

A memorial for the Estonian victims of communism in Maarjamäe is open

23 August 2018 Today, on the European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism, a memorial for the Estonian victims of communism was opened in Maarjamäe, Tallinn, which is a tribute to the victims of communism and a place of remembrance for their loved ones. All are welcomed to see the memorial from 18.00.

“Still, there are those who justify totalitarian ideologies on various pretexts, and say that ideally one or the other is actually noble, only implementation has failed so far. But every totalitarian ideology is by its nature an enemy of freedom, and we know its high price from our own historical experience,” President Kersti Kaljulaid noted in her speech at the opening ceremony of the memorial.

“Democratic countries should stand for the fact that hatred will never lead the decisions of anyone. We need to think about maintaining and protecting democracy and European moral values – citizens’ rights and freedoms – from all forms of populism and extremism. Only then we can be sure about the future of our children and grandchildren,” the President of the Republic said.

“The memorial that has been opened today is our tribute to those Estonian men, women, and children, who gave their lives for Estonia as victims of the Soviet communist regime. Let this place remind us our loved ones and all predecessors, who can sense us from the history with their eyes blinded. Now, there is a place of remembrance for everyone whose grave has remained unknown,” Minister of Justice Urmas Reinsalu said. “When you visit this place, think about the fact that for us, there is no abstract price to exist as a free country. Loss of freedom, resulting from a deal signed between the Nazi and communist regime, cost us the lives of more than a fifth of our people.”

The memorial site for communism’s victims, established for the 100th anniversary of the Republic of Estonia, consists of two parts: the Journey and the Home Garden. The first one is a corridor of memories, on the walls of which have been recorded the names of more than 22,000 persons who lost their lives; most of them died far from their home and their burial sites are largely unknown. This corridor symbolises the cruelty and inhumanity of the totalitarian regime. The peace and safety of the Home Garden is conveyed through a park with apple trees, and bees on the memorial wall facing the park.

“I would like to thank all the people of Estonia, who contributed to the establishment of this memorable place – the authors of the memorial, Riigi Kinnisvara AS and builders, the Estonian Institute of Historical Memory and, first and foremost, people who have prepared lists of victims of communism’s crimes through the decades, headed by Leo Õispuu. I would also like to thank those people of Estonia, who took stones to Pilstvere to commemorate their loved ones and friends, and those, who collected signatures during a whole generation to make this day a reality,” the Minister of Justice expressed his gratitude.

The memorial for communism’s victims of Estonia was commissioned by the Ministry of Justice, and it is managed by Riigi Kinnisvara AS. The consortium that established the memorial includes Haart Ehitus OÜ, Verston Ehitus OÜ, and GRK Infra AS.

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