

The Yurii Lawrynenko Archive

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Working with archives for many years, I am still amazed at how, all at once, history begins to develop from an unorganized bulk of papers. In this case, it was the story of the life of Yurii Lawrynenko – a writer, literary theorist and critic, historian, editor, political and social journalist, and prominent figure of the Ukrainian emigration. He was a very charismatic person, a real man on a mission, boundlessly devoted to his work. His archive is a unique record of a whole epoch and its value is hard to exaggerate. To borrow the language of literature, one could say that some archives are short stories, some are novels or poems; the Lawrynenko archive is an epic.

The archive is physically large: 89 archival boxes of papers, photographs, and audio tapes. There are materials in three languages—Ukrainian, Russian, and English—that range in date from the 1880s to the 1980s.

The bulk of the collection consists of Yurii Lawrynenko's professional and personal correspondence, manuscripts, research notes, and printed materials. There are also photographs, documents, diaries, notebooks, memoirs, and audio materials. In addition, there are extensive files (including documents and editorial materials) from the major Ukrainian publications in Germany and the United States (*Ukraïns'ka Literaturna Hazeta*, *Literaturno-Naukovyi Zbirnyk*, et al.), and from "Slovo," the Ukrainian writers' organization. The collection contains unpublished and previously unknown original manuscripts by Lawrynenko and other prominent Ukrainian authors. A large part of the collection consists of printed materials, including books, brochures, rare serial publications, and periodicals from Ukraine and from the Ukrainian diaspora in Germany, the United States, and Canada. All these materials document the life and work of Yurii Lawrynenko as well as the formation and development of the literary, cultural, and social life of the Ukrainian diaspora in Germany and the United States.

Ivan Koshelivets' has this to say about the memoirs of Yurii Lawrynenko: "It is not simply a chronicle of his life, but also an account of the cultural

and social life of the diaspora [...] It is a contribution to the biography of a generation."¹ These words could be applied to the Lawrynenko archive as well. This collection is an immensely rich resource for the study of this generation, the generation that kept Ukrainian culture and the Ukrainian national idea alive in exile. Dmytro Chyzhevs'kyi, Ivan Bahrianyi, Vasyl' Barka, Iurii Sherekh, Ivan Koshelivets', Iosyp Hirniak, and Hryhorii Kytastyi are just a few of the artists, writers, political leaders, and intellectuals whose correspondence with Yurii Lawrynenko is preserved here. Scholars will be able to research many subjects in the archive. There are original manuscripts by Teodosii Os'machka, George S. N. Luckyj, poets of the New York Group, and other prominent authors; autobiographies written by activists of the Ukrainian Revolutionary Party; playbills from the Iosyp Hirniak Theater Studio; circular letters from Radio Liberty; editorial materials from *Ukraïns'ka Literaturna Hazeta*, and *Literaturno-Naukovyi Zbirnyk*; and the files of the Ukrainian writers' association "Slovo."

Processed and described in accordance with professional standards, the Yurii Lawrynenko papers greatly expand the Ukrainian holdings of the Bakhmetieff Archive. They will bring even more scholars working in the fields of Ukrainian culture and history to Columbia University.

Since Ukraine became an independent country, interest in Ukrainian émigré life has increased. There is every sign that this interest will increase dramatically in the coming years, both in Ukraine and elsewhere. I think that now is the time to create a unified database of Ukrainian émigré holdings, making them available everywhere through the virtual reality of the twenty-first century. This might take shape as a collaborative inter-institutional project of the Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences in the U.S., the Shevchenko Scientific Society, and Columbia University.

In conclusion, I would like to announce that the collection of the personal papers of Yurii Lawrynenko. I. Ivan Koshelivets', "Spohad pro spohady," Introduction to *Chorna purha ta inshi spomyny* by Iurii (Jurij) Lawrynenko, i-vi. Suchasnist', 1985. Henceforth bibliographic references to Lawrynenko will cite the author as Iurii Lavrynenko.

nenko, "an outstanding and brilliant figure, who was productive in the creative life of two continents, whose life doesn't fit any simple pattern of the artist adapting himself to alien soil,"² is now open to researchers. Its description is available online: http://www.columbia.edu/cu/libraries/inside/projects/findingaids/scans/pdfs/Lawrynenko_Jurij.pdf.



Upper row, left to right: Oleksa Lawrynenko, eldest brother; Prokhir Masiuk, eldest sister Hania's husband; Teodos' Lawrynenko, brother; middle row, left to right: Oksana Dyvnych-Lawrynenko, mother; Nastunia Lawrynenko, youngest sister; Andriian Lawrynenko, father; bottom row, left to right: Lesia, Hania, and Marusia Lawrynenko, sisters

2. Tetiana Shestopalova. "Characteristics and Particular Features of Yurii Lawrynenko's Critical Thinking," lecture presented at the Harriman Institute, Columbia University, New York, February 2007.