning to be free*." - Second Inaugural Address, President Dwight D. Eisenhower (1957)

To many observers the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 appeared spontaneous and erratic. Both Washington and Moscow were blindsided and unprepared for the rapid escalation of events in Budapest and across Hungary between October 23rd to Nov. 4th, 1956. Spearheaded by peaceful student protest, events quickly turning violent when State Security Authority (ÁVH) officers opened fire on assembled peaceful crowds at the Hungarian state radio building attempting to air their demands, including the withdrawal of Soviet troops, free elections, new leadership and civil liberties. Nikita Khrushchev once remarked "*if ten or so Hungarian writers had been shot at the right moments, the revolution would never have occurred*."

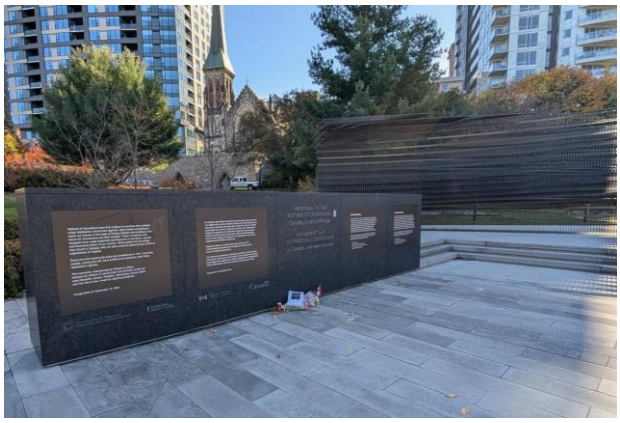
Over the course of twelve days, the Hungarian revolution came to represent a breaking point of disillusionment with the oppression and horrors of Soviet occupation, economic stagnation, and authoritarian misery. The earlier revolts in East Germany (1953) and at Poznan (1956) ignited an awareness that communism and the Soviets were perhaps not invincible after all. As a result, the Hungarian revolution profoundly altered the worlds perception of the Soviet Union and indeed communism - exposing its true nature. By November 4th a full-scale Soviet invasion of Hungary all but crushed remaining revolutionary holdouts. Soviet aggression and suppression of revolt, reform, and free thought in Hungary proved a fatal flaw: that global Socialism did not rest on popular will but rather a dictatorship of a minority class relying on terror.

The human cost of the revolution in Hungary was staggering for a nation slightly larger than New Brunswick. Over 200,000 Hungarians fled abroad. 20,000 were wounded during the revolt and 2,500 were killed. In the wake of the revolution, over 20,000 individuals were handed prison sentences for their role in the revolt and 300, including former Prime Minister Imre Nagy, were executed. Approximately 38,000 Hungarian refugees were welcomed to Canada, forming the single largest arrival of refugees in Canadian history. Many of those Hungarians would become prominent business owners, inventors, scientists, public servants, and industry leaders. In recognition of those individuals, and the cause of freedom, the Government of Ontario officially recognized October as Hungarian Heritage Month in 2022.



As we commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution, we look out around the world to witness that global peace is still distant and inaccessible. Significant areas of the world remain under oppressive, autocratic systems. There is a protracted war in Europe as well. The revolutionaries of 1956 were perhaps idealistic to believe that only a few could take on the mighty. The legacy of that bravery is apparent, yet the lessons of history have much

further to advance. Even now as 70 years has passed since the events of October 1956, it remains important to recall that many of those same brave souls witnessed the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989; the peaceful democratic transition across Eastern Europe after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991; and the beginning of countless new lives abroad. Former Secretary of State John Foster Dulles once remarked that freedom and democracy will, in the long run, prove irresistible. Let's hope that he is right.







The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 must not be remembered merely as an historical footnote. It is proof of the power of truth and bravery against insurmountable odds. As we continue to grapple with the ideological legacies of the twentieth century, and the re-emergence of some of its dangerous elements, the events of October and November 1956 demonstrate the strength of the human spirit and that freedom is not always given; it must at times be taken.

Submitted by Joseph Imre, Historian

Black Ribbon Day 2026 at the Memorial

Black Ribbon Day, August 23rd, commemorates the victims of Stalinism and Nazism. The date commemorates the signing on August 23, 1939, of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact and its secret protocols, which effectively divided Central and Eastern Europe into spheres of influence between the USSR and Nazi Germany. It is an international day of remembrance of the occupation, repression, suffering and death of people under these totalitarian regimes. It is also a day on which to hope for freedom for those who still suffer under totalitarian regimes.



Latvian community members Janis Lielamers, Aija Auzina, and Markuss Zichmanis

