

An Open Reply to Ms Rhonda Spivak re The Canadian Museum for Human Rights

For Immediate Release (Dr Lubomyr Luciuk, 1 April 2011)

re:

[http://www.winnipegjewishreview.com/article_detail.cfm?id=960&sec=1&title=OPEN LETTER TO LUBOMYR LUCIUK, DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH UKRAINIAN CANADIAN CIVIL LIBERTIES ASSOCIATION RE:CMHR](http://www.winnipegjewishreview.com/article_detail.cfm?id=960&sec=1&title=OPEN_LETTER_TO_LUBOMYR_LUCIUK,_DIRECTOR_OF_RESEARCH_UKRAINIAN_CANADIAN_CIVIL_LIBERTIES_ASSOCIATION_RE:CMHR)

An open, courteous and honest exchange of views on the proposed contents and governance of the publicly funded Canadian Museum for Human Rights is welcome.

Respect, however, begins with recognizing whom you are communicating with. My surname is spelt Luciuk, not Luciak. For someone from Winnipeg, where Jewish and Ukrainian Canadians have long lived together, making this rather basic spelling error doesn't convince me that you've considered carefully what you wanted to say before you began broadcasting your commentary. [*Note: This paragraph is being left here for the historical record. Ms Spivak did confirm that the mis-spelling of Dr Luciuk's surname was "an honest mistake."*]

The position of the Ukrainian Canadian Civil Liberties Association (www.uccla.ca) is that all 12 of the 12 galleries in the publicly funded Canadian Museum for Human Rights should be thematic, comparative and inclusive. No community's suffering should be elevated above all others. The *Shoah* must be included in this national museum. It belongs in a gallery that deals with the many acts of genocide that have befouled human history. So does the genocidal Great Famine of 1932-33 in Soviet Ukraine, the *Holodomor*. We have never called for a *Holodomor* gallery, only for a permanent place where that particular crime against humanity can be addressed, i.e. in a Genocide Gallery.

Please note that UCCLA does not speak for the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, nor does it belong to the UCC, so any concerns or complaints you may have with

that organization should be directed to/at them. As their HQ is conveniently located in Winnipeg I recommend you drop in and pursue any quarrel you have with the good folks there.

A recent Nanos Research survey confirms (and you can find the results posted on the UCCLA website under Media Releases) that 60.3% of men and women, of all ages, voter groups and from every province, share our view that no community should have a gallery of its own. Less scientific polls run by the Winnipeg Free Press and Globe and Mail found public opinion even more emphatically against such partiality. Since this is a taxpayer-funded national museum, whose operating costs are to be paid in perpetuity by all of us, your objection to listening to what Canadians want seems rather counterproductive. Few Canadians endorse the notion that one or another group deserves preferential treatment even as all the rest of us are expected to pay for this imposition of a "hierarchy of suffering." [Of course if this museum were, or had, remained a private initiative its contents would be determined by its owners. In this case, however, all Canadian taxpayers are the 'owners' and, overwhelmingly, they're against funding such preferential treatment.]

On scholarly input with respect to the museum's contents please note that Professor Roger Smith, chair of the International Institute for Genocide Studies, recommended recently "that the CMHR convey, as part of the universal experience, the historical, political and moral lessons of genocide in an inclusive, holistic and comparative manner. Anything less would do a grave disservice to its stated mission and would become of concern to the conscience of all Canadians."

Who donated privately in support of this museum and what promises may have been made to such people, and by whom, and on what authority, is not something I care to speculate about. Whatever assurances were made when this was still a private project obviously have no validity now. As I am sure you can appreciate, donations can't be made in the expectation of securing any influence over any Canadian national museum's contents. I am not a lawyer but attempts to do so might even be illegal, an issue we can leave to the legal advisors at the Ministry of Canadian Heritage to ponder. I must also reject your statement that those Jewish Canadians who gave money were promised a "Holocaust gallery"

in return for their generous contributions. Your allegation to that effect is contradicted by Ms Gail Asper who wrote in The Winnipeg Free Press that no group was asked to make a contribution in order to secure preferential treatment in the allocation of space or curating of the CMHR's contents. If you have evidence to the contrary you should write to the Honourable James Moore, MP, the Minister of Canadian Heritage, and share that intelligence with him. Insofar as I know the several Ukrainian Canadians who contributed several million dollars in support of the CMHR were not promised anything in return, other than a recognition of their generosity.

Finally let me underscore that the Ukrainian Canadian community in general welcomed plans for the development of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. We have no objection to this national museum being located in Winnipeg. Many of us have already demonstrated political and financial support for this project. However, like most Canadians, including a large number of principled MPs representing all of the parties found in the House of Commons (and the Green Party) we do insist that (1) as a national museum the CMHR's galleries must all be thematic, comparative and inclusive, (2) its governance should be undertaken by a board of trustees truly representative of our multicultural society and (3) public funds should not be expended to promote the conceit that any one community's suffering is somehow more worthy of memory than that of all others.

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