

In the depths of the underground, Nil Khasevych (1905–1952) turned the chisel and gouge into his own weapons, and his engravings and woodcuts into shots of truth. He was called the “Chief Artist of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army” (UIA) because it was he who, in secret bunkers, created the indestructible symbols of freedom that neither raids nor enemy propaganda could erase.

Born on 25 November 1905, in the village of Diuksyn (now Rivne oblast), the son of priest Anton Khasevych, Nil lost a leg in an accident in his youth. However, this only hardened the young man’s will. With extraordinary talent, he entered the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, where he mastered graphics and woodcut and caricature techniques. His works, full of sharpness and depth, quickly gained recognition: already in the 1930s, they were exhibited in Poland, Czechoslovakia, France, the United States, and other countries, earning critical acclaim.

Upon returning to Volhynia, Khasevych joined the Ukrainian cultural revival, collaborating with the publications “Volyn” and “Ukrainski Visti” (Ukrainian News). His satirical caricatures, which exposed social injustice and the occupying regimes, resonated with the wider public.

With the onset of the war and the activation of the national liberation movement, Khasevych refused to emigrate abroad and joined the Ukrainian Insurgent Army in 1942, becoming its chief graphic artist. Remaining underground until 1952, using pseudonyms such as Bei-Zot, Levko, Rybalka, Staryi, and others, he headed the regional propaganda referentura (department) of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and an underground printing house. In difficult conditions – often

Commemorative coin

120 YEARS SINCE THE BIRTH OF NIL KHASEVYCH



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by the dim light of a kerosene lamp – the artist created powerful examples of insurgent graphic art: leaflets, posters, illustrations for magazines (“Do Zbroi”) (To Arms), “Ukrainskyi Perets” (Ukrainian Pepper), “Khrin” (Horseradish) and agitational bofons (symbolic money receipts used to raise funds for the liberation struggle). Khasevych also developed sketches for Ukrainian Insurgent Army awards and satirical caricatures exposing the crimes of the Soviet regime. The artist’s works were sent abroad and presented to delegates of the UN General Assembly in 1951, where the issue of the Ukrainian liberation struggle in the Soviet Union was raised. This prompted the Moscow authorities to issue an order for the artist’s elimination.

On 4 March 1952, Khasevych was killed in a battle with Soviet punitive detachments near the village of Sukhivtsi, having refused to surrender. Posthumously awarded the UIA’s Gold Cross of Military Merit, he left behind an eternal manifesto:

“I cannot fight with weapons, but I fight with the chisel and the gouge. I, a cripple, fight at a time when many strong and healthy people in the world do not even believe that such a struggle is possible at all. I want the world to know that the liberation struggle continues, that Ukrainians are fighting... Glory to Ukraine!”

Designer – Alisa Ivanova.

Engraver – Volodymyr Atamanchuk.

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Metal

nickel silver

Diameter

31.0 mm

Quality

special uncirculated

Edge

grooved

Mintage

Up to 75,000