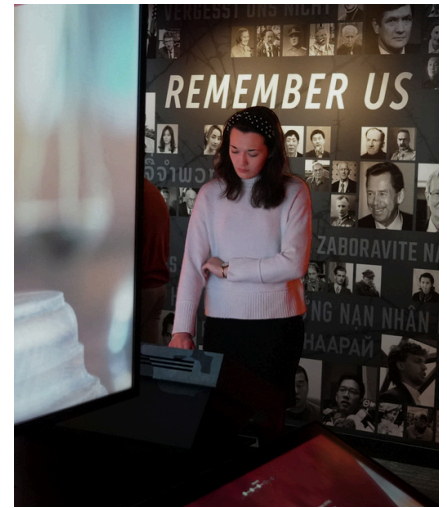
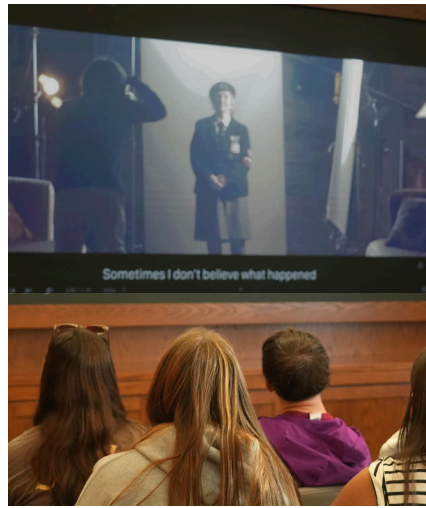




VICTIMS OF COMMUNISM MEMORIAL FOUNDATION 2025 Annual Report

MISSION

To educate all generations about the ideology, history, and legacy of communism by equipping and convening students, educators, and policymakers through our unique museum and curricula, heroic witness testimonies, and groundbreaking research to keep our world free from the true evils of communism.

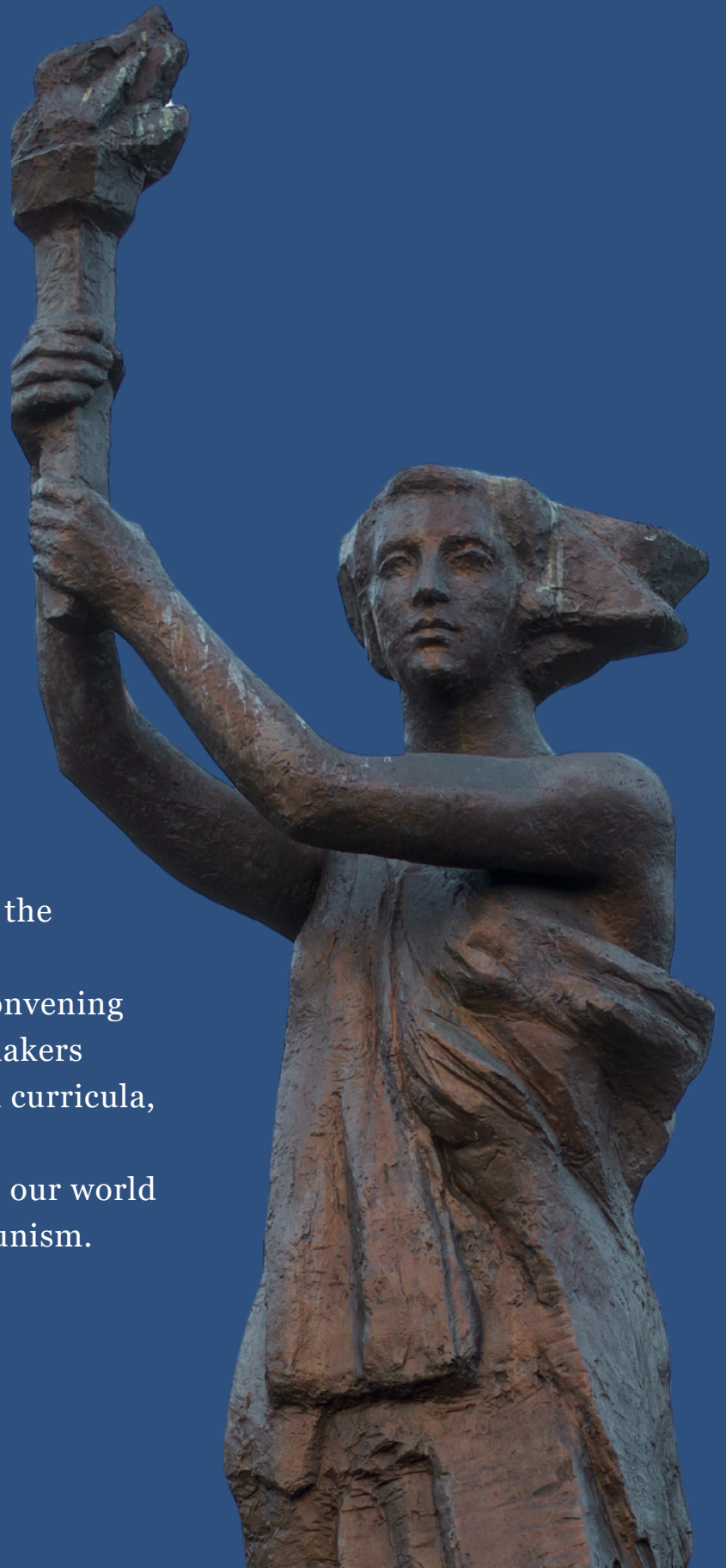




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[Kazimierz Lejko, 1930s]

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A MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP

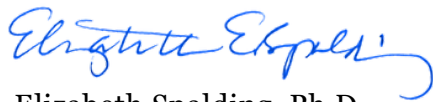
Across the world, courageous dissidents such as María Corina Machado, Jimmy Lai, and José Daniel Ferrer continue to risk their freedom to resist communism in all its forms. Their example reminds us that our struggle is not confined to distant nations; it is a contest of ideas that touches free societies as well. In a year when socialist leadership has ascended in New York City, we are reminded that the defense of liberty requires vigilance at home no less than solidarity abroad.

At the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation and Museum we confront these threats and seize these opportunities. **Our mission is to educate all generations about the ideology, history, and legacy of communism. We do this by equipping and convening students, educators, and policymakers through our unique museum and curricula, heroic witness testimonies, and groundbreaking research to keep our world free from the true evils of communism.**

In this 2025 report you will see evidence of VOC's impact, including:

- An increase in **school group visits to the Museum by 60%.**
- **VOC's major report on slave labor in China's tomato industry**, which was widely broadcast by the BBC and other media with headlines such as "Is that slavery on your pasta?" The *Financial Times* reported that **by November 2025, China's total tomato paste exports fell 9%, with sales to Western Europe down 67% compared to 2024!**
- Publication of three new curricula at the high, middle, and elementary school levels, such as *Ten Great Speeches Against Communism* and *Learning Liberty Through Freedom Movements*.
- Outreach to over **9,000 teachers at 20 teachers conferences** across the country.

We invite you to join us in celebrating America's 250th birthday with a national essay contest for students, a series of patriotic events, and a special exhibition at our museum. All of these teach the truths of the Declaration of Independence while exposing the ideological lies found in the Communist Manifesto.



Elizabeth Spalding, Ph.D.
Chairman



Eric Patterson, Ph.D.
President and CEO





EDUCATION





VOC MUSEUM: OUR “SCHOOLHOUSE”

A distinctive educational experience that exposes the human cost of communism and honors the enduring struggle for freedom.



“I learned how communism really destroys a culture and destroys people’s lives in general. But I also learned how people used their faith to keep them going and to give them joy in the hardest moments in human history.”

—Intern, The Institute of World Politics



In 2025, the museum
educated thousands:

58

Student Group
Museum Tours

36

Events

6,200

Museum Guests



★★★★★ 6 months ago

This is an amazing little museum. The story it tells needs to be told because unfortunately too many don't know, deny, or ignore the truth about the devastation communism brings. I read the one-star

★★★★★ 3 months ago

A must see for anyone who values freedom and needs a reminder of the world under communism.

★★★★★ 4 months ago

An absolute treasure to the national collection of museums here in DC. Putting faces and names front and center of the consequences to communism in the world is a must see educational experience for people (especially) our youth to experience.

★★★★★ Oct 11, 2025

This is a very interesting museum. We went for the operation Peter Pan exhibit but I recommend everything there. Especially if you are currently enjoying freedom. It shouldn't be taken for granted.

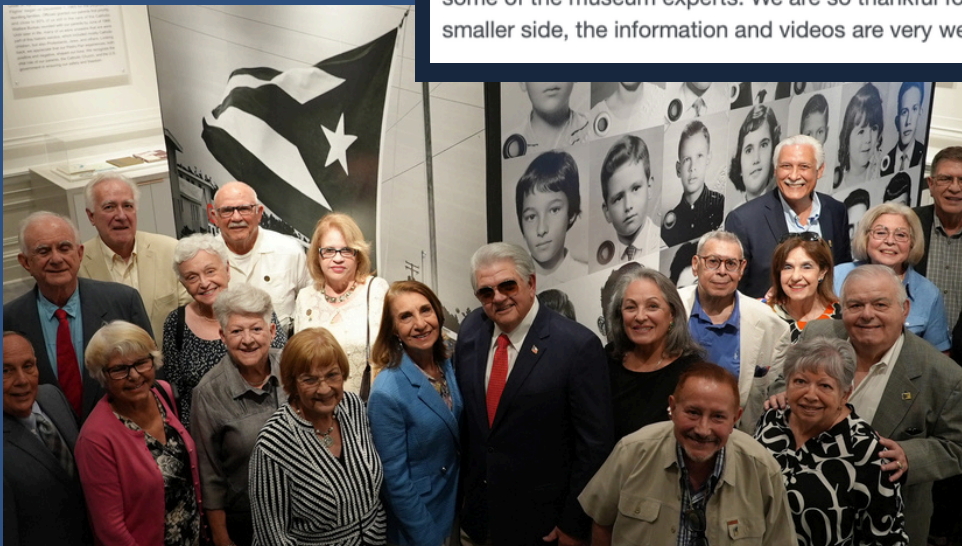


★★★★★ 10 months ago

Absolute must-visit. Very emotional, educational, and well-organized museum. This museum is doing extremely important work to increase awareness of the damage that communism has wrought across so many countries. Staff are very kind, knowledgeable, and welcoming as well.

★★★★★ 7 months ago

Our organization brought in our six summer interns for a tour of the museum and a private talk with some of the museum experts. We are so thankful for their hospitality. Though the museum is on the smaller side, the information and videos are very well done!!



★★★★★ 2 months ago

We visited this past week and found the museum to be very grounding. Here is a place to engage with this massive idea that has played such a major role in shaping our world for the last century, and in a very accessible way. I'd recommend a visit - the museum is not large but has good displays and again puts texture to this thing that we all know about but may not really understand. The paintings from the survivor of the Gulag were particularly impactful for me.

VOC MUSEUM: TEMPORARY EXHIBITS

Temporary exhibits allow VOC to work with partners to feature the stories of countries impacted by communism.

Vietnam: The Truth

This exhibit was curated by the **Viet American Foundation**. The exhibit depicted Vietnam's enduring fight for freedom against communism and explored the communist takeover of the country, the brave Vietnamese who fought for freedom, and the ongoing oppression by the communist regime.



Ukraine – The 21st Century War

This pop-up exhibit was created by the **Institute of Judaica** (Ukraine) with the support of the **Dar Charitable Foundation** (Ukraine) and the **DAAR Foundation** (US). The gallery depicted the lived experiences of Ukraine in war — from the shattering first day of invasion to the enduring resilience of people rebuilding their lives under fire.



Operation Pedro Pan

The exhibit details “Operation Pedro Pan,” the United States’ mission to save over 14,000 Cuban children from communism between 1960 and 1962. Several Pedro Pan children were involved in the design and execution of the temporary gallery. The exhibit was curated by **Carmen Valdivia** and made possible with the generous support of **Maximo Alvarez**.



CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

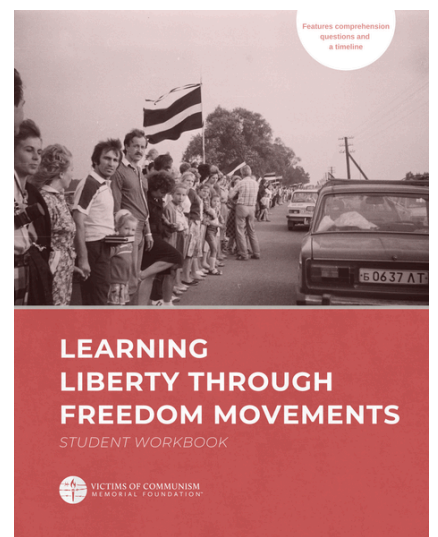
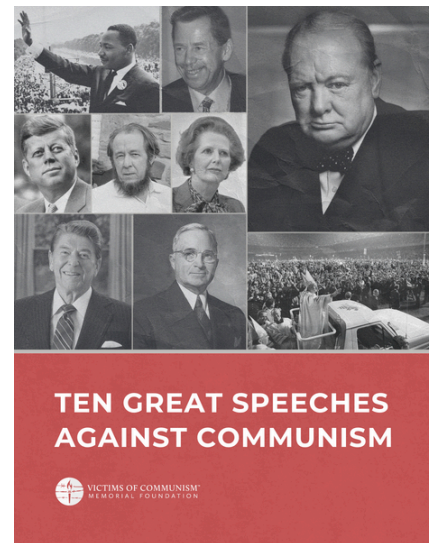
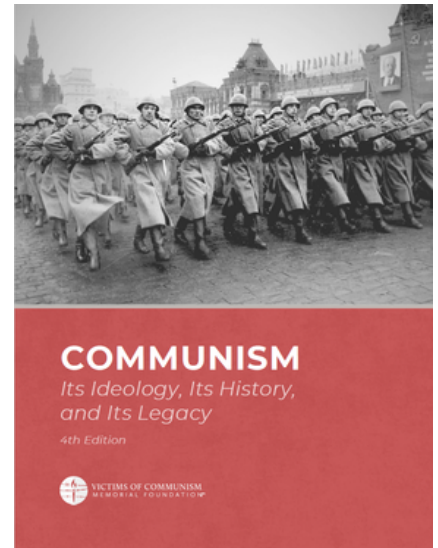
We ensure the rising generation understands the truth about communism and the eternal value of freedom.

Since 2016 we have been equipping middle and high school teachers to tell students the truth about communism. In 2024 we published the fourth edition of our flagship high school curriculum and in 2025 published three new curricula, expanding our age-appropriate resources to middle and elementary school levels. We now offer five different curricula with accompanying digital resources for students ages 4th grade through university.



“Inspired by a visit to the Victims of Communism Museum in Washington, D.C., I found this book to be an excellent and accessible resource. It is well-suited for classroom use. Thank you for your commitment to educating our children.” —Chris A.

“The curriculum is well-researched, accessible, and remarkably adaptable to students of different ages and learning levels...My students come away with not just historical knowledge, but a profound understanding of the human cost of totalitarian regimes.” —Catherine O.



EDUCATOR TRAINING

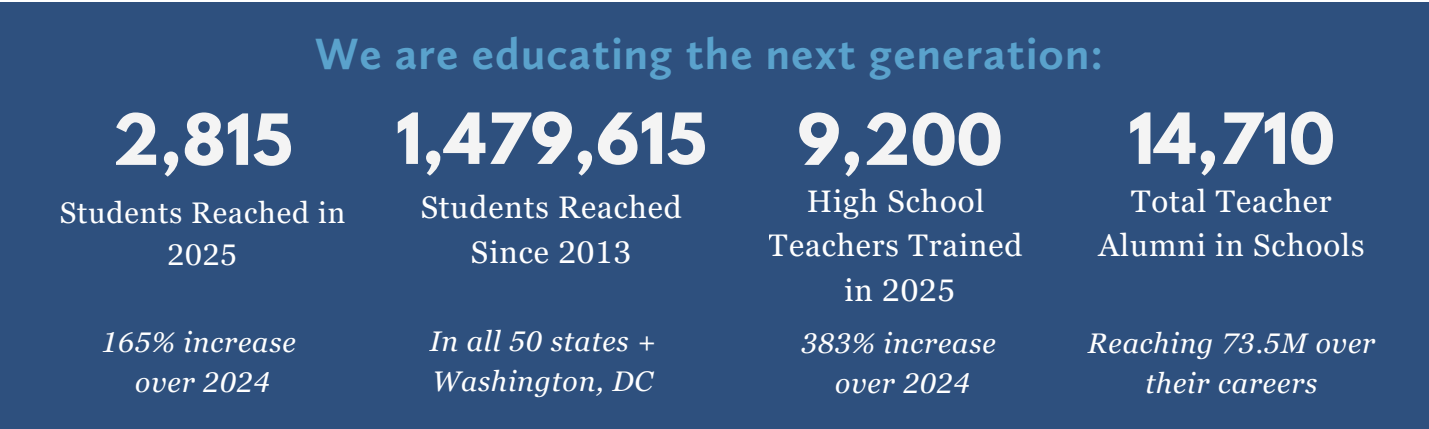
We equip students, educators, and stakeholders with the definitive suite of academic resources for all age levels, subject areas, and learning styles.



We **train teachers** on the most effective ways utilize our curricular resources and *Witness Project* video testimonial products in their classrooms. In 2025, VOC participated in **20 teacher training events** reaching over **9,200 educators** in **six states**. VOC provides teachers with the tools and strategies they need to inspire and empower the next generation’s knowledge that communism’s crimes and errors must not be repeated.

VOC has made substantial progress in developing collaborative partnerships with like-minded groups working on civic education, allowing us to plug our content into their established networks and reach classrooms in even more ways, including Coalition for Empowered Education, Foundation for Economic Education, Founding Forward, Leadership Institute, School Board Member Alliance, and the Texas Public Policy Foundation.

“The VOC Conference was truly a life-changing experience. The in-depth lectures and witness speakers made me realize just how little I knew about communism and its impact across the world. I have been recommending this conference whenever and wherever I can!” —Emily McLean



NATIONAL RECOGNITION

The White House Declares Anti-Communism Week.



On November 7, Victims of Communism Day, President Donald J. Trump proclaimed the week to be **National Anti-Communism Week**. As the proclamation reads:

This week, our Nation observes Anti-Communism Week, a solemn remembrance of the devastation caused by one of history's most destructive ideologies. Across continents and generations, communism has wrought devastation upon nations and souls. More than 100 million lives have been taken by regimes that sought to erase faith, suppress freedom, and destroy prosperity earned through hard work, violating the God-given rights and dignity of those they oppressed...

***For more than a century, communism has brought nothing but ruin.** Wherever it spreads, it silences dissent, punishes beliefs, and demands that generations kneel before the power of the state instead of standing for freedom. Its story is written in blood and sorrow, a grim reminder that communism is nothing more than another word for servitude.*

As we mark Anti-Communism Week, we stand united in defense of the values that define us as a free people.



VOC CONGRESSIONAL CAUCUS

VOC re-launched the Victims of Communism Congressional Caucus on April 10, 2025 with U.S. Representatives and Caucus Co-Chairs Debbie Wasserman Schultz and Joe Wilson.



On Thursday, April 10, 2025, U.S. Reps. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (FL-25) and Joe Wilson (SC-2) joined VOC's Dr. Eric Patterson to re-launch the bipartisan Congressional Victims of Communism Caucus.

The representatives announced their priorities for the 119th Congress, from educating Americans about the history of exploitation and abuse under communism, to fighting for the human rights of those who suffer under authoritarian regimes today.



VOC is proud to partner with these distinguished leaders in the ongoing fight for the human rights of those suffering under authoritarian regimes worldwide.

"Communism is not a relic of the past. It remains a present day threat to freedom." —Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz



"To oppose communism is not right, left, or center, it's a moral imperative about fighting for freedom against the ideology that is objectively evil and continues to oppress more than 1.5 billion people around the world." —Rep. Joe Wilson

STATE PARTNERSHIPS

We support state Departments of Education and School Boards with historically accurate curricular resources and help develop comprehensive, high-quality standards for teaching the history of communism.

VOC's work with state Departments of Education and School Boards continues to grow. In 2022, VOC began partnering with Departments of Education to formally build the VOC curriculum into public school classrooms. Currently, **Florida, Arizona, Arkansas, and Texas** have adopted a requirement to educate about the history and horrors of communism, and several other states are in the process.



“With the resurgence of communist ideologies across the United States and throughout the world, it is more important than ever for students to understand the catastrophic failures and human suffering caused by communist regimes.” —Anastasios Kamoutsas, Florida Commissioner of Education

In 2023, both the Florida and Arizona Departments of Education asked VOC to **create videos featuring witnesses of communism** that are now being used in public middle and high school classrooms in both states. At the request of Florida, VOC hosted plenary sessions for a series of **five teacher seminars** across the state during summer 2023 to train thousands of educators on the most powerful ways to teach students about the destruction caused by communist regimes. In 2024, VOC partnered with Arizona State University and The Goldwater Institute to train teachers and in 2025, VOC's Ken Pope worked with the Florida Department of Education to **launch new education standards for teaching about communism**, which will go into effect for the 2026-27 school year. Florida also asked Mr. Pope to develop and deliver three teacher trainings on the new standards and the history of communism in summer 2026.

In Texas, VOC has worked alongside key partners, Coalition for Empowered Education (CEE) and the Texas Public Policy Foundation (TPPF), to **provide recommendations for the most effective changes** to Texas's educational standards. Mr. Pope testified at the State Board of Education and helped TPPF secure the passage of the comprehensive model for the teaching of social studies and history. In 2026, VOC will support CEE, School Board Member Alliance, and Leadership Institute (LI) to conduct 12 webinars and two in person events focused on America's 250th anniversary and will support ten LI sponsored school board member training events across the US.

VOC is actively engaged with state-based educational leadership in other states, mainly **Alabama, Georgia, Indiana, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia**, and we are working to engage with leadership in other states to get our resources directly into all public high school classrooms in each state.

COLLEGE STUDENT MENTORING

We offer internships for enterprising young professionals to equip the next generation of leaders with the knowledge to stand up for freedom and fight against communism and socialism.

In 2025 VOC proudly welcomed 15 students to our semester-long internship program. Interns participated in professional development trainings, gained insights into policy advocacy through events on Capitol Hill, and deepened their understanding of communism through guided readings and seminars. Integral to the VOC team, our interns help with signature events and contribute to our museum guests' experiences through daily interactions. Below, interns are pictured with Congressman Joe Wilson, Co-Chair of the VOC Caucus, and representing VOC at the IRF Summit.

"I am amazed at how much a nonprofit has accomplished over the past three months. The skills I have gained here will be invaluable to my future career as an advocate, and seeing the drive of the VOC team has inspired me to continue fighting for the causes I believe in."

—Anja Ree, 2025 Fall Intern



Our 2025 interns:

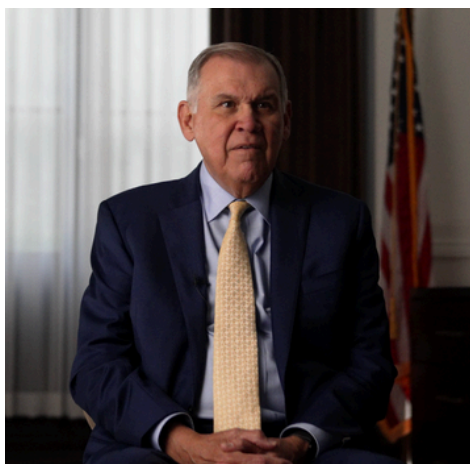
10
Colleges & Universities

4 **3**
States Countries



WITNESS PROJECT

We memorialize the stories and voices of individuals who have suffered and fought against communism through our award-winning Witness Project documentary series and long-form conversation series, Profiles in Freedom, all available on YouTube.



GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS

VOC's message reaches across the globe through partnerships that extend our educational work in and beyond the United States.



VOC hosted the Baltic Foreign Ministers for a discussion on Baltic security, Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine, and the transatlantic alliance.



Lithuanian Ambassador Gediminas Varvuolis places the country's traditional straw ornament on the VOC Captive Nations Christmas Tree.



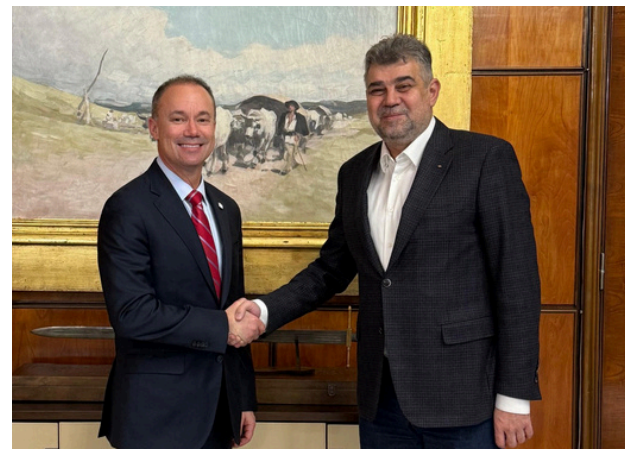
VOC's Eric Patterson spoke at events commemorating the end of World War II in Hungary and Belgium.



VOC's I-Lin Lin represented VOC at Taiwan Foundation for Democracy's Asia Democracy and Human Rights Award ceremony in Taipei.



VOC's Matthew Robertson presents at the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China Summit in Brussels, joining lawmakers from 28 democratic countries to advance coordinated responses to the CCP's human rights abuses and authoritarian influence.



VOC's Dr. Patterson meets with Romanian Prime Minister Marcel Ciolacu in Bucharest.

RESEARCH



CHINA STUDIES

We enhance understanding of the Chinese Communist Party's policies and actions through cutting-edge research and media engagement, arming policymakers with actionable evidence, empowering victims, and advancing accountability.

In 2025 VOC successfully continued its mission to document Beijing's oppression campaigns, amplify victim testimonies, engage key policymakers, and raise awareness of human rights violations against Muslim Uyghurs, Christians, and other vulnerable groups. We have conducted several strategic engagements focused on exposing the atrocities of the Chinese Communist Party, including **key stakeholder meetings** with the U.S. Congress and Administration and **diplomatic outreach** in Geneva with OHCHR officials, UN Special Procedures staff, numerous NGOs, and representatives from Permanent Missions.

Our **media work has gained international traction** with coverage in British, Danish, and New Zealand outlets, while our investigation with French media exposed the use of forced labor in sports retailer Decathlon's supply chain, resulting in coverage by AFP and French national television. We have continued our **policy influence** through targeted submissions and consultations, including the State Department's 2025 *Trafficking in Persons Report* and collaboration with the Hudson Institute's China Human Rights Working Group.

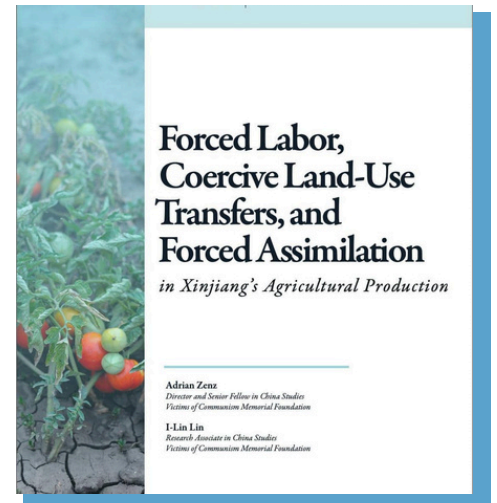
In 2025, VOC's Dr. Adrian Zenz supported an investigation into the **shocking number of Western companies' forced labor usage** across China in 75 factories. Companies including BMW Group, Volkswagen, Mercedes-Benz AG, LG Electronics, Tesla, KFC, McDonald's, and Skechers were implicated in China's massive Uyghur forced labor system. Zenz and his research were cited extensively in reports across *The New York Times*, *Der Spiegel*, and The Bureau of Investigative Journalism.



Informing Policy: VOC breaks China's forced-labor supply chain.

Thanks to VOC's research and impact strategy there was a market collapse in China's tomato sales to Italy. Last December, VOC released peer-reviewed research that exposed the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) use of forced labor in Xinjiang Province's tomato, pepper, marigold, and stevia industries. The report uncovered a network that tied these products to 72 major global companies, including Kraft, Heinz, Nestlé, PepsiCo, Unilever, and L'Oréal.

Investigators identified Italy as the main entry point that funneled Xinjiang goods into European markets disguised as "Italian" products.



A year-long collaboration with the BBC produced a 90-minute documentary titled "Blood on the Shelves." It traced the entire supply chain from Xinjiang to Central Asia to Italian processing plants. Lab tests on 17 supermarket items confirmed Chinese origin despite labels that claimed otherwise. Moreover, 14 survivors shared their stories of confinement and coerced labor. VOC's Dr. Adrian Zenz published an op-ed in *The Hill* entitled "Is that slavery on your pasta?" which translated

the findings for a mass audience, emphasizing Italy's role as a conduit and exposing shell company tactics. The impact was immediate. Fourteen members of the UK Parliament demanded answers from retailers. Companies grew fearful of scandal as the evidence tightened around Italian processors. Beijing even held an emergency press conference to counter the revelations.

By November 2025 the market collapsed. *The Financial Times* reported a stunning downturn:

- Italy's imports of Chinese tomato paste **crashed by 76%**, dropping from \$75 million to \$13 million.
- Western Europe saw sales fall by **67%**.
- China cut production by **66%**, from 11 million tons to just 3.7 million.
- Between **600,000-700,000 tons** of Chinese tomato paste now sits unsold. **That is six months of global exports frozen by the truth.**

This happened without new legislation. Public exposure and reputational pressure alone broke a major supply chain worth hundreds of millions. This is the first agricultural breakthrough of its kind. ***This is not really about tomatoes and tomato paste. It is about the men, women, and children forced into slave labor processing tomatoes by the CCP.***

MEDIA BY THE NUMBERS

Online, VOC reached:

3.3 MILLION+

on Social Media

Our experts' voices were heard
in the media:

44

Op-Eds and Blog Posts

302

Scholarly Citations

2023: 712

2024: 1,300

2025: 3,650

Media Mentions

*VOC's media
mentions
skyrocketed in
2025 by 181%.*

TELEVISION



HBO MAX

Cuba: *Night Is Not Eternal*



C-SPAN

Interview with Sen. Tom Cotton at the
VOC Museum



NTD

Feature on the VOC Museum

PRINT AND ONLINE

The New York Times

*"The authorities used the labor transfer program to control Uyghurs who were not in the camps, according to **Adrian Zenz**, an anthropologist who is an expert on Uyghur forced labor. Chinese officials deemed many of these Uyghurs 'idle' and therefore a threat, requiring close monitoring."*



*"**Dr. Eric Patterson**, you are running such an important mission at the **Victims of Communism Museum and Memorial**...Everyone should go visit."*



*"**Adrian Zenz** said the US laws introduced in 2021 had been effective. Company reports show targeted entities recording decreased exports due to geopolitical reasons. The laws had also helped trigger foreign divestment from the region."*

OP-ED



The Tragic Reality of Cuba's Medical Brigades

January 29, 2025

**Rep. Mark Green and
Dr. Eric Patterson**



Why 62% of young Americans are falling for 'pop Marxism'

September 17, 2025

Dr. Eric Patterson



Europe Is Welcoming China While Freezing Out America

December 5, 2025

Amb. Andrew Bremberg

NATIONAL REVIEW

Trump's Bold Strike Against the Venezuelan Narco-Communist Regime

September 10, 2025

Yuri Perez

SOCIAL MEDIA



Stalin died in 1953. He left behind a legacy of terror, famine, and mass murder.

Remember the victims.



The Death of Stalin

9:37 AM · Jan 27, 2025 · 852.1K Views

850,000 Views



Fidel Castro's legacy is oppression, poverty, and death.

Remember the victims of communism in Cuba.



12:10 PM · Dec 17, 2025 · 390.3K Views

390,000 Views

CHINA FORUM

China Forum is an annual conference exploring the nature of the People's Republic of China, the Chinese Communist Party, and key issues in U.S.-China relations.



On October 27-28, 2025, VOC hosted its 11th annual China Forum in Washington, D.C. This seminal event convened leading scholars, experts, and policymakers in the areas of trade and economics, foreign policy and security, human rights, and political development to discuss the evolving threats from the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

Featured speakers included **Grace Jin Drexel**, daughter of imprisoned Pastor Ezra Jin, who spoke on her father's faith, persecution, and the fight for freedom in communist China. **Congressman John Moolenaar**, Chairman of the House Select Committee on the CCP, and **Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi**, ranking member of the Committee, spoke about the U.S. threats from the CCP and how the free world can stand for liberty. **Congressman Thomas Suozzi**, co-chair of the Congressional Uyghur Caucus, expressed his gratitude for VOC's groundbreaking research highlighting these important issues. VOC's **Ambassador Paula Dobriansky** hosted **Mike Gallagher**, Head of Defense at Palantir and a former member of Congress, for a fireside chat to consider how the U.S. government can push back against the CCP.

Keynotes were delivered by **Dr. Rush Doshi** of the Council on Foreign Relations, former **Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen**, **Dr. Katrina Lantos-Swett** of the Lantos Foundation for Human Rights and Justice, and **Damon Wilson** of the National Endowment for Democracy. VOC's Dr. Adrian Zenz conducted interviews with **Dr. Frank Dikötter**, Milias Senior Fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution, on the history of the CCP and their genocide against the Chinese people, and with **Adam King**, Regional Director for East Asia and the Pacific at the International Republican Institute, on the democratic movements sweeping across Asia and the hope for freedom by China's youth. Three panels of distinguished experts explored China's brutal system of forced labor, countering PRC aggression in an era of change, and confronting China's techno-authoritarianism.





HUMAN RIGHTS

LATIN AMERICA STUDIES

We support dissidents by conducting research on human rights violations, building capacity, organizing events, and educating the public and policymakers.



VOC supported the participation of Cuban and Venezuelan partners in **advocacy meetings with relevant stakeholders**, including United Nations human rights officials and representatives from the Organization of American States.

We released four reports: *Torture: Venezuela's State Policy* detailing the Venezuelan government's systematic use of torture to instill fear and suppress dissent; *Electoral Transparency*, reporting on the 2024 elections in Venezuela; *State Terrorism in Venezuela*, which details the regime's use of force to persecute citizens amidst the July 2024 presidential elections; and, *Transnational Repression*, which details how the Venezuelan regime is persecuting people in Colombia and how the Nicaraguan regime is persecuting and assassinating dissidents who have escaped to Costa Rica.



We presented research on the poor state of labor rights in Venezuela at the 352nd Session of the Governing Body of the International Labor Organization. We also supported partners' efforts to participate in and monitor the Venezuela elections, financing training, media, and election transparency efforts in solidarity with the Venezuelan people before and after the stolen elections on July 18, 2024.

ROLL CALL OF NATIONS

Representatives from 16 embassies, 3 delegations, and 41 ethnic and human rights organizations gathered together with leaders of VOC for the 18th Annual Roll Call of Nations Wreath Laying Ceremony at the VOC Memorial.



The event began with a prayer delivered by **Margaret G. Kibben**, Chaplain of the U.S. House of Representatives. VOC Chairman **Dr. Elizabeth Spalding** explored why we must continue to fight for those still oppressed under communism. **Professor Chen Guangcheng**, Chinese human rights activist, lawyer, former prisoner of conscience, and VOC's 2015 Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom awardee spoke on his activism for the voiceless in communist China and his subsequent persecution for seeking justice.



CAPTIVE NATIONS SUMMIT

Each year we lead efforts to mark National Captive Nations Week in fulfillment of the 1959 congressional resolution, adopted during the Eisenhower Administration, to show American solidarity with nations subjugated by communism.



This year's Captive Nations Summit brought together senior leaders, international experts, and dissidents to discuss the ongoing crimes of communism and share lessons for current and future generations of freedom fighters. Broadcast by C-SPAN, the Summit featured **Ambassador Paula J. Dobriansky, Ph.D.** and representatives from the five current communist countries: **Vi Kha Hoang, Founder**, Viet Toon and Principal of Thang Long Vietnamese Language School; **Elfidar Iltebir**, President of the Uyghur American Association; **Eunsook Jang**, Fulbright Scholar, DPRK Escapee, and M.A. Candidate at Brandeis University; **Bounleang Kern Kataviravong**, Vice President of Union for Lao Nation; and, **Rosa María Payá**, Founder of Cuba Decide, and Commissioner-Elect of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.



TIANANMEN SQUARE MASSACRE VIGIL

Every year, VOC commemorates what happened on June 4, 1989, when the Chinese Communist Party crushed a massive pro-democracy movement by sending tanks into Tiananmen Square.

Since June 4, 1989, Beijing has erased from its history books all mention of this uprising for democracy and the CCP's brutal violence towards its citizens. The death toll remains unknown. VOC honored the bravery of those who stood for freedom at our annual Tiananmen Square Massacre Candlelight Vigil.

“Thirty-six years ago, thousands of students, workers, and ordinary citizens rose to demand dignity and freedom. The Chinese Communist Party responded to peaceful calls for change with violence, trying to crush hope. But hope—like memory—is stubborn. It lives on in the candles we light, the names we remember, the voices we raise, and the actions we take.” —Rushan Abbas, Campaign for Uyghurs



BLACK RIBBON DAY

We observe Black Ribbon Day annually to remember the victims of Soviet Communist and Nazi regimes.



On Friday, August 22, the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation partnered with the Joint Baltic American National Committee (JBANC), the Embassies of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, and the Polish American Congress to commemorate 36 years since the “Baltic Way,” when millions of Baltic citizens peacefully formed a human chain across their shared borders.

The event featured remarks from Lithuanian Ambassador H.E. Gediminas Varvuolis, Sabīne Janisela, Press & Public Diplomacy Counselor from the Latvian Embassy, Anna-Liisa Merilind, Counselor for Political Affairs from the Estonian Embassy, Karl Altai, Managing Director of JBANC, Tom Kolodziej from the Polish American Congress, and Dr. Eric Patterson, President and CEO of VOC.

The Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation was also honored to publish articles from each of the Baltic Ambassadors on this important commemoration:

“Black Ribbon Day reminds us of what happens when tyranny is appeased.”

—H.E. Gediminas Varvuolis, Lithuanian Ambassador to the U.S.

“The sacrifices of the past generations demand that we recognize that the will of the people to be free and independent will always be stronger than the will of those to subjugate them.”

—H.E. Ms. Elita Kuzma is the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Latvia to the U.S.

“The international impact of the Baltic Way was profound. Images of the human chain made headlines across the world, leaving no doubt about the scale and determination of our demand for independence.”

—H.E. Kristjan Prikk, Estonian Ambassador to the U.S.



VOC MEMORIAL DAY

November 7 is National Day to Remember the Victims of Communism, due to the Bolsheviks seizing power from the elected Russian government on November 7, 1917.



On November 7, 2025, VOC, the Hungarian American Coalition, and the National Monuments Foundation hosted *Victims of Communism Memorial Day: Roll Call of Nations* at Millennium Gate Museum in Atlanta, GA.

This year, VOC was honored to mark National Day for the Victims of Communism in Atlanta as Georgia is one of 10 states that have passed legislation to recognize VOC Memorial Day. The city of Atlanta has called herself the “gate city of the south” for well over a century, welcoming refugees from around the world.

Carmen Agra Deedy, Cuban refugee and award-winning children’s book author, provided the keynote. Deedy is known for her funny and insightful narratives which are culled from her childhood as a Cuban refugee in Decatur, Georgia, including *The Rooster Who Would Not Be Quiet!* and *14 Cows for America*, a *New York Times* bestseller.

“The price of freedom is dearly bought and easily forgotten if we do not tell the stories. That is why New York, a city of trees, voted for an axe. We need to tell the stories to our children.”
—Carmen Agra Deedy



VOC HONORS



TRUMAN-REAGAN MEDAL OF FREEDOM

The Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom is awarded to those who have demonstrated a lifelong commitment to freedom and democracy and opposition to communism and all other forms of tyranny.



VOC was proud to present the 2025 Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom to **Representative Chris Smith**.

“Congressman Smith defends the vulnerable. He has been recognized for his outstanding work for veterans and against religious persecution, human trafficking, and violence against women.” said VOC Chairman Dr. Elizabeth Spalding. She commented that Smith “also defends the vulnerable and persecuted abroad. His tireless efforts against all forms of tyranny, particularly communism, Chris Smith lives up to the legacy of Harry Truman and Ronald Reagan, two great Americans and principled men of action.”

Elected in 1980, U.S. Rep. Chris Smith (R-Manchester, N.J.) is currently in his 23rd, two-year term in the U.S. House of Representatives, and serves residents of the Fourth Congressional District of New Jersey. Mr. Smith serves as a senior member on the Foreign Affairs Committee and as Chairman of its Africa Subcommittee, which has oversight over the continent, with U.S. legislative authority over Africa, along with important State Department bureaus and programs.

He has been appointed to serve as both the Co-Chair of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, and as Co-Chair of the bipartisan House/Senate/White House Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC). He has also served as Special Representative on Human Trafficking for the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. Additionally, he previously served as Chair and highest-ranking House member of the bipartisan House/Senate Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE, or Helsinki Commission) serving as chairman five times, and has served as Chairman of the Veterans Committee (two terms), and chaired the Foreign Affairs’ past subcommittees on human rights, international operations and organizations, and global health.

“Communism has been—and continues to be—the equivalent of the bubonic plague on innocent men, women and children...We must never grow weary in the defense of human rights. Injustice need not be forever. Many are depending on us.” —Representative Chris Smith

On November 10, 2025, VOC, in partnership with the Embassy of Lithuania, presented the Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom to Cuban dissident **José Daniel Ferrer**. Originally given in absentia in 2020 while Ferrer was imprisoned, the medal recognizes Ferrer's lifelong commitment to democracy, human rights, and opposition to communist oppression in Cuba, where he endured more than two decades of imprisonment, torture, and persecution.

The award was presented to Ferrer by VOC Chairman **Dr. Elizabeth Edwards Spalding**. At the ceremony, Lithuanian Foreign Minister **H.E. Kęstutis Budrys** highlighted Ferrer's fearless pursuit of liberty for all Cubans and reflected on the Cuban people's fight against communism—a struggle that Lithuania has also faced. U.S. Deputy Secretary of State **Christopher Landau**, who helped welcome Ferrer at the event, called out the crimes of the communists in Havana and urged European allies to hold the Cuban regime accountable.



"I'm here, thanks to the solidarity of friends and organizations, in the name of the political prisoners who are still suffering in Cuba... Communism does not need to be debated. It is the worst system that the human race has endured... This is why the work of the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation and governments like the United States and Lithuania is so important." —José Daniel Ferrer



DISSIDENT HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD

The Dissident Human Rights Award is given to individuals who have demonstrated courageous opposition to communism and all other forms of totalitarianism.



VOC was proud to award our 2025 Dissident Human Rights Award to the **Ladies in White** for their sacrifices and dedication to advocating for human rights, religious freedom, and democracy in Cuba. A ceremony will be held in 2026.

The Ladies in White is a courageous opposition movement in Cuba formed in 2003 by wives and mothers of political prisoners arrested during the Black Spring. Dressed in white and carrying gladiolus, they march silently after Sunday Mass at St. Rita's Church in Havana to a nearby park to demand freedom for prisoners and respect for human rights.

For more than two decades they have endured arrests, beatings, and constant harassment from the communist regime. Their courage exposes repression in Cuba and gives a voice to the imprisoned. VOC applauds their steadfast defense of liberty.

LEE EDWARDS AWARD FOR SCHOLARSHIP

The Lee Edwards Award for Scholarship is VOC's signature honor recognizing outstanding academic achievement.



VOC was proud to award **Dr. Sean McMeekin** the Lee Edwards Award for Outstanding Scholarship. Dr. McMeekin is a member of VOC's Academic Council, the Francis Flournoy Professor of European History and Culture at Bard College, and the winner of ISI's 2025 Conservative Book of the Year for his new work, *To Overthrow the World: The Rise and Fall and Rise of Communism*.

Like Lee Edwards, Sean McMeekin is a compelling writer. *The New York Review of Books* called his book, *July 1914*, "Almost impossible to put down. A punchy and riveting narrative." The BBC said of *Stalin's War*, "Remarkable book...meticulously researched...elegantly written."

Dr. McMeekin was presented with the Lee Edwards Award by VOC Academic Council Chair Dr. Flagg Taylor on October 16, 2025 at VOC's educator conference in partnership with the University of Texas at Austin, *Teaching the Twentieth Century: Communism and Dissent*. Dr. McMeekin provided keynote remarks, during which he said, "Teaching the truth about communism to this generation is not easy as there has been so much misinformation. But, the historical record is unassailable and I am very proud of the work of this conference."

On October 28, 2025 at The China Forum, VOC was honored to bestow the Lee Edwards Award for Outstanding Scholarship to **Dr. Frank Dikötter**, presented by VOC Chairman Dr. Elizabeth Edwards Spalding. Dr. Spalding remarked, “Dr. Dikötter has devoted his career to uncovering the truth about one of history’s most murderous regimes... [ensuring] that all the victims of communist China will be remembered, even if they cannot be individually named.”



Frank Dikötter was born in the Netherlands and moved to Switzerland at the age of twelve. After graduating from the University of Geneva in 1985 with a double first in History and Russian, he spent two years in the People's Republic of China. Three years later he obtained a Ph.D. in History at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, and published a revised version of his dissertation as *The Discourse of Race in Modern China* with Stanford University Press in 1992. He spent close to twenty years in London, recasting the history of Republican China into a series of five research monographs that culminated in a long essay entitled *China before Mao: The Age of Openness* (2005). A few years after he was made a full professor in 2002, he left London to join the University of Hong Kong. From his position as chair professor in Hong Kong, Frank was the first—and apparently only—foreigner to systematically use a whole range of archives of the Chinese Communist Party, using thousands of files to document the fate of ordinary people under Mao Zedong in three volumes popularly known as the *People's Trilogy*. The first installment, entitled *Mao's Great Famine*, covered a man-made disaster that led to the deaths of at least 45 million people between 1958 and 1962. In 2011, the book obtained the Samuel Johnson Prize for Non-Fiction, Britain's most prestigious literary award. *The Tragedy of Liberation* followed in 2013 and *The Cultural Revolution: A People's History* in 2016. An interlude appeared in 2019, entitled *How to be a Dictator*, with chapters on eight dictators from Mussolini to Mengistu. In 2022, a sequel to the *People's Trilogy* entitled *China after Mao* was published, showing how the forty years known as “Reform and Opening Up” from 1978 onwards were instead a concerted effort to reinforce the party's monopoly over power and its control over the commanding heights of the economy, in explicitly Marxist-Leninist fashion. Frank joined the Hoover Institution, Stanford University, as adjunct professor in 2017 and on a full-time basis as the Milius Senior Fellow in 2025. He has an honorary doctorate from Leiden University and retains a link with the University of Hong Kong as Chair Professor of Humanities. He is the most widely read living historian of modern China, with books translated into more than twenty languages.

“As long as you continue doing your job, I will continue writing.” —Frank Dikötter, Ph.D.



VOC founded the Victims of Communism Museum Remembrance Society in 2021. Members are devoted to supporting liberty everywhere. Thank you to our Members for their generous support and partnership!

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IN MEMORIAM

Edwin J. Feulner, Ph.D.

1941-2025

Dr. Ed Feulner, a long-time Trustee and former Chairman, was instrumental in the founding and growth of the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation and was recognized with its highest award, the Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom, in 2006. He passed away on July 18, 2025, at home in Alexandria, Virginia.

Dr. Feulner was renowned across the globe for his many years of strategic leadership as president of The Heritage Foundation in Washington, DC, as well as his founding of, and influence on, many other organizations. During a speech in 1986, President Reagan praised him thus, “Ed Feulner, you’re a combination of many things: intellectual, administrator, politician, diplomat, but most of all, dreamer and darer.”



Dr. Feulner came to the Victims of Communism Foundation by way of his friendship with its co-founders: the late Dr. Lee Edwards—Dr. Feulner’s biographer and frequent partner on projects—and the late Dr. Lev Dobriansky, his Georgetown University economics professor and mentor. Dr. Feulner actively supported the construction and dedication of the VOC Memorial, ensured the perpetuation of VOC’s Nikolai Getman Gulag art collection in the years before its permanent home at the Museum, and, through his consequential chairmanship during COVID and its aftermath, helped to make the Victims of Communism Museum a reality.

Dr. Feulner’s storied career began with time as an analyst at the Center for Strategic and International Studies and Stanford University’s Hoover Institution, as an aide to Representative Melvin Laird (R-WI) and Chief of Staff to Congressman Phil Crane (R-IL), and as the Executive Director of the Republican Study Committee. Feulner assumed the presidency of The Heritage Foundation in 1977, and held leadership positions in a wide array of academic, political, and economic non-profit organizations and universities.



VOC published a previously unreleased interview of Dr. Edwin J. Feulner in which he explains, in his own words, why he picked up the mantle of anticommunism, and why we must continue to “fight the battle every day.”

Watch the full video online at this link:
<https://shorturl.at/Ltp5C>



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