

# FIELD NOTES FROM UKRAINIAN CANADA

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Now that spring has arrived after an unusually mild winter (that at least in southern Alberta is not attributable to global warming), it's time to exchange our sheepskin coats for something lighter and more water resistant as we gear up for a new season. And given all the signs of a neo-Soviet revival in the "old country," meaning Moscow as well as Kyiv, we thought we might kick off this edition with a salutary period piece by the late Volodymyr Sosiura (1898–1965)—who is perhaps best known as the author of the lyrically patriotic poem, "*Liubit' Ukrainu*" (Love Ukraine), written in 1944. Although a member of the Communist Party from 1920, Sosiura was always passionate about his native language and country, and not surprisingly this increasingly caused him problems with Soviet authorities in the 1930s. The following work dates from the early and more optimistic years of Bolshevik dictatorship, when working people around the world still looked hopefully toward the Soviet Union as a beacon of economic progress, social justice, and equality. Little did they know how things would turn out ...

## Greetings

### To the Workers of Canada and the United States

Over there, across the ocean, where there are scorching factories,  
where the senseless days of servitude drip like blood  
and where in the narrow streets misery eternally roams,  
and the workers go to work dejectedly...

Where there's only the cry of a whistle and stale bread and tears,  
where fetters are baked to the bone of one's legs,  
and one's forehead is bowed from despair and fatigue,  
and the iron wind angrily flies to the heights...

That is where we send this greeting. We gunned down yesterday,  
hymns are being composed to us about our first blow,  
machine-tools are buzzing, roaring in the illuminated expanse,  
and our universal objective is blazing like a star.

We call upon you to make a transoceanic October,  
so that the locomotive will joyously cry out into the air,  
for the swarthy, black and yellow comrades  
to raise to the sky their own bloody banner.

Kharkiv, 9.XI.1924.

As published in *Ukrains'ki robotnychi visty* (Ukrainian Labor News), No. 126, 1924, p. 4, and translated by Jars Balan.

Needless to say, Sosiura never actually visited Canada, nor was he ever granted the opportunity to travel outside the Soviet Union. It goes without saying that the work is hardly the best example of his poetic talent, and like many other writers of his generation—at least those that survived the

Stalinist purges—he probably later cringed at the thought of his naivety, both about North America and the Soviet Union.

*Field Notes from Ukrainian Canada* are compiled and distributed by the Kule Ukrainian Canadian Studies Centre at the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, University of Alberta.

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**Nota bene!** New to *Field Notes*? If you have received our quarterly e-bulletin unsolicited and do not wish to remain on our mailing list, simply drop Andrij or Jars a line at one of the addresses above and we'll be happy to send you to the recycle bin. We also welcome suggestions as to who else you think might be interested in getting our newsletter devoted to developments in the field of Ukrainian Canadian studies. Back issues of our notes can be accessed via the Kule Ukrainian Canadian Studies Centre page on the Web site of the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies: [www.ualberta.ca/CIUS/ukrcan/uc-home.htm](http://www.ualberta.ca/CIUS/ukrcan/uc-home.htm).

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## Conferences

This year's annual conference of the **Canadian Association of Slavists** is taking place at the **University of Waterloo**. A panel on *Ukrainian Life in Canada from the Twenties to the War Years* will be held on the afternoon of Sunday 27 May and feature the following presentations: Jars Balan, "In Peak Form: The Artistic and Cultural Life of Ukrainian Canadians in the Interwar Era"; Andrij Makuch, "The Petliura Legacy in Interwar Ukrainian Canada"; and Connie Wawruck-Hemmet, "Rehabilitating the No-Voters: The *Winnipeg Free Press*, Francis H. Stevens and Manitoba's Ukrainian Canadians." Three sessions of the Canadian Association of Ukrainian Ethnology (CAUE) will also be offering presentations Ukrainian Canadian themes, one on topics related to the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village involving Radomir Bilash, Gordon Yaremchuk and Mark Woytiuk; and another with talks on the "The Community of Rycroft, Alberta, as part of Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage" (Maryna Hrymnych) and "Letters from the Old Country" (Natalia Khanenko-Friesen), dealing with Canadian Ukrainian Vernacular Letter Writing. The third "Research in Progress" session of the CAUE includes Svitlana Melnyk speaking about "The Development of the Ukrainian language and language programs in Ukraine and Canada," and Iryna Matiash "Examining the Fate of Ukrainian Canadians (Based on the Case Studies of IEvhen Deslav and General V. Sikevych)." Two additional presentations on yet another panel are devoted to Ukrainian-Canadian themes, both of them drawing on findings from the on-going "Sanctuary" project: Eva Himka's "From Community Institution to Monument to Memory: Changes to Symbolism and Perceptions of Ukrainian-Canadian Prairie Churches," and Michal Mlynarz's "Preserving Ukrainian-Canadian Prairie Churches: Advantages and Problematics of Heritage Work, Physical and Digital Preservation and Processes of Museumification." For the complete conference program and details concerning the times and locations of the sessions go to <http://www.ualberta.ca/~csp/cas/conference.html>.

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## Publications: New and Forthcoming

A recently-published biography and family history of **Michael and Muriel Ewanchuk** is a welcome addition to any Ukrainian-Canadian library. Titled *Trailblazers: The Lives and Times of Michael Ewanchuk and Muriel (Smith) Ewanchuk*, it was written by **John Lehr**, a geography

professor at the University of Winnipeg with a string of Ukrainian-themed publications to his credit, and David McDowell, a former geography teacher who is now an educational consultant. The 226-page book, generously illustrated with black and white photographs, document reproductions and maps, was published in late 2011 by Winnipeg's Carpathia Publishers (ISBN-978-1-55099-4) and retails for \$28.50 with the tax included. A former teacher and school inspector before becoming an historian, Michael Ewanchuk was the author of more than two dozen books on Ukrainian Canadian themes (some in Ukrainian), a list of which provided in the appendices.

Our congratulations go out to **Shandi Mitchell**, who won the **2012 Kobzar Prize** for Canadian literature on a Ukrainian theme for her novel *Under This Unbroken Sky*, set on the prairies during the Depression. The other short-listed works were *Mammoth*, a debut collection of poetry by Larissa Andrusyshyn; *Prodigal Daughter: A Journey to Byzantium*, by Myrna Kostash; *Jews in Ukrainian Literature: Representation and Identity*, by Myroslav Shkandrij; and *The Knife Sharpener's Bell*, by Rhea Tregebov. The \$25,000 prize, provided by Shevchenko Foundation, was presented at a sold-out banquet at Toronto's Palais Royale on 1 March. The winner also receives a statuette of a Ukrainian minstrel, or kobzar, while this year all of the short-listed authors received \$1000 each. Adjudicators for the biennial competition were Denise Chong, Nino Ricci, MG Vassanji and Randall Maggs.

We also wish to congratulate biologist **Michael Mucz**, whose much delayed book, *Baba's Kitchen Medicines: Folk Remedies of Ukrainian Settlers in Canada* (announced in an earlier *Field Notes*), has now been published by the U of A Press (ISBN 978-0-88864-514-2). The 265 page book retails for \$34.95.

Two recent publications have come out featuring works by author **Ulas Samchuk** (1905–1987), who immigrated to Canada in 1948. The first is a translation by **Roma Franko** of his novel *Maria: A Chronicle of a Life*, described as “A gripping tale about a village woman's loves, losses and daily toil, from the emancipation of the serfs in 1861 to one of the most tragic periods in human history—the 1932–33 Holodomor-Famine Genocide.” Based on the revised 1952 edition of Samchuk's best-selling novel, the 256-page work (ISBN 978-0-99877750-0-9) can be purchased for \$19.95, plus taxes and shipping, from Language Lanterns Publications at [www.language lanterns.com](http://www.language lanterns.com). The book was launched in Toronto at St. Vladimir Institute on 29 April at an event hosted by Oksana Bryzhun-Sokolyk. Also worth mentioning is a newly-published three-act play by Samchuk, *Shumliat' zhorna*, set in his native Volhynia in 1942. Although he began work on it during the war, he only completed the play in a refugee camp in 1947. Prepared for publication by **Inna Nahorna**, the 58-page drama was issued in Rivne in 2012 as No. 15 in the series put out by the Bibliotechka Literaturnoho muzeiu Ulasa Samchuka v Rivnomu (ISBN 978-966-888-3-85-9).

Speaking of books published in Ukraine, we also wish to draw attention to the appearance of a new title in a series dedicated to the late Metropolitan Ilarion of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada. *Ivan Ohienko i suchasna nauka ta Osvita. Naukovyi Zbirnyk. Vypusk VIII* (Kamianets'-Podilskyi Natsional'nyi Universytet imena Ivana Ohienko, 2006), features contributions from the Canadian clergymen Revs. O. Krawchenko, S. Jarmus and B. Demchuk.

A new anthology of historical essays, *Edible Histories, Cultural Politics: Towards A Food History of Canada* (ISBN 97814442644762, cloth, \$85; ISBN 9781442612839, paper, \$35) is scheduled to be released by the University of Toronto Press, in May 2012. The 445-page work contains two chapters of interest to Ukrainian Canadian studies: “We Didn't Have Much Money, But We Had Food,” by Montreal oral historian **Stacey Zembrzycki**, and “Feeding the Dead: The

Ukrainian Food Colossi of the Canadian Prairies” by Ottawa art historian **S. Holyck Hunchuck**. The scholarly, peer-reviewed collection is a Canadian contribution to the emerging field of international food studies. Five years in the making, the collection is multicultural and multi-disciplinary in approach, and was commissioned and edited by three of Canada's foremost social historians and scholars of food history: Franca Iacovetta (University of Toronto), Marlene Epp (University of Waterloo) and Valerie Korinek (University of Saskatchewan).

Zembrzycki's chapter is based on interviews she conducted with 82 Ukrainian Canadian elders in Sudbury, Ontario in 2004–6. In it, Zembrzycki determines how food—and especially Ukrainian food—shaped memories and identities as Ukrainian Canadians, in terms of food production and consumption, domestic space, and gender roles around culinary labour during the 1920 and 1930s. Although all interviewees now reside in Sudbury, half were raised in farming families in Alberta and Saskatchewan, where gender roles were blurred in terms of producing food and putting it on the table. Another half grew up in Ukrainian boarding houses, where fathers worked in nickel mines and mothers and daughters bought food in grocery stores, while doing the cooking and cleaning for the extended families of industrial labourers. Zembrzycki finds that despite their differences in regional origins in Canada, economic activities, means of acquiring foodstuffs, and gender roles around food production and consumption, traditional Ukrainian meals were a constant source of identity as Ukrainian Canadians for all interviewees.

Hunchuck's chapter examines some of the same Ukrainian food items as discussed by Zembrzycki, but applies them to a folkloric and symbolic discussion of the ensemble of seven giant statues of Ukrainian foods, erected in Alberta and Saskatchewan between 1974 and 2001. The chapter asks why these modern statues came to be built, and proposes that they have an important meaning beyond that of tourist kitsch. She explores ancient Ukrainian “foodlore”—the traditional folk practices, beliefs, and myths around particular food items. She proposes that these statues are modern versions of ancient practices in which certain Ukrainian food items are revered in their own right, and also left out in the land as a means of honouring ancestors. The chapter is illustrated with original photographs taken during Hunchuck's field research in 2008, and focuses on two examples in particular: the “Lesia” monument in Canora, Sask (with her salt, bread, and *rushnyk*), and the renowned Pysanka of Vegreville, Alberta.

Last but not least, we are especially pleased to announce the appearance of a new book by **Andriy Nahachewsky** of our sister Kule Folklore Centre at the University of Alberta. Titled *Ukrainian Dance: A Cross-Cultural Approach* (Print ISBN 978-0-7864-6168-4; and Ebook ISBN: 978-0-7864-8706-6), the 274-page softcover published by McFarland & Company is sure to be of particular interest to the thousands of active, semi-active and retired Ukrainian dancers to be found wherever there are Ukrainians across this fair land of ours. The book was officially launched in Edmonton on 24 March at the Cheremosh Ukrainian Dance Company Studio, and was presented again in Toronto on 8 May at the Ukrainian National Federation Hall on Evans Avenue. *Ukrainian Dance* has 46 photos, 6 maps, notes, a bibliography and an index, and it can be ordered from McFarland Publishers or the Kule Folklore Centre for \$55. If you go the website of the Peter and Doris Kule Centre for Ukrainian and Canadian Folklore you can also hear an interview done with Andriy by Steve Chwok of CFCW's Zabava program.

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## Research Notes

The **Sanctuary Project** documenting the spiritual heritage of Ukrainians in Canada is resuming its field work this summer. Researchers will be focussing their efforts on sanctuaries and cemeteries in rural east central Alberta, photographing religious artifacts, recording architectural

details and conducting interviews with parishioners about the history of Orthodox and Catholic congregations, many of which are struggling to survive. Besides sharing their findings with local church members, the Sanctuary team will eventually make all of the information that they gather available to researchers on a searchable database.

Taking advantage of a trip to Winnipeg to launch his new book, **Serge Cipko** spent some time in mid-April working in the archives of Oseredok searching for material dealing with the impact of the Ukrainian Famine-Holodomor on Canada.

Meanwhile, **Jars Balan** has now input almost 400 pages of new stories, articles, editorials and letters to the editor, relevant to understanding how the Famine-Holodomor of 1932–33 was covered by the mainstream Canadian press. Newspapers in Canada provided a surprising amount of information to their readers—some of it confused and contradictory, but much of it quite revealing—about events in Ukraine leading up to, during, and following the peak years of the starvation attributable to the brutal policies of Joseph Stalin. These preliminary findings underscore the need to conduct further investigations of additional sources to obtain a fuller picture of what Canadians were told about Soviet Ukraine and the USSR in the interwar period, especially during the forced collectivization drive and the Great Famine.

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## In the Realm

**Weronika Suchacka**, who spent time in Canada doing research with the help of the KUCSC, on 6 March gave a talk on “Ukrainian-Canadians: Identity and Literature,” at the University of Szczecin, in Poland. Her presentation kicked off a lecture series titled “Canadian Studies Showcase,” sponsored by the Department of English, and featuring 14 scholars from various European universities.

**Serge Cipko** delivered the keynote address at the annual general meeting of the Ukrainian Pioneers Association of Alberta, held at St. John’s Institute in Edmonton on 30 March. He spoke about Alberta Ukrainians during the Second World War, having previously given presentations on the same subject at academic conferences in Winnipeg and Fredericton.

Meanwhile, **Jars Balan** gave a short presentation at the Annual General Meeting of the Kalyna Country Ecomuseum Society, held in Vegreville, Alberta, on 31 March. Kalyna Country is in the process of rebounding from an acrimonious parting of ways with the couple who for more than a decade produced the *Kalyna Country Visitors and Events Guide* with the support and on behalf of the volunteer society.

Speaking of Kalyna Country, the ecomuseum, in partnership with the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village and the Ukrainian Pioneers Association of Alberta, is sponsoring an exhibition of original paintings, drawings, lithographs and prints by the late, great artist, **William Kurelek** (1927–1977), who was born on a farm near Willingdon, Alberta. Titled “Kurelek in the Community,” the show will be on display at the UCHV from 22 May to the Labour Day weekend, and will feature works expressive of the artist’s close connection with the wider community, drawn from private as well as institutional collections. Of course, Kurelek is also the subject of a major retrospective exhibition, “William Kurelek: The Messenger,” which hung in Winnipeg from 28 September to 31 December, at the Art Gallery of Hamilton until 29 April, and will be shown at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria from 25 May through 3 September. The show was expertly

curated by Tobi Bruce, Mary Jo Hughes and Andrew Kear and has received rave reviews. A beautifully produced catalogue (ISBN-978-0-88885-364-6) with the same name has also been issued in conjunction with the exhibition, lavishly illustrated with color reproductions and photographs, and featuring essays by Brian Dedora, Avrom Isaacs and Brian Smylski. The 246-page book retails for \$35. Also worth checking out is a website complementing the exhibit, at <http://kurelek.ca/>. Among its supplementary resources are audio-taped interviews done with Kurelek by the late Michael Ewanchuk, video footage, a virtual tour of the show and an illustrated timeline of the artist's life and career.

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## Diaspora Studies Update

Serge Cipko's book *Ukrainians in Argentina, 1897–1950: The Making of a Community* was recently launched in Edmonton and Winnipeg. The launch in Edmonton took place on 3 April 2012, and was organized by the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies (publisher of the book in association with the Shevchenko Scientific Society of Canada) and was co-sponsored by the Department of History and Classics, University of Alberta. The second presentation of the book took place in Winnipeg on 12 April 2012 and was held at the Oseredok Ukrainian Cultural and Educational Centre and co-sponsored by the Department of German and Slavic Studies, University of Manitoba. At both events, Cipko discussed the contents of the study through a power-point presentation. The book is currently being displayed at the Feria Internacional del Libro in Buenos Aires, an international book fair that is held annually in the Argentine capital.

In mid-September, the Ukrainian Diaspora Studies Initiative Coordinator will again have an opportunity to talk about his book when he travels to Poland to take part on a panel of Latin American and Diaspora Studies experts at the II World Congress of Historians of Poland from Abroad, being held in Krakow.

We are pleased to report that an article about the UDSI's e-bulletin "Ukrainians Abroad: News and Views" was recently published. "Khronika ukrains'koi diaspori: informatsiyni biuleteti 'Ukrainci za kordonom'" by Maryna Hrymych, appeared in the latest issue of *Ukrainoznavstvo*, and can be accessed at: <http://www.ualogos.kiev.ua/category.html?category=8&number=83>.

And on a related note, should you wish to receive "Ukrainians Abroad: News and Views," write to [scipko@ualberta.ca](mailto:scipko@ualberta.ca).

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## This and that

We are sad to report the passing on 5 March 2012 of **William Fedeyko**, just nine days shy of his 101<sup>st</sup> birthday. He was predeceased by his wife Justine on 4 June 2011, and is survived by 3 sons (William, Eugene and Dennis), one daughter (Catherine) and their families. A native of Krydor, Saskatchewan, where his parents settled after emigrating from the Sokal district in Galicia, Mr. Fedeyko was a successful farmer and businessman and a life-long Ukrainian community activist and Orthodox church member. Passionate about their Ukrainian and Ukrainian-Canadian heritage and great believers in the value of a good education, the Fedeykos established an endowment fund to support research into the history of Ukrainians in Canada that their entire family contributes to on a regular basis and is now worth more than \$100,000. We extend our sincere condolences to the entire Fedeyko clan, who have lost a wonderful and truly remarkable father,

grandfather and great-grandfather whose presence will be sorely missed by everyone who knew him. *Vichnaia iomu pamiat'!*

We also wish to share the news that Saskatchewan poet, Andrew Suknaski, died at the age of 70 in Moose Jaw on 3 May 2012. A native of Wood Mountain, Saskatchewan, he was the author of several books of poetry and numerous chapbooks published from the 1970s to the mid-80s, after which he fell silent due to a combination of debilitating health problems. He is best known for his debut collection, *Wood Mountain Poems*, which appeared in 1976 and was reprinted in 2006. The son of an immigrant Ukrainian father and a Polish mother, in his poems Suknaski memorably captured the unique voices and characters of the multi-ethnic inhabitants of the Canadian prairies. The subject of a 1978 documentary film by Harvey Spak also titled *Wood Mountain Poems*, Suknaski wrote a number of well-known poems with Ukrainian and Ukrainian-Canadian themes, such as “the first syrota,” “what is remembered” (dedicated to the murdered composer Volodymyr Ivasiuk), “Prosvita,” and “Koonohple” (i.e., *konopli*)—the latter a favourite with members of the 60s generation. You can learn more about Suknaski’s literary legacy by going to <http://robmclennan.blogspot.ca/2012/05/andrew-suknaski-july-30-1942-may-3-2012.html>.

And on a decidedly happier note, the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies was very pleased to host a visit by **Drs. Peter and Doris Kule** to CIUS on 3 April. The generous benefactors of the Kule Ukrainian Canadian Studies Centre and its Diaspora Studies Initiative enjoyed a light lunch with CIUS staff members and had an opportunity to see the office shared by Jars Balan and Serge Cipko. Afterwards, they attended the launch of Serge’s book on Ukrainians in Argentina, reported on in the Diaspora Studies Initiative update.

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## Last Words

Given that Ukrainian Christians of all denominations recently celebrated Easter, not to mention the on-going tensions in Ukraine vis-a-vis Church-State relations—some of which continue to pose particular challenges to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada—we feel this item from our research files might serve as a timely reminder of how things used to be when a large part of Ukraine was under Soviet rule.

## RELIGIOUS ISSUE IN RUSSIA AND IN UKRAINE IS AIRED

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### Mennonites Claim Minister Tortured; Toilers Say No Truth to Alleged Persecutions

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A news item in the “Mennonitische Rundschau” [corrected from the original] published in Winnipeg, states that John Tows, a Mennonite minister, had been tortured to death in Moscow, the torture consisting of being buckled in a rack and torn apart, lasting three hours, while is also alleged that another man, named Fink, was similarly treated.

The same newspaper, printed in the German language, states that information has also been received that all ministers in Siberia are kept in prison and have their hands tied above their heads.

Direct denials to these charges are made in resolutions which are being passed by members of Ukrainian organizations throughout the country. This week *The Mail* received two such resolutions from Drumheller and Wayne which were adopted at meetings attended by over five hundred individuals.

The resolutions, which are printed, state that the Soviet Government “does not persecute nor punish priests or anybody else for their religious convictions, but for their political counter-revolutionary and anti-Soviet activities, perpetrated under the cover of religion.” It further states that compulsory closing of churches is not favored by the Soviet Government, but only when the majority of people demand such action in the various towns and villages.

It is admitted that certain “intellectuals and leaders of the Ukrainian Orthodox Autocephalous Church in Ukraine,” have been arrested and are now being tried before the Soviet court in Charkoff. These men are charged with being “spies who menaced the Soviet Government and hindered the progress of the building up of socialist society.”

Nothing is mentioned in the resolution concerning the alleged killing of the Mennonites, but the document attacks the “Ukrainian adherents of Petlura” in Canada “and all similar groups who protest against the alleged persecution by the Soviet Government of the Orthodox Autocephalous Church, as well as against the alleged persecution of the Ukrainian culture and peasantry, are consciously spreading false lies and trying to deceive the public.”

The “Ukrainian Toilers” alleged in turn that the enemies of Soviet Russia “do not deem it necessary to protest against the Polish Government which closed over 600 Greek-Orthodox Churches in Western Ukraine, and over 3,000 Ukrainian schools; they do not protest against the indisputable fact that 80 per cent of the Ukrainian peasantry in Western Ukraine has been reduced to beggary due to the terrible persecution by the Polish authorities.”

The “Ukrainian Toilers” voice condemnation against what they term as “the anti Soviet campaign of Pope and international clergy as part and parcel of the International capitalistic campaign which is preparing war against the Soviet Union.” They also “condemn fascist terror of the Polish fascist government” in Western Ukraine and claim that “the followers of Petlura and other counter-revolutionary groups in Canada do not express in their protests sentiments, wishes or aims of the Ukrainian toiling masses in Canada.”

*The Drumheller Mail*, 2 April 1930, p. 2.

On a relevant related note, it is worth mentioning that miners from the Drumheller area were successfully recruited around the same time to work in the coal mines of the Donbas—almost all of whom never returned to Canada as they fell victim to Stalinist repressions.