

Only PCs and NDP respond to UCC – APC questionnaire

(UCC-APC/UkrNews)—Only two parties running in the April 23 Alberta Provincial Election — the Progressive Conservatives and the New Democrats — responded to a questionnaire prepared jointly by the Ukrainian Canadian Congress and Ukrainian News on issues affecting the Ukrainian community by the designated deadline of April 10.

The questionnaire has been sent out over a week earlier to representatives of all five parties contesting this election — the PCs, the Wildrose Alliance, the Liberals, the NDP and the Alberta Party.

In all cases several follow-up calls were made by UCC – APC Provincial Co-ordinator Serhiy Kostyuk reminding them of the deadline.

The responses which were received are published below and will also be posted on the UCC-APC website

Should any more responses be received after the deadline, they will also be posted on the UCC – APC Website.

The questions and responses are as follows:

Immigration: *Would your party support the creation of a provincial advisory body on immigration, which would include representatives of Alberta's ethnic communities?*

PC — The province is working actively with the federal government to attract and retain an increasing number of immigrants. We are also working closely with various agencies and community groups across the province to enhance the services offered to our immigrant population. A provincial advisory body on immigration, which would include representatives of Alberta ethnic communities, is something that we may be open for consideration after further exploration.

NDP — Yes. The Alberta NDP supports the principles behind this proposal because it would allow for input from immigrants and other knowledgeable stakeholders. Such improved input could also result in public policies being more effective and relevant.

Alberta needs more immigrants to come here and settle, making contributions into the generations to come, as we have seen happen with Ukrainians. The experience and understanding of people in ethnic and cultural communities who have lived the settlement experience in the past is a tremendous resource in the development of good policies in the future. This advisory body could ensure better identification of emerging possibil-

ities and challenges and offer ideas to best address them. We know much more is needed than simply hoping a strong labour market will attract people to come to Alberta. We need comprehensive policies that support the full success of all members of families so there is a desire to stay and make homes in Alberta. Such a body would demonstrate that the government seems immigrant communities as an asset able to make useful contributions.

Such a body may also be able to provide helpful input in regards to the issue of the immigration-related issue of the temporary foreign worker program for lower-skilled workers.

The Alberta NDP understands that immigration is primarily a federal matter but being a destination where immigrants experience full success is vital for Alberta's long term strength in light of current Canadian demographics so the more relevant work the province can do both in advocating on federal policies and in developing measures that are within provincial jurisdiction the greater the potential to achieve this result.

Would your party support budget allocations to community based settlement agencies to enhance their capabilities, as is done in Saskatchewan?

PC — A number of government agencies are available across

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Ukrainian stereotypes in Holland's 'In Darkness'

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By far the most domineering is a Ukrainian policeman by the name of Bortnyk. He's fanatically pro-German, fanatically anti-Semitic, and fanatically pro-Ukrainian. His eyes glisten when he speaks of hunting down Jews and, naturally, he loves to drink. He appears for minutes on end, arguably being the second most important character in the film. He identifies himself — and is identified as — Ukrainian. And, lest the point escape you that the external appearance of Ukrainians shouldn't mislead you about their internal brutishness, he is, unlike the dumpy Socha, tall, dark, and handsome. Indeed, Bortnyk even comes across as worse than the Germans, who are portrayed only as background brutes. The Ukrainian is a living, breathing embodiment of evil, whereas the Nazis have no personality whatsoever. Not surprisingly, Bortnyk becomes stereotypically "unreal," and the film suffers aesthetically as a result.

Two other Ukrainians make bit appearances lasting a few seconds apiece. One is a peasant woman selling vegetables who expresses regret over the killing of Poles. The other is a worker who helps one of the Jews get through town. Neither of these two characters is identified as Ukrainian, and the only way you'd know they are is if you understand the language. If you don't, you're liable to think they're two of the many more or less nuanced, multi-dimensional Polish characters. And besides, the two Ukrainians appear on screen for a total of about 30 seconds.

Here's how Yale historian Timothy Snyder describes Holland's portrayal of Ukrainians:

Poldek has a Ukrainian friend, Bortnyk, who serves as a chief of the local police. This friendship saves Poldek once, but has its risks, since among the tasks of the police are the discovery and murder of Jews. Bortnyk comes to Poldek's house late at night drunk and demands sustenance; Poldek's little daughter, rubbing her eyes in bed, reminds her father that they were saving food for "the Jews." She then realizes what she has done, and convinces Bortnyk that by "Jews" she meant her dolls, which, she says, came from the ghetto. In a story of interaction between Poles and Jews, the natural tendency would be to export local evil as much as possible to the third nationality: the Ukrainians. Without at all disguising the horrible local politics of occupation, Holland carefully balances Ukrainian villains with sympathetic Ukrainian characters. One of the Jews in hiding smuggles himself into a concentration camp to see if the younger sister of the woman he loves is still alive. This heroism is enabled by a Ukrainian, who performs the indispensable [sic] logistical work and refuses payment.

Carefully balances, indeed! Imagine a German-language film with multi-dimensional German characters and three Jews. Two speak Yiddish (which sounds awfully like German to the untrained ear), are never identified as Jewish, and come off positively for all of 30 seconds. The third identifies himself as Jewish, is a fanatical Zionist, is depicted as a blood-sucking banker, and is on screen for 10 to 15 minutes.

I don't doubt that both Holland and Snyder would find the film aesthetically flawed and anti-Semitic.



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Easter is a very special time of year filled with laughter, joy and lots of good cheer. Friends and family gather from near and far away to share the warmth of the season, on this special day. The Board of Directors and staff of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress - Alberta Provincial Council wish you all an Easter filled with favorite traditions and happy new memories, but most of all, an Easter that renews your faith, uplifts your spirit, and fills your heart with joy!

Christ is Risen!

Святий Великдень несе нам довгоочікувану радість перемоги Сина Божого, дарує надію та вєвненість у застрашньому дні, поселяє спокій у серцях, укріплює віру та живить душу. Тож нехай Божя милість та благословення оросять ваше життя, а мир, любов та злагода запанують у Вашій оселі. Зичимо Вам гарного настрою, відмінного здоров'я, сімейного затишку, незмінного успіху та здійснення усіх задумів!

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Alberta to support immigrants in their new communities and provide a number of services to help them make the transition to life in Alberta. Locations: Brooks, Calgary, Edmonton, Fort McMurray, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, Lloydminster, Medicine Hat, Red Deer.

More information is available at <http://employment.alberta.ca/Immigration/154.html>.

Further, funding is already available through the Community Initiatives Program for projects that enhance and enrich communities throughout Alberta. The program is intended to reinvest revenues generated from provincial lotteries in communities, to empower local citizens, and community organizations to work together and respond to local needs.

Within Community Initiatives Program (CIP) funding there are three categories:

Project-Based Grants to provide financial assistance for community organizations for such things as equipment purchases, facility construction or renovation projects, hosting/travel/special events, new programs or special funding (ie disaster) requests within Alberta.

Community Operating Grants to provide financial assistance to registered non-profit organizations in Alberta to enhance the organization's ability to operate and to deliver services to the community.

International Development Grants to provide financial assistance to small and medium sized Alberta based non-government organizations to meet Alberta's commitment to give people in developing countries the tools to eventually meet their own needs. The purpose of the international development grants are to match or supplement the donations the citizens of Alberta make to humanitarian projects of their choosing.

Additional information is available at: <http://culture.alberta.ca/cip/default.aspx>.

NDP — Yes. The Alberta NDP supports best settlement practices and believes that not only do we need to restore funding to EAL programs and initiatives that the provincial conservatives have cut over the years, but that there should be a sustainable funding commitments made to community

based settlement agencies so that they can better manage and respond to the significant challenges faced by newcomers. This is especially important since recent cuts to settlement agencies by the Federal Conservatives affected many newcomers, and have created obstacles in getting language support, counseling services and transferring skills to new employment. There has been ample evidence over the years that the settlement sector is a source of creative initiatives that address emerging needs at street level before larger problems can develop. Current funding models for supporting settlement organizations have made it much more difficult for them to have speedy and effective responses to new issues than if they had more long-term broadly-based mandates for their funding.

Education: Knowledge of a second language is a mandatory part of school programmes in other provinces. What initiatives would your party take to ensure students are not disadvantaged in comparison to other students in other provinces?

PC — Parents can choose a public, separate, francophone, private, or charter school or a home education for their children, and each of those choices is supported by the provincial government.

Further, many schools already offer second language programs, and our French immersion programs are amongst the most popular in Canada.

We believe our education system is working well, as it is consistently ranked among the best in world, earning many accolades in the process.

We will continue to support educational choices, including second language programs.

NDP — Investing in our children's education is an investment in the future of Alberta. Second language learning enhances the education experience and better equips students for an international economy and for maintaining strong connections to family of origin cultures. It also allows students to better understand Canada and the world, especially when complemented by supportive curriculum in other subject areas. Some school boards in Alberta have done excellent work in second language programs, bilingual and immersion ones as well.

The Alberta NDP believes that without better education funding, and putting it on predictable, sustainable multi-year funding cycles, it is very difficult for school boards to offer such programs as fully as they might like. Without additional resources, such as better funding, new schools, and more teachers, boards are unable increase the quality and accessibility of second-language programming.

It should also be noted that current funding does not adequately address the needs for English as an additional language for many children coming as new immigrants and does not reflect proper understanding of the amount of time needed to achieve true language proficiency for success and not just oral fluency.

Does your party agree that coordination needs to be strengthened between Alberta Education,

school boards and different language communities in Alberta?

PC — Education remains a priority for the Progressive Conservatives. We are steadfast supporters of any initiative that will make it even better, including greater coordination between stakeholders. In addition, we remain committed to continued and predictable investments in our world class education system, as highlighted in Budget 2012:

- \$34 million invested every school day in K-12 students.

- School boards to receive grant rate increases of 1%, 2% and 2% for base instruction and class size grants over the next three years to address enrolment and other cost pressures. Other grants increasing 2% each year.

- 14 new schools opening their doors to more than 10,000 students this year.

- We are committed to building 50 new schools and upgrading 70 others throughout Alberta.

- \$1 billion invested in school infrastructure over the next three years.

NDP — Yes. Without Alberta Education taking a larger and proactive role in establishing more clear and effective linkages between these stakeholders and coordinating work with them a lot of resources are spent on activities that do not permit moving the core agenda of enhanced availability of second language education forward.

If you form the government will you assist volunteers by investing financially to help language communities employ staff and carry out public information campaigns to recruit students into Alberta's various bilingual school programs?

PC — We have no position on this matter at the moment. It is something that we would have to explore further before consideration.

NDP — Ensuring reliable, predictable, adequate funding for school boards would enable school boards to develop quality programs and recruit students. The Alberta NDP would work with community stakeholders to develop incentives for bilingual programs, and would work to alleviate barriers for students such as financial or learning difficulties.

Access to second language training is important, but so too is the right to speak additional languages without discrimination. The Alberta NDP has fought against cases of discrimination and believes in strengthening the Human Rights Commission. In 2007, the Alberta NDP stood up in the legislature and demanded answers when Suncor fired a unionized Canadian worker with 25 years' experience because his first language was French. The Alberta NDP, therefore, would ensure that there is a balance between the promotion of second languages with that of social inclusion and human rights. The active promotion of cultural diversity is critical to encouraging children to broaden their own cultural understanding, respect of other cultures and strengthen their second language skills.

Arts and Culture: Alberta demographics have changed to include a broad range of ethno-cultural

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heritage groups. What actions would your party take to ensure that arts funding in our province reflects this new reality?

PC — A Progressive Conservative government has shown its commitment to continuing to invest in cultural endeavours across the province. Funding of the new Royal Alberta Museum is the latest example of this commitment. Another example is the continuation of the Community Initiatives Program (as stated in question 2, above). This lottery funding will also remain available to Ukrainian and other cultural organizations through Culture and Community Services, and other government departments.

With more than 20,000 non-profit organizations employing 176,000 Albertans, and serving many hundreds of thousands more, the health and well-being of the nonprofit and voluntary sector is critical to our efforts to maintaining and enhancing strong, welcoming and healthy communities.

These groups are often the hands and feet of our communities – lending assistance to those in need.

We need to continue to work together on behalf of Albertans. Culture Forum 2012 will bring together policy and community leaders to share ideas to ensure Alberta's culture, including our nonprofit sector, is vibrant and sustainable.

NDP — The Alberta NDP recognizes that communities are stronger, safer, and more livable when the arts have a significant and visible place. The arts provide a substantial economic value to communities, directly and indirectly. The arts also play a significant role in the preservation and promotion of culture. As an NDP government corrected what has happened overall with regards to government support for the arts it would certainly ensure the real demographic realities of the province were reflected in funding and policy actions.

Government support is needed for the arts to thrive and grow and for various cultural exchanges to occur within the art realm. A robust environment to support the arts arises from fine arts and culture having a healthy place in the education system. An investment of public money in fostering the arts will have economic and social benefits that will be greater over time.

The NDP recognizes that large government cuts have hurt the arts in Alberta. The 2008 promise to increase funding for the Foundation for the Arts was reversed in 2009. Providing support for artists so they can make a living from their art is an important step the government can take to foster a more thriving arts community and can protect the artisan and crafts of various cultural communities. We recognize funding for the arts is an investment which benefits Alberta in many ways.

The NDP would, first and foremost, improve funding for the arts.

- Raise Foundation for the Arts funding to \$90 mil-

lion in four years;

- Support public art by investing 1% of capital project funds in art;
- Create an endowment for social sciences, arts, and humanities research;
- Ensure support for film and television production;
- Fund public libraries to ensure they can fill a significant role in community life;
- Enhance the place of arts in schools;
- Require fine arts as a curriculum element from Kindergarten through Grade 12, with the necessary funding support for teachers, equipment, and supplies
- Strengthen fine arts training in post-secondary institutions
- Support career success for artists
- Enact Status of the Artist legislation
- Develop a program to enhance and expand working spaces and studios for artists
- Create opportunities for the Alberta Foundation for the Arts collections to be shown in public spaces

Tourism: *Over the past 35 years, the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village (UCHV) has become a world class open air museum, yet the site has endured cut-backs and today remains unfinished. Now, as the early pioneers and their children are passing away, and old historic structures in east central Alberta are demolished, the UCHV is under threat of never being completed. Will your party see to the immediate completion of this lasting tribute to the Ukrainian community in Alberta, and if so, how?*

PC — Like all Albertans, we value the contributions and the diversity of our communities. The Ukrainian community has shaped our province in so many positive ways and the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village is reminiscent of this lasting legacy.

Funding has been made available to the Friends of the Ukrainian Village Society in the past and we encourage the organization to collaborate with them in applying for funding again in the future, through the various funding mechanisms made available to cultural groups across the province.

NDP — The Alberta NDP recognizes and appreciates the historical contribution of the Ukrainian people and believes that the celebration and knowledge of these histories contributes significantly to the quality of life for all Albertans. The UCHV is a provincial treasure and it is essential to consult and agree on a comprehensive plan to achieve a full vision of what this initiative can be. There is no doubt it would be a significant tourism destination as it was more fully realized. Large government cuts by the Conservatives have hurt arts, culture and tourism across Alberta. The Alberta NDP would provide adequate supports for cultural and historic preservation, thus stimulating the tourist industry. We recognize funding for cultural preservation and community is an investment which benefits Alberta in many ways.

UCCLA campaign targets human rights museum

By Ross Romaniuk, *The Winnipeg Sun*, April 9, 2012

A Ukrainian Canadian organization wants the public to speak up about a lack of openness it says is a serious problem in the planning of Winnipeg's developing human rights museum.

The Ukrainian Canadian Civil Liberties Association (UCCLA) is using a postcard campaign directed at federal Heritage Minister James Moore to push its point that because the Canadian Museum for Human Rights is publicly funded, it should be far more transparent in its goals for its galleries — and should not “elevate the suffering of any community above all others.”

Lubomyr Luciuk, the UCCLA's director of research, said on Monday (April 9) that no genocide — including the Holocaust or the Holodomor famine in Soviet Ukraine in the early 1930s, both of which killed millions of people — should stand out above other such crimes against humanity at Canada's first national museum outside the Ottawa area.

“No community's suffering should be elevated above all others,” Luciuk told the *Winnipeg Sun* from Kingston, Ont., where he lives and works as a university professor.

An institution so heavily funded by the public purse, he said, must equally focus on genocides such as those that devastated Rwanda, Cambodia and other countries.

“We question whether any tax money should be given to promoting any kind of prejudice,” Luciuk

stressed, noting that the museum's escalating development price tag means “it's costing more, and more and more” with a projected total of \$351 million.

The campaign by the organization — which is not a member group of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress — uses a postcard-style mailout that states the sender opposes “additional federal funding for the CMHR.”

However, the Harper government has stated it won't spend more on the project than \$100 million committed years ago for construction and \$21.7 million annually for operations.

Also including a photograph of Gail Asper, national campaign chairwoman for the Friends of the CMHR holding a dirt-filled shovel at the project's sod-turning ceremony, the card says: “There's been enough shovelling and spreading.”

Staff in Moore's ministerial office in Ottawa did not return a call for comment.

Angela Cassie, spokeswoman for the museum project, said the institution's three goals are to “promote an understanding of human rights issues; encourage dialogue and reflection; and inspire action.”

In an e-mail, she added that the CMHR “will work to capture Canada's unique human rights story” with galleries and programming that will “lead our visitors into a deeper understanding of the ongoing struggle to turn the vision of international human rights into a reality for all.”

PC Alberta

Thank you for all that we have achieved together. I ask for your continued support on April 23, 2012.

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