

# Group Says Rights Museum Slighting Suffering Of Ukrainians

JAMES ADAMS

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The Canadian Museum for Human Rights, scheduled to open in Winnipeg in 2013, is slighting the sufferings of Ukrainians here and in the former Soviet Union and needs a “reconstituted” board of trustees and content advisory committee to help set matters right, according to a report prepared by the Ukrainian Canadian Congress.

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Titled “Canadian Museum for Human Rights – A Call for Inclusiveness, Equity and Fairness,” the report was sent to The Globe and Mail after being submitted to Canadian Heritage Minister James Moore, Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Minister Jason Kenney and the Prime Minister’s Office. In 2007, the Harper government announced that the CMHR, originally a private initiative of the late media mogul Israel Asper, would be a national museum, and committed \$100-million for its construction, plus \$22-million annually for operations.

The UCC, regarded as the major representative of the country’s estimated 1.2-million Ukrainian Canadians, says a recent report by the CMHR’s now-disbanded content advisory committee calls for the creation of “only two permanent galleries” in the museum, one devoted to aboriginal issues, the other to the Holocaust. “This is unacceptable,” the UCC says, and in its report asks that the Holodomor (Ukrainian for “death by hunger,” and the term used to describe the famine/genocide that claimed millions in Soviet-occupied Ukraine in 1932-33) “be provided no less coverage ... than the Holocaust.”

The UCC also asks for “a permanent and prominent” display devoted to the 1914-20 internment of 6,000 Ukrainian immigrants under the first imposition of Canada’s War Measures Act. It calls for the formation of both a “reconstituted content advisory committee” to prepare a new report and a “reconstituted” board “more reflective of Canadian society.”

Angela Cassie, CMHR communications director, said in an interview that the museum’s content “is by no means set at this point” and that the content advisory committee’s work, “while important ... is not directing the museum. ... It’s one of many other sources in terms of our process for developing content.” There will be “many mass atrocities ... considered in the content of the museum,” perhaps as many as 50, she added.

A spokesperson for Mr. Moore said the government wouldn’t be commenting on the UCC report since the CMHR, “like other national museums,” is “an arm’s-length organization ... responsible for its own exhibits and programming. We welcome the CMHR consulting all communities ... to ensure the content reflects Canadian values and interests.”