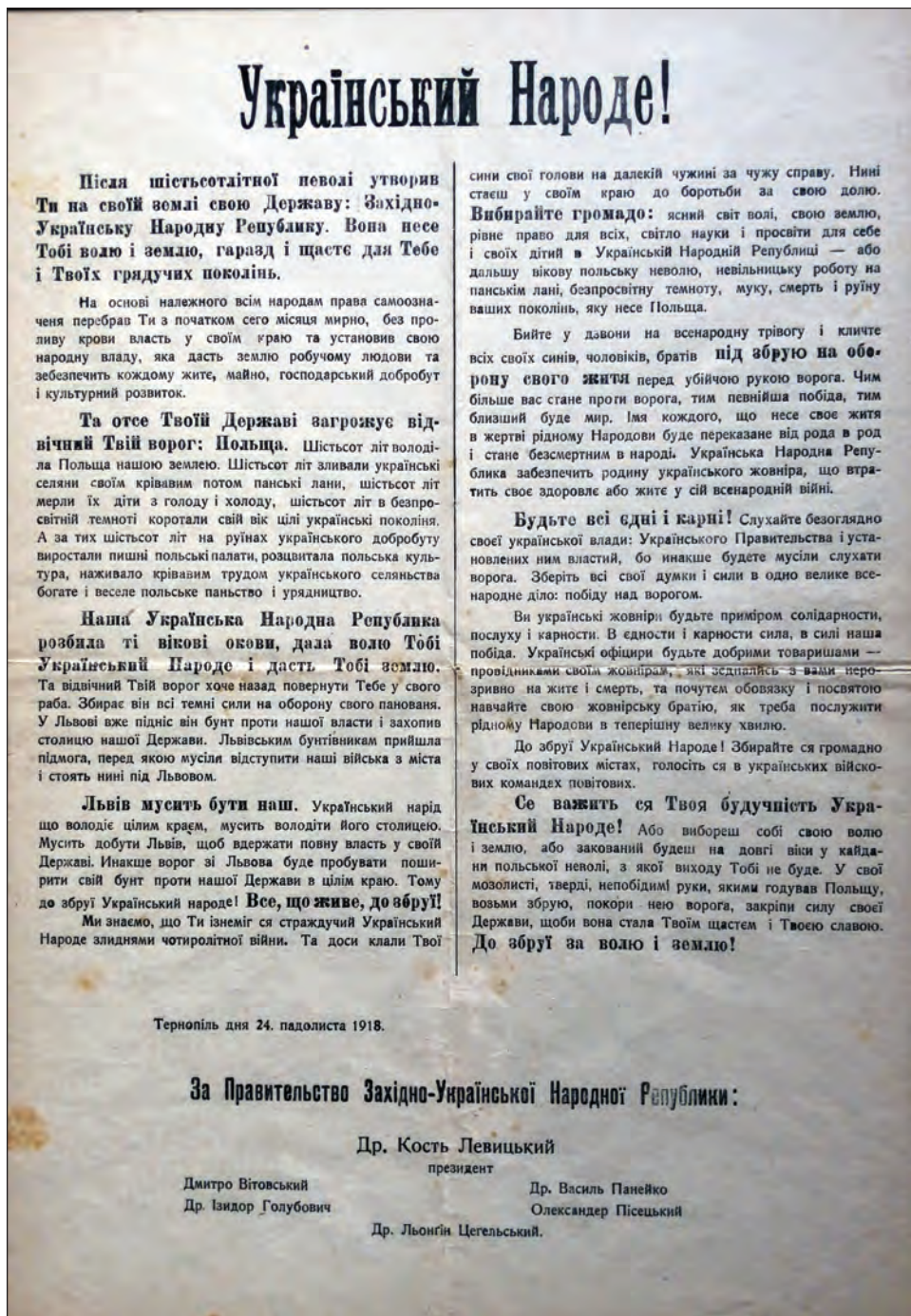


EXPLORING OUR MUSEUM AND LIBRARY

THE STRUGGLE OF UKRAINE FOR INDEPENDENCE-FREEDOM, 1917-1921

By Lubow Wolynetz, Curator



PROCLAMATION OF INDEPENDENCE,
Ukrainian Museum and Library of Stamford

The aftermath of World War I brought about many changes in Europe. Great monarchies collapsed, new nations emerged as independent states, and new forms of government were established. For centuries, numerous nationalities and ethnic groups within these monarchies had been politically suppressed. Their national awareness was subdued and stifled, and their livelihood was strictly controlled by dictatorial rule. With the collapse of the great powers, these

oppressed nationalities saw an opportunity to rise up, to ascertain their existence, to fight for their freedom, and to create their own independent state. On this occasion freedom from foreign domination and the achievement of self-determination became a possibility.

The collapse of the Russian tsarist empire in 1917 gave Ukrainians the golden opportunity to fight for and to establish a free and independent Ukraine; it was actually proclaimed in

Kyiv in January 1918, exactly 100 years ago. The Ukrainians in western Ukraine, towards the end of the same year, while the Austro-Hungarian Empire was tottering, proclaimed a free and independent Western Ukrainian National Republic (ZUNR-Zakhidno-Ukrainska Narodna Republika).

This struggle for independence during the years 1917-1921 brought about for Ukrainian people significant achievements (political, economic, cultural, military). On the human side, there were examples of incredible dedication, extraordinary sacrifice and heroism, but also disappointment, dissolution, frustration, betrayal, and defeat. However, the fervent attempts and dedicated work towards independence, despite its defeat at the time, was not in vain. The struggle and work towards nation building in the years 1917-1921 served as an inspiration and an encouragement for posterity to follow their precursors to work towards independence until its successful achievement which was finally won in 1991.

In the archives of our Museum and Library we have numerous documents and photographs dealing with the aforementioned events. Recently our archival collection, in addition to what we already have, was enriched with archival material dealing with the establishment of the Western-Ukrainian National Republic. Among them are a number of posters, mobilization orders, proclamations, and single newspaper issues with pertinent information on events at hand, as well as appeals for unity, for taking up arms to fight for freedom, for integrity, and for self-sacrificing service.

A representative body of Ukrainians within the Austro-Hungarian Empire was known as the Ukrainian National Rada (Council) whose president was Dr. Kost Levytsky, 1859-1941. This same body on November 9th, 1918 proclaimed the establishment of the Western-Ukrainian National Republic (ZUNR). Kost Levytsky became the president and later Yevhen Petrushevych, 1863-1940. On November 24th, 1918, under Kost Levytsky's presidency, a proclamation was issued, of which we have an original. The proclamation was signed by Dr. Kost Levytsky, Colonel Dmytro Vitovsky, 1887-1919 (killed in a plane crash on his return from the Paris Peace talks), and others. The

establishment of ZUNR had its resonance among Ukrainians in USA. The Providence Association newspaper *Ameryka* (published in Philadelphia) in its December issue (of which we have the original) printed the news. To defend its territory ZUNR needed an army and thus it began a general mobilization. A Ukrainian Galician Army was formed. Army uniforms and insignias were provided. Its first commander was Colonel Dmytro Vitovsky who later became the Minister of Defense of ZUNR. He also headed the committee, which organized the November uprising in Lviv in 1918. We also have the original poster-proclamation announcing this general mobilization. The need for communication through the postal service prompted ZUNR to issue postal stamps. For this purpose, Austrian official stamps were used with over imprints on them with the letters ZUNR (3VHP) and the Trident.

Other pertinent posters, photographs, and documents are preserved in our archival collection. In this, the 100th anniversary of the 1918 independence of Ukraine, we wish to share them with you, our avid readers.

In the spring, our Museum and Library will open a special exhibit dedicated to the 1917-1921 struggle for Ukrainian independence. All exhibit materials will be utilized from our archival collection. The exhibit will be expensive. Your generous donations will be greatly appreciated. ■



COLONEL DMYTRO VITOVSKY (PHOTO),
Ukrainian Museum and Library of
Stamford

BOOK REVIEW: A POPE AND A PRESIDENT: JOHN PAUL II, RONALD REAGAN, AND THE EXTRAORDINARY UNTOLD STORY OF THE 20TH CENTURY / by Paul Kengor (New York : Wilmington, DE : ISI Books, 2017 – ISBN 978-1-61071434)

This is a fascinating book that proposes the separate journeys of Pope Saint John Paul II and President Ronald Reagan, albeit, a spiritual connection, in bringing about the collapse of Soviet Communism in the closing decades of the twentieth century. The book begins with the fact that both the apparitions of Our Blessed Lady in Fatima, Portugal, and the birth of the October Revolution in the Soviet Union occurred in the year 1917. The weaving of the three promises entrusted to mere children in Fatima occurs throughout this book, which is catalogued by the Library of Congress as a "historical documentary".

The author, Dr. Paul

Kengor, is an academic scholar and professor of political ethics in the United States. His specialty is the life and values of Ronald Reagan, the fortieth President of the United States. He also is an adult convert to Catholicism. Through painstaking historical research and a fresh blast of spiritual energy, he presents many parallel crossroads in the lives of two great men (e.g. their survival of attempted assassinations in 1981 occurred five weeks apart from one another).

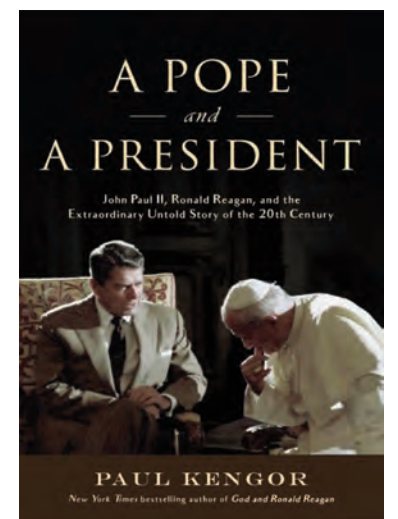
I already knew much of the information that the author presents on the life and papacy of Saint John Paul II. The average person however, would find this information thorough and enlightening. It

really was for me more informative about the religious character of Ronald Reagan, shaped by his evangelical mother and revealed through interviews with his friends and political advisers. The author frequently cites two Catholic men, who held high positions in the Reagan administration as his sources: William P. Clark, his National Security Adviser, and William J. Casey, his CIA director.

The author is convinced about a "partnership" shaped by both the Pope and the President through the 1980s. He delivers a wallop of historic dynamism through such events as John Paul's papal election and his homilies delivered to over a million of

his countrymen during his first return visit to his native and beloved Poland; Reagan's famous speeches as the Berlin Wall and the Danilev monastery in Moscow (where Reagan brings up the situation of the Ukrainian Catholic Church as a primary doubt of religious freedom existing in the Soviet world); and the now famous encounter between the Pope and Mikhail Gorbachev, the General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party on the eve of the 1990s.

In reading this book, I am not convinced regarding how deep a personal relationship existed between the two heroic men. There is no question, however, of their great



accomplishments (be it through planned or independent execution). The author, nevertheless, makes the case for a challenging theory of historical proportion and providential oversight. ■

For more information about The Ukrainian Museum and Library of Stamford, please, visit www.ukrainianmuseumlibrary.org, call 203-324-0499 or 203-323-8866. The museum is open Wednesday through Friday from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., or by appointment, and is located at 161 Glenbrook Road, Stamford, CT 06902.