

## Open Letter to the Mayor of Lviv

November 1, 2011 by Per Bylund

Some may remember the search for and the final success in finding Ludwig von Mises birthplace in the Ukrainian town of Lviv. Then, at the 120th anniversary of Mises's birth, a conference was organized to celebrate the life and works of Ludwig von Mises. As part of this celebration, a memorial plaque was placed on the wall of the building at 13 Academician V. Hnatiuk Street where Ludwig von Mises grew up.

What happened after the celebration is the typical story of bureaucratic statism. The Standing Committee on Culture, Promotion, Media and Tourism of Lviv City Council, the authority (judging from the name) that is in charge of a bunch of things, ruled that the plaque violated a number of bureaucratic rules and was therefore to be forcefully taken down. So much for Lviv's great heritage and the historical significance of the birthplace of the greatest economist in the 20th century.

Of course, it is likely that both the "standing committee" and the mayor are quite ignorant of the life and works of Ludwig von Mises. It is also likely that this is but a routine bureaucratic matter that has not gained much attention in the town of Lviv. Therefore, and to express our dissatisfaction with the committee's decision, an open letter is currently finding its way through the DHL logistics network to the mayor of Lviv, Mr. Andriy Ivanovych Sadovyyj. The letter reads (but translated to Ukrainian):

To: Mr. Andriy Ivanovych Sadovyyj, Mayor of Lviv;  
Cc: Lvivska Miska Rada  
Re: Lviv and Ludwig von Mises

30 October 2011

Dear Mr. Sadovyyj,

This is to call your attention to a matter of symbolic and practical importance to the City of Lviv and to the countless admirers of one of Lviv's most famous sons.

Lviv has an enviable history with many great sons and daughters. One of the greatest is

no doubt the world renowned economist Ludwig von Mises. Born and raised in Lviv before the family moved to Vienna, Mises is known for many important breakthroughs in economic, monetary, and business cycle theory, the methodology of the social sciences, and for being one of the leading voices in the historically significant socialist calculation debate in the 1920s and 1930s. The numerous and voluminous works of Ludwig von Mises have shaped much of modern economic theory and his many theoretical advances have greatly contributed to both economic and political thinking. Current global financial and monetary challenges have both proven the accuracy of Mises theories and sparked unprecedented interest in his life and works.

By all available records, the Mises family's industriousness, personal sacrifice and courage had made an extraordinary contribution to the progress and peace of Lviv and Galicia. This was the reason for Ludwig von Mises's grandfather to be granted a patent of nobility. Considering the great historical and contemporary impact of Ludwig von Mises's work, and the recent renewed global interest – indeed, a surge – in his work, we would expect the City of Lviv to host annual festivities to commemorate this great man and his achievements, dedicate the town library in his name, or establish a Mises museum to celebrate and document his life. Being the birth town of Ludwig von Mises, the City could venerate and benefit from his deeds and glory.

Yet the actions of the Standing Committee on Culture, Promotion, Media and Tourism of the Lviv City Council are in stark contrast to this great Lvivian heritage. Instead of celebrating their great son of Lviv, the Committee has decided to forcefully remove the plaque that commemorates Mises's birth home. Such a disregard to Lviv's own history is hard to comprehend. We can assure you that this motion is interpreted as a gesture of disgrace and bold intransigency.

We hope, Mr. Mayor, that you will be able to convince the Council and your fellow citizens not only to leave Mises's memorial plaque at the house wall but undertake initiatives to honor his heritage. We remain open for discussion and cooperation for such initiatives.

Sincerely,

Per Bylund, The Ludwig von Mises Institute in Sweden  
Dr. Krassen Stanchev, Institute for Market Economics  
Ruta Vainiene, Lithuanian Free Market Institute

Signatories:

Dr. Roman Mogilevskii, Center for Social and Economic Research CASE-Kyrgyzstan,  
Lisl Biggs-Davidson, Center for the Research into post-Communist Economies  
Gia Jandieri, New Economic School – Georgia  
Dr. John H. Moore, President Emeritus, Grove City College  
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Andrei Illarionov, PhD, Institute of Economic Analysis, Cato Institute  
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Jan Oravec, The F.A.Hayek Foundation  
Svetozar (Steve) Pejovich, Professor Emeritus, Texas A&M University, Professor,  
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Dr. Franz-Lothar Altmann, Assoc. Prof.  
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