



VICTIMS OF COMMUNISM
MEMORIAL FOUNDATION



2018 ANNUAL REPORT

VISION

A world free from
the false hope of communism.

MISSION

To educate future generations about the
ideology, history, and legacy of communism.

HISTORY

Victims of Communism Memorial
Foundation is an educational and human
rights nonprofit organization authorized
by a unanimous Act of Congress signed as
Public Law 103-199 by President William J.
Clinton on December 17, 1993. From 2003
to 2009, President George W. Bush was
Honorary Chairman. On June 12, 2007,
he dedicated the Victims of Communism
Memorial in Washington, DC.

ACHIEVEMENTS

A YEAR *of* ACHIEVEMENTS 2018 IN REVIEW

In 2018, a rising generation of Americans warmed to socialism as the territory of the free world shrank. Communist regimes from China to Cuba continued to project power and interfere abroad while persecuting millions of their own people at home, even as former captive nations grappled with the bitter legacy of Soviet occupation.

The Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation worked tirelessly in 2018 to teach the truth about the failures of Marxist ideology, to pursue justice for those still striving for freedom under communist regimes, and to honor the memory of the more than 100 million victims of communism.

We equipped teachers and students with the tools to counter socialism's rising popularity, we engaged with lawmakers and dissidents to identify and condemn the abuses of communist dictatorships, and we convened anticommunists from more than 30 countries to celebrate the triumph of liberty for freedom-loving peoples in Central and Eastern Europe.

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VOC Director of Government Relations Kristina Olney addresses thousands of Uyghurs, Tibetans, and other minorities at a rally in front of the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland on November 6 to protest persecution by the Chinese Communist Party during a UN review of China's human rights situation.

Message from the CHAIRMAN

Opposition to communism united the free world in the last hundred years. The Cold War was the most protracted and unconventional conflict, and it established America as the global superpower.

It was waged on many fronts—from the United States to the Soviet Union, from Europe to Asia, from Africa to Latin America—and by many different kinds of governments: liberal democracies, totalitarian regimes, and everything in between. There were grand strategy and petty politics, shrewd diplomacy and brutal coups. Economics, religion, and culture were in play. There were shooting wars in Korea and Vietnam and many flashpoints. There were purges, deportations, gulags, and forced famines that killed millions of men, women, and children.

At stake was whether the postwar world would be subsumed by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics or inspired by the principles of political and economic freedom embodied in the United States of America.

When the Second World War ended, the American people sought a return to normalcy, to a concentration on domestic affairs. Most expected they could turn over most of the responsibility for international affairs to Great Britain, Soviet Russia, and the UN. But the war had reduced Britain to a shadow of itself, a militant Soviet Union was determined to spread communism, and the UN was a new and untested organization. Quite suddenly, there was no one to protect America and its interests but America itself.

For the next four decades under nine administrations, both Democratic and Republican, the United States led the world in opposition to communism and eventually succeeded in undermining and bringing down what President Ronald Reagan called an “evil empire.”

Today’s world would be a far different place if the United States had not waged and won—at the cost of tens of thousands of lives and many billions of dollars—the Cold War. That conflict established America as the leader of the free world and a global superpower, thereby shaping U.S. diplomacy, military strategy, economic policy, and domestic politics from President Harry Truman to the present.



An essential factor in this victory was the power of ideas. American support for the ideas of democracy, freedom, and human rights had an enormous impact on dissidents behind the Iron Curtain. They listened to broadcasts from the Voice of America, Radio Liberty, and the BBC and took full advantage of the Helsinki Accords. In Martin Walker’s words, the accords served as “the West’s secret weapon, a time bomb planted in the heart of the Soviet empire.”

Unlike most protracted conflicts, writes Carole K. Fink, the Cold War ended without a formal surrender or celebration, but its demise affected most of the world. Former clients of Moscow like Cuba, Vietnam, North Korea, and the Palestinians were forced to rely on their own resources. The former Eastern and Central European satellites gravitated toward the West. India and other socialist-leaning Third World countries moved toward a market economy. The United States remained the sole superpower, with all the attendant challenges and responsibilities.

The American president who effectively wrote *finis* to the Cold War was Ronald Reagan, who came into office with a clear set of ideas he had developed over a lifetime of study. He forced the Soviet Union to abandon its goal of world communism by challenging its legitimacy, regaining superiority in the arms race, and using human rights as a powerful psychological weapon.

Since the Bolshevik Revolution, anticommunism has been a unifying American issue, not a partisan issue. This is because the ideology of communism conflicts with the principles that have made America the freest, safest, and most prosperous country in history. The more than 100 years of history since the Bolshevik Revolution, especially the decades of the Cold War, prove this. Everywhere communism is tried, it results in a police state, economic collapse, and great loss of innocent life.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lee". The signature is stylized, with a large, flowing 'L' and a cursive 'ee'.

Lee Edwards, PhD

Message from the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Berlin Wall fell nearly 30 years ago, but communism did not. Freedom lovers the world over euphorically celebrated in November 1989. But in the months and years that followed, the West failed to deliver a moral reckoning for the crimes of communism. There was no Nuremberg trial. There was no great public condemnation of the ideas of Marxism. There was, regrettably, an acceptance of communist power where it still existed.



The single-party communist dictatorships today in China, Cuba, Laos, North Korea, and Vietnam all trace their DNA to the Bolshevik Revolution, where the ideas of Marx first grasped political power. And so, in the 20th century, we must contend with these regimes and the threats they pose to free people—and we must struggle for the freedom of the more than one billion people held captive by these regimes.

Since the Tiananmen Square Massacre and the collapse of communism in Europe, the Chinese Communist Party has vowed to avoid the fate of the Soviet Union and, under Xi Jinping, has tightened its grip on political power. Today, the party of Mao is militarizing islands, building concentration camps, deploying Orwellian technology to control its citizens, and vying for superpower status. Revisionist Russia, led by a former KGB officer who kills his political opponents, is working to reassemble the Soviet empire and destabilize the West through annexation, proxy war, Middle East adventurism, drug trafficking, and cybercrime. In Venezuela, Maduro's socialist party and the Castro regime in Havana conspire to establish another Marxist dictatorship.

The situations in Hong Kong, Xinjiang, Tibet, Crimea, Eastern Ukraine, Venezuela, and Nicaragua are perilous and tragic. The alarming reality is that the world is growing less free and Marxism is on the rise.

What besides a horrible failure of education can explain the growing popularity of socialism in America today? Poll after poll indicates a growing trend among young Americans saying they support socialism. Our efforts at the local level, in schools and on college campuses, are more important than ever. Too many high schools teach a Howard Zinn-style Marxist critique of the United States. Too many colleges teach collectivism as an alternative to free enterprise. Karl Marx is the most assigned economist. New generations of Americans are warming to collectivist ideas because they are not taught the facts about the nature and history of communism.

As our staff work with middle school and high school teachers and college students in all 50 states, it is clear that we are filling a crucial gap in the proper education of young Americans. And the lessons keep coming. Two decades of democratic socialism in Venezuela have proven that Marxism always leads to ruin. Friedrich Hayek summed up why: "A claim for equality of material position can be met only by a government with totalitarian powers."

At home and abroad, we 21st-century freedom fighters have our work cut out for us. We talk to many dissidents, defectors, exiled politicians and activists, artists, and scholars. They tell us they feel like their voice is lost in a whirlwind. Fortunately, we have three advantages. First, the asymmetrical weapon of human rights. Second, a commitment to live by the truth, not by lies, as Václav Havel challenged us to do. Finally, we stand on the shoulders of giants such as Ronald Reagan, Natan Sharansky, Tom Lantos, Kornel Morawiecki, Oswaldo Payá, and so many more who have proven that courage in defense of liberty can succeed against all odds.

At our Triumph of Liberty annual dinner in Union Station, we welcomed President Donald Trump's message declaring the second-ever National Day for the Victims of Communism on November 7. As part of our efforts to engage citizens at a local level, we have begun to work with state lawmakers to recognize officially a day to honor the victims of communism. Virginia was the first to do so in 2018, and many states are following suit.

Each day, the news at home and abroad proves why our work is so important—and it is your courageous and generous support that makes our work possible. Thank you. Together we are still honoring the millions of victims, supporting the heroic dissidents of our day, and educating a new generation of Americans so that they will see through the lies of Marxism and defend our precious experiment in human liberty.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marion". The script is fluid and cursive.

Marion Smith



TRUTH

National Teachers Seminars

From July 16-20, VOC held its third annual Seminar for Middle and High School Educators in Washington, DC, gathering 25 teachers from 16 states plus Belize and Canada to engage with a blend of scholarly lectures, peer discussions, and pedagogical sessions.

Over the course of the week, students studied communist ideology and history, the character of totalitarian governmental systems and practices, and the legacy of communist and postcommunist states today. They also experienced the personal stories of witnesses, dissidents, and victims. More than 250 alumni from our seminars and regional workshops reach more than 40,000 students each year.



During Captive Nations week in July, a new cohort of teachers from across the country gathered in Washington, DC, for our third annual National Seminar for Middle and High School Educators, leaving equipped with the tools and know-how to teach the truth about communism.

Maryland Public School Teachers Adopt VOC Curriculum

On March 29 our director of academic programs, Dr. Murray Bessette, joined Dr. Guy Burnett of Hampden-Sydney College to deliver our first in-service professional development workshops to 76 teachers in Harford County Public Schools in Maryland.

Modeled on our National Seminar offering, the sessions drew on materials from our curriculum *Communism: Its Ideology, its History, and its Legacy* aimed at educating young students. The presenters taught on subjects such as free-market versus communist political economy, the Cold War, and communism as an ideology, sending off another cohort of teachers equipped to bring the truth about communism to America's youth.

The need for this is clear. Last year, VOC's widely respected

"Annual Report on U.S. Attitudes Toward Socialism" by polling firm YouGov showed more Americans under age 35 would prefer to live in a socialist country (44%) or even a communist one (7%) than in a capitalist one (42%). The share of Millennials who prefer socialism to free enterprise is a full 10 points higher than in the general population. Yet six in 10

Americans were unfamiliar with socialist dictators like Venezuela's Nicolás Maduro.

Such news is alarming, but not hopeless. Young Americans simply have not been taught in the classroom the history of communist enslavement and the horrible bloodshed perpetrated by this deadly ideology.



Dr. Murray Bessette introduces our curriculum to 75 public school teachers at a workshop in Harford County, Maryland in March on how to reach students effectively.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS



The American Legion's Boys Nation.



Center for Strategic and International Studies: Expert Panel.

American Legion: Speech to Young Leaders – Arlington, VA

- On July 23, VOC Executive Director Marion Smith gave a speech in Arlington, Virginia to the young men attending The American Legion's Boys Nation, a week-long civics training symposium for 100 rising high school seniors. Smith, an alumnus of Boys Nation, encouraged the young men to cultivate America's democratic institutions by becoming involved in their local communities, exhorting these future leaders: "Educate, don't indoctrinate. Build happy communities, don't just denounce and condemn. And have faith in our American civics and the processes and traditions that come with it."

Knights of Columbus: Explaining Socialism – Glendora, CA

- VOC Director of Academic Programs Dr. Murray Bessette was invited by the council of the Knights of Columbus in Glendora, California to give a presentation on September 20 about why socialism has such a hold on Millennials today and how to combat it.

Azusa Pacific University: Campus Lecture – California

- On September 20, Dr. Murray Bessette spoke to 75 students of history and national security at Azusa Pacific University in California about the deficiencies of Marxist theory, the threat socialism poses to freedom, and how communist regimes use ideology and revisionist history to manipulate public opinion on foreign policy issues.

Hudson Institute: Discussing China's Interference – DC

- VOC's China Studies Research Fellow Peter Mattis (center) participated in the Hudson's Institute's Mark Palmer Forum on China's Global Challenge to Democratic Freedom on October 24 in Washington, DC. He spoke on the nature of the Chinese government's interference in Western society, and on how a free and open press is the most helpful tool to combat this.

Presbyterian College: Lecture on Socialism's Flaws – South Carolina

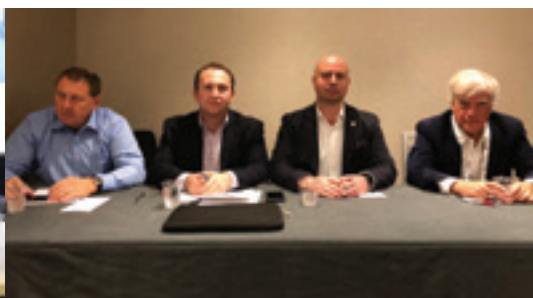
- On October 3, Dr. Murray Bessette delivered the 10th annual BB&T lecture at Presbyterian College in Clinton, South Carolina, to an audience of 179 students. Dr. Bessette's talk, "So You Think You're a Socialist?", laid bare the gap between socialism's promises and its realities.

Princeton University: Discussing Communism's Legacy – New Jersey

- VOC co-sponsored an evening event entitled Consequences of an Idea: Assessing 100 Years of Communism with Princeton University's James Madison Program on September 25. The event featured experts from various disciplines discussing the dangerous impact communism has had on history and politics up to the present day.



Florida International University: The Long Night of the Watchman.



American Political Science Association, Boston: Expert Panel.



Hudson Institute, DC: Discussing China's Interference.

“Educate, don’t indoctrinate. Build happy communities, don’t just denounce and condemn. And have faith in our American civics and the processes and traditions that come with it.” – Marion Smith



Newnan High School: Witness to Mao's China Shares Story in Georgia.



Presbyterian College, South Carolina: Lecture on Socialism's Flaws in.



Universities of Ottawa & Texas: Campus Talks on Communism.

American Political Science Association: Expert Panel – Boston

• On September 1, VOC sponsored its first panel at the American Political Science Association in Boston, Massachusetts. Panelists Dr. Andrei Illarionov, David Satter, VOC Baltic Studies Manager Naphtali Rivkin, and Dr. Murray Bessette presented on the Soviet legacy in Putin's Russia.

Newnan High School: Witness to Mao's China Shares Story – Georgia

• In partnership with VOC, John Garner, an alumnus of our 2017 National Seminar for High School Educators, organized visits by Lily Tang Williams to both Newnan High School and Northgate High School in Georgia. Williams spoke to three classes at each school, sharing with approximately 300 students her personal story of growing up in Mao's China.

Case Western University: Counting the Human Cost – Cleveland, Ohio

• October 29 VOC's Dr. Murray Bessette moderated a panel on the human cost of communism, held at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. Hosted by political science professor Dr. Laura Tartakoff, the panel included Defense Forum Foundation president Suzanne Scholte who spoke on North Korea, and Freedom Society Project president Maria Werlau who spoke on Cuba. It was attended by around 40 students, faculty, and community members. The next day the panel spoke to over 400 high school students in Bay Village, Ohio on the human rights situation in both countries—an event arranged by Elias Gorman, an alumnus of VOC's National Teacher Seminars—after which four students interviewed them for a podcast.

Baltic Studies Association: Talking Decommunization – Estonia

• VOC's Naphtali Rivkin organized and held a panel on decommunization in the Baltics for the Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies' Conference at Stanford University on June 1-3 and again a week later in Tartu, Estonia. The discussion focused on how to best commemorate the Baltics' communist past.



Knights of Columbus, Glendora, CA: Explaining Socialism



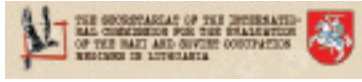
Oslo Freedom Forum, Norway: Witness Project



Princeton University, New Jersey: Discussing Communism's Legacy

VOC Partners with Lithuanian Commission on Nazi and Soviet Crimes

On December 7, a delegation of Lithuanian



MPs led by His Excellency Emanuelis Zingeris, a hero of his country's post-communist transition, visited VOC headquarters to sign a memorandum of understanding between VOC and the International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania.

The commission was established in 1998 by Lithuanian president Valdas Adamkus to investigate the crimes committed by the Nazis and Soviets during five decades of occupation from 1940 to 1990. Its members comprise dozens of leading scholars, historians, and representatives of non-governmental organizations tasked with researching those crimes and publicizing their findings to help strengthen democracy, civil society, and respect for human rights. It is chaired by Zingeris, a leading member of the Lithuanian Seimas and laureate of VOC's Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom.

Film on Soviet Deportations Hits The Big Screen

On September 21, VOC Director of Academic

Programs Dr. Murray Bessette attended the LA Film Festival for the world premiere of *Ashes in the Snow*, a film directed by Marius Markevicius and set to be released in select theaters and video-on-demand on January 11, 2019. Based on the *New York Times* best-selling novel



Between Shades of Gray by Ruta Sepetys—an advisor to VOC's Baltic Studies Program—the film tells the story of a 16-year-old artist and her family being deported from Lithuania to Siberia amid Stalin's brutal dismantling of the Baltic region. In partnership with Mrs. Sepetys, VOC developed a curriculum supplement based on the book and film to use in our education efforts. VOC plans to work with Mrs. Sepetys to deliver this curriculum to teachers during our professional development workshops throughout 2019.



H.E. Emanuelis Zingeris (center left) and our executive director Marion Smith (center right) with a Lithuanian delegation and VOC senior staff, after signing a memorandum of understanding on December 7 between VOC and the International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania.



Dr. Murray Bessette (right) with best-selling author Ruta Sepetys and director Marius Markevicius after a successful world premiere of the film *Ashes In The Snow* on September 21.

VOC Research Supports Verdict on Chinese Communist Crimes

VOC China Studies Research Fellow Matthew Robertson appeared as an expert witness before the Independent Tribunal into Forced Organ Harvesting from Prisoners of Conscience in China, held in London from December 8-10. Robertson briefed the seven-member panel—chaired by Sir Geoffrey Nice, a former judge who helped prosecute Slobodan

Milošević for war crimes in Yugoslavia—on his research into evidence that China’s hospital and prison systems have collaborated to harvest organs from political prisoners. The tribunal issued a unanimous interim judgment that this atrocity has been taking place “beyond any reasonable doubt” for a “substantial period of time” on a “very substantial” scale.



Matthew Robertson, VOC China Studies Research Fellow



VOC gave expert testimony before an independent tribunal held in London on December 8-10 to investigate the practice in China of killing political prisoners for their organs. The China Tribunal panel (left to right): historian Prof. Arthur Waldron, Malaysian lawyer Andrew Khoo, Professor of Cardiothoracic Surgery Martin Elliott, Sir Geoffrey Nice, businessman Nicholas Vetch, Iranian Human Rights Lawyer Shadi Sadr, and American lawyer Regina Paulose.



Dissidents Condemn the Castro Legacy in Cuba

On the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on December 10, VOC co-hosted a panel with Freedom House on Cuba’s human rights legacy at the Foundation’s headquarters in Washington, D.C. Panelists included Frank Calzon, executive director of the Center for a Free Cuba; Mario Felix Lleonart Barroso, a Baptist missionary in Cuba; Sirley Ávila León, a Cuban dissident and laureate of VOC’s Human Rights Award; and John Suarez, Freedom House’s program director for Latin America and the Caribbean. The panel contrasted the role of pre-revolutionary Cuba in drafting the UN declaration with the Castro regime’s six decades of brutal human rights violations at home and abroad.



On December 10 VOC co-hosted an expert panel with Freedom House contrasting pre-revolutionary Cuba’s role in drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with the Castro regime’s six decades of brutal human rights violations. Panelists (left to right): Frank Calzon, executive director of the Center for a Free Cuba; Mario Felix Lleonart Barroso, a Baptist missionary in Cuba; Sirley Ávila León, a Cuban dissident and laureate of VOC’s Human Rights Award; and John Suarez, Freedom House’s program director for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Fourth Annual China Forum Conference: Understanding the Nature of the Chinese Communist Party

On September 27-28, our Foundation convened the fourth annual China Forum conference at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, DC bringing together top experts, policymakers, and scholars to help Americans understand the nature of the People's Republic of China, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), and key issues in US-China relations.

The first day of the forum featured a series of panels on topics including the CCP's tools of economic and military coercion, its abysmal treatment of ethnic minorities, and its use of revisionist history as a tool for statecraft. Josh Rogin, a columnist for the *Washington Post*, moderated a discussion on how the CCP enforces domestic censorship and manipulates foreign journalists.

The panel also included *New York Times* reporter Michael Forsythe, who was suspended from Bloomberg News in 2013 for revealing that a story he had written detailing corruption among Chinese officials was pulled after the CCP threatened to shut down the newspaper's Beijing bureau.

Forsythe unpacked some of the “red lines” journalists are greatly discouraged from crossing, especially if they report anything relating to President Xi Jinping's background.

Ursula Gauthier of the French publication *L'Obs* spoke on the difficulties of being a foreign journalist in China, noting how during multiple trips to China she had to conceal that she was a foreign correspondent to be able to speak with anyone other than CCP representatives.

Rep. Ted Yoho (R-FL), then-chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, and Nonproliferation, delivered a keynote address on the US-China strategic competition, the political and ideological nature of the CCP, and the paramount importance of the US-Taiwan relationship.

The forum concluded with a private policy roundtable where scholars and experts discussed US options in dealing with China, the implications of Chinese infrastructure financing abroad, and the future of the US-China relationship.



Dr. Frank Dikötter, Robert Suettinger, Dr. Miles Maochun Yu, Dr. Samantha Hoffman, and VOC's Peter Mattis, from left, analyze the Chinese Communist Party's strategic outlook and the rising tension between the US and China over global influence.



Dr. Adrian Zenz, Analyst, Jamestown Foundation.



Ursula Gauthier, Journalist, L'Obs.



Dr. Frank Dikötter, Chair Professor of Humanities, University of Hong Kong.



Matthew Robertson, China Studies Research Fellow, VOC.



Josh Rogin, Columnist, The Washington Post.



Michael Forsythe, Reporter, The New York Times.

“The CCP does not directly censor foreign journalists, but it does find ways to suppress them.” – Michael Forsythe



Rep. Ted Yoho (center), then-chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, and Nonproliferation, with VOC staff after delivering a keynote address during our China Forum Dinner at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, DC, on September 28.

“Foreign journalists cannot do their job anymore in China...It does not mean anything to be a journalist in China.”
– Ursula Gauthier

On The Blog

Why Was There No Nuremberg For Communism? by Janina Beck •

Everyone is familiar with the Nuremberg Trials, convened in 1945 to prosecute the crimes of Nazi Germany. Considering how deadly the ideology of communism proved to be in Eastern Europe, Russia, and elsewhere, why has there never been a similar trial for the crimes committed by the communist regime in the Soviet Union? We explore this question and its impact on perceptions of communism today.



Mikhail Gorbachev's Worst May Day Ever by Dissident

• International Workers' Day was a red-letter day on the Soviet calendar since 1918, a prime opportunity to celebrate the Soviet Union's official reason for existence. For decades, May 1 parades were tightly controlled affairs. We tell the story of how on May 1, 1990, during Gorbachev's new policies of perestroika and glasnost, thousands marched in protest at Soviet brutality, made it onto live television, and helped bring down the regime.



Why China's Communists Are Scared Of #MeToo by Lily Weninger

• The #MeToo movement that erupted in early 2018 and spread across the globe changed the face of feminism. Millions of women took their stories to the social media stage, calling for an end to silence on the discrimination and abuse they had suffered because of their gender. It's no wonder a movement of this scale seeped into even the most guarded countries. But in China, the movement was far from welcome.



Communism, Inc. by Marion Smith •

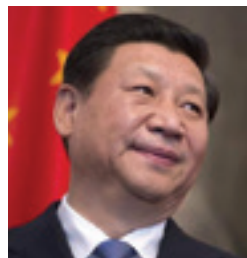
Towards the end of the Cold War, Nike, Coca-Cola, and Levi's jeans symbolized the free-enterprise possibilities of the West. Tragically, today's major US brands are willing to aid and abet the Orwellian surveillance apparatus of the world's largest totalitarian state, China. Will these companies wake up to their responsibility to do no evil? When Big Brother and Big Business collude, we all lose.



Op-Eds

Correcting the Record of Socialism on May Day by Marion Smith •

May Day was once an innocuous holiday celebrating workers. Today, it has been hijacked as an occasion for collectivism to rear its ugly head in public, with tub-thumping rallies praising socialist ideas. But do Americans even know what socialism is? On May Day's eve, executive director Marion Smith published an op-ed in the *New Hampshire Union Leader* showing how Marxist ideology has corrupted labor movements founded to fight for workers rights but that now serve socialist masters: "Far from ushering in a more equitable society, socialist movements that subscribed to Marxist ideology engendered a new form of slavery in the modern world...If May 1 really is about workers, then don't celebrate socialism. Celebrate free enterprise that allows workers to thrive."



China's Incursion onto US Campuses by VOC Peter Mattis •

In May, China Studies research fellow Peter Mattis published an op-ed *The Hill*, coauthored by Dr. Samantha Hoffman of the Mercator Institute for China Studies, exploring how the

Chinese Communist Party (CCP) manipulates its citizens and exiles. By setting up harmless-sounding "Confucius Institutes" on foreign campuses, he wrote, the CCP is able to monitor, and ultimately control, the very people who are most exposed to notions of freedom and who might otherwise speak out. "The very existence of a party branch on a US campus," he wrote, "signals to overseas Chinese that they are still subject to the CCP's restrictions."

Third Annual Report on US Attitudes Toward Communism, Socialism, and Collectivism

On October 30, we released our Third Annual Report on US Attitudes Toward Socialism in partnership with the polling firm YouGov. It confirmed a disturbing trend evident in the previous two reports: the American public lacks a serious understanding and education regarding socialism and communism.

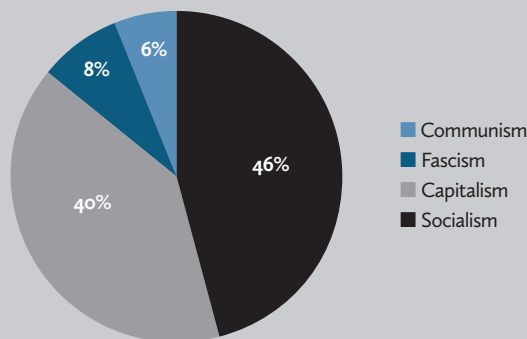


The results were alarming.

- More millennials would prefer to live in a socialist (46%) or communist (6%) country than a capitalist (40%) one.
- Some 26% of Americans have never been taught about communism in any educational or professional setting.
- Almost half of millennials agree or somewhat agree with restrictions to make sure public speech is not offensive (47%).
- Only half of Americans can identify Cuba as a communist country, and 41% of Americans do not consider North Korea communist.
- Half of Americans associate socialism with welfare states in Western Europe and Scandinavia—not Marxist dictatorships.
- Three out of four Americans cannot correctly identify how many people have been killed by communist regimes (at least 100 million).

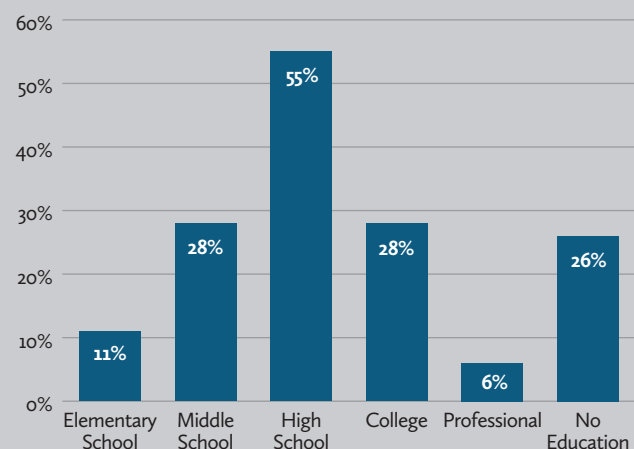
Millennials say they prefer socialism or communism...

Share of millennials saying they prefer:



...but they do not know much about either.

Share of respondents educated about communism at each level:





WE OFFER

Congressional Caucus Rebukes Juncker for Celebrating Marx

On May 5, 2018, the bicentennial of Karl Marx's birth, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker spoke at the unveiling of a colossal statue of Marx in the German city of Trier, the communist ideologue's birthplace.

Town locals didn't necessarily want the statue—which in revealing symbolism stands a towering 18 feet high—but the city government accepted it anyway. Shockingly, the monument to Marx was a gift of the People's Republic of China, one of the world's most ruthless communist-totalitarian governments.

This could not go unanswered. Ahead of the statue's unveiling, co-chairs of our bipartisan Congressional Caucus—Reps. Chris Smith (R-NJ), Dan Lipinski (D-IL), Dennis Ross (R-FL), and Marcy Kaptur (D-OH)—sent a letter to President Juncker urging him not to speak at the statue's unveiling: or if he did, not to honor Marx in any way but to honor the victims of Marxist regimes.

The letter condemned Marx, noting his 1849 article calling for terrorizing and murdering political opponents, and linked such incitement to the atrocities of regimes hailing his ideas. The letter noted, **“Marxism is a toxic ideology that has led to mass death, torture, and enslavement wherever it has been applied... Violence and Marxism go hand in hand.”**

The letter was referenced by major media outlets including *The Wall Street Journal* and European media outlets. Alarming, Juncker's remarks tried to sever the link between Marx's ideas and the atrocities they inspired, ignoring well-known historical facts about the call to violence embedded in Marx's thought.



President Juncker claimed there was no link between Marx's ideas and the atrocities they inspired, although our Congressional Caucus letter pointed to an explicit call to violence in Marx's own writings.

Capitol Hill Briefing: The Socialist Crisis in Venezuela

The socialist policies of dictator Hugo Chávez—and his successor-tyrant, Nicolás Maduro—have caused a horrific humanitarian crisis in Venezuela. Inflation is set to hit 1,000,000%, long-dormant diseases like malaria have surged, and food is so scarce that the average Venezuelan has lost 24 pounds. The dictator Maduro has essentially dissolved the legitimately elected National Assembly and is responsible for the murder of more than 150 peaceful protesters.

On March 9, we convened a panel of experts on Capitol Hill to discuss this growing crisis and steps the United States can take to restore democracy and protect human rights in Venezuela. Venezuelan dissident and accomplished musician Wuilly Arteaga opened the event with a violin performance and spoke stirring about the prospect for freedom in his country.

Among the distinguished panelists were Juan Gonzalez, former deputy assistant secretary of state for the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs; Dr. Robert Kahn, adjunct professor at American University; and our executive director, Marion Smith, who held an intense discussion on the dire situation on the ground, and how state sanctions might be applied to pressure the Maduro regime to reverse its bloody course.



Back, left to right, panelists Francisco Marquez, former political prisoner in Venezuela and founder of Vision Democratica; Dr. Robert Kahn of American University; Juan Gonzalez, deputy assistant secretary of state under President Obama; and Marion Smith, with Wuilly Arteaga and Kristina Olney at our Capitol Hill briefing on March 9.

Six States Move to Recognize Victims of Communism Day

Last March, Virginia became the first state to officially recognize November 7 as Victims of Communism Memorial Day after passing a resolution spearheaded by Virginia Del. Mark Cole



Five states are set to join Virginia in officially recognizing November 7 as Victims of Communism Memorial Day by early 2019, a direct result of efforts by VOC's government relations department.

(R-Spotsylvania County). Now six more states—Illinois, Kansas, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, and Utah—are moving to adopt similar resolutions by early 2019.

This is the direct result of VOC's work. In June, our government relations department became an official member of the Federalism and International Relations Task Force convened by the American Legislative Exchange Council. We drafted a resolution—modeled on the Virginia law and a 2017 Presidential Message designating November 7 as National Day for the Victims of Communism—and presented it to the Council.

On September 19, our draft was adopted as official model policy recommended to all Council members, who comprise one-quarter of all state legislators in the country. Our goal is to see resolutions passed in all 50 states so that more people will be aware of the vast human suffering caused by totalitarian regimes.

VOC Rallies for Religious Freedom in Asia

In July we participated officially in the first-ever Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom, hosted by the State Department in Washington, DC. The gathering—led by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom Sam Brownback, and with a keynote by Vice President Mike Pence—convened leaders from across the human rights community and delegations from more than 80 nations for three days of productive talks on how to combat persecution and ensure greater respect for religious liberty.

In coordination with the Ministerial, VOC hosted a Rally for Religious Freedom in Asia at the US Capitol in observance of Captive Nations Week, a tradition established in 1959 by President Eisenhower to recognize nations suffering under communist tyranny. Hundreds showed up both in person and virtually on Facebook Live, and the rally received wide press coverage including in *The Hill*, *Radio Free Asia*, and *The Washington Examiner*. Our six speakers were Rep. Alan Lowenthal (D-CA), co-chair of the Congressional Vietnam Caucus; Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX); Pastor Nguyen Cong Chinh, former prisoner

of conscience in Vietnam; Bhuchung Tsering, of the International Campaign for Tibet; Golog Jigme, Tibetan Buddhist monk, human rights advocate, and survivor of torture in Chinese detention centers; and Dolkun Isa, president of the World Uyghur Congress and laureate of our Human Rights Award.



VOC held a Rally for Religious Freedom in Asia on Capitol Hill on July 23 in coordination with the State Department's Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom. Left to right: Kristina Olney (VOC), Dolkun Isa, Golog Jigme, Pastor Nguyen Cong Chinh, Bhuchung Tsering, David Talbot (VOC).

“I will continue to fight until all prisoners of conscience throughout the world are released and free to express their views.” – Rep. Alan Lowenthal

Launch of Transatlantic Human Rights Forum

On May 18, VOC co-hosted a forum on Capitol Hill with the Václav Havel Program for Human Rights and Diplomacy organization to discuss democracy and human rights in Cuba and Venezuela. The meeting, called A Transatlantic Forum for Freedom in Cuba and Venezuela, brought freedom advocacy leaders from both countries together with regional experts

and representatives from the US and EU governments to chart a path forward for freedom in the Western Hemisphere.

Participants included pro-democracy leaders—11 from Cuba and 5 from Venezuela—11 staffers involved in US and EU lawmaking, and 8 representatives of democracy and human rights organizations. The conversation

was so productive that all the leaders agreed to join us in a new regular event series to be hosted by our Foundation called A Transatlantic Forum for Human Rights. The next conference is scheduled to be held in Brussels on October 16, 2019.

Left to right: Aaron Rhodes, former head of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights; Pavel Telička, vice president of the European Parliament; H.E. Martin Palouš, former Czech ambassador to the US; Rep. Paul Cook (R-CA), then-chair of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, Civilian Security, and Trade; Rosa María Payá, Cuban democracy advocate and founder of Cuba Decide; Marion Smith, executive director of VOC; and Carlos Vecchio, exiled leader of Venezuela's opposition party Voluntad Popular.



Marion Smith in Lima: End the Castro Doctrine

Leading up to the Summit of the Americas in Lima, Peru in April, we hosted a Cuba's Free Future event with Freedom House and the Latin American Youth Network for Democracy to draw attention to the dire state of political repression in Cuba and the urgent need to press for greater freedom.

The event drew nearly 100 people with a strong showing of VIPs, including Carlos Trujillo, US ambassador to the Organization of American States (OAS). OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro gave remarks, as did Marion Smith and former presidents of Bolivia and Costa Rica, respectively Jorge Ramírez and Miguel Echeverría. In his remarks, Smith said:

“The Revolution of Fidel and Che has failed the people of Cuba. And yet the Castros keep trying to export their failed model to other countries in this region, through propaganda, corruption, and violent coercion. It’s time for this Castro Doctrine in Latin America to end.”



VOC fellow Enrique Altimari, executive director Marion Smith, Cuban civic leader Rosa María Payá, David Talbot, and Cuban artist El Sexto.

Strengthening Memory and Conscience in the Baltics

On August 20-26, Dr. Murray Bessette and Kristina Olney, VOC's directors of academic programs and government relations, respectively, completed a week-long tour of the Baltics to support our European partners in public education and remembrance.

VILNIUS, LITHUANIA: Participated in the 2018 President Valdas Adamkus Conference on Restoring European and Transatlantic Resilience



Estonian President Kersti Kaljulaid pauses for a moment of silence at the dedication of a new Victims of Communism Memorial in Tallinn, Estonia, on August 23, also known as Black Ribbon Day, following a conference on communist crimes.

and commemoration of Black Ribbon Day. Featured speakers included Viktor Yushchenko, former president of Ukraine, and Vytautas Landsbergis, first Lithuanian head of state and laureate of VOC's Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom. Toured the Museum of Genocide Victims, housed in a former KGB prison. Met with Valdas Adamkus, former president of Lithuania.

TALLINN, ESTONIA: Participated in a conference on Communist Crimes and European Memory and official dedication of a new Victims of Communism Memorial hosted by the Estonian Institute of Historical Memory. Featured speakers included President Kersti Kaljulaid, Justice Minister Urmas Reinsalu, and Göran Lindblad of VOC's sister organization, the Platform of European Memory and Conscience. Toured Patarei Prison, the future location of an International Museum of the Crimes of Communism. Met with Tunne Kelam, founding member of the Estonian National Independence Party and Member of the European Parliament.

RIGA, LATVIA: Received private tour of the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia. Met with the museum's director, Gunars Nagels, on the importance of preserving historical memory.

VOC Represented at China's UN Human Rights Review

On November 6, director of government relations Kristina Olney represented VOC as an NGO observer at a special meeting of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland to review the human rights situation in China.

During China's third Universal Periodic Review, a UN mechanism to evaluate the human rights records of member states, 24 countries—including Australia, Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States—submitted questions about China's mass incarceration of religious minorities in concentration camps, banning of foreign journalists, and alleged torture and cultural genocide.

After the review, Olney spoke in front of the Palais des Nations at a demonstration of thousands of Muslim Uyghurs, Tibetan Buddhists, and other religious minorities from more than 27 countries. Other speakers included Dolkun Isa, president of the World Uyghur Congress; Jampa Tsering Samdho, a Tibetan parliamentarian in exile; and representatives of the Tibetan and Uyghur communities, who offered personal testimonies of CCP persecution.



VOC's Kristina Olney: (right) and a representative of the Central Tibetan Administration attend the United Nations' third Universal Periodic Review of the People's Republic of China as NGO observers.

While in Geneva, Olney also participated in the 2018 Geneva Forum hosted on November 2 by the Central Tibetan Administration, the India-based government-in-exile of independent Tibet. The forum brought together a select group of human rights experts, academics, diplomats, and activists to discuss the human rights situation in China, the plight of Uyghurs and Tibetans, and Chinese challenges to UN human rights institutions.

Dissident Artists and Musicians Shine at Free2Be Event in Dupont Underground

On June 12-22 our Foundation, hosted a multimedia exhibit and dual concert event called Free2Be in Washington, DC's historic Dupont Underground, featuring dissident art, music, and film viewed by hundreds of tourists and locals throughout a 10-day period.

The exhibit displayed a selection of oil-on-canvas from the Gulag Collection, a series of 50 paintings by gulag survivor Nikolai Getman depicting the brutal nature of Soviet concentration camps. Interspersed among the paintings, VOC's award-winning Witness Project videos

played on loop, telling the harrowing stories of witnesses to communism such as Cambodia's Nal Oum and Hungary's Dániel Magay.

The exhibit was bookended by concerts featuring young musicians inspired by a yearning for freedom. The opening performance was by Dr. Elida Dakoli, an Albanian-American pianist who also spoke on the effect communism's legacy has had on her creative development.

The closing concert featured Wuilly Arteaga, a native of socialist Venezuela who gained

worldwide fame for braving street protests against the brutal dictator Nicolás Maduro, armed only with his violin. He was injured by buckshot to the face, arrested on false charges, held in prison for 19 days, and had his violin destroyed by a National Guard soldier. Arteaga was joined on stage by Jana Kubánková, a Czech violinist and composer whose family suffered under communism. The two musicians performed a duet composed by Kubánková expressly for the Free2Be event and earned a standing ovation.



VOC Executive Director Marion Smith opens our Free2Be exhibit celebrating dissident art, music, and film at Washington, DC's historic Dupont Underground on June 12.



Visitors take in paintings from the Gulag Collection, an oil-on-canvas series by Soviet gulag survivor Nikolai Getman.



Arteaga and Kubánková performed a duet composed by Kubánková expressly for the Free2Be event.



Pianist Dr. Elida Dakoli explains the effect communism has had on her creative development during a media interview the effect communism has had on her creative development.

MEMORY





Fang Zheng, who was among the peaceful protesters overrun by army tanks during the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre, spoke at our annual commemoration vigil in June, with Marion Smith at the Victims of Communism Memorial in Washington, DC.

Zheng Receives Human Rights Award on Tiananmen Anniversary

A picture is worth a thousand words, but what if it is the wrong picture? The iconic image of “tank man” standing down armored vehicles in Tiananmen Square—long seared into public memories of June 1989—serves the Chinese Communist Party just fine: tidy images numb the memory of blood and gore unleashed during Beijing’s vicious crackdown on peaceful protesters. The truth is, not all tanks stopped.

We highlighted this on June 4, during our annual Tiananmen vigil at our Memorial statue in Washington, DC, by honoring the hero Fang Zheng, who was among the students cruelly overrun by army tanks during the protests of 1989. After he pushed a young female student to safety, a tank crushed both his legs and he lost consciousness. He recovered after both of his legs were amputated, only to have Chinese authorities deny him a passport in an attempt to silence him about what had happened.

To counter the CCP’s Orwellian whitewashing of history, dozens of survivors attended our vigil to light candles and hear Zheng testify to an atrocity that the Chinese government still denies ever happened. The next day we held a panel discussion on Capitol Hill called “Exploring the Contested History of Tiananmen Square,” moderated by VOC Research Fellow Peter Mattis and featuring Robert Suettinger, former director of the State Department’s Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs; award-winning journalist Natalie Liu; and Dr. Jianli Yang of Initiatives for China.

Congressman Chris Smith (R-NJ), co-chair of our bipartisan Congressional Caucus, also gave remarks in which he announced he was introducing a bill requiring intelligence agencies to report regularly on Confucius Institutes, the shadowy propaganda units Beijing has set up on US campuses by the hundreds to burnish China’s image abroad. We then presented our human rights award to Zheng for his bravery.

Black Ribbon Day Committee Donates Official Archives

On August 23, VOC acquired the official archives of the International Black Ribbon Day Committee, a civic organization that successfully advocated to establish an international day of remembrance for the victims of totalitarian regimes.

Black Ribbon Day began in the 1980s, when refugees from nations held captive by the Soviet Union started holding demonstrations to protest Soviet atrocities behind the Iron Curtain. They chose August 23, the day the Nazis and Soviets signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact to carve up Poland in 1939 and ushered in a brutal occupation of more than half of Europe. Their efforts eventually helped bring down the Berlin Wall, culminating in the Baltic Way demonstration of 1989, in which 2 million people joined hands to form a massive human chain across the Baltic states to defy Soviet occupation.



Foreign dignitaries and honored guests gathered at the Victims of Communism Memorial in Washington, DC on August 23 to mark Black Ribbon Day, commemorating the victims of totalitarianism. Left to right: Jonas Mažeika, Minister counselor of Lithuania; Markus Hess, founder and chairman of the International Black Ribbon Day Committee; Andris Teikmanis, Latvian ambassador to the US; and Marko Koplmaa, Estonia’s deputy chief of mission.

Black Ribbon Day was officially recognized in 2009 by Canada and the European Union—where it is known as the European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism—followed by the US House of Representatives in 2014. With official backing, the committee became a movement of citizens devoted to educating people about the brutality of collectivist regimes.

The gift expands VOC’s growing archives—which include the Gulag Collection, a series of paintings by Nikolai Getman depicting the horrors of the Soviet gulag, and the Novacovici Romanian Archive—and advances our goal to become the leading repository of knowledge on communism. At the donation ceremony, Markus Hess, the committee’s founder, said the courage to hold course was inspired by moral clarity and a confidence that historical justice could be achieved: **“We knew we were completely right and that they were completely wrong. And we knew that we were going to win and they were going to lose.”**

11th Annual Roll Call of Nations Wreath Laying Ceremony & Presentation of the Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom

On the morning of June 8, under a clear blue sky, we convened our 11th annual Roll Call of Nations Wreath Laying Ceremony and Presentation of the Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom at our Memorial statue in Washington, DC, at the corner of Massachusetts and New Jersey Avenues' near our nation's capitol.

The solemn gathering—dedicated to honoring communism's victims—was attended by a broad array of representatives from 16 embassies, 4 official government delegations, 39 ethnic and human rights organizations, as well as scores of activists and lovers of freedom.

In his remarks, Executive Director Marion Smith said: **"If you want to know what the real legacy of Marxism is, it is this ceremony.** It

is dozens of countries represented here by those who will lay wreaths to commemorate the lives of those killed in some 40 communist countries since 1917—more than 100 million people killed."

VOC chairman Dr. Lee Edwards and Marion Smith presented the Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom posthumously to Oswaldo Payá, the Cuban dissident slain by Castro agents in 2012 for leading pro-democracy efforts in Cuba. The award was accepted by his widow, Ofelia Acevedo, and his daughter, Rosa María Payá, herself a civic leader, who spoke about what her father's struggle for freedom means for the Cuban people.

The Medal of Freedom is awarded to those individuals and institutions who have

demonstrated a lifelong commitment to freedom and democracy and opposition to communism and all other forms of tyranny.

This year's ceremony and award centered on prospects for freedom in Cuba and the Latin America region, in the hope that old and new tyrannies in places such as Cuba and Venezuela will be reversed and help ensure the triumph of liberty in the Western Hemisphere.



Oswaldo Payá's widow and daughter, Ofelia Acevedo and Rosa María Payá, accept the award on his behalf.



Amb. Andris Teikmanis lays a wreath for Latvia.



Fr. Charles Nalls lays a wreath for the American Cold War Veterans group.

"Socialism has never worked anywhere in the 100 years of its existence." – Dr. Lee Edwards



A colorful array of embassies, delegations, and ethnic and human rights organizations gathered to lay wreaths in honor of the victims and the heroes at our memorial statue on the anniversary of its dedication on June 8.



Amb. Rolandas Kriščiūnas lays a wreath for Lithuania.



Amb. Tihomir Stoytchev lays a wreath for Bulgaria.



Amb. László Szabó (left) and Dr. Imre Nemeth lay a wreath for Hungary.

“Freedom is going to come soon to Cuba, because we haven’t lost our hope.” – Rosa María Payá

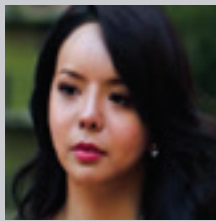
Witness Project Wins Second Award at Anthem Film Festival

On July 20, our latest Witness Project episode won an award for Excellence in Filmmaking at the Anthem Film Festival in Las Vegas, Nevada. This year's submission, released on May 17, tells the story of Wanda Woc Lorenc, a survivor of both Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia who was an active member of the Polish resistance during World War II. After the failed Warsaw Uprising, Wanda was sent to a concentration camp, where she was ultimately "liberated" by the Red Army. Upon returning to Warsaw, Wanda and her family fled communist Poland, escaped to Austria, and eventually found their way to the United States. The award follows VOC's victory in the same category last year for our Witness Project episode featuring Anastasia Lin, a Chinese-Canadian beauty queen and human rights activist whom the Chinese Communist Party has tried to silence.

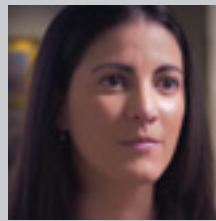


Witness Project Director Adam "Hawk" Jensen accepts the Excellence in Filmmaking award at the 2018 Anthem Film Festival in Las Vegas on July 20.

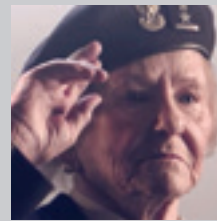
Watch Witness Project Episodes on YouTube:
youtube.com/vocvideos



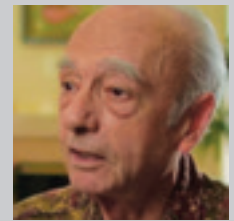
Anastasia Lin, Chinese-Canadian beauty queen.



Rosa María Payá, Cuban democracy advocate.



Wanda Woc Lorenc, Polish freedom fighter.



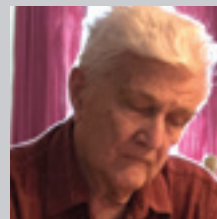
Dániel Magay, Hungarian Olympic fencer.



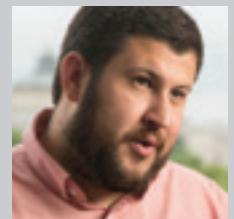
Nal Oum, Cambodian doctor.



Ji Seong-ho, North Korean defector and escapee. Coming soon!



Dan Novacovici, Romanian prisoner of conscience. Coming soon!



David Smolansky, Soviet, Cuban, and Venezuelan dissident. Coming soon!

Cuba Calls VOC “Subversive”

On February 10, we premiered a nine-minute documentary—part of our Witness Project oral history series featuring men and women who experienced communism firsthand—to a packed house at the American Museum of the Cuban Diaspora in Miami.

The episode tells the story of Oswaldo Payá—the Cuban dissident slain by Castro agents in 2012 for his tireless promotion of democracy in Cuba—through the eyes of his daughter, Rosa María Payá, who carries on her father’s fight today through Cuba Decide, a civic organization she founded calling for free elections in Cuba.

Soon afterward, the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MINREX) released a statement on its website denouncing—by name—our Foundation and other human rights and pro-democracy movements as subversive.

Marion Smith, our executive director, responded: “MINREX released its condemnation on the eve of Cuban ‘elections’ because the ‘revolution’ always needs an invented enemy. But, in reality, the Cuban ‘elections’ on March 11 were a sham because only the Communist Party of Cuba was on the ballot. The Cuban regime is the real enemy of the Cuban people. The Cuban people deserve better.”



In a public statement, the Cuban Foreign Ministry denounced our Foundation for telling the story of slain Cuban democracy advocate Oswaldo Payá.

“Cuban ‘elections’ on March 11 were a sham because only the Communist Party of Cuba was on the ballot. The Cuban regime is the real enemy of the Cuban people. The Cuban people deserve better.” – Marion Smith



Left to right: Luis Almagro, Secretary General of the Organization of American States; Rosa María Payá; and Marion Smith, at a premiere of our mini-documentary on Oswaldo Payá in Miami on February 10.

TRUMPET OF LIBERTY

Conference and Gala





Triumph of Liberty Gala Dinner

On November 14, we convened hundreds of friends of freedom in Washington DC's historic Union Station for our Triumph of Liberty Annual Conference and Gala, celebrating 100 years of independence of former captive nations in Eastern and Central Europe.

We hosted a three-panel conference, welcomed a presidential message marking November 7 as National Day for the Victims of Communism, received a letter from Vice President Mike Pence, enjoyed a choral performance featuring Baltic music, premiered two new educational videos, and awarded our Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom to three Baltic leaders: former Lithuanian president Valdas Adamkus, Latvian independence movement leader Sandra Kalniete, and founding member of the Estonian National Independence Party Tunne Kelam.

Presidential Message and Letter from Vice President

For the second year in a row, President Donald Trump issued a message declaring November 7 National Day for the Victims of Communism. We also welcomed a letter from Vice President Mike Pence commending our work, joining us in celebration, and congratulating the Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom recipients.



“For more than two decades, the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation has remembered the victims of communism and honored the heroes who are advancing the cause of freedom in our day.” – Vice President Mike Pence



Gen. Peter Pace, USMC, Ret., a Cold War veteran and former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, delivers the keynote address.

Baltic Choral Performance

The power of song to build community has long been an important cultural factor in the Baltic countries—never more so than in 1989, as two million Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians sang in peaceful defiance of Soviet tyranny during the Baltic Way protests. To honor this, we began our gala dinner with a concert of Baltic choral music, inspired by Baltic poetry and sung by the professional choir The Thirteen. The lyrics described the beauty of the landscape in these formerly captive countries.



Video Premiere

During the dinner we screened a short video of the Baltic Way protests, including aerial footage of the 420-mile human chain. We also premiered two short animated videos as part of our new explainer series aimed at young Americans. “Who is VOC?” unpacks the growing urgency and relevance of our mission to teach truth, keep memory, and pursue justice. “Why Anticommunism Is Nonpartisan” explains how Americans from across the political spectrum have historically always united behind our cause to promote freedom, justice, and peace.



Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom

We awarded our Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom to three heroes of Baltic independence following the collapse of the Soviet Union: former Lithuanian president Valdas Adamkus (pictured, right), Latvian independence movement leader Sandra Kalniete, and founding member of the Estonian National Independence Party Tunne Kelam. Each of them gave remarks on his or her lifelong devotion to fighting communism and pursuing freedom in the former bloodlands.



Keynote Address

Our keynote speaker was Gen. Peter Pace, USMC, Ret., who shared his personal story of rising from combat veteran in the jungles of Vietnam to 16th chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. General Pace recounted the principles that helped carry him through times of immense strain and peril and stressed the importance of courage, friendship, and a moral compass in confronting the challenges of one’s era.



Polish Government Museum Gift

The gala dinner concluded with a special video message from Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki announcing a \$10 million gift from the Polish government to help build a world-class museum in the capital of the free world to honor the victims of communism. The museum, he said, is critical to “ensure that future generations fully appreciate the difference between collectivist oppression and a free society.”



Academic Conference



VOC Chairman Lee Edwards delivers conference remarks.

On November 14, we convened a three-panel conference gathering 18 renowned scholars, dissidents, journalists, and policymakers to discuss communism's past, present, and future in Eastern and Central Europe and around the globe.

PAST: The first panel focused on the vital role American leadership played in confronting communist regimes in the 20th century.

PRESENT: The second panel addressed how former captive states today must still grapple with the bitter legacy of decades of Soviet occupation, and how they must confront security threats to their freedom and independence.

FUTURE: The third panel centered on the enduring challenges posed by communism in the 21st century.



H.E. Mari-Ann Kelam, former member of the Estonian Parliament.

“To keep democracy living is a matter of education.” – Martin Palouš



John O'Sullivan, former speechwriter for Margaret Thatcher.



Dr. F. Flagg Taylor IV, associate professor of government at Skidmore College.



Rosa María Payá, a Cuban human rights and democracy activist.



Dolkun Isa, president of the World Uyghur Congress.



Dr. Alina Polyakova, professor of European politics at Johns Hopkins.



Dr. Murray Bessette, VOC director of academic programs.



Halya Coymash, editor at the Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group.



H.E. Sandra Kalniete, a Latvian politician and independence movement leader.



Carlos Vecchio, leader of the Venezuelan opposition in exile.



Dr. Włodzimierz Batóg, VOC senior Polish studies fellow.



H.E. Žygimantas Pavilionis, a Lithuanian diplomat and Seimas member.



H.E. Martin Palouš, former Czech ambassador to the U.S.



Fatima Tlis, investigative reporter for Voice of America.

“The only real weapon against [Russian] disinformation is to tell the truth.” – Fatima Tlis



Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom recipient Tunne Kelam and conference guests.



Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom recipient Sandra Kalniete with VOC staff.



Dolkun Isa and H.E. Anna Maria Anders.

“Mr. Gorbachev did not voluntarily tear down the Berlin Wall. He had no other option, because of pressure from the West.” – Tunne Kelam



Bethany Allen-Ebrahimian, president of the International China Journalists Association.



H.E. Anna Maria Anders, Polish state secretary and plenipotentiary of the prime minister for international dialogue.



Myroslav Marynovych, founding member of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group and laureate of our Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom.



Dr. Lee Edwards, VOC chairman.



H.E. Tunne Kelam, Estonian politician and member of the European Parliament.



Dr. Carlos Ponce, director of Latin American programs at Freedom House.

Triumph of Liberty Gala Dinner



Marion Smith, VOC executive director, offers opening remarks.



Guests seated in Union Station's East Hall.



H.E. Tunne Kelam, Marion Smith, H.E. Sandra Kalniete, and Gen. Peter Pace



H.E. Žygimantas Pavilionis accepts the Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom on behalf of H.E. Valdas Adamkus.



Živilė Kriščiūnienė, Lyra Puišytė-Bostroem, H.E. Žygimantas Pavilionis, H.E. Rasa Juknevičienė, Rep. John Shimkus, Kristina Olney, Tadas Kubilius, and David Hobbs.



Amb. Andris Teikmanis, Hon. James Burnley IV, and H.E. Sandra Kalniete.



John O'Sullivan, Dr. Lee Edwards, and H.E. Tunne Kelam.



Dr. Flagg Taylor, Katharine Gorka, Merita McCormack, and Dr. Sebastian Gorka.



Myroslav Marynovych and Gen. Peter Pace.



Ryan Williams, Dr. Matthew Spalding, Amanda Achtman, and Drs. Murray and Lee Bessette.



Left to right, back to front: Ashlee Davis, Buddy Anderson, Włodzimierz Batóg, Gwen Balmes, Nicholas Bartulovic, Elad Vaida, Jonathan Davis, Ben Walters, Cheryl Yu, Naphtali Rivkin, Briggs Burton, McBryde Campbell, David Talbot, and Marion Smith.



John O'Sullivan, H.E. Žygimantas Pavilionis, and Anna Smith Lacey.



H.E. Tunne Kelam and Marion Smith.

Host Committee

Her Excellency Anna Maria Anders • The Honorable James Burnley IV • Ambassador Aldona Z. Wos, M.D. and Mr. Louis DeJoy • The Honorable Doctor Paula J. Dobriansky • Doctor and Mrs. Lee Edwards • Doctor and Mrs. Edwin J. Feulner • Mr. Nicholas Gage • His Excellency Doctor Václav Klaus • The Honorable and Mrs. Edwin Meese III • The Very Reverend Charles Nalls, CH (COL) (Ret.) • Mr. and Mrs. John O'Sullivan • Mr. Thomas Peterffy • Professor and Mrs. Paul du Quenoy • Their Imperial Highnesses Prince and Princess Ermias Sahle Selassie • Mrs. Ruta Sepetyš • Mr. and Mrs. John Thomas Taft



Tara Thu Nguyen, Tanh Nguyen, Nam Loc Nguyen, Jaden Lam Phan, David Talbot, Minh Tam Do, and, Vien Dang.

Diplomatic Host Committee

Her Excellency Floreta Faber, Ambassador of the Republic of Albania • His Excellency Grigor Hovhannissian, Ambassador of Armenia • His Excellency Wolfgang A. Waldner, Ambassador of Austria • His Excellency Sidney S. Collie, Ambassador of the Bahamas • His Excellency Tihomir Stoytchev, Ambassador of Bulgaria • His Excellency Pjer Šimunović, Ambassador of Croatia • His Excellency Hynek Kmoníček, Ambassador of the Czech Republic • His Excellency Jonatan Vseviov, Ambassador of Estonia • His Excellency David O’Sullivan, Ambassador of the EU Delegation • His Excellency David Bakradze, Ambassador of Georgia • His Excellency Dr. László Szabó, Ambassador of Hungary • His Excellency Geir H. Haarde, Ambassador of Iceland • Her Excellency Vlora Çitaku, Ambassador of Kosovo • His Excellency Andris Teikmanis, Ambassador of Latvia • His Excellency Rolandas Kriščiūnas, Ambassador of Lithuania • Her Excellency Cristina Balan, Ambassador of Moldova • His Excellency Piotr Wilczek, Ambassador of Poland • His Excellency George Cristian Maior, Ambassador of Romania • His Excellency Ivan Korčok, Ambassador of Slovakia • His Excellency Stanislav Vidovič, Ambassador of Slovenia • Her Excellency Karin Olofsdotter, Ambassador of Sweden • His Excellency Valeriy Chaly, Ambassador of Ukraine

Congressional Host Committee

Senator Tom Cotton (R-AR) • Senator Thom Tillis (R-NC) • Senator Roger Wicker (R-MS) • Representative Lou Correa (D-CA) • Representative Jeff Duncan (R-SC) • Representative Virginia Foxx (R-NC) • Representative Mike Gallagher (R-WI) • Representative Andy Harris (R-MD) • Representative Alcee Hastings (D-FL) • Representative Randy Hultgren (R-IL) • Representative Sam Johnson (R-TX) • Representative Marcy Kaptur (D-OH)* • Representative Doug Lamborn (R-CO) • Representative Dan Lipinski (D-IL)* • Representative Zoe Lofgren (D-CA) • Representative Alan Lowenthal (D-CA) • Representative Mark Meadows (R-NC) • Representative Robert Pittenger (R-NC) • Representative Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA) • Representative Dennis Ross (R-FL)* • Representative Adam Schiff (D-CA) • Representative Chris Smith (R-NJ)* • Representative Jackie Walorski (R-IN) • Representative Randy K. Weber (R-TX) • Representative Ted Yoho (R-FL)
 *Victims of Communism Congressional Caucus Co-Chairs



Amb. Aldona Wos (center, in black dress) and her White House Fellows guests.



Rishat and Rushan Abbas, Dolkun Isa, and Omer Kanat.



David Talbot, Rep. John Shimkus, H.E. Tunne and Mari-Ann Kelam, and Kristina Olney.



Guests mingle during the dessert reception in the Presidential Room.



Dr. Péter Szalay, H.E. Anna Maria Anders, Justice István Stumpf, and Anna Smith Lacey.

2018 Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom Laureates

Valdas Adamkus



Valdas Adamkus fought as a Lithuanian partisan, worked as an engineer, and served twice as president of Lithuania. During World War II, Adamkus fought alongside the partisans against Soviet rule, published an underground newspaper during the Nazi occupation,

and then resumed the fight against the returning Soviet army. In 1949, he immigrated with his family to the United States and later began a career with the US Environmental Protection Agency upon its inception in 1970. In addition to his many achievements in the US, as a consultant he helped address environmental problems in Eastern Europe. When he retired from the EPA in 1997, he had the longest tenure of any senior executive. Adamkus then announced that he would return to Lithuania, become a citizen, and run for president. He supported membership both in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and in the European Union. He also worked to achieve friendly relations with Lithuania's neighbors and ease tensions with Russia. In his first term, he successfully increased economic growth and lowered unemployment. In 2004, Adamkus served as president for a second term, during which he strove to further public participation in Lithuanian governance and promote closer relations between the European Union and the countries of the former Soviet sphere.



President Adamkus meets with President George W. Bush in 2007 to discuss Lithuania's push for energy independence to reduce Russian influence.



President Adamkus and his wife in a private audience with Pope Benedict XVI in 2007 to discuss social and moral issues before a Brussels forum on dealing with Russia.



President Adamkus with his wife Alma Adamkienė near the US Capitol in the 1950s, shortly after arriving in America. After earning a civil engineering degree from the Illinois Institute of Technology, he went on to serve as a regional administrator for the Environmental Protection Agency under President Reagan, then returned to Lithuania for a successful run for president in 1998.



Adamkus is a hero of the postcommunist transition in Lithuania and other former captive nations of the Soviet Union.

Sandra Kalniete



Sandra Kalniete is a Latvian politician, author, diplomat, and independence movement leader. She served as foreign minister of Latvia from 2002 to 2004 and as European commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries in 2004. Since 2009, she has served as a

member of the European Parliament representing the European People's Party. After her re-election in 2014, she became vice-chair of the European People's Party group in the European Parliament. Kalniete has also served as ambassador to the United Nations, France, and UNESCO. Having been born into a family who were the victims of Soviet crimes, Sandra Kalniete is involved in many human rights causes pertaining to totalitarian crimes. She chairs Reconciliation of European Histories Group, an all-party group in the European Parliament aimed at coming to terms with the totalitarian past of many countries in Europe.



Kalniete authored a book in 2000 chronicling the successes of the Baltic Independence Movement during the fall of the Soviet Union.



Kalniete's second book recounts her experiences growing up in a Siberian gulag.



Sandra Kalniete addresses the EU parliament in 2018, speaking on the urgency of opposing the influence of Russian propaganda in EU countries.



Kalniete with European Union President Martin Schulz after successfully advocating for fair direct payments to Latvian farmers in 2013.

Tunne Kelam



Tunne Kelam is an Estonian politician and member of the European Parliament. In 1972, Kelam prepared a memorandum to the UN on behalf of two underground citizens' groups, which asked for assistance to end Soviet occupation

and organize free elections. Despite strict KGB surveillance, Kelam continued to organize unofficial opposition groups and pass information to the West about human rights violations in Estonia. In August 1988, he became a founding member of the Estonian National Independence Party, the first non-communist political party within the territory of the Soviet Union. In 1989, he emerged as a leader of the Estonian Citizens' Committees movement and two years later was instrumental in achieving a national understanding with Soviet Estonia's Supreme Council on the principles of restoring Estonian statehood. Kelam was a member of the Constitutional Assembly and was elected to the first constitutional parliament, the Riigikogu, where he served for 12 years. Kelam represented Estonia in the Convention on the Future of Europe, and he was elected to the European Parliament three times.



Tunne Kelam urges the European Parliament to stop to stop the forced return of exiled Uyghur minorities to China, where they face persecution by the communist government.



Tunne Kelam with Jerzy Buzek, president of the European Parliament, and Mart Laar, former Estonian prime minister and a fellow Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom laureate.



Tunne Kelam and his wife Mari-Ann stand in solidarity with Ukraine after Russia's invasion in 2014.



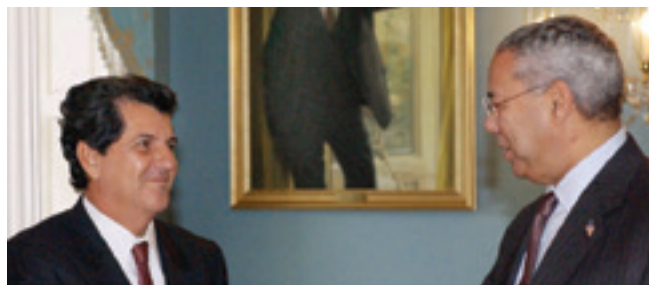
Tunne Kelam shares his experience in transitional justice in Estonia with a conference in 2014 advocating for greater respect for minority rights in Iraq.

Oswaldo Payá



Oswaldo Payá was a Cuban civic leader, dissident, and pro-democracy activist. Born in Havana in 1952, he refused to join the Young Communist League after the revolution and spent three years in a labor camp for declining to transport

political prisoners during his mandatory military service. After the University of Havana expelled him, he attended night school and became an engineer. Payá was given the chance to leave Cuba in 1980 but chose to stay, despite constant harassment and intimidation from the Cuban regime. He founded the Christian Liberation Movement to oppose one-party rule and advocate for civil rights. He attempted to run for a seat in Cuba's National Assembly in 1992 but was barred. Mentored by Václav Havel, the former dissident who became president of the Czech Republic, Payá led the Varela Project, a petition drive for laws enshrining freedom of speech and multi-party democracy, which collected 25,000 Cuban signatures. In 2012, Oswaldo Payá and his associate Harold Cepero were killed in a car crash orchestrated by agents of the Castro regime. Oswaldo Payá had received numerous awards, including the European Parliament's 2002 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought, and he was nominated five times for the Nobel Peace Prize.



Oswaldo Payá meets with US Secretary of State Colin Powell in 2003 to discuss a path to reform for the Cuban government.



Thousands of Cubans march in grief and defiance during Payá's funeral procession after Castro agents assassinated him in 2012 by forcing his car off the road.



Oswaldo Payá receives the European Union's prestigious Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought in 2002.



Oswaldo Payá meets with Pope Saint John Paul II at a general audience during an impromptu trip to Rome in 2003.



Oswaldo Payá meets with Czech president Václav Havel in 2003 after former Czech dissidents signed a petition urging the Cuban government to release its political prisoners.

Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom Laureates

2018

Oswaldo Payá
H.E. Valdas Adamkus
H.E. Sandra Kalniete
H.E. Tunne Kelam

2017

H.E. Mart Laar, PhD
Memorial Society
Hon. Natan Sharansky

2016

Paul A. Goble

2015

Chen Guangcheng
Guillermo Fariñas
Alexander Podrabinek

2014

Mustafa Dzhemilev
Myroslav Marynovych

2013

H.E. Václav Klaus, PhD
Fr. Thadeus Nguyễn Văn Lý
Yang Jianli, PhD

2012

Hon. Donald Rumsfeld
H.E. Stanislaw Shushkevich

2011

Hon. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
H.E. Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga
John C. Whitehead

2010

Robert Conquest
Hon. Armando Valladares
Harry Wu
H.E. Emanuelis Zingeris

2009

Rep. Steny Hoyer
Hon. Jack Kemp
Hon. Edwin Meese III
Richard Pipes, PhD
Hon. Bishop László Tőkés

2008

Midge Decter
Hon. Paula J. Dobriansky, PhD
Hon. Tom Lantos
Hon. Kateryna Yushchenko

2007

William F. Buckley, Jr.
Hon. János Horváth
Hon. Henry “Scoop” Jackson
Rep. Dana Rohrabacher
Trần Văn Bá

2006

Edwin J. Feulner, Jr., PhD
Hon. Milada Horáková
H.E. Lech Wałęsa

2005

Pope Saint John Paul II
Hon. Lev E. Dobriansky
Lt. Gen. Edward L. Rowny, USA, Ret.
Solidarity Free Trade Union of 1980
Anna Walentynowicz

2004

Lockheed Martin Corporation
Rep. John Shimkus
Maj. Gen. John Singlaub, USA, Ret.

2003

H.E. Václav Havel
National Endowment
for Democracy
Michael Novak

2002

Hon. Philip M. Crane
Hon. Hae Yung Chung
Hon. Joseph Lieberman
H.E. Viktor Orbán

2001

Vladimir Bukovsky
Hon. Jesse Helms

2000

Đoàn Viết Hoạt, PhD
Col. John McKone, USAF, Ret.
Col. Lewis Millett, USA, Ret.
Hon. Orson Swindle
Gen. Paik Sun-yup, ROKA, Ret.
Wei Jingsheng
Youk Chhang

1999

Elena Bonner
Lane Kirkland
H.E. Vytautas Landsbergis, PhD
H.E. Philip Dimitrov

Financial Position

ASSETS

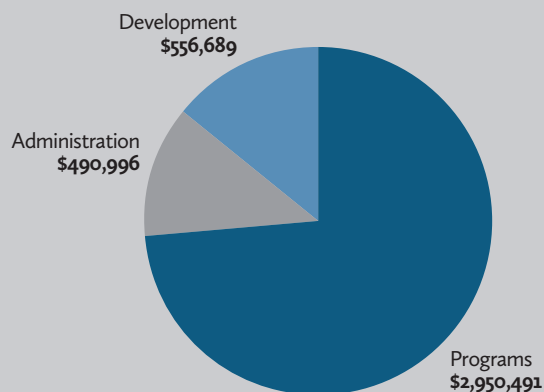
Total current assets	\$ 9,354,305
Property and equipment, net	\$ 1,401,024
Other assets	\$ 104,241
Total assets	\$ 10,859,570

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

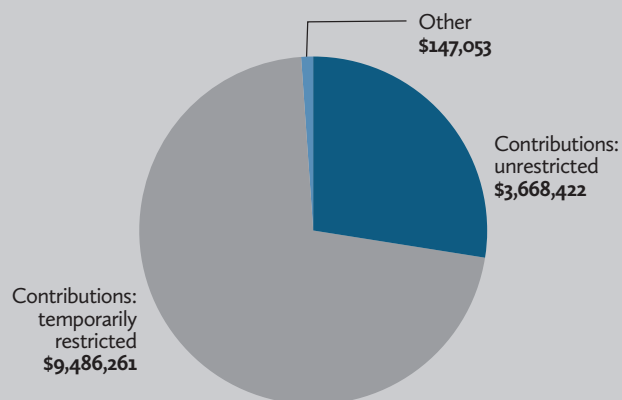
Current liabilities	
Accounts payable	\$ 97,795
Other liabilities	\$ 42,031
Total current liabilities	\$ 139,825
Net assets	
Unrestricted	\$ 1,510,182
Temporarily restricted	\$ 9,209,563
Total net assets	\$ 10,719,745
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 10,859,570
Change in net assets from operations	\$ 9,303,560
Net realized gain on investments	\$ (1,558)
Change in net assets	\$ 9,302,272
Net assets, December 31, 2017	\$ 1,417,473
Net assets, December 31, 2018	\$ 10,719,745

Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation's financial position is based on an unaudited internal report for the fiscal year January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018. The Foundation is grateful for the generosity of its stakeholders.

Total expenses \$3,998,176



Total revenue \$13,301,736



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300 New Jersey Avenue NW, Suite 900
Washington, DC 20001
202.629.9500
victimssofcommunism.org