

203 SECOND AVE
NEW YORK, NY 10003
TEL: (212) 228-6840
FAX: (212) 254-4721
WWW.UCCA.ORG

UCCA BULLETIN



March 2014 ...Our 74th Anniversary Year

UCCA ORGANIZES MEETING WITH VICE PRESIDENT BIDEN

At the request of the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America, the Vice President of the United States, Joseph Biden, met with representatives of prominent Ukrainian American churches and organizations on Friday, February 7, 2014. The meeting was held in the Vice President's ceremonial meeting room in the Old Executive Office Building.

The community representatives thanked the Vice President for his numerous communications with Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich in trying to mediate the crisis in Ukraine. All participants expressed the need to eliminate violence during the political stalemate in Ukraine. A fruitful discussion ensued about U.S. engagement in the region and included a vibrant exchange of ideas and recommendations.



L to R: Askold Lozynskyj, Andriy Bihun, Marianna Zajac; Larissa Kyj; Roksolana Lozynskyj; Bishop Paul Chomnysky; Bishop Daniel; Tamara Olexy, Michael Sawkiw; Julian Kulas; Stefan Kaczaraj; and Andrij Futey.

Participants at the meeting included Vice President Biden and his national security team, hierarchy from the Ukrainian Catholic and Orthodox Churches, current and past presidents of the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America, as well as fraternal, youth, humanitarian, women's, and financial organizations.

The UCCA, would like to extend its sincere gratitude to the Congressional Ukrainian Caucus Co-chairs – Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur, Congressman Sander Levin and Congressman Jim Gerlack – for their personal assistance in helping make this important meeting happen.

W. KLITSCHKO MEETS UKRAINIAN COMMUNITY

On February 3rd, World Heavy Weight boxing champion, Wolodymyr Klitschko, met with the Ukrainian American community during his brief visit to New York City. Addressing the standing room only crowd, Klitschko remarked that his trip to New York was not only to attend his first Super Bowl, but to bring attention to the political crisis currently taking place in Ukraine.

The Community Event, which was supported by the UCCA, opened with welcoming remarks by UCCA President Tamara Olexy. She introduced the afternoon's guest speaker, stating "We are honored to host a person who needs no introduction. Ukrainian World Heavyweight Champion Wolodymyr Klitschko, has long been familiar to the Ukrainian Community – we have been rooting for him since he stepped onto the world stage at the Atlanta Olympics in 1996... He has continued his winning streak as a professional boxer. But his impressive career does not stop in the ring – he is also a fighter for underprivileged children and a fighter for democracy in his homeland Ukraine."



Before a standing ovation, Wolodymyr Klitschko approached the podium. He began his remarks by noting that he did not come as a politician, but someone who cares deeply about what is currently transpiring in Ukraine. He thanked everyone for coming, stating "I know how much you are supporting your mother country Ukraine... that a lot of you are sending funds, clothes and good thoughts. You are supporting in any way you can." He went on to say that the protests that have continued for over two months are "not only because of the association with Europe... today all the activists that are on the Maidan –Euromaidans in every corner of our country, the country we love so much, are demonstrating against the regime that we have today." He underscored that these maidans have proven how much Ukrainians desire democracy and freedom. "We have shown the world that we are a great nation, a smart nation, and we will fight for our rights, and for democracy in our country, until eventually we reach our goal", stated Klitschko. He concluded his remarks with the hope that "we will always find peace", but noted the people will not depart the maidans until new presidential and parliamentary elections are called.

Following a brief Q&A session, the crowd participated in a flash mob under the awning of the Ukrainian National Home. Hundreds joined Wolodymyr Klitschko in singing the Ukrainian National anthem and chanting "Slava Ukrainyiii" (Glory to Ukraine). To read more please visit www.ucca.org.

"FIGHT AND YOU WILL CONQUER" 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF SHEVCHENKO

This year, as we commemorate the 200th anniversary of our National Bard Taras Shevchenko, we must remember, that Shevchenko endured the hardships of servitude, bondage and national censorship. In his works, Shevchenko voices the cries of the oppressed, and with his fiery words highlights the multidimensionality of social and national drama, representing the Ukrainian nation in all its various forms. Shevchenko urges the people to love their homeland – **"Love your Ukraine, Love her in turbulent times, In the last most difficult moment, Pray to the Lord for Her."** And while urging Ukrainians to love their homeland, Shevchenko writes with pain-filled words about the destruction of Ukrainian society under foreign, mainly Muscovite, rule.

Shevchenko recognized the problem of the Ukrainian nation not only in foreign occupation. It pained him to write about the nation's traitors for whom there was nothing sacred and who used the people for their own advantage. It is about these traitors that Shevchenko wrote : **" People! People! For a piece of rotten sausage you would give up your own Mother."** Like the prophet Jeremiah Shevchenko wept over the ruins of his country, whose people failed to defend their rights. Examining the tragic life of the Ukrainian people Shevchenko wrote, **"We looked on in silence ... like mute slaves!"** To them Shevchenko appealed in his work "Epistle": **"To the dead, the living and the unborn"** he called them to, **"Come to your senses, you fools! ... Come to your senses! Be decent people – otherwise it will be bad for you. The fettered will soon become unchained and the time for judgment will come!"**

And Shevchenko, as the unsparing critic, at the same time is almost divine in His love that conquers the despair of the injured soul which seeks mercy and a bright future. He is a poet of **words, truth, freedom, glory and love**. And the **word** within his creative arsenal is the weapon that he uses in the battle for a better future for his people. Shevchenko emphasizes the meaning of words as a weapon in defense of his ill-fated nation, when he writes: **"I shall arise today! For them! For my imprisoned people ... and in their defense I will place the word."**

It is now, in the 200th anniversary of the birth of Shevchenko that his words become weapons on the Euromaidans of Ukraine, where the people rise to defend their civil and national rights. May the words of Ukraine's greatest poet, Taras Shevchenko continue to inspire the world over, and especially encourage the people of Ukraine to stand strong against tyranny and continue their efforts to ensure dignity and true democracy in Ukraine.

UNIS ORGANIZES EMERGENCY 'UKRAINIAN DAY'

On Wednesday, February 5th, over a hundred Ukrainian Americans descended upon Capitol Hill to advocate a strong U.S. position vis-à-vis the crisis in Ukraine. The day's events commenced with a briefing session attended by two Patriarchs of Ukraine – His Holiness Filaret and His Beatitude Sviatoslav; Rep. Marcy Kaptur (co-chair of the Congressional Ukrainian Caucus); Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Eric Rubin; the international advocacy director at Amnesty International; as well as, the deputy commander of Maidan, Oleh Medunytysya.

Throughout the day, Ukrainian community representatives met with their respective Members of Congress to advocate the concerns of the community for more support for the people on the Maidan. Many congressmen met with their constituents and declared their support for a non-violent and peaceful resolution to the crisis.

The day also featured several protests in front of the lobbying firms which have been hired by Yanukovich sympathizers and at the Ukrainian and Russian embassies. Following the protests, an ecumenical prayer for Ukraine was offered by the two Ukrainian Patriarchs at the Shevchenko Memorial in Washington.

A detailed account of Ukrainian Day will be highlighted in next month's bulletin

UCCA CALLS ON COMMUNITY TO KEEP UP THE PRESSURE TO AID UKRAINE

The UCCA is extremely grateful to its Branches, membership and the entire community for their work over the last several weeks to defend democracy in Ukraine! The people of Ukraine, with our support, have accomplished their first victory. But victory is fragile and much work still needs to be done to stabilize the situation. The new interim government has an enormous task before it to institute the much needed reforms, stabilize its economy and begin to heal the wounds that have been inflicted by this three month-long crisis.

However, our work is not yet complete. Today we ask you to redouble your efforts in support of the Ukrainian People. We are urging our branches and members to continue working with their elected representatives to assist the interim government of Ukraine to secure their sovereignty and democracy. A bullet point list of issues of utmost importance can be found on our website at www.ucca.org or you may call the UCCA at 212-228-6840.