

## **“Ukraine expert”, eh?**

### **Marples owes Ukrainians and Ukrainian Canadians an apology**

**By Serhiy Kostyuk**

At first it was difficult to believe that David Marples, Ph.D., a distinguished professor at the University of Alberta could write such a misleading and offensive article (“Hero of Ukraine links to Jewish killings”) and the Edmonton Journal would actually print it, as they did on Feb. 7, the day the people of Ukraine peacefully elected a new President of Ukraine.

The “scholarly” component of Marples’ article has been very aptly addressed by Stepan Bandera’s grandson Stephen, Ukrainian News Editor Marco Levytsky, CIUS Director Dr. Zenon Kohut and Lubomyr Markevych. And the distress this has created in our community was noted in the Letter to the Editor of The Journal by the Ukrainian Canadian Congress – Alberta Provincial Council, which “is receiving calls from respected individuals in Alberta society who are being harassed at work as a result of an inaccurate, inappropriate and sensational headline and column.”

Who is Marples and why he is throwing around comments that nurture Ukrainophobia?

I’ve up two Jan 28 Voice of America (VoA) reports by André de Nesnera “*Tymoshenko Faces Yanukovich in Feb. 7 Ukrainian Presidential Runoff*” and “*Yanukovich Seen as Front-Runner in Ukraine Presidential Election*”, both basically the same story under different headlines, in which Marples was quoted and referred to as a “Ukraine expert”. Some expert. Marples says that Ukraine’s Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko “earned a doctorate in economics”. Not true. In actual fact, Tymoshenko only defended her Candidate of Economic Sciences degree in 1999, and never started working on her doctorate after that. (In Ukraine a doctorate takes another 4-6 years of study following a Candidate degree).

While noting that Yanukovych was convicted of assault and manslaughter (the second not true) as a youth, Marples adds that “Tymoshenko also spent time in prison — but for so-called ‘white collar’ crimes. So both the presidential candidates of Ukraine have been in jail”. Again not true. Yanukovych was convicted twice and served sentences for each of these offenses, but Tymoshenko was never convicted of either “white collar” or “street” crimes. She spent six weeks in a detention centre, but in March 2001 Pechersk District Court of Kyiv revoked the arrest warrant issued by Prosecutor-General’s Office and dismissed the charges against her).

Marples is also careless with his dates. He says that Yanukovych “was arrested in 1968”. Not true. Yanukovych was sentenced a year earlier, on December 15, 1967 (according to Article 141, Part 2 of the Criminal Code of the Ukrainian SSR).

But what lessons do we take from the Marples article that was published in The Edmonton Journal?

First, can you imagine that the Canadian Director of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre for Holocaust Studies or someone in a similar position would publish Nazi propaganda? Yet what is Marples, who is the Director of the Stasiuk Program for the Study of Contemporary Ukraine at the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies at the U of A, doing when he makes the totally unsubstantiated claim that “*members of the OUN-B spearheaded pogroms in L’viv in the summer of 1941 when about 4,000 Jews were killed*”? He is spreading Soviet disinformation.

Second, historical research on the Ukrainian nationalist movement during the Second World War, Stalinism, repressions, Holodomor-Genocide 1932-33, Famine 1946-47, and dissident movement in Ukraine should be based on the unclassified archived documents and memoirs, which are now available in printed and electronic formats. Researchers should stop unquestioningly using material from Soviet sources on the history of the USSR and Ukraine, which serves only to spread stereotypes of Ukrainians. They should distinguish between the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, the Galicia Division (later renamed First Division of the National Army of Ukraine) and the Roland and Nachtigall Battalions of the Wehrmacht. The English author Samuel Johnson once said “It is more from carelessness about truth than from intentionally lying that there is so much falsehood in the world.”

Third, Ukrainian Canadians should respect not only others, but also themselves. We should defend our human rights and continue to battle discrimination. We should think twice before inviting Marples to deliver a lecture, giving him research and travel grants, allowing him to manage Ukrainian projects or rewarding him in other ways. It is unfortunate that he was awarded the Shevchenko Medal in 1999 by the “Ukrainian Canadian Committee (national)”, as he says on his web site. Apparently he’s unaware the title Ukrainian Canadian Committee was replaced with Ukrainian Canadian Congress 10 years before his award, back in 1989.

Finally, Marples should be held responsible for his statements and apologize to Ukrainians for the disinformation he is spreading. In 2009 Ignatieff apologized for and condemned statements he had posed in the form of a rhetorical exercise in his 1992 book “Blood and Belonging”. In 2008 Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall apologized for speaking in an exaggerated Ukrainian accent and mocking then-NDP leader Roy Romanow, who went on to become premier in the 1991. Similarly Wildrose Alliance chief of staff Stephen Carter apologized for poking fun at Premier Ed Stelmach’s Ukrainian accent in 2009.

Ukrainian Canadians welcomed the belated or quick, but unequivocal apologies from Ignatieff, Wall, Carter and others, and considered those matters closed. Does Marples have the courage to apologize for a rehash of misinformation?

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