



Memorial Unveiling!

On December 12, 2024, the Government of Canada inaugurated the Memorial to Victims of Communism – Canada, a Land of Refuge.

At the ceremony, the Arc of Memory, the centrepiece element of the Memorial, was unveiled. Designed by Paul Raff Studio and fabricated by Dymech Engineering, it includes an array of more than 4,000 metal rods configured on two gently curved wall-like frames intended to express the vastness of people who suffered under Communist regimes. The work also invites visitors to reflect on Canada as a free and welcoming country.

“We solemnly commit to preserving the voices and experiences of those who sought refuge on Canada’s shores, while honouring the memory of those who never had the chance or died trying. This national memorial stands as an enduring testament to a profound truth—the freedoms and dignity we cherish in Canada are not simply inherited gifts, but hard-won responsibilities. They are fragile, precious and demand our constant vigilance and protection,” said Ludwik Klimkowski, Tribute to Liberty Board Chair.

Located on the west side of the Garden of the Provinces and Territories in downtown Ottawa, the Memorial site also includes a landscaped gathering area that provides a contemplative space for visitors to reflect on the experiences of those who suffered under Communism.

Tribute to Liberty is thankful for the work of everyone involved in making the Memorial a reality, including Canadian Heritage and the National Capital Commission. Read coverage of the unveiling in the *Ottawa Citizen* [here](#) and watch a video of the unveiling [here](#).



Tribute to Liberty Board of Directors



Tribute to Liberty Board Chair Ludwik Klimkowski



Architect Paul Raff



Speech of Memorial Competition Winner Paul Raff at the Unveiling

My colleagues and I were deeply honoured to be selected and tasked with shaping this important National Memorial. We call it “The Arc of Memory.”

It faces due North, and orients us in time as well as space. From East to West, its 365 vertical fins each demark one day of the year, from the peak of summer to middle of winter and back through to summer solstice. And, on each of those days of the year, every hour from sunrise to sunset is made visible as an azimuth: the unique angle of the sun at each of those respective moments in time.

In this way, The Arc of Memory is a three-dimensional calendar. It lets us locate moments from other times and places-- historically important events, culturally or personally significant memories-- all in this time and place, here and now.

From a distance its unusual, highly original form is open and receptive. As a visual sculpture it uses the artistic strategy of passive kinetics, meaning that although it does not move, motion is integral to its being: its sweeping arrays, its rhythmic dynamics engage us in a direct, experiential way. As you move around it, its form seems to shift and unfold.

As a Memorial, it invites you to walk your own path and reflect freely. The Arc of Memory evokes our universal humanity under the arc of the sun and speaks to our global journeys through the arc of history. It is a testament to the value of our liberty and the value of all of our lives: past, present, and future.

Speech of Tribute to Liberty Board Chair Ludwik Klimkowski at the Unveiling

Bonjour tout le Monde, Madam Deputy Minister Mondon, Senators, Members of Parliament, Ambassadors and members of the diplomatic core, distinguished community leaders, and Ladies and Gentleman, dear friends,

Today, we gather here on December 12, 2024, for a momentous occasion of remembrance, reflection, and resolve. The unveiling of the Memorial to the Victims of Communism—Canada, a Land of Refuge—is not just the culmination of years of dedication and vision but a resounding testament to the values that define us as a nation.

This memorial stands as a solemn tribute to the countless lives shattered by regimes rooted in oppression and authoritarianism. It is a monument to the resilience of those who endured, the courage of those who resisted, and the memory of those who perished. It is also a beacon of hope and a reminder of Canada's unwavering commitment to freedom, human dignity, and justice.

Le dévoilement de ce mémorial est un geste profond de solidarité. Il relie les générations, les cultures et les histoires, nous unissant dans un engagement commun à faire en sorte que les leçons du passé guident notre avenir.

The unveiling of this memorial is a profound gesture of solidarity. It bridges generations, cultures, and histories, uniting us in a shared commitment to ensuring that the lessons of the past guide our future. Let this monument inspire dialogue and education, reminding us that the freedoms we enjoy today were hard-won and must be vigilantly preserved.

As we stand together before this symbol of remembrance, let us reaffirm our pledge to uphold the principles of freedom, justice, and peace for all. Thank you for your presence and for being part of this historic occasion.

As we gather to unveil this profound symbol of remembrance and resilience, it is only fitting that we take a moment to express our heartfelt gratitude to those whose unwavering commitment and generosity have made today possible. I will do today what was never done before and please help me in showing your appreciation; to the dedicated members of the Tribute

to Liberty Board, whose vision and tireless work have brought this project to fruition, we extend our deepest thanks. Your determination to honour the victims of communism and preserve their stories for future generations has been nothing short of inspiring. Allow me to recognize each of you in alphabetical order by name:

- Teresa Berezowski
- Christine Dang
- Alide Forstmanis
- Ivan Grbesic
- Paul Grod
- Markus Hess – looking at us from heaven
- Marcus Kolga
- Byong Gil Suh (Ron Soh) resting at home in Vancouver
- Robert Tmej

To my own family, thank you for your unwavering support of my humble involvement.

My friends, your leadership, collaboration, and perseverance have been the driving force behind this remarkable achievement.

We also wish to express profound gratitude to the major donors who, in moments when it was needed most, answered the call with extraordinary generosity. Your contributions have ensured that this memorial stands as a lasting testament to hope, freedom, and the triumph of the human spirit. Without your support, this vision could not have been realized.

- People of Hungary, especially survivors of the Budapest Uprising of 1956
- To James, Ludmila and Louise Temerty for the spark when it was desperately needed
- Senator Linda Frum with Howard Sokolowski for opening your generous home to us
- Ian Ihnatowycz with Marta Witer
- Delores Huculak with late Erast Huculak
- Jerry and Deyse Tmej
- John Merins
- People of Latvia, Estonia and Croatia, Chechia, with people of Georgia who are still fighting for the ultimate freedom
- People of Taiwan

Sincere thanks to all the ethnic and social groups, especially

- Croatian Catholic Parishes and Community in Canada,

- Latvian Relief Society of Canada,
- With our utmost admiration to the Korean War Veterans of Canada – Mr. William Bill Black,
- Polish Fraternal Aid Society of St. John Cantius,
- And last but certainly not least to the Ukrainian Canadian Congress,
- And my personal thanks to the Canadian Polish Congress with Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon, founding member of the project and Mr. Dominik Roszak today's president.

Nous vous remercions pour votre engagement émotionnel et vos conseils constants dans les moments difficiles.

Today, this memorial is a reality because of the shared passion and commitment of everyone involved. To the Tribute to Liberty Board, the donors, and the many supporters who have contributed in countless ways—thank you for your part in shaping a legacy that will endure for generations.

Your efforts are a beacon of the values we hold dear as Canadians, and for that, we are forever grateful. (Showing the landed immigrant card) The landed immigrant record of landing is more than a document—it is a symbol of hope, resilience, and the boundless possibilities of a new beginning. It represents the moment when dreams of freedom, safety, and opportunity become a tangible reality for those who have endured the unthinkable.

For the prisoner in a North Korean concentration camp, it is the promise of liberation.

For the family crowded on a small boat fleeing Vietnam, it is the beacon of safety across turbulent waters.

For the students who risked their lives in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square massacre, it is the sanctuary of a place where their voices can be heard.

For the imprisoned activists of the Budapest Uprising or the brave individuals of the Solidarity movement, it is the light of hope after the darkness of oppression.

For the former gulag prisoner, it is the assurance of a life free from chains.

BTW, tomorrow is the 43rd anniversary of the Martial Law imposition in Poland.

In the hands of these courageous individuals, the acceptance letter (ie the landed immigrant document)

becomes more than just paper—it is a bridge to a new home, a place where empty suitcases can be filled with dreams, where families can rebuild their lives, and where the fear of yesterday is replaced by the promise of tomorrow.

This letter, and it belongs to my own child, symbolizes, as well as this Memorial, our Canada as the *land of the free*, a nation that opens its arms to those seeking refuge, offering not just a place to live but the dignity, security, and opportunity to thrive. It reminds us of the profound responsibility we bear to protect and nurture these freedoms for all who call this country home.

On behalf of Tribute to Liberty let me repeat again - Canada we love you and thank you for permitting us to make a small mark on your history. We hope to see you again soon, later in 2025, to share the story of our journey to Canada and the tales of your fellow Canadians, whose names will be inscribed on the Wall of Remembrance. Until then, à la prochaine.

Barbara Kay: In Support of a Memorial to the Victims of Communism

This article appeared on ProudtoBeCanadian.ca on March 17, 2010.

In 1968, naive anti-establishment American and Canadian students considered themselves courageous for locking supine university presidents in their offices, throwing computers out of windows and even burning out-of-favour academics' research work. They knew that in the free, indulgent West, their childish parody of a revolution would result in nothing more than a suspension from their studies.

In the same year truly courageous Moscow academic Yuri Glazov signed the famous "letter of the twelve," protesting illegal arrests and trials of dissidents, knowing full well that this real act of revolution would result in a suspension of his human rights.

Glazov was predictably fired, meaning he was henceforth unemployable and deemed a "parasite" on the state. Warned by a friend, he narrowly avoided imprisonment on a trumped-up narcotics-dealing charge. Finally, through a stroke of luck, Glazov came with his family to the West, and in 1975 took up residence in Halifax as chair of the Russian Studies

department at Dalhousie University, a position he held until shortly before his death in 1998.

An outstanding Canadian, Glazov deserves recognition, and so do many other brave dissidents for whom Canada has been a refuge. Nine million Canadians—that's almost a third of us according to the 2006 census—came to these shores from communist-ruled countries. Many are now dead or very old. Their descendants deserve to see their sacrifices acknowledged and Canadians exposed to the full panoply of communist atrocities.

Prospects for educating Canadians about the human toll exacted by communism through their stories will brighten when a long-sought Ottawa Memorial to the Victims of Totalitarian Communism is completed, a project singled out for endorsement in the recent Throne Speech.

This memorial isn't just a good idea, like an also-promised national Holocaust memorial, it is a necessary idea.

The exhaustively researched Holocaust is in no danger of being forgotten. The highest term of opprobrium in Western culture, whether from leftists or rightists (rightly or wrongly) is "Nazi," not "communist." That's not because Nazis and communists have been compared and Nazis found to be worse. It's because people don't know how bad communism was and is.

In 2006 the Swedish Ministry of Education initiated programs teaching the crimes of communism because a poll had revealed only 10% of Swedish youth could identify the Gulag. Canadian youth would not fare better. All educated Canadians associate the word "Auschwitz" with "genocide." The equally horrific "Holodomor" is more likely to draw a blank stare.

Why has communism escaped the moral condemnation Naziism attracts in such exuberant degree? In recent years several scholars have addressed the question and provided a litany of reasons, amongst them:

- Stalin was a war ally and therefore escaped the postwar censure he deserved;
- Only since the fall of the Berlin Wall has the most damaging data emerged; by then witnesses were aging and focused on economic priorities;
- There was no Nuremberg, no Truth and Reconciliation moment for communism as there was for other genocidal regimes;
- Communist propaganda machines are extremely efficient at positive branding (Trudeau bought in; his

fawning patronage of Fidel Castro was beyond contemptible).

But all reasons pale beside the glaring failure of left-wing intellectuals to admit—and to *teach*—that communism isn't simply an unfortunate contingency of socialist passion but an ideology as immoral and implacably ruthless and dramatically consequential as Naziism.

Actually it is more than intellectuals' failure, which suggests passivity; it was, and is, active avoidance. Yuri Glazov was proud to become a Canadian citizen, but was shocked and chagrined at the ignorance and even denial of communism's crimes he found amongst his fellow academics. As his son Jamie Glazov noted in his 2009 book, [*United in Hate: the Left's Romance with Tyranny and Terror*](#), "[W]hile we were cherishing our newfound freedom, we encountered... intellectuals in the universities who hated my parents for the story they had to tell..."

Left-wing intellectuals' laundering of the truth about communism has translated into a vast lacuna in the teaching of 20th century history in our schools—one we can only hope the new memorial will help to fill.

The word "memorial" is somewhat misleading, though, suggesting that communism is a closed historical chapter. The fall of the Berlin Wall notwithstanding, communism in one guise or another still determines the fate of millions of hapless people around the globe. Victims in communist regimes are still starved, imprisoned, tortured and denied the most basic of human rights.

"Centre"? "Testament"? It is not too late to find a word to remind communism's ongoing victims that right-thinking Canadians know the truth and will not abandon them.

