Bearing Philatelic Witness:
Stamp Design in Post-Communist Eastern Europe and the
Successor States to the Soviet Union

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Postage stamps have come a long way since the Penny Black and the Two Penny Blue made their debut in Great Britain in 1840. Since then, governments have realized that stamps could serve additional purposes, above and beyond their primary function of paying to send an item through the mail. One such purpose is propaganda. Stamps can be an effective medium for propaganda for several reasons. First, since postal services are a government function, governments have complete control over stamp design: a government can, quite literally, send any kind of message it wants on its postage stamps. Second, the vast majority of stamps are relatively inexpensive, which makes them easy to obtain. Therefore, third, they are ubiquitous. They travel throughout their country of origin and to foreign countries as well, as postage or to stamp collectors.

The first European countries to appreciate and utilize the propaganda potential of postage stamps were the major dictatorships of the 1930s: Mussolini’s Italy, the Third Reich, and the Soviet Union. Mussolini, Hitler, and Stalin all ruled through a combination of persuasion and coercion. One form of persuasion was propaganda, and one medium for propaganda was the postage stamp.

When World War II ended, the Red Army occupied most of Eastern Europe, which was recognized as a Soviet “sphere of influence.” Within five years the predictions that Churchill made in his “Iron Curtain” speech had come true: Communist Parties had taken power throughout Eastern Europe and speedily dispatched the political opposition. Then, on orders of and with assistance from the Kremlin, they set about turning their countries into carbon copies of the Soviet Union. They did so through a
combination of persuasion and coercion. As in the Soviet Union, one form of persuasion was propaganda; and propaganda extended to postage stamp design.

As a result, the stamps issued by the People’s Democracies of Eastern Europe have several themes in common. One is the history of the country’s Communist Party. Stamps were issued to commemorate the founding of the Communist Party, the founder of the Communist Party, the first issue of the Party newspaper, the organization of the Party’s youth group, and the heroes and martyrs of the Communist resistance movements during World War II, to name a few. A second is the goals and achievements of the Five-Year economic plans (lots of factories). In addition, stamps were issued to honor Lenin, Stalin, local Communist Party leaders, the accomplishments of the Soviet Cosmonauts, plus the occasional commemorative of the Paris Commune.

But what came next philatelically, after the Soviet Union itself and Communist hegemony in Eastern Europe had landed in the proverbial “dustbin of history?” What did the countries of Eastern Europe and the successor states to the Soviet Union choose to put on their stamps—once they had the choice? Obviously, an analysis of two decades’ worth of stamp design in approximately 30 countries (including the successor states to Yugoslavia) would be a vast undertaking. The purpose here, therefore, is to examine one subset of stamp designs: stamps which commemorate the victims of Stalinism. Tragically, that, too, is a broad theme; so the stamps presented here constitute a representative sample rather than a comprehensive survey.

The stamps can be divided into two groups according to their design: explicit and implicit. Explicit design leaves no doubt about what is being commemorated—and why.
Fig. 1: Ukraine, Scott nr 526

Examples of explicit design to be analyzed here commemorate the victims of the Ukrainian famine of 1932-33, the Polish POWs executed in the USSR in the spring of 1940, known as Katyn (the location of one of the mass graves), the Lithuanians deported from the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic in June of 1941, and the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. Implicit design is less obvious. They are standard commemoratives stamps: a picture of the deceased, plus his name and dates. It is clear from the design who is being commemorated, but the stamp design contains few, if any, clues, as to why.

Fig. 2: Hungary, Scott 3342

The examples of implicit design presented here commemorate three church leaders on the centenary of their birth: Cardinal Joseph Slipyj (Ukraine), Jozsef Cardinal Mindszenty (Hungary), and Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski (Poland).

**Ukrainian Famine:** During the First Five-Year Plan in the USSR (1929-34), Stalin completed his control over the Soviet economy, including the agricultural sector.
Every region of the country was obligated to sell a stated amount of its annual grain crop to the government at the government’s price. What was unique about the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1932 was that its grain quota was set so high that fulfilling it would lead to starvation in the countryside. Ukrainian Party officials explained this to the Kremlin and argued for a reduction, but to no avail. The grain quota was enforced rigorously—and famine ensued.

When the grain was gone, peasants slaughtered whatever farm animals had not already starved. Then they ate cats and dogs, then rats, mice, birds, earthworms, and insects. To make matters worse, no famine relief was provided—no soup kitchens in the Ukrainian countryside. Peasants were even forbidden to go to cities and towns in search of food; instead, local officials were specifically instructed to keep the Ukrainian peasantry “down on the farm.” A conservative estimate of the resulting death toll is five million.6 Currently, estimates range from seven to as high as ten million.7

The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic became an independent country upon the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Two years later, on the 60th anniversary of the famine (1993), Ukraine issued a stamp in memory of the victims. The stamp design pictures a memorial to the famine victims in Kiev, the Symbol of Sorrow; and the release of the stamp coincided with the unveiling of the memorial. The memorial is in the shape of a Cossack cross, with the figures of a Madonna and child superimposed on it.8 The inscription on the stamp reads: “Sixtieth Anniversary of Mass Murder by Starvation (Holodomor) in Ukraine.”

Holodomor is a Ukrainian compound word: holod means “hunger” or “famine,” and mor is the first part of the word for mass murder (translated here as “mass murder by
starvation”). Ukrainians regard the famine of 1932-33 as deliberate, avoidable, and, therefore, as mass murder by starvation: *holodomor* is the term they use to refer to it. The term shows up more clearly on a commemorative issued ten years later (2003) to coincide with observances of the 70th anniversary of the famine (Fig. 1).⁹

Once again, the stamp design shows a Cossack cross. In the middle of the cross is the figure of a famine victim. Lest there be any doubt that the victim is Ukrainian, little colored dots at the victim’s throat suggest traditional Ukrainian folk embroidery on a peasant blouse. The word *holodomor* appears in bold black lettering and the dates of the famine years in bright red. To the left of the cross are a few stalks of grain, indicating what the famine was all about.¹⁰

**Katyn:** World War II began on September 1, 1939, when the *Wehrmacht* invaded Poland. On September 17th the Red Army, in accordance with the terms of the Hitler-Stalin Pact concluded the previous month, invaded Poland from the east and occupied the eastern half of the country. Even though a formal declaration of war was lacking, 15,000 Poles, the majority of whom were members of the officer corps of the Polish Army, were taken prisoner by the Red Army and deported to POW camps in the USSR: Kozelsk, Ostashkóv, and Starobelsk. In accordance with Red Cross protocols, a limited amount of correspondence was allowed between the POWs and their families. In March of 1940 the correspondence stopped: letters no longer arrived from the POWs; and mail sent to them was returned, marked “addressee unknown.” Inquiries were made, but to no avail.

In June of 1941, the Hitler-Stalin Pact to the contrary notwithstanding, Hitler invaded the USSR. Two years later German soldiers discovered a mass grave containing thousands of bodies in the Katyn forest, located near the city of Smolensk in western
Russia. The victims were Polish Army officers (subsequently determined to be the POWs from the Kozelsk prison camp), identifiable by their uniforms and artifacts in the grave. Each had been executed with a bullet to the back of the head. Radio Berlin announced the discovery and blamed the deaths on Stalin. The USSR denied the accusation and blamed the deaths on the Germans. It is said that losers do not write history, so the Soviet version was accepted (persuasive forensic evidence from the bodies and the grave site to the contrary notwithstanding) and became the Party line—even though no one in Poland believed it. And that was how matters stood for decades: Katyn was a Nazi war crime.¹¹

The change came in 1990. Poland was in the process of transitioning from a Communist government to a non-Communist one; and, in the USSR, Gorbachev had come to power and had instituted the policy of glasnost. That spring he admitted that Stalin and the NKVD (Soviet secret police), not the Germans, were responsible for the deaths of the missing Polish POWs (referred to simply as Katyn).¹² A few months later, Poland issued a stamp commemorating the 50th anniversary of Katyn. The design was a simple cross with “Katyn 1940” inscribed on it.

The news triggered an emotional explosion in Poland: the official lies about what the Poles had always suspected were over. The surviving relatives of the murdered POWs formed an organization, the Society of Katyn Families. Their advisor was a prelate, Monsignor Zdzisław Peszkowski, who, while serving in the Polish Army in the fall of 1939, had been captured by the Red Army and imprisoned at the Kozelsk POW camp, along with their loved ones. For whatever reason, his life had been spared; when the prisoners were transported to their death, he was simply moved to another POW
camp. The Society of Katyn Families had several purposes: to publicize the truth about Katyn at home and abroad, after so many years of official lies and complicit silence; to have a proper military cemetery at the Katyn grave site (nothing could bring their loved ones back, but at least they could be given a proper burial); and to have a memorial erected in Warsaw honoring those who had died “in the East.”

In December of 1993 Polish President Lech Walesa designated 1995, the 55th anniversary of Katyn, as the International Year of Katyn; in his proclamation he reiterated the goals of the Society of Katyn Families. In 1995 Poland issued a second commemorative.

![Fig. 3: Poland, Scott 3233](image)

The inscription reads “International Year of Katyn.” The design is an artifact from the Katyn grave site—a button from a Polish army officer’s uniform, identifiable by the eagle, the emblem of the Polish state—lying on the ground in the dirt.

Poland issued a pair of commemoratives memorializing the victims of Katyn in 1999. The designs of both stamps are reproductions of icons. The first, a Madonna and Child, is inscribed “Our Lady of Victories: Kozelsk” (Kozelsk was the POW camp where those buried at Katyn were held before their execution). The second is inscribed “Our Lady of Katyn.”
Fig. 4: Poland, Scott 3345

The design (intentionally or by chance) illustrates a passage from the Prayer of the Katyn Families: “Our Lady of Katyn, Mother of Mercy and Reconciliation, Into Thy hands we commend all those murdered in the East. With steadfast belief in the communion of saints we pray…that Thou willst embrace them and entrust them to Thy Son.” 16

Poland issued an additional pair of commemoratives in 2000. 17 The inscription on both stamps reads “the 60th Anniversary of the Crime of Katyn.” By then the goals of the Society of Katyn Families had been realized. Volumes of documents from both Polish and Soviet archives regarding Katyn had been published, including the “smoking gun,” an order from the Kremlin to execute the Polish POWs. 18 A proper military cemetery at the mass grave in the Katyn forest was officially opened on July 28, 2000, with the participation of the Premier of Poland, Jerzy Buzek, and the Deputy Premier of the Russian Federation, Viktor B. Khristenko. 19 The first commemorative portrays Monsignor Peszkowski standing in front of a gigantic wooden cross at the Katyn grave site. 20
The second depicts Pope John Paul II during his visit to Poland in 1999, kneeling in prayer in front of the memorial in Warsaw which commemorates “those who died and were murdered in the East.” People’s Poland had erected numerous memorials to victims of Nazi atrocities, but few—if any—to commemorate the victims of Stalinism.

**Deportations from Lithuania:** In June of 1940, in accordance with the Hitler-Stalin Pact, the Red Army invaded and occupied the three Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. They were subsequently annexed to the Soviet Union (at their own request, of course) and became constituent republics. The following June the NKVD (Soviet Secret Police) deported numerous Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians. The procedure was similar in all three republics: a knock at the door in the middle of the night, a limited amount of time to pack a few essentials, a long journey to an unknown destination in a packed cattle car. Families were separated; men were deported north and east to Soviet labor camps while women and children were deported east to northern Kazakhstan. The numbers of the deported would have been far higher than they actually
were only because Hitler, the Nazi-Soviet Pact to the contrary notwithstanding, invaded the Soviet Union one week later.  

Fifty years later the Baltic republics declared their independence; and Lithuania issued a set of three triangular stamps commemorating the events of June, 1941. All three are inscribed with the dates 1941-1991. The first stamp commemorates the deportations.

![Lithuania, Scott 393](image)

**Fig. 6: Lithuania, Scott 393**

The design is a candle surrounded by either a circle of barbed wire, symbolizing imprisonment, or a crown of thorns, symbolizing suffering. The stamp includes the date of the deportations, June 14. The second stamp commemorates the Nazi invasion. Lithuanians welcomed the Germans as liberators, hoping that their independence would be restored. An independent Lithuania, however, was not part of Hitler’s plan for his Thousand-Year Reich. The stamp design is the Sacred Heart pierced by seven swords and includes the date of the invasion, June 22.

The third honors the Lithuanian resistance movement, the Forest Brotherhood, which began as soon as the Red Army invaded in 1940 and lasted well into the mid-1950s. It survived as long as it did due to the severity of Soviet repression following the re-conquest of Lithuania in 1944. Lithuanians joined the resistance movement because they felt that they had nothing to lose, even though the average life expectancy of a
member of the resistance was only two years. The stamp design is a sword surrounded by a wreath of green foliage. The inscription reads simply “For Lithuania.”

Subsequently Lithuania issued an additional three stamps commemorating the deportations. The designs on all three are Lithuanian folk art. The first, released on June 14, 1995, pictures a Pieta with a sword piercing the chest of the Virgin. The inscription reads “Day of Mourning and Hope,” probably referring to nation-wide observances of the anniversary of the deportations. A series of two commemoratives appeared a year later, the 55th anniversary of the deportations. The inscriptions are identical, “June 14, Day of Mourning and Hope” (again, probably a reference to nation-wide observances); and the designs are reproductions of wooden folk art carvings. The design on the first stamp is a “Man of Sorrows” (head of Christ), symbolizing mourning; the design on the second is an angel, symbolizing hope.

The Hungarian Revolution: The decade following World War II had been a difficult one for Hungary. Hungary had been an ally of the Third Reich, and Hungarian soldiers had participated in the invasion of the Soviet Union. As a result, Stalin regarded Hungary as an enemy combatant; and the Red Army acted accordingly, pillaging and raping its way across Hungary en route to Berlin.

Following the war, massive amounts of Hungarian property were expropriated by and taken to the Soviet Union as war reparations. Expropriation extended to entire factories, which were taken apart and shipped, complete with their contents, east. Joint Hungarian-Soviet companies were established to exploit Hungary’s natural resources for the benefit of the Soviet Union. By 1950 Stalin’s hand-picked government of Hungarian Communists had taken power and eliminated the political opposition. To consolidate its
power and terrorize the population into submission, it carried out a massive wave of
purge trials. Thousands were arrested by the Hungarian Secret Police (AVO) and tried on
trumped-up charges, found guilty, and imprisoned or executed. By October of 1956,
when the Hungarian Revolution erupted, three generalizations could be made about
Hungarians: they resented the “Russians,” they resented Hungary’s Communist
government, and they resented the Hungarian Secret Police.29

Three decades later, Hungary regained its de facto independence with a non-
Communist government in 1989. In 1991 it commemorated the 35th anniversary of the
Revolution with an overprint on a previously existing postage stamp. The overprinted
stamp was released on October 22, the day before the anniversary of the beginning of the
Revolution; October 23 had become a national holiday in 1989. The overprint is two
concentric circles which resemble a postmark; and the inscription reads simply “In
Memory of the Revolution, 1956-1991.”30

To commemorate the 40th anniversary in 1996, Hungary issued a series of five
stamps, four regular stamps plus a souvenir sheet, which tell the story of the Revolution.
The designs on all five stamps utilize reproductions of photographs and newspapers from
the period, so the color scheme is overwhelmingly black, white, and tan.31 The only
additional colors are the Hungarian flag, a red, white, and green tricolor which appears
somewhere on each of the stamps. In addition, the first four of the five stamps include
the dates “1956-1996.”

The Revolution began on October 23, 1956 with massive student demonstrations
in Budapest, pictured on the first stamp in the series.32 The second stamp shows
demonstrators carrying a Hungarian flag with a hole in the middle. The post-war
Hungarian flag had a Soviet-style coat of arms in the center: a hammer and cycle surrounded by stalks of wheat, topped with a star.\textsuperscript{33} One of the first acts of revolution was demonstrators removing the post-war coat of arms, symbolic of so much that was resented, from the Hungarian flag. The Hungarian flag with the hole in the middle became a symbol of the Revolution.\textsuperscript{34}

One of the demonstrations took place at a massive statue of Stalin, a “gift” from the Soviet Union, which the demonstrators attacked and tried to pull down. When this was reported to the Budapest police, the police chief replied that he and his men were not paid enough to protect a statue of Stalin. Initially it appeared that Hungarians were not going to open fire on Hungarians—except for the Secret Police, attempting to disperse a demonstration at the local radio station, which did. Several demonstrators were killed, and several more were injured.\textsuperscript{35}

The rest is history. If the demonstrators were going to be attacked, they were determined to fight back; and they rapidly obtained weapons from all over Budapest: police stations, military installations, and the local secret arms factory (disguised as the United Lamp Factory on Csepel Island in the Danube). When tanks from Soviet military garrisons (Soviet troops were stationed in several of the Eastern European countries, including Hungary, following World War II) arrived at dawn the next day to “restore order,” they were met by surprisingly effective guerilla-style resistance which brought them to a standstill. The third stamp in the series shows two armed demonstrators.\textsuperscript{36} The fourth pictures Prime Minister Imre Nagy addressing the nation over the radio.\textsuperscript{37}
The final item in the series of commemoratives, a souvenir sheet containing one stamp, includes elements from the previous four stamps and summarizes the story of the Revolution.

![Image of commemorative stamp]

**Fig. 7: Hungary, Scott 3353**

The design includes a crowd of demonstrators (top), an armed demonstrator (lower right foreground), the Hungarian flag with a hole in the middle (red, white, and green, diagonal across the souvenir sheet), newspapers published during the Revolution (lower left foreground) and the revolutionary government (11 men in the lower half, with Imre Nagy in the center). In addition, the design includes the traditional Hungarian coat of arms, located in the lower right corner.

It did not last. After several days of vacillation in the Kremlin, Khrushchev ordered a massive invasion of Hungary. Soviet troops stationed in Hungary (who refused to engage in further military action without the necessary reinforcements) were augmented with troops from the USSR plus Soviet troops stationed in neighboring
Eastern European countries. At least one member of the government managed to escape and fled into Austria; all the rest were arrested. Several, including Imre Nagy, were sentenced to death; the others received prison sentences.38 The Latin inscription at the top left of the souvenir sheet, *Gloria Victis*, (white lettering against the black background) alludes to the fate of the Revolution: “Glory to the Vanquished.”

**Patriarch Cardinal Josyf Slipyj, 1892-1984:** In September of 1939, the Red Army invaded and occupied the eastern half of Poland, an ethnically diverse area. The southern section, heavily Ukrainian, was annexed to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. The Ukrainians in the annexed territory were overwhelmingly Uniate (also known as Eastern Rite Catholics), a combination of Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy dating from the Union of Brest in 1596, an attempt to reunite the two branches of Christianity. Uniates followed Eastern Orthodox doctrines and practices but recognized the authority of the Roman Catholic Pope.

Stalin feared that the Uniates could be an obstacle to the smooth integration of the annexed territory, so in 1945 he ordered the Uniate hierarchy and its priests arrested. The Union of Brest was declared invalid, and the Uniates were placed under the authority of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (which Stalin had well under control). The Uniate hierarchy, including the Patriarch, Josyf Slipyj, was deported to the Gulag. Eighteen years later, the Patriarch was the only member of the hierarchy still alive. At least in part due to the intercession of Pope John XXIII and President Kennedy, he was released and sent to Rome in 1963.39

Independent Ukraine issued a single stamp commemorating the centennial of his birth in 1993.
The stamp design includes his portrait, his name and titles, and his dates. The only reference to his persecution by Stalin is a small circle in the upper left corner. It is identified as the Crown of Thorns, a reference to his suffering, and, by extension, that of the imprisoned hierarchy and priests, and the persecution of the Uniates under Stalin.40

**Jozsef Cardinal Mindszenty, 1892-1975**: Cardinal Mindszenty became Primate of the Catholic Church in Hungary in October of 1945; in December of 1948 he was arrested in the purges which took place in the late 1940s. Tortured, and possibly drugged, he confessed to all of the trumped-up charges against him and was sentenced to life in prison. At the time of the Hungarian Revolution he was living under house arrest near Budapest. During the Revolution he was officially rehabilitated by Prime Minister Nagy, returned to his residence in Budapest, but fled when the Red Army invaded. He sought asylum in the American Embassy, where he remained for the next 15 years. He was granted safe passage to the West in 1971 and died in Austria in 1975.41

Hungary honored the centenary of his birth with a single commemorative stamp, issued in 1992 (Fig. 2). A reproduction of a portrait of Mindszenty painted by Bela
Schmidt in 1977 is in the foreground, with a drawing of the interior of the Cathedral at Esztergom in the background. The significance of the Cathedral is two-fold. Esztergom holds pride of place in Hungarian Catholicism; as Primate of Hungary, Cardinal Mindszenty was also Archbishop of Esztergom. In 1991 Mindszenty’s remains were returned to Hungary and interred in the Crypt of Archbishops in the Cathedral.42

**Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski, 1901-1981:** Cardinal Wyszynski was appointed Primate of the Catholic Church in Poland in 1948. Arrested in 1953, he spent time under house arrest in various Polish religious establishments. Upon his release in 1956, he was allowed to return to his position as Primate and spent the rest of his life making as much space for the Church in Polish society as possible under difficult conditions and defending the Church against Party and State.

Poland issued a single commemorative marking the centenary of Wyszynski’s birth in 2001. The stamp design consists of a photograph of the Cardinal and a reproduction of his signature against a Polish landscape. It includes an inscription, which reads “Primate of the Millennium, 1901-1981.” The millennium referred to is not the millennium of 2000 but the millennium of Polish Christianity, 1966. Party and State did their best to drain the millennium of its religious significance by co-opting it, claiming that it was the millennium of the Polish state. Poland did not even issue a stamp commemorating the millennium of Christianity (that was left to the Vatican and the United States), but it did issue a set of four red and gold stamps commemorating the millennium of the Polish state.43 To the extent that the millennium of Polish Christianity was observed in Poland, it was due to the efforts of Cardinal Wyszynski.
Conclusions: What can we conclude from these stamps? What, if any, is their meaning? These stamps signify the break from the Communist past. Between 1989 and 1991 Communism landed on the dustbin of history in the Iron Curtain countries of Eastern Europe, to be followed by the Soviet Union itself. Otherwise, the stamps presented here would not—could not—have been issued. The momentous political changes that took place during those three years—from Constituent Republic to independent country and from dictatorial Communist Party rule to a multi-party system based on democratic principles—triggered countless subsequent changes; and the stamp designs shown here reflect some of those additional changes.44

One break with the Communist past was the rewriting of history to set the record straight after decades of manipulation to fit the Party Line: the Ukrainian famine was not simply the unfortunate result of collectivization plus bad weather, Katyn was not a Nazi war crime, the Lithuanians deported were not “enemies of the people,” the Hungarian Revolution was not a fascist counterrevolution, and Cardinal Mindszenty was not an agent of either the United States or the Vatican. Not only had the Party Line manipulated history, it had dictated that the national tragedies mentioned above—since they officially did not exist—could not be publicly and properly recognized and mourned.

A second break with the Communist past occurred as the calendar began to change in accordance with the history books. Long-delayed national observances began to take place, complete with commemorative stamps. These stamps, therefore, were not issued in a vacuum; they appeared in a context of national and local events which preceded them, coincided with them, and would follow them. Such events include numerous observances of tragic anniversaries, memorials to famine victims in Kiev and
to the Poles who had died “in the East” in Warsaw, proper military cemeteries at the
grate sites of the Polish POWs and the publication of official documents about their fate,
an NKVD museum in Vilnius, Lithuania, and a holodomor museum in Ukraine, the
reburial with honor of Imre Nagy’s remains. The first set of Lithuanian stamps
commemorating the deportations, for example, were issued on June 14th for the 50th
anniversary; they appeared even before Lithuania was legally an independent country
(Lithuania had declared its independence before the Soviet Union collapsed), so some
editions of the Scott stamp catalogue do not list them.

A third break with the Communist past is a cultural one, the increased presence of
religion in society. Religion had been at best tolerated, at worst suppressed, in the Soviet
Union and the People’s Democracies. The resurgence of religion is reflected in stamp
design. Some stamps directly honor Church leaders who had suffered for their faith.
Others contain religious imagery: depictions of Christ, the Madonna, angels, crosses,
crowns of thorns. Many of the stamp designs are reproductions of actual works of art,
some of which were created specifically to memorialize victims of Stalinism.

For decades Party and State had tried to indoctrinate skeptical populations with
the Party Line, employing a combination of persuasion and coercion. One form of
persuasion was propaganda, and propaganda even extended to stamp design. In contrast,
what these stamps signify is, for however brief a moment, government united in
solidarity with the nation and expressing it through bearing philatelic witness to the
victims of Stalinism.
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4 In the United States the standard reference book for postage stamps is the *Scott Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue,* a multi-volume work issued annually. The Scott numbers for this first group of stamps are: Ukraine, Scott 188, 526; Poland, Scott 2975, 3323, 3444-3445, 3557-3558; Lithuania, Scott 393-395, 517, 547-548; Hungary, Scott 3320, 3549-3553.

5 Scott numbers: Ukraine, Scott 166; Hungary, Scott 3342; Poland, Scott 3598.


12 *Katyn,* p. xv.


16 Peszkowski, *op. cit.*


18 *Katyn: a Crime without Punishment* is an anthology of some of those documents. Included also are documents given to Polish President Lech Walesa by Russian President Boris Yeltsin in 1992 which identify the grave sites of the POWs from the other two prison camps, Ostashkov and Starobelsk.

19 *Katyn,* p. 258.

20 Tragically, the 95 passengers on the Polish plane which crashed on its approach to Smolensk in April, 2010 were *en route* to Katyn, to the site pictured on the stamp, to observe the 70th anniversary. There were no survivors. Among the victims were numerous members of the Polish government, including Polish President Lech Kaczynski and his wife, and five members of the Society of Katyn Families.
In 2010 Poland issued a souvenir sheet commemorating the 70th anniversary of Katyn (Scott nr 3978). The design on the stamp is a combination of the designs on the first two commemoratives (1990 and 1995): several buttons from the grave site arranged in the form of a cross. *Scott Stamp Monthly*, vol. XXVIII, nr 11 (November 2010), p. 66.


Andrew Kapochunas, *loc. cit.*; Vainora, *loc. cit.* According to Vainora, the design is a Biblical reference, The Gospel According to St. Luke, chapter 2, verse 35: “Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also….”

See references in Footnote 22.


The post-war flag is pictured on a series of Hungarian stamps, Scott nr 856-858.

Kohalmi, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10; Sebestyen, *op. cit.*, pp. 111, 304. For the 50th anniversary of the Revolution in 2006, Hungary issued one commemorative. It pictures a Hungarian flag with a hole in the center (Hungary, Scott nr 4005).


Ibid., pp. 216-7, 268, 292.


Poland, Scott nr 1423-1426; United States, Scott nr 1313; Vatican, Scott nr 433-438.