

EXPLORING OUR MUSEUM AND LIBRARY

The War Continues for the Freedom of Ukraine

By Lubow Wolynetz, Curator



Not such a long time ago, it seemed that Ukraine had achieved the status of an independent nation. Majestically and loftily it celebrated its 30th anniversary in August of 2021, had ultimately achieved acknowledgement by the world as such and stands shoulder to shoulder with all independent nations as an equal among equals. Yet this status, yearned and fought for centuries is now, again, under a great threat.

In its centuries long fight for freedom and independence, great sacrifices were made and much Ukrainian blood was spilled. These heroic efforts, even with some short lived successes, ended not only in disappointment but in the destruction of the nation's elite – the nation's leaders, advisors. The everlasting enemies, the expropriators of Ukraine destroyed the nation either by annihilating the nation's best and brightest or by bribing others with benefits, titles of nobility, land estates etc. All of this was the result of greed, avarice, selfish-

ness. Characteristics which afflict the unscrupulous, dishonest members of every society to this day.

And yet, notwithstanding such, which seemed at times unabated and exhaustive destruction, according to Yevhen Sverstiuk (a Ukrainian dissident) "...No logic can explain our rebirths after our downfalls... our defeats ... seem final every time we have been decimated and routed, (our enemies) forgetting in the bloody heat of battle that our roots are beyond their reach, that in our soil the seeds, sown in struggle, sprout again..."** In time new generations brought with them new life, awoke national consciousness, rediscovered the past, revived historic memory, renewed national state symbolism and pursued historic truth.

In the beginning of the 20th century, quite unexpectedly, Ukraine was able to achieve independence in 1917 as a result of the collapse of two great powers – the tsarist Russia and Austro-Hungarian empires.

Even though this independence was short-lived, it was nevertheless significant. The world briefly recognized our existence. Post World War I transactions of the dominant nations included us in statehood building and reorganizations but did not help us in our consolidation and the question of our independence was ultimately used for their own negotiating advantage. The second unexpected independence came in 1991, again as a result of the collapse of a different empire - the Soviet Union. This time Ukrainian independence was achieved without bloodshed, but not for long. Everything changed February 24th, 2022, when without any provocation or cause Russia attacked Ukraine. This time Russia's plan was horrendous – destroy not only Ukrainian statehood but wipe out all traces of its being so that such a state or nation will never endure. Putin's regime continuously is destroying our country, our heritage and our people. Regardless of all provocations, outright lies, slander, disinformation Ukrainian people have united and with unparalleled courage and valor are fighting to assert their right to exist and be free.

During the war years for Ukrainian independence, national statehood symbols fulfilled a significant role. National as well as regional coat-of-arms are one of the most important visual symbols which represent the state or region. They often reflect the nation's historic heritage, achievements, aspirations. State symbols often rally the nation to decisive action and determination. The Trident - Tryzub - which originated during the age of the Kiyevan-Rus State, was used by Prince Volodymyr the Great, became the official State Symbol of Ukraine in 1917. During soviet occupation the use of Tryzub was strictly banned and anyone displaying it was harshly persecuted. In 1992, during the second anniversary of Ukrainian independence, a golden Tryzub on a blue shield and a blue and

yellow flag were officially used as Ukrainian State symbols.

During a number of years several State coat-of-arms projects were created by notable Ukrainian artists but were not confirmed. Nevertheless they are interesting from a heraldic point of view. A few of such projects were created by a former soldier of the Ukrainian Army (1917-1921), an artist – Mykola Bytynsky. Original drawings of these projects are in our library. They are quite interesting and expressive.

Ukrainian Government, a few times tried to establish the Great Coat-of-Arms of Ukrainian State but without success.

Meanwhile we can become acquainted with the Great State Coat-of-Arms as created by Mykola Bytynsky. His drawings are important historical treasures of Ukraine. Their preservation as well as other historical archival documents by our Library places upon our institution significant responsibility towards Ukraine and its people. In the light of the present hor-

rific war caused by the inhuman Russian horde, our responsibility is to preserve all which manifests our existence, which proves we were, we are, and we will be. Our Ukrainian warriors, our knights, who fight for our lastingness, our endurance in a decisive battle to victory are sacrificing their lives. What are we doing, living comfortably in peaceful surroundings to help those who are fighting for the freedom of our nation? Do we consider the fact that the best youth of our nation is dying on the battlefield in order to achieve and preserve freedom for future generations? Are we helping, in various means available, to let the world know the precarious situation, not only Ukraine is in, but the whole democratic world? Our efforts should be concentrated on the support of all the efforts which are directed towards victory, peace and the rebuilding of Ukraine.

**Sverstiuk's quote translated by George S. N. Luckyj



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 5:00 p.m., or by appointment, and is located at: 161 Glenbrook Road, Stamford, CT 06902.

First Solemn Holy Communion 2023



AUBURN, NY—STs. PETER AND PAUL

From L to R: Mrs. Maria-Liusea Colopelnic, Catechist, Rostyslav Kokerchuk, Mariia Makarevych, Brianna Ilcu, Jonathan Pysnack, Fr. Vasile Colopelnic, Administrator.



LINDENHURST, NY—HOLY FAMILY: JUNE 4TH

David Luchechko, Anna Gurevich, Daniel Shustak, Viktor Vasiurko, Maksym Pokaliuk, Oleksiy Choplechyi, Ivan Tanchak, Alexander Pokaliuk, Eva Losiuk and T. Temofiev.