



Another “Forgotten War”

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Colaboraciones n° 720

December 28,2005

We’d all like it to be, but the war’s not over. And occasionally, it still erupts in violence. No, not the war in Iraq. The Cold War between western freedom and communist tyranny.

The small Chinese village of Dongzhou finds itself on the front lines of this twilight struggle. In recent weeks, police in riot gear have fired automatic weapons at villagers, killing dozens. The villagers were protesting because the Communist Party had seized their land to build a new power plant.

These unfortunate citizens are merely the latest victims of communism, the bloodiest ideology yet devised by man. In the name of communism, the Soviet Union murdered 20 million people through purges, famines and the infamous gulag. In the name of communism, Mao Zedong and the other Chinese Communist leaders slaughtered an estimated 50 million people through the Great Leap For-

ward, the Cultural Revolution, the Tiananmen Square massacre and other “socialist experiments.” In the name of communism, more than 100 million have been killed worldwide.

Too many of these victims lie forgotten in unmarked graves. This tragic oversight must be corrected. It’s time to build a fitting memorial to the victims of communism.

I am honored to be the chairman of the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation (victimsofcommunism.org), which is authorized under public law to design, build and maintain a memorial in Washington, D.C., to the victims of communism. The government has given us a sliver of land on Capitol Hill, two blocks from Union Station. That’s the entire federal contribution to this worthy project; everything else is being funded through private contributions.

Our memorial will feature a 10-foot-

high bronze replica of the statue of Democracy, erected by pro-democracy students in Tiananmen Square in the spring of 1989 and then destroyed by Chinese Communist tanks.

On the front pedestal of the Democracy statue, modeled after our own Statue of Liberty, will be inscribed the words: "To the more than one hundred million victims of communism and to those who love liberty."

On the back pedestal will be the words, "To the freedom and independence of all captive nations and peoples." These words will remind visitors that a fifth of the world's population still lives under communism, a sad fact too often forgotten, especially by Americans.

We Americans are lucky. We've never had to worry about a knock on the door in the middle of the night, with members of the secret police ready to drag us from our homes. We have never had to endure the horrors of re-education camps to break the minds and bodies of dissidents. We have never seen whole families, whole cities, even whole peoples deported or extinguished in the name of communism.

We have never suffered in these ways, but for many millions of people over the past century, these horrors were a daily fact of life. Today, the remaining communist dictatorships perpetuate the Leninist legacy of fear and intimidation.

In Cuba, Fidel Castro has silenced any

opposition to his rule, placing political dissidents in concrete jail cells with no light and no furniture for as long as 20 years. In China, thousands of dissidents are imprisoned in the *laogai*, slave-labor camps that are the Chinese equivalent of the old Soviet gulag. Others, as noted above, are shot down in the streets. In North Korea, the entire populace lives in a totalitarian nightmare, marked by starvation and mass public executions.

The deaths and oppression caused by communism worldwide are unparalleled in human history. Nothing else -- no war, no plague -- has come close. When asked who were the victims of communism, a former occupant of the Soviet gulag replied, "Everyone who lived in the 20th century was a victim of communism." This is the true cost of communism -- a holocaust that has lasted for nearly a century.

Of course, because of inspiring leaders such as Ronald Reagan, Pope John Paul II and Margaret Thatcher, and because of the millions of anonymous soldiers who served in the front lines across the decades, communism is in decline. Eventually it will completely disappear. And that makes a memorial even more vital.

When people in the years to come see our memorial and read that 100 million died as a result of communist tyranny, they will be reminded of how fortunate they are to live in a free country, and how important it is to resist tyranny around the world.

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