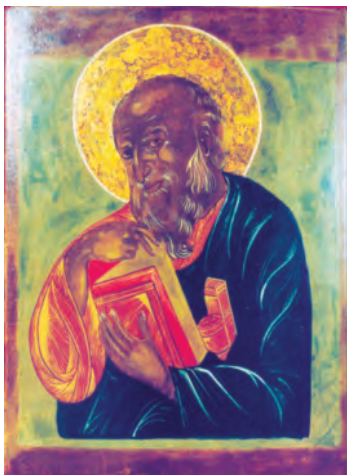


The Ukrainian Museum and Library of Stamford WE SHALL SOON CELEBRATE AN 80TH ANNIVERSARY!

Part Four by Lubow Wolynetz, Curator

In addition to the gifts (previously mentioned in our past articles) which our Museum and Library had received from the Basilian Sisters in 1935, there were two icons, the work of contemporary artists of note. Both artists, at that time, lived and worked in Lviv. The icons are: *Saint Luke the Evangelist (tempera on wood, 1930)*, the work of Yaroslava Muzyka, 1894-1973; and *Archangel Michael (tempera on wood, 1931)*, the work of Mykhailo Osinchuk, 1890-1969. The significance of these two icons is



twofold. First, their artistic value is unquestionable. They represent the artists' work of the early 1930s. Second, the fact that a large number of art works which these two artists, as well as those of many other artists, produced between the two World Wars, and housed in the National Museum in Lviv, were purposely destroyed by the Soviet authorities in 1952. The two items which we have would definitely have been destroyed, but due to fortunate circumstances they have been preserved in our Museum and Library.

Yaroslava Muzyka as an artist created works using various art forms. She was a painter, an iconographer, a graphic artist, an enamellist, who worked on mosaics and painted on glass. She was especially known for her book graphics. Yaroslava came from a prominent Galician family whose ancestors and parents were highly mindful of their Ukrainian heritage. They were active-



ly involved in cultural activities of their society during difficult and harsh political times which a downtrodden nation had to endure. Yaroslava was surrounded by family members and friends who were staunch Ukrainian patriots and culturally refined. Her great grandfather, Hryhorii Savchynsky, 1804-1888, was a priest, a writer, and a social activist. He continued to do the good work which Markian Shashkevych had begun. He even contributed poems to children's magazines. Yaroslava heard many stories about her legendary family ancestor. Her aunt was the world famous opera singer Solomiya Krushelnytska, 1872-1952. Oftentimes, the family was visited by the highly respected artist Kyrylo Ustyianovych, 1839-1903, as well as by many others. All of this had a profound impact on Yaroslava's development, attitudes, and interests. From early childhood she loved to draw and paint. This talent led her to study art at the Art Studio of S. Batovsky and the Free Academy of Art in Lviv. She also studied art restoration in Kyiv, Moscow, and Paris. Based on this expertise, she worked for years as an art restorer for the National Museum.

Inter-War years in western Ukraine, primarily in Lviv, were years of outstanding political, artistic, and literary activity. The Ukrainian population, especially the younger generation, although dissolutioned by the political situation and the inability of Ukraine to achieve independence, nevertheless began working ardently at national, literary, and artistic

revival. Above all, Ukrainian artists achieved much, thanks to talented persons as Yaroslava Muzyka, Mykhailo Osinchuk, Pavlo Kovzhun, 1896-1939; Sviatoslav Hordynsky, 1906-1993; and others. They founded the Association of Independent Ukrainian Artists which existed from 1930 until its dissolution in 1939 by Soviet authorities. They united artists of various styles, organized many art exhibits, printed catalogues, and published an art magazine *Mystetstvo*. Yaroslava was at the heart of these activities. During the Soviet occupation in 1948, she was arrested on grounds of being a bourgeoisie nationalist, an enemy of the Soviet State. As a result she was imprisoned and sentenced to 25 years. For almost 7 years she lived in a Soviet penal

colony in Kazakhstan. But, after Stalin's death an amnesty was proclaimed and Yaroslava was freed in 1955. She was allowed to return to Lviv, a semi-invalid with a broken back and TB.

Soon after after World War II and the Soviet occupation of western Ukraine, Soviet authorities did as much as possible to destroy what they deemed was not in line with their socialist ideals. They imprisoned and killed Ukrainian Catholic hierarchs, clergy, intellectuals and many more. During those days of destruction and purges, art works (and any cultural artifact which the Soviet authorities considered to be dangerous because it was too nationalistic) met the same tragic fate. Museum collections suffered the most. A special henchman, by the name of Vasyl Lubchuk, was assigned to do this destructive work. A great number of art works of noted artists as Ivan Trush, 1869-1941; Mykhailo Boychuk, 1882-1939; Sviatoslav Hordynsky, 1906-1993; Oleksa



Hryshchenko, 1883-1977; Mykhailo Moroz; 1904-1992, Yaroslava Muzyka and many others, were removed from the National Museum in Lviv; and from July 31 to August 2, were burned. Sculptures were smashed and thrown into a huge garbage heap.

Yaroslava Muzyka's icon of the Evangelist Luke which is in our collection was done in the Byzantine style. The Saint with a large golden halo, dressed in a red tunic and blue mantle, with his eyes looking at us; in his left hand is holding the Gospel Book, and with his right hand is pointing to the contents of the book. In the folds of the blue cloak, another books is partially visible. This could possibly be the work entitled *Acts of the Apostles*, also written by Saint Luke. The artist probably did depictions of other Evangelists and saints, but as to what was their fate we do not know. If they were destroyed during the 1950s



purge, then our Museum is fortunate to have the rare work of Yaroslava which has survived. In the late 1990s, researchers in Lviv actually published a register of the destroyed art works. Among them we find listed as being destroyed Yaroslava's engraving of the Evangelist John, lithographs of Christ on the Throne, and the Annunciation of which we have copies.

In the April, 2015 issue of the *Sower* I wrote about the artist Mykhailo Osinchuk and his works which we have in our Museum and which were painted in the late 1940's, 1950's, and 1960's when he resided in the United States. The icon of the Archangel Michael which we received from the Basilian Sisters in 1935, was painted by the artist in 1931. The depiction of the Archangel is in a traditional Byzantine style giving it a severe and austere look. From this stem and somber Byzantine iconographic manner the artist later departed and henceforth developed his own neo-byzantine style of iconographic depictions. Thus, his icons have a more serene look and are bright in color. Since Osinchuk's pre-war works which were housed in the National Museum were also among those destroyed, his icon of Archangel Michael in our collection from 1931 is another example of a rare work which has fortunately survived.



The above article is another unusual story about the fate of Ukrainian cultural heritage, and how unforeseen circumstances have been instrumental in its preservation.

Explore and Experience Our Past



LUC National Board Meets

The National Board of the League of Ukrainian Catholics met on Wednesday, May 17, 2017 in Wilkes-Barre PA. The group convened at the Genetti Best Western Hotel and Conference Center which will be the primary site of the upcoming National Convention set for the weekend of October 6-8.

The morning session focused on reviewing and meeting the League's Constitution purposes, revisiting its mission; discussion on more active participation within the parishes and protopresbyterates (deaneries) and need to visit parishes; providing needed support of clergy and religious; the ACTION newsletter as well as membership. Following lunch the members discussed the upcoming Convention including the theme "Diakonia: Serving One's Neighbor - Serving Christ", media announcements, invitations,

speakers, workshops, overall weekend schedule, etc.

Pictured left to right: Father Paul Wolensky, North Anthracite Council Spiritual Director; Father Marijan Procyk, National Spiritual Director; Dorothy Jamula, North Anthracite Council President; and Paul Ewasko, National Publicity Director. Standing: Helen Fedoriw, National VicePresident; Janina "Yanka" Everett, National Membership Director; Maria LaPaglia, National Convention Procedures Director; Nadia Marc, National Recording Secretary; Elaine Nowadly, National Treasurer; and Marion Hrubec, National President. Photographer was Father Daniel Troyan, Spiritual Director. Several board members were unable to attend due to professional and personal commitments.