



Ukrainian Canadian Congress
Toronto Branch
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June 11, 2008

To the Chairman and Trustees of
The Toronto District School Board
5050 Yonge Street
Toronto, ON M2N 5N8

Re: Proposed Genocide Course at the TDSB

Dear Mr. Chairman and Trustees:

You and your Board have a very important matter before you at your meeting on Thursday evening (June 12). You have a recommendation that the Holocaust, and the Armenian and Rwandan genocides be the core curriculum modules in the proposed grade eleven course, *Genocide: Historical and Contemporary Implications*, starting this fall.

We request that you NOT approve this recommendation as written. Instead, we request that you approve a motion to include the Holodomor as a 4th core curriculum module in the Genocide course.

You have been misled in a number of key respects:

1. It has been implied that the Holodomor will be taught in the Genocide course. Simply put, that is not so! There will be a couple of minor references, at best. It is impossible for teachers to teach a programme if there are no, or very limited, resources available.
2. Despite comments by some of your staff, there were absolutely NO consultations with our community regarding this course. We made repeated requests for consultation:
 - On January 30 the Ukrainian Canadian Congress e-mailed a letter to Nadine Segal and Gerry Connelly, with a copy to all trustees of the TDSB. We received only a standard response indicating that the Holodomor would not be excluded. Our follow up calls for a meeting went unanswered.
 - Subsequently, we made several attempts to contact John Campbell via phone. Again, our follow up calls for a meeting went unanswered.
 - After weeks of trying, we finally did we receive a response telling us that the issue is before a special committee.
 - Our community was deliberately excluded from any consultations while decisions were being apparently finalized.
 - We did not even receive a courtesy call from the TDSB to advise us that a decision was reached.
 - Only by chance, in May did we discover that a decision was a “fait accompli”.
3. Trustees have been told that the course was designed by “impartial professors of history” from York University and the University of Toronto. We ask you to look carefully at the objectivity of these advisors – not a single one of them is an expert on the Holodomor. It stretches the bounds of incredulity that an impartial group of professors, recommending a course of study on genocides in the 20th Century, would omit a major genocide such as the Holodomor from the core curriculum.

4. However, if the professors (and your staff) were impartial and objective, and they knew that they would not be recommending the inclusion of the Holodomor in their study outline, then why did they not advise our Congress and community, or afford us the consultations that we had asked for?
5. The June 2nd Committee appeal process was very badly flawed. Barely a quorum was reached; there was no serious debate; information provided misled trustees into thinking the Holodomor would be part of the course; and the deputants were given the impression that a decision had been reached before the appeal was heard.
6. There have been implications that the Ukrainian community wanted to replace one of the three proposed core modules with the Holodomor. This is absolutely false! Nothing could be further from the truth! This is quite simply blatant misinformation in an attempt to deliberately smear our community. Our position is simply that the Holodomor should be a 4th core module in the Genocide course.

The TDSB trustees have not received UUall the information required for an informed decision, and most certainly have not heard the position of our community. Would this be permitted with any other community? Absolutely not!

Historically, the Toronto District School Board has never shied away from sensitive issues. Your Board is the first to offer a course in genocide studies at the Grade 11 level. For this you should be applauded. But you should also get it right, and you should set up a curriculum that you can be proud of. Ignoring, or not including, a genocide in the core curriculum that was for so many years covered up by the Soviet regime, only perpetuates the insult to so many victims and their descendants. And it is offensive and unacceptable in the very year when we commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Holodomor, and the year when Canada's Parliament has unanimously recognized the Holodomor as an act of genocide and proclaimed the 4th Saturday of November as Holodomor Memorial Day.

We respectfully and firmly ask that the Holodomor be added as a 4th core curriculum module of the Genocide course offered this fall.

Respectfully yours,



Markian Shwec
President, UCC-Toronto

cc:
All Trustees of the TDSB
The Toronto Star
The Globe and Mail
The Toronto Sun