

## COMMUNIQUÉ

To the joint invitation of the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation of the United States of America as well as the Hungarian American Coalition, Bishop László Tőkés, President of the Hungarian National Council of Transylvania, visited to Washington and New York in June 2007.

László Tőkés' one-week schedule in the United States was marked by the remembrance of the victims of communism. On the other hand, being a topical issue, his stay meant an occasion for the Hungarian Americans to be informed at first hand about the current situation of the Hungarian minority of Romania and other ex-communist countries.



The 'Goddess of Democracy' featured by Chinese protesters in Tiananmen Square in 1989 is the model for a memorial in Washington, D.C., to victims of communism

On June 13 and 14, 2007, in the organization of the Hungarian Human Rights Foundation Bishop Tőkés visited the US Congress, the State Department, as well as the National Security Department. He also had meetings with executives in the American administration system. Among the audience and congregation at the New York and Washington conferences and religious services there were emigrants who had had first-hand experience in the ill effects of communism. Subsequently, they saluted, with a joyous soul the progress made concerning the Dedication of the Victims of Communism Memorial, thus, facing the sins of the communist past. In addition, they assured their support in sustaining the change of regime that commenced in 1989 against communist pursuits.

During his Washington stay, Bishop Tőkés met Congressman Tom Lantos, president of the United States House Committee on Foreign Affairs. Mr. Lantos assured the bishop of his support in the process of regaining possession of the church property confiscated by the communists, as well as reestablishing the Hungarian higher education in Transylvania. László Tőkés held a presentation entitled "From Communism to Europe" in the Kossuth House in Washington on 13 June, and, respectively, on 17 June in New York.

The Victims of Communism Memorial was inaugurated by President George W. Bush on the 12 June. With his presence and official speech he emphasized the international significance of this event. In his casual speech, similarly to the president, Congressman Tom Lantos compared fascist totalitarianism with communist despotism. The core and timely political message of these speeches was the disapproval of the Islam terrorism / the 'Islam fascism'.



"To the more than 100 million victims of Communism and to those who love liberty".

On the afternoon round-table discussion well-known American experts held presentations about the victims and ills of communism. These were joined by the confessions of such renowned Russian, Cuban, Estonian, Chinese, Vietnamese and Polish personalities that had been submitted to communist persecution. Ex-President Emil Constantinescu, representing Romania, similarly held a speech. Romania was also represented by Marius Oprea, president of the Institute Investigating the Sins of Communism.

The Foundation led by historian Lee Edwards, besides putting up the memorial called "The Goddess of Freedom" sustained its wish to establish a museum in Washington dedicated to the memory of the victims of communism. They comment upon the ideological background of their endeavors in the following way: "It is one of the present day's greatest moral omissions that people are not entirely informed about the inhumanities of communism. Who is aware of the fact that since the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution communism took a toll of over 100 million lives? Are we conscious of the more than one fifth of the world population – not quite deliberately – is still living in communism?" These questions can be read on their information sheet.

In one of the Foundation's documents one can find the term "the imperialism of the communist holocaust". Bishop László Tőkés in his opening prayer uttered at the official dinner organized by the Foundation recalled the memory of the victims of communism. He expressed his gratitude for God's wondrous liberation and he prayed for those who are still compelled to live in oppression, deceit and terror.

Senator Joseph Lieberman, chief spokesman of the dinner, along with his compatriots cheered Liberty, the United States' greatest value. In this spirit several were awarded with the Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom.

László Hámos, President of the Hungarian Human Rights Foundation (HHRF) attended all meetings, thus he was present at the audience of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Mr. Hámos has been performing a blessed activity protecting the interests of Hungarians outside the mother-country for more than 20 years. To the chief executives of the State Department, such as Judith G. Garber in charge of North and Central Europe and John P. Becker, executive consultant in returning properties, László Tőkés gave general information about the issues concerning the post-communist transitions, as well as, the particular problems of the Romanian Hungarians: the issue of human and minority rights, right to free elections, the current situation of the returning of properties, discrimination against minority churches, the issue of the Csángó community, the case of the Hungarian university, the legacy of communism (truth and indemnity) and the case of the confiscated sports-ground originally belonging to the Lorántffy High School.

Adam Stirling, head of the Office of National Security for Central and Eastern Europe was to meet Adrian Cioroianu, Foreign Minister, the very same day, in the afternoon, when he received László Tőkés' visit. As a result of pure coincidence the issues, very much on the agenda, concerning the Romanian internal affairs, the contribution of the Democratic Alliance of the Hungarians in Romania to this situation and the referendum, which ultimately reinforced President Traian Basescu in his position were discussed. In connection with the freedom of Kosovo, Russia's, Slovakia's and Romania's attitudes to this matter were discussed. The question of the autonomy of the Transylvanian Hungarians was also touched upon. László Tőkés expressed his opinion according to which the Romanian Foreign Affairs is supposed to maintain a balance between the European and American orientation. Furthermore, in his view, the autonomy is a quintessential democratic institution and it could bring stability to both Romania and the Central and Eastern regions of Europe.

**Prayer and Invocation**  
at the Victims of Communism  
Memorial Gala Dinner  
Washington, June 12, 2007  
*László Tőkés*

Almighty God  
Our Heavenly Father!

From the bottom of our hearts, we give thanks to You for making this day possible. This day, when we can rejoice in the freedom of once-captive peoples and yearn for the liberation of those still in bondage. This very day, when we had the opportunity to dedicate — here in the Land of the Free — a memorial to honor those persecuted and victimized by communism.

Blessed be your name, for your mercy, and for setting free the enslaved.

Let this memorial serve to **remind** us of the millions who “were persecuted for righteousness’ sake” (Matthew 5:10).

Let us **pay tribute** to those freedom-fighters, who during the Berlin Uprising, the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, the Prague Spring, the Polish Solidarity Movement and at Tiananmen Square stood up and sacrificed their lives for truth and freedom.

Protect us from sinful forgetfulness! Let us **teach** our children and future generations the meaning, in the age of the Holocaust, of the “imperial communist holocaust,” so that this catastrophe would never again occur in the history of humanity.

Give us grateful hearts to **appreciate** and **value** the sacrifice of those who contributed to ending the vile Cold War and tearing down the Berlin Wall.

“Out of the **depths** have we cried unto thee, O, Lord.” (Psalms 13:1). We thank You, Jesus, for you descended into the deepest hell for our salvation and lifted us from the depths of atheist dictatorship.

Your people “sat in **darkness**” (Mat. 4:16), in labor camps and gulags of sin, hatred and violence. We give thanks to You, Christ, “the light of the world” (John 8:12) for “You made Your sun to rise” (Mat. 5:45).

In the liberated fellowship of the once captive nations we render our thanks to You, oh Lord, for helping us break through the wall of the “**Big Lie**” (greater even than the Berlin Wall) with the truth of the Gospel. Thanks be to You that the “**Wall of Silence**” tumbled down in Timisoara/Temesvár, and with it Ceausescu, to let in the sunshine of freedom even onto the “country of darkness.”

Finally, we **pray** for our Brethren — more than one fifth of the world’s population — who still chafe under the yoke of communist oppression. We appeal to You, oh Lord: set them free! Give us the strength that we may struggle and take action for their liberation.

We are guided by the sufferings of the Almighty’s Son, Jesus Christ. “He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief... he was despised, and we esteemed him not,” lamented Isaiah. “Surely he has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows ... and with his stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53: 3-5). For the sake of Jesus’ sole sacrifice on the cross, we pray that your liberation triumph and that You heal us with His wounds! *Amen.*



Bishop László Tőkés delivered a stirring convocation speech recalling the horrors of communism

## Return of Church Property

Up to the present day approximately 150 from the 370 claimed real estates, constituting the property of our District, have been successfully reacquired – on paper – by the decisions of the governmental Special Committee. The process of the actual restoration was unaccommodating and it ensued at a slow pace.

By now, most of the returned buildings are run down and need renovation. In the worst cases they are almost completely ruined. The procedure concerning the return of the real estates of higher value is emphatically difficult since either the government committee in charge of the actual restoration keeps on coming forward with further hindrances, or local government contest the decree declaring the churches' ownership that has previously been approved by the committee.

As a tangible example the high valued real estate in Zilah/Zalau, the Wesselényi Reformed College is to be mentioned. Though legally it is a simple case there is no political willingness for its restitution. Subsequently, the Reformed students are not granted the right to get possession of our ancestors' magnificent building raised with exquisite care.

Another noteworthy instance is the real estate, of yet again high worth, belonging to our Church in Nagyvárad/Oradea. In this affair the local city hall and the county council contested the decree concerning the restoration of the property. The result was that the Church litigated for it for more than two years. At the end, according to the verdict, the above mentioned building was given back, but in a run down condition.

Seventeen years after the fall of communism, only a fracture of the 2,140 properties illegally confiscated from the Hungarian-speaking churches between 1945-1989 have been restituted. Only when the rightful owners finally regain title to, use of and compensation for these properties will the ongoing, major blow to religious freedom, civil society and the 1.5 million Hungarians ability to maintain community and church life be reversed.

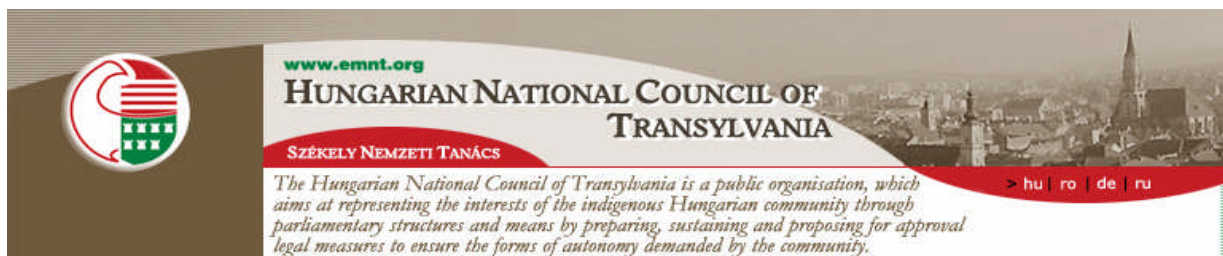
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*Previous Transylvanian Monitor issues are available at:*

[www.emnt.org](http://www.emnt.org)



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