

Moses Fishbein: “The Chekist-style persistence of disinformation specialists”

Moses Fishbein’s introductory remarks during a briefing at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine on 3 November 2008



Ladies and gentlemen!

The ancients said: *De mortuis aut bene, aut nihil*. Of the dead be nothing said but what is good. In recent years, Russian politicians, diplomats, political scientists, journalists, and even pop stars have clearly taken a fancy to another expression: *De Ukraina aut male, aut nihil*. Of Ukraine be nothing said but what is bad. Nothing matters to them — not logic or common sense, not honesty or decency. In their view, Ukraine — like the young woman with a fierce mother-in-law, like the Jew among anti-Semites — is guilty of everything. In its imperialistic frenzy, combined with its perennial inferiority complex, the Russian leadership seeks, with its own Ukrainophobia, to zombify both the international public and Russian society, and through the mass media which it controls and its agents of influence — a certain part of Ukraine’s population.

Today, growing numbers of Russian citizens consider Stalin the most distinguished figure in the history of their country. An icon of Stalin recently appeared in a church on the outskirts of St. Petersburg.

On 17 September 2008 the well-known Russian journalist Aleksandr Prokhanov, the editor of the newspaper *Zavtra* (Tomorrow) — of whom it is said, “What Putin has on his mind, Prokhanov has on his tongue”— the same Prokhanov who openly calls himself an imperialist — said the following in an interview with the radio station Ekho Moskvyy: “Stalin is becoming the face of Russia.” In that same interview he declared: “Russia is a potential

superpower. If not, it will fall apart.” He then declared: “We have achieved that very crisis in Ukraine.” In reply to the female journalist’s question, “What should be done right now?” he said: “Yushchenko must be neutralized.”

High-ranking Russian politicians are making noisy claims to Ukrainian territory. Cultivated and welcomed by the Russian leadership, provocateurs are plundering national Ukrainian hallowed sites on our Mt. Hoverla, and shredding and trampling the Ukrainian flag near one of Ukraine’s embassies. During a press conference that took place on 28 October 2008 Vitaly Churkin, the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation at the UN, made the following comment about the Holodomor, the Great Famine of 1932-33 in Ukraine: “...the Ukrainian government is using that question with the goal of making mischief between our two fraternal nations, sowing discord between our peoples...No matter what repressions or actions were carried out by the Stalinist regime, it cannot be called the primary cause of the Famine...And it is wrong to say that the Stalinist regime was against the Ukrainian people.”

I don’t know if Churkin the diplomat has read *Forever Flowing*, a book about the Holodomor that was written by the famous Russian writer Vasily Grossman. I don’t know if Mr. Churkin reads anything besides “instructions from the Center.” But his declaration is shameless profanity. His other comments that were made during that press conference at the UN headquarters are also nothing but shameless profanity and arrogant lies. I quote: “...The second question...which, in my opinion, has a definite logical interconnection with the first, is the question of the heroification of Nazism... In his edict bestowing an award on one of the odious members of the Ukrainian Nazi movement, the President of Ukraine called Mr. Shukhevych, who was a Nazi, a hero... Do you remember that thousands of Jews were killed in Kyiv? The majority of the people who were killing Jews in Babyn Yar were Ukrainian Nazis.”

“Ukrainian Nazis”? In other word, some Ukrainians, who were supposedly members of Hitler’s National Socialist German Workers Party, the NSDAP, were shooting Jews in Babyn Yar, and not Germans from the *Einsatzkommando*? “Shukhevych, who was a Nazi”? In other words, Shukhevych, who was supposedly a member of the Nazi Party yet was based in Halychyna (Galicia), was in some fashion involved in the shootings in Babyn Yar? Anyone who says this is either an ignoramus or a

disinformation specialist. I hope that Mr. Churkin is at least not an ignoramus.

Let's remind Mr. Churkin that from 1939 to 1941 the USSR, whose successor today is the Russian Federation, was an ally of Nazi Germany. How can one forget all those movie reels showing the joint Soviet-German military parades? Let us also remind him of the way the special disinformation operation targeting Roman Shukhevych, the Commander in Chief of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), is being conducted today. Initially, a story was planted in the mass media, claiming that Shukhevych was a "captain of the SS." The disinformation specialists were told that there was never any such rank. Then the disinformation specialists transformed Shukhevych into some sort of *Obersturmfuehrer*. It was explained to them that in order for an individual to become a member of the SS, he had to expend a lot of effort on proving his Aryan origins, which Shukhevych naturally did not have. Then the disinformation specialists planted another story in the mass media, this one claiming that Shukhevych had received a military decoration from Hitler himself. They were reminded that only Himmler had ever received a military decoration from Hitler. According to information stored at the Military Archive in Freiburg (Germany), the Commander in Chief of the UPA was never awarded any German decoration.

But the disinformation specialists desperately need to discredit not only General Shukhevych and the UPA but the entire Ukrainian national liberation movement, as well as the president of Ukraine, Viktor Yushchenko.

So they have resorted to an old Soviet secret police provocation by playing the "Jewish card": they accuse some Ukrainians of destroying Jews, and others — of turning into heroes those whom they were allegedly destroying. This is a well-known device: turn the Jews away from the Ukrainian renaissance, turn the Jews and the entire civilized world away from those who want to restore a genuine Ukrainian Ukraine — Ukrainian in spirit, language, and memory of its geniuses and heroes — a Ukrainian Ukraine for all those who live in that country today, regardless of ethnic origins.

I respect the Russia of Boris Pasternak, Andrei Sakharov, Andrei and Arsenii Tarkovsky, and Vasily Grossman. The Russia of Putin and Medvedev is foreign to me.



Iryna Ryzhko

One final point: in 1942-43 Natalia Shukhevych, the wife of Roman Shukhevych, the Commander in Chief of the UPA, hid a young Jewish girl named Ira Reichenberg in her home. General Shukhevych prepared a fake passport for the girl in the name of Iryna Ryzhko. When the Gestapo arrested Mrs. Shukhevych, the little girl was brought to an orphanage based at a convent in the village of Kulykiv in the Lviv region. Living in this Ukrainian convent, the girl survived the German occupation and the war. This is a picture of her. She has a typical Jewish face. Last year Iryna Ryzhko died in Kyiv. Present in this room today is her son Volodymyr.

Translated from the Ukrainian.

Moses Fishbein is a distinguished Ukrainian poet and translator, winner of the Vasyl Stus Prize, and a member of the Ukrainian Center of the International PEN Club and the National Union of Writers of Ukraine. Academician Ivan Dziuba calls him a "Poet by the Grace of God." Moses Fishbein is listed in various world encyclopedias. In Ukraine he has been awarded the Order of Prince Yaroslav Mudry, V Degree, and the Order of Holy Prince Volodymyr the Great, Equal to the Apostles, III Degree.

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