

CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNCIL OF CANADA



2011 NATIONAL BLACK RIBBON DAY COMMEMORATION EVENTS ANNOUNCED

TORONTO, ONTARIO – The Central and Eastern European Council of Canada, representing nearly 4 million Canadians of European heritage, have announced plans to commemorate **National Black Ribbon Day on August 23rd, 2011** in cities across Canada.

Evening ecumenical services are planned in **Toronto, Vancouver, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Ottawa and Montreal**. In each city, all communities will be invited to a central place of worship. The Toronto Black Ribbon Day memorial service will be held at the **St Maximilian Kolbe Church in Mississauga**. Details regarding services in other locations will be released in the coming weeks.

In November 2009, a resolution declaring Black Ribbon Day, August 23, an annual day of remembrance for the victims of Communism and Nazism in Europe was unanimously passed Canada's Parliament.

Black Ribbon Day historically commemorates the anniversary of the infamous Molotov- Ribbentrop pact, a sinister partnership treaty between Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia that allowed each to violently and illegally seize the lands and peoples situated between them. Twenty Five years ago, Canada's Central and Eastern European communities, by initiating Black Ribbon Day, were instrumental in bringing international attention and understanding of the plight of their heritage nations. This Canadian initiative organized demonstrations in 21 cities on both sides of the Iron Curtain. In 1989 close to 2 million people formed a human chain across the Baltic republics and by 1991, demonstrations were held in 56 cities on three continents.

Coinciding with the Church memorials is a conference co-sponsored the CEEC and the Black Ribbon Day Foundation (location TBD). The conference has attracted leading historical political and historic academic figures. The conference will examine current historical issues and historical and current energy security issues in Europe. Information about the conference will be released at a later date.

Resolution by the Parliament of Canada

By unanimous consent, it was resolved, —

(1) WHEREAS the Government of Canada has actively advocated for and continues to support the principles enshrined by the United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 260 (III) A of December 9, 1948;

(2) WHEREAS the extreme forms of totalitarian rule practiced by the Nazi and Communist dictatorships led to premeditated and vast crimes committed against millions of human beings and their basic and inalienable rights on a scale unseen before in history;

(3) WHEREAS hundreds of thousands of human beings, fleeing the Nazi and Soviet Communist crimes, sought and found refuge in Canada;

(4) WHEREAS the millions of Canadians of Eastern and Central European descent whose families have been directly affected by Nazi and/or Communist crimes have made unique and significant, cultural, economic, social and other contributions to help build the Canada we know today;

(5) WHEREAS 20 years after the fall of the totalitarian Communist regimes in Europe, knowledge among Canadians about the totalitarian regimes which terrorised their fellow citizens in Central and Eastern Europe for more than 40 years in the form of systematic and ruthless military, economic and political repression of the people by means of arbitrary executions, mass arrests, deportations, the suppression of free expression, private property and civil society and the destruction of cultural and moral identity and which deprived the vast majority of the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe of their basic human rights and dignity, separating them from the democratic world by means of the Iron Curtain and the Berlin Wall, is still alarmingly superficial and inadequate;

(6) WHEREAS Canadians were instrumental during the 1980's in raising global awareness of crimes committed by European totalitarian Nazi and Communist regimes by founding an annual "Black Ribbon Day" on August 23, to commemorate the legal partnership of these two regimes through the infamous Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and its

BE IT RESOLVED THAT every victim of any totalitarian regime has the same human dignity and deserves justice, remembrance and recognition by the Parliament and the Government of Canada, in efforts to ensure that such crimes and events are never again repeated;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Parliament and the Government of Canada unequivocally condemn the crimes against humanity committed by totalitarian Nazi and Communist regimes and offer the victims of these crimes and their family members sympathy, understanding and recognition for their suffering;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Government of Canada establish an annual Canadian Day of Remembrance for the victims of Nazi and Soviet Communist crimes on August 23, called "Black Ribbon Day", to coincide with the anniversary of the signing of the infamous pact between the Nazi and Soviet Communist regimes.