

LAUNCH OF BOOK, *TIMISOARA*, IN OTTAWA
Hon. David Kilgour
Media Conference, Room 602, Centre Block at 11am
House of Commons
Ottawa
19 Nov 2012

I wonder how many Canadians are aware of the major role Canadians, especially the author of *Timisoara* and two Montréalers, played in toppling one of Europe's most mindless and brutal dictators, Nicolae Ceausescu, in mid- December, 1989? Their courageous secret interview with dissident László Tóké in Timisoarea, when later broadcast from Hungary, sparked events which led to large public uprisings by Romanians and the almost immediate downfall of Ceausescu.

It's an honour to join Canadian author, Árpád Szöczi, now a journalist in Berlin, and MP Corneliu Chisu to hear about what occurred in Romania, Canada, Hungary and elsewhere at the time of Romania's democratic Revolution. Having read both the book and seen the film, I know both are excellent and should be well-received both across Canada and in Europe.

In *Timisoara*, which is to be launched at the European Parliament in Brussels on Nov. 24th, the author reveals among many other matters:

- the sending of two reporters from Montreal to Romania to interview László Tóké secretly, which when broadcast later led directly to the democratic revolution of December, 1989,
- his role in collecting the money for what proved to be a brilliant strategic interview,
- the roles played by CSIS and the Romanian Securitate, including the monitoring of Canadians, and
- the role of Gorbachev's Soviet Union.

Permit me to add a few related points I made to a public meeting hosted by the Timisoara Society in that city on July 9, 2007:

- ...between December 16-20, 1989, residents of this city waged a successful revolution against one of the most powerful and hateful repressive systems of the world...on one side there was the barehanded population; on the other were the Securitate, the militia, the army and the zealous troops of party activists... not even the mass murders could stop them...On December 20th, 1989 Timisoara was irrevocably in the population's hands and it turned into a free city within the huge prison that Romania had become.
- ... hundreds of Romanian-Canadians and others (were at) at the Romanian embassy in Ottawa the night the Ceausescu regime fell. As many of us as

could squeeze into the building were eventually allowed to enter. The long nightmare was finally over.

- ...how can it be, when totalitarianism was jettisoned across central and eastern Europe during 1989 with virtually no loss of life elsewhere, that 1104 children, women and men died violently across this country, including 104 in this city? Why were an additional 3352 civilians wounded?...Why then is it that (a majority) of your 1104 martyrs for democracy across the country were murdered after December 22nd? Who killed them? After 18 years, when will those criminals be brought to trail?
- In March, 1990, (this society) issued The Proclamation of Timisoara, which Ana Blandiana said was "the most important political text after '89 and in fact the only coherent program of changing the communist Romania into a democratic society." Could it not be said that your society paved the way towards an open society and democracy in Romania...?

Thank you to Árpád Szöczi, and MP Corneliu Chisu for what they have done. In the book's epilogue, Szoczi notes that it was a visit to the grave of 2-year-old Cristina Lunga, a victim of the violence in Timisoara, that encouraged him to complete his book. The world should be very glad that he persevered.

Thank you.