



**Victims of Communism**  
Memorial Foundation

# WINTER 2018 NEWSLETTER

## Anticommunists Mark Bolshevik Centenary

On a cold night in Petrograd, just over one hundred years ago, a small group of Red Guards seized the Winter Palace and installed the world's first communist government. The Bolshevik Revolution marked the beginning of a century in which adherents to communist ideology committed some of the worst and most widespread atrocities known to history.

On November 7-9, 2017, we convened more than 1,000 anticommunists—including diplomats and Congress members, historians and dissidents, and champions of freedom and human rights—in Washington, DC, for the Victims of Communism Centennial Commemoration, solemnly marking the 100th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution.

In sum, we launched a bipartisan Victims of Communism Caucus in Congress, welcomed the President's message declaring the first National Day Commemorating the Victims of Communism, premiered a documentary featuring six women who were political prisoners in Stalin's Gulag, hosted a Russian Orthodox choir concert, and organized a two-day conference in the Library of Congress.

Our reflection culminated with a dinner on Nov. 9 in the main hall of Union Station. Economic historian Niall Ferguson delivered a keynote speech on communism and civilization.



*Chairman Dr. Lee Edwards, Trustee Thomas Peterffy, Executive Director and Trustee Marion Smith, and keynote speaker Dr. Niall Ferguson in Union Station on November 9, 2017.*

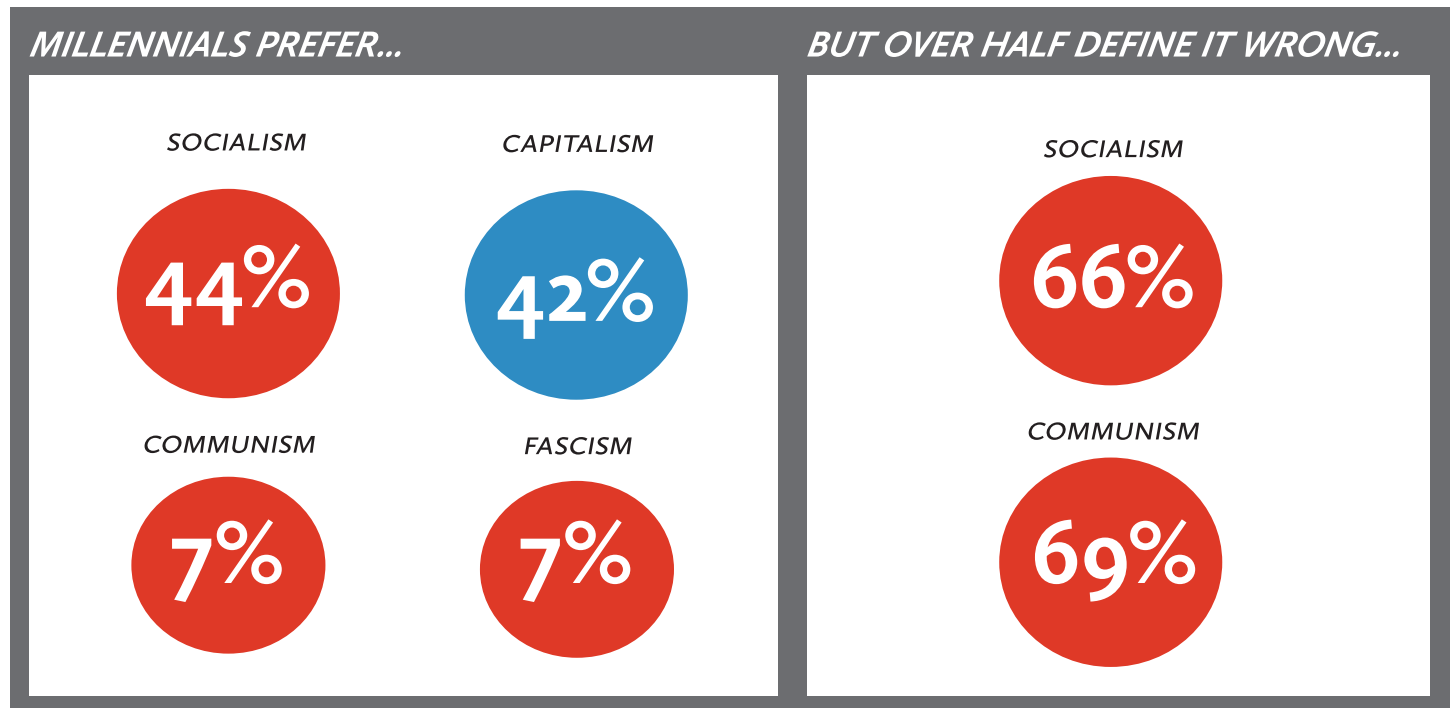
We awarded Natan Sharansky, Israeli statesman and former Soviet political prisoner, and the Russian NGO Memorial Society, represented by their Executive Director Elena Zhemkova, the Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom for their life-long commitments to freedom and democracy and opposition to communism and all other forms of tyranny.

In his acceptance remarks, Sharansky said: **"It is the desire of people to be free and to speak their minds freely, which is an unconventional weapon the free world has."**

President George W. Bush sent a video message thanking Sharansky and Memorial Society for their work, and reminded us all that "freedom is precious and cannot be taken for granted, that evil is real and we must confront it."

Thank you to all those who joined us to mark this historic anniversary, and all those who were with us in spirit.

# Survey Says: Millennials Want Collectivism, But Can't Define It



Source: 2017 Annual Report on US Attitudes Toward Socialism by VOC and YouGov.

On November 2, we released our Second Annual Report on US Attitudes Toward Socialism, confirming that young Americans remain largely ignorant of the crimes of communist regimes and how Marxist ideology directly enables such atrocities.

The percentage of Millennials who would prefer socialism to capitalism is a full ten points higher than that of the general population.

The significance of this finding cannot be overstated: **the largest generation in America would rather live under socialism or communism than under a free market system** that respects the rule of law, private property, and limited state intervention. And yet, despite Millennials' enthusiasm for socialism and communism, they do not, in fact, know what those words mean.

More than 30 outlets, including *The Washington Post*, *Fox News*, *Bloomberg*, *The Weekly Standard*, *The New York Times*, and *USA Today*, cited the report.

**1/3 OF MILLENNIALS BELIEVE THAT  
GEORGE W. BUSH KILLED MORE  
PEOPLE THAN JOSEPH STALIN.**

#KnowTheTruth

100 YEARS  
100 MILLION KILLED

**Victims of Communism**  
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*The results of our inaugural survey in 2016.*



*In April, we launched a video series to help unpack difficult concepts related to communism. The first video "What Is Socialism?" debunks the myth that socialism provides greater equality and prosperity than free enterprise, and has more than 35,000 views on Facebook and YouTube.*



# Changing How Communism Is Taught



*Dr. Gregory McBayer lectures on Political and Economic Theory during seminar session one in Washington, DC's Union Station.*

July 16-21, we convened our second annual National Seminars for High School Educators and equipped 25 teachers from 18 states, plus DC and Brazil, with the tools to change how communism is taught in their classes, their schools, and their states.

Faculty lectured on the history of communist regimes, political economy, totalitarianism, the Cold War, and American communism. Participants created instructional units and peer-to-peer presentations, watched our Witness Project videos, and heard from witnesses of communism Joseph Kim and Grace Jo, North Korean defectors; Enrique Altimari, a Venezuelan pro-democracy advocate; and Dr. Yang Jianli, a survivor of the Tiananmen Square Massacre.

**"The care shown in balancing discussion of ideology with the application of the curriculum materials makes a huge difference in allowing me to take these resources and make them relevant in my classroom,"** said Mike Lutz of Cumberland Valley High School in Mechanicsburg, PA.

We've grown our ability to maintain long-term relationships with these teachers and expand our outreach. Thirty-six percent of our 2017 alumni scheduled follow-on activities for the 2017-2018 academic year. Every teacher who uses our curriculum, presents to fellow educators, or invites a dissident to speak helps us reach thousands of high school students with the truth.



*Betsy Newmark, 2017 seminar alum, Landon Wang, winner of the VOC student essay contest, and his father Dr. Jiangbo Lu attend Centennial Commemoration.*



*Tom O'Hare (front center), 2016 seminar alum, leads a workshop on communism at the South Carolina Independent Schools Teachers Convention in November.*



# National Captive Nations Week



*The ¡No Che! Noche rally crowd stands in solidarity on the steps of the US Capitol on July 19.*

Each July we mark Captive Nations Week, first observed in 1959 under President Dwight D. Eisenhower, by recognizing those peoples and nations suffering under communist and other totalitarian regimes.

The week began early with the tragic death of Chinese dissident and Nobel Laureate Liu Xiaobo. We held a candlelight vigil at our Memorial on July 17 to commemorate his life, which inspired so many Chinese to stand up for democratic reform.

On July 19, we honored slain Cuban dissident Oswaldo Payá by organizing a ¡No Che! Noche rally on the steps of the US Capitol. We passed out t-shirts with Che Guevara's face marked out to symbolize his brutality, and reflected on the legacy of Payá, a true Cuban hero. Two hundred people joined us at the Capitol and 3,500 tuned in online.

Ofelia Acevedo, Oswaldo Payá's widow; Enrique Altimari, a Venezuelan pro-democracy advocate; and Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) delivered remarks during the rally.

**"Millions of more victims live ignored by many today. You are called to be a voice for them,"** said Acevedo.

During the week, we engaged with Members of Congress to build bipartisan support for the Captive Nations. Ofelia, Enrique, and Cuban-American activist John Suarez met with Rep. Albio Sires (D-NJ) to discuss how the US can help the people of Cuba and Venezuela.

Rep. Dennis Ross (R-FL) and Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) delivered speeches on the House floor on July 20 in support of the captive people's aspirations for freedom.

We also hosted a public phone conference and a private luncheon where activists reported on the ongoing struggle for freedom in China, Cuba, Hong Kong, Laos, North Korea, occupied Eastern Ukraine, Crimea, Venezuela, and Vietnam. Reports on each Captive Nation are published on *Dissident*.

Dr. Lee Ae-ran, the first North Korean defector to earn a doctoral degree and run for the Republic of Korea's National Assembly, visited our office on Capitol Hill to brief staff on her work to raise awareness about the strategic importance of the Korean Peninsula.

Millions of people around the world still live under brutal repressive communist regimes. During Captive Nations Week, we united Americans in solidarity with them.





*Henry Li, Marion Smith, and Dr. Yang Jianli hold vigil for Liu Xiaobo.*



*Ofelia Acevedo, wife of murdered Cuban opposition leader, shares remarks.*



*Marion Smith addresses the ¡No Che! Noche crowd in front of the US Capitol.*



*Enrique Altamari advocates for a free Venezuela.*



*Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen supports Captive Nations Week on the House floor.*

# Victims of Communism Centennial Commemoration



Panelists Dr. James McAdams, Vladimir Kara-Murza, Dr. Paul Hollander, and Marion Smith discuss the legacy of Soviet Russia in the Library of Congress on Nov. 8.



Representatives Marcy Kaptur (D-OH) (pictured), Dan Lipinski (D-IL), Dennis Ross (R-FL), and Chris Smith (R-NJ) announce their leadership of our Victims of Communism Caucus in Congress on Nov. 7.



Choir from the Synodal Cathedral of the Icon of Our Lady of the Sign in New York performs at Saint Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral on Nov. 8.

*"As long as there are communists, there will be anticommunists!"*

*- Marion Smith*

*"We should not be lulled into thinking that communism is no longer a threat to freedom in the world."*

*- Rep. Dennis Ross*

*"The United States does not only espouse the principles of freedom, but we act on it, we lead."*

*-Hon. Dr. Paula Dobriansky*

*"This caucus will shine a light on the victims' struggle, and work to keep the flame of human rights around the world alive."*

*- Rep. Marcy Kaptur*

*"This is the reality of communism. A god that failed, a science that never was, a political system that sits abandoned and bereft on the ash heap of history."*

*- Dr. Lee Edwards*



*"Truth matters. The truth is, communism is an unmitigated evil."*

*- Sen. Ted Cruz*

*"The best reason, in my view, to support the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation is to learn from our past mistakes."*

*- Dr. Niall Ferguson*

*"It is our duty to tell these stories, the truth about communism, and preserve this history for all generations."*

*- Rep. Dan Lipinski*

*"To overcome the legacy of our past lies in bringing memory and freedom together."*

*- Elena Zhemkova*

*"Our bipartisan caucus is determined to ensure that Congress and the American people remain aware and continue to fight."*

*- Rep. Chris Smith*



*Niall Ferguson delivers the keynote address at the Centennial Commemoration dinner in Union Station on Nov. 9.*



*Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom laureates Elena Zhemkova, representing the Russian NGO Memorial Society, and Natan Sharansky, Israeli statesman and former Soviet political prisoner.*



*His Imperial Highness Prince Ermias Sahle Selassie, grandson of Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie, views paintings from The Gulag Collection by Ukrainian artist Nikolai Getman.*

# Honoring Otto Warmbier, Victim of Communism



*Otto Warmbier is led to trial in North Korea in 2016.*

The North Korean regime is one of the world's most brutal communist dictatorships, starving its people, constantly threatening nuclear war, and again murdering an American citizen. This June, Otto Warmbier was sent home in a coma after suffering 17 months of imprisonment in North Korea for allegedly stealing a propaganda poster. He died on June 19 as a result of torture-induced injuries.

We honored Otto by educating Americans about North Korea's barbaric communist regime and calling out those who defend Kim Jong-un.

Executive Director Marion Smith appeared on Fox News' Tucker Carlson Tonight on June 20 to discuss the tragedy. Reaching approximately three million viewers, he explained, **"Unfortunately, what has happened to Otto Warmbier is how they treat their own citizens. It is a cruel regime, and you can say, in fact, that all 25 million citizens live in a slave camp."**



*Marion Smith appears on Tucker Carlson Tonight on June 20.*

With America's attention on North Korea, we highlighted the outrageous praise of that regime by former NBA star Dennis Rodman, who considers Kim Jong-un a "friend for life" and has made multiple trips to North Korea on the basis of "basketball diplomacy." He continued his one-man PR campaign even as Otto Warmbier fought for his life.

We launched petitions on Change.org and StandUnited.com to remove Rodman from the Basketball Hall of Fame. Over 9,000 people added their names in support.

Our petition was also written up in dozens of media outlets, including USA Today, CNN, TMZ, Maxim Magazine, and The Washington Post.

On the day of Otto's funeral, June 22, we sent flowers to his family and laid a wreath in his honor at our Memorial. We stand firm in our commitment to honor every victim of communism. It is with great sorrow that we added Otto's name to that list.



# Music Buoy Hope for a Free Venezuela



*Venezuelan dissident Wuilly Arteaga playing violin at our Memorial on June 9.*

Last year, we watched in real time a new communist regime take form in the Western Hemisphere. With the support of Cuba, Nicolás Maduro erased private property, human rights, political freedom, and the rule of law across Venezuela.

We penned an open letter to the media, which was signed by 5,942 people, demanding major news networks accurately cover the true cause of Venezuela's economic and humanitarian crisis: socialism.

We also partnered with 23-year-old violinist Wuilly Arteaga, who became an icon of the protest movement early in 2017, to advocate for a free Venezuela. The photos and videos coming out of the brutal crackdown on protests showed this brave young man armed only with his violin playing in the streets in support of the cause of freedom. **"I went out to protest with my only weapon,"** he told *The Washington Post*, referring to his violin.

In June, Wuilly performed at our 10th Annual Roll Call of Nations Ceremony and laid a wreath on behalf of his fellow Venezuelans. While he was in DC, we brought him to brief Members of Congress on the crisis, and raised \$1,500 to buy him a new violin to replace the one that had been deliberately destroyed by a National Guard soldier in May. This was not just

Wuilly's property; it was his livelihood.

Just ahead of Maduro's sham elections in August, Wuilly was injured by a buckshot to the face, arrested on illegitimate charges, and held in custody for 19 days simply because of his peaceful protest. He was released on August 16, but he and his fellow Venezuelans are still not free.



*Wuilly Arteaga protests the Maduro regime's brutal tyranny, as more than 160 protestors were killed in Venezuela in 2017.*



# 10th Annual Roll Call of Nations



On June 9, the ten-year anniversary of our Memorial's dedication, we gathered with 17 embassies, 3 delegations, 31 ethnic and human rights organizations, and over 150 guests for our annual Roll Call of Nations Wreath-Laying Ceremony. This year's ceremony centered on the legacy of communism in the Baltic nations of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. We awarded our Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom to H.E. Dr. Mart Laar, the first official Prime Minister of Estonia's Second Republic. H.E. Dr. Vytautas Landsbergis, first head of state of Lithuania after it declared independence from the Soviet Union, offered keynote remarks. Guests enjoyed music by Venezuelan violinist and freedom advocate Wuilly Arteaga, who laid a wreath on behalf of the people of Venezuela and Cuba. The day was a powerful reminder of the bond between those who fought for freedom in the 20th century and today's dissidents pursuing freedom still.



*Lithuanian statesman H.E. Dr. Vytautas Landsbergis delivers keynote remarks.*



*Dr. Lee Edwards offers remarks at the 10th annual Roll Call of Nations.*



## Vietnamese Weigh In on Global Migration Crisis



We co-sponsored “War and Refuge: Reflections on the Vietnamese Refugee Experience and Its Applicability to the Global Migration Crisis” on August 3 to help Americans learn from the Vietnamese who fled communism in the 1970s. Over 150 people attended our panel, film screening, and art exhibit, organized in partnership with the Vietnamese American Heritage Foundation, the Vietnamese American Arts & Letters Association, and the Vietnam Culture Center of Washington, DC.

## Viral Post Connects Nazism and Communism



The only difference between national socialism and international socialism is which type of mustache your dictator prefers. We want a society where communism is condemned like Nazism and where public figures can't praise it without popular outrage—so we're sharing graphics like this to help teach Americans that fascism and communism are twin ideologies.

## Payá Continues Her Father's Quest for a Free Cuba



On April 6, we hosted the conversation “A Cuban Dissident’s View: Memory, Justice, and US-Cuban Relations” with Cuban dissident Rosa María Payá, following the reintroduction of a bipartisan bill to rename the street in front of the Cuban Embassy in DC as “Oswaldo Payá Way.” Rep. Dennis Ross, Sen. Ted Cruz, and Sen. Marco Rubio joined Rosa María to discuss her father’s legacy and Cuba’s path to democracy. Changing the street name will serve as a permanent reminder that the US supports the aspirations of Cuba’s citizens to decide their own future.

## Checking Chinese Influence on College Campuses



Mao Zedong’s policies killed nearly 60 million people, making him the greatest mass murderer of the 20th century. Yet, half of Millennials say they have never heard of him. In 2017, we brought Chinese dissident Lily Tang Williams to visit 19 colleges and educate American students about China. She shared her personal experience growing up under Mao, and warned that Beijing-backed Confucius Institutes on US campuses advance CCP propaganda and block the truth.



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# Centennial Commemoration Dinner



*Our stage was flanked by the flags of countries participating officially—Albania, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Georgia, Hungary, Israel, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Malta, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Sweden, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and the United States.*



*Centennial Commemoration dinner in the main hall of Union Station on Nov. 9.*



*President George W. Bush thanks our Foundation, Natan Sharansky, and Memorial Society in a video message.*