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**THE POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF PHILATELY:
IMPERIAL AND NATIONAL POSTAL SYSTEMS IN UKRAINE**

by

Karen Jean Lemiski

**A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy**

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

May 1999

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ABSTRACT

This thesis addresses the importance of the post and postage stamps for Russian imperial and Ukrainian national identities. Through a topical analysis of the over ten thousand postage stamps from the Soviet Union and contemporary Ukraine, the connection between a functioning post office, modern states, and the process of nation-building were examined.

Recent treatments of the history of nationalism and nation-building have rightly emphasized the important role of modern communication in forging national identity. Effective communications, the printed word especially, allow individuals to visualize in a general way the existence of multitudes of other people just like themselves. This type of unification takes on an added significance in modern states that have been created during revolutionary circumstances, when ancient allegiances are destroyed in favor of newer concepts and when positions of authority must continually be used to maintain and propagate a particular image of the world. By uniting the population, the mail carried through the post office serves to thicken the bonds of union, therefore acting as an agent of national integration.

Within this context, the introduction of postage stamps is significant. With their depictions of national history, culture, and the political agendas, stamps became a relatively innocuous means of reaching and educating the population. The use of national symbols, whether traditional or newly created, also became an important design element.

The Soviet government effectively used the postal system to bond together the diverse populations within its borders behind the programs of the centralized state. Its postage stamps exhibited the goals of the regime and the accepted view of history. The Ukrainian national movement also exploited the post in constructing and spreading its own national identity. It united the diaspora by presenting its own notions of shared historical and cultural bonds.

To Alexander Reitarowski

Vichnaia Pamiat'

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INTRODUCTION

In commenting on the significance of the U.S. postal system, the reporter William Emery Channing conceded in 1829 that “no other channel of intercourse can so effectively bind the ‘whole country’ in a ‘chain of sympathies’ and in this way transform it from a confederation of separate states into ‘one great neighborhood’.”¹ In addition to recognizing the important role played by postal communications, Channing’s observation is significant because of when it was made. Although systems have existed for the sending of messages by courier since ancient times, until as late as the nineteenth century these networks primarily served the rulers of empires in their efforts to proclaim victories, convey decrees, warn of revolutions, and send requests for help. In societies where the majority of the population held ties on only a village level, and where the ruling monarchs achieved their status primarily through unchallenged birth rights, there was no need for extensive communications networks.

The growth of empires, among other factors, prompted the need for effective communications. With the expansion of their territories, Europe’s rulers came into contact with other civilizations, which ultimately served in the definition of “self” and “other.” Postal communications would help both sides. Faced with increasing challenges (perceived or actual) to their own authority, the monarchs needed to maintain strong centralized administrations. While postal networks could offer insights into potential sources of opposition via, for example, censorship of written materials, the mail would further allow the rulers to reach their subjects — if not personally then through written decrees. This statement implies that simultaneously to

¹ William Ellery Channing, “The Union,” *Christian Examiner* 6 (1829): 159–160; cited in Richard R. John, *Spreading the News: The American Postal System from Franklin to Morse* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 13. According to John (page 289 n. 47), Channing’s essay would almost certainly have been familiar to Samuel F. B. Morse and may have inspired Morse’s comment that the electric telegraph had the potential to transform the United States into “one neighborhood.” Similarly, more than a century later, media critic Marshall McLuhan acknowledged that communications technology was quickly transforming the world into a global village.

being educated by the mail, the general population could be united through the messages carried in the mail, either in support of their distant rulers or in favor of the emerging concepts of new nation-states.²

This thesis addresses the role of philately in the construction of national and state identities in Ukraine. Because an effective functioning postal service is crucial for the circulation of postage stamps throughout society, an overview of the development of the postal service on Ukrainian territory is provided. The images that were selected for reproduction on the postage stamps of the autonomous Ukrainian regimes of the twentieth century were then examined and contrasted to those selected in the Soviet Union. In this struggle between nation and empire, the stamps that were circulated by the postal service became indexes. In addition to indicating the country, the stamps offered symbolic representations of both Ukrainian and Soviet authorities in easily recognized terms. These ranged from profiles of the current leadership, the national flag, an allegorical figure, or an abbreviation of the country's name. The stamps also were used to represent aspects of the Soviet Union and the Ukrainian nation. Some pictorial designs celebrated specific events and anniversaries of both national and international importance while others provided an indication of the future goals of the political leadership. The significance of this last practice is explained by David Scott: "When a stamp represents an aspect of the country, such as a monument or a site, it equally represents the country itself for the image reproduced on the stamp is accompanied by the signs that establish that nation's identity."³ The stamps, therefore, represent the country, or nation in the case of Ukraine, as a cohesive national unit.

² The development of extensive postal networks was also prompted by the modernization of western civilization. After the Napoleonic Wars, Europe entered a period of comparative tranquility that greatly encouraged the development of trade and commerce. At the same time, rising literacy and greater mobility of the population encouraged letter writing. James Mackay, *Stamp Collecting* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company Inc., 1983), 7. See also U.S. Postal Service, *History's Messages: Marvels of the Mail* (Washington, DC: U.S. Postal Service, 1989).

³ David Scott, *European Stamp Design: A Semiotic Approach to Designing Messages* (London: Academy Edition, 1995), 8.

This thesis also considers the stamps that were prepared by the Ukrainian diaspora in the years following the total incorporation of Ukraine into the Soviet Union. The dream of a national stamp was maintained in Europe and North America by the diaspora, who produced designs for successive exile governments and various émigré organizations. That these individuals continued to fantasize for over forty years about postage stamp designs for their longed-for independent state is symptomatic of the profound role stamps play in the expression of national aspirations and identity.

From its foundations as a courier network with permanent stations, the post office has come to represent an important division of a *modern* state's administrative activities. One scholar has labeled it "the most essential department of a *civilized* government."⁴ This view is reinforced in the *Foundations of Philately* by Winthrop S. Boggs, who states that "few of us realize how dependent civilization is upon the safe and reliable transmission of the written word. It is not too much to say that the entire structure of commerce and industry rests upon the work of the postal system."⁵ Moreover, where no ancient ties existed based on language or geography, the messages carried by the post office played a key role in the formation of a national consciousness among various population groups.

Theoretically, the academic community has recognized this connection between social communications and the rise of national states. In 1953, Karl Deutsch presented his groundbreaking theories in what he called a "functional definition of nationality."⁶ According to Deutsch, "membership in a people" consisted of the ability to communicate more effectively,

⁴ August Dietz, *The Postal Service of the Confederate States of America* (Richmond, VA: The Dietz Printing Company, 1929), 2; emphasis added.

⁵ Winthrop S. Boggs, *The Foundations of Philately* (Princeton, NJ: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1955), 13.

⁶ Karl Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication: An Inquiry into the Foundations of Nationality* (n.p.: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1953), 71.

and over a wider range of subjects, with members of one group than with outsiders. What counted was not the presence or absence of any single factor — a common language, ethnic background, or culture — but rather the existence of a communications system that could disseminate information related to the living memories, patterns of behavior, and preferences of its members. Thus, individuals would act as a “people” when each recognized the same meaning in various symbols and had similar reactions to specific associations and events in history, factors that were to be learned and enforced by external sources.⁷

Among other scholars who have subsequently built upon Deutsch’s ideas was Benedict Anderson, who conceived of the nation as an imagined community.⁸ The group is imagined in that its members will never know most of their fellow-members, yet all mentally share an image of the community to which they belong. In this situation, personal acquaintanceships are not necessary. Instead, effective communications, the printed word especially, allow individuals to visualize in a general way the existence of thousands and thousands of other people just like themselves.

This type of unification takes on an added significance in modern states that have been created during revolutionary circumstances, when ancient allegiances are destroyed in favor of newer concepts and when positions of authority must continually be used to maintain and propagate a particular image of empire. Alfred Arteaga describes the two-step, evolutionary process that these societies must undertake. The first is a period of domination during which those in opposition to the new regime are killed or at least removed from public positions; the second period is one of “hegemony,” requiring the bonding together of the population behind

⁷ Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication*, 70–71.

⁸ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edition (New York: Verso, 1991), 6.

the new system following a re-education campaign.⁹ Obviously, the access to communications is vital for the maintenance of power, serving as a tool to continually reinforce a particular image of the world while simultaneously uniting the like-minded citizens.

Although their function may be obvious, there is a wider significance to the developments within the post surrounding the introduction of postage stamps. Namely, while the traditional monarchy was not required to pay for the transmission of its correspondence, the production of stamps signaled public access to the post. Therefore, the appearance of the stamps not only indicated pre-payment for the service, but can further be linked to a communications revolution that created a market for commercial information as well as a public sphere for the discussion of state affairs. By uniting the population, the mail served to thicken the bonds of union, therefore acting as an agent of national integration.

Despite the framework suggested by the studies of Deutsch and Anderson, modern scholarship has generally neglected the application of the theories of nationalism to administrative histories, especially those of the post office. The void is especially obvious in studies related to the Russian Empire and former Soviet Union, where attention has been given to so many other administrative departments. Most general accounts include no more than a few token paragraphs about the role of the postal system in Russian public life, and the focus primarily is given to administrative details or issues of censorship. With the exception of a number of specialized Western philatelic studies and translations by a few individuals, the Russian-Soviet postal system remains an important, albeit virtually unexplored, institution.

This dissertation, then, is intended as a contribution to the studies of nation-building in the Russian Empire and Soviet Union. I contend that in Russia, as in the West, the post

⁹ Alfred Arteaga, introduction to *An Other Tongue: Nation and Ethnicity in the Linguistic Borderlands*, edited by Alfred Arteaga (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994), 1.

office was both an agent of change and a mechanism for uniting the diverse populations within the growing empire. At the same time, the post became an arena in which various groups within the administration and those close to it struggled for control of the levers of power. Here, the roles played by foreigners and private individuals in the development of the Russian post cannot be overlooked. As a counter-measure, however, strong-willed government agents and several tsars adopted restrictive policies to curtail outside influences. My intention, then, is not simply to locate the postal system *in* the social process, but rather to explore its role *as* a social element, with particular consideration given to some of the ways in which the communications revolution set in motion other changes in society and contributed to the construction of national identity.

As a case study, this dissertation also focuses on the role played by the post in the process of nation-building for Ukraine. Until the twentieth century, there had been no established Ukrainian state. According to one historian, "Ukrainians were a people who had not yet developed a crystallised national consciousness and whose emergence to the stature of nationhood seemed like a distant goal."¹⁰ Yet, with the opportunities presented by the collapse of the Russian and Austrian empires, nationally aware Ukrainian political leaders formed an independent state in 1918. Their mission, among others goals, was to unite a dispersed people behind them while also gaining international political recognition for a nation that perceived itself as having suffered centuries of oppression, including distortions of its own history. Thus, a complementary analysis of the development of the post in the Austrian Empire allows for an exploration of the postal institution on Ukrainian territory and its contribution to the forging of national identity in the various twentieth-century Ukrainian states.

¹⁰ Bohdan Krawchenko, *Social Change and National Consciousness in Twentieth-Century Ukraine* (London: The MacMillan Press, 1985), 1.

The chapters that follow build on the themes mentioned above. The second chapter looks at the results of the October Revolution of 1917. Focused not specifically on the postal system, the discussion examines the overall transformation of Russian society and the politicization of many otherwise non-political entities, such as art and the hobby of stamp collecting, under the new Bolshevik leaders. The third chapter examines more closely Russian and Soviet postage stamp issues, especially from the first decades following the revolution, as a way of developing the concept of the post office as a factor in the nation-building process. With their depictions of history, culture, and the Soviet political program, the colorful stamps became innovative yet innocent means of reaching and educating the population about the goals of the new leaders and of uniting the population behind the concepts of the new Soviet state.

The last two chapters provide a comparative case study by examining the importance of the post office, again through its postage stamps, in forming and uniting the Ukrainian diaspora. Following the re-absorption of the early twentieth-century Ukrainian states into the Soviet Union, the preservation of the memory of the former political achievements of the Ukrainian national movement was taken up by émigrés who settled primarily in Europe and North America. Through their postal system and postage stamps — both unofficial — the exiles continued not only the struggle against Soviet domination, but also worked toward uniting the Ukrainian nation until an independent national state could be achieved.

1. Ukraine

The Ukrainian nation forms a remarkable reflection of Benedict Anderson's theories surrounding imagined communities.¹¹ Although geographically dispersed, it is a limited nation with finite, but historically flexible, boundaries beyond which lie other nations. Historically, this

¹¹ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6–7.

has meant several things: because there is no “island” of Ukraine, at times its political leaders have had to enter into cooperative agreements with foreign rulers as a means of survival, while at other times the areas occupied by those who imagine themselves to be Ukrainian have been overtaken and dominated by other states. It is also significant that the idea of a Ukrainian nation was created in an age of nationalism during which the legitimacy of Europe’s hereditary, hierarchical dynastic realms was destroyed and thus state sovereignty for a number of nations was gained. Finally, Ukrainians form a community that is conceived of as a horizontal comradeship: having no ancient noble families of its own, the Ukrainian nation is derived from primarily a peasant population. Modern nationalist have translated the traditions associated with the implied bond to the land into a tie to *Ukrainian* land and a sense of patriotism: such putative peasant virtues as honesty and hard work are just what a new nation and a new state need.¹²

The concept of a distinctive Ukrainian culture and tradition is a retrospective invention. Before their national awakening in the late nineteenth century, Ukrainians were neither recognized as a distinct nation nor did members call themselves Ukrainians.¹³ From the Russian perspective, these people were “Little Russians,” while the community itself tended to identify with specific regions rather than with a larger state. This problem of ethnonational classification resulted primarily from the political reality that confronted the Ukrainian homeland: for most of its modern history, Ukraine was occupied by foreign powers and did not exist as a formal nation-state until the Ukrainian National Republic (*Ukrainska Narodnia Respublika*) was proclaimed in 1918.

¹² Alexander Motyl, *Dilemmas of Independence: Ukraine After Totalitarianism* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1993), 85.

¹³ Peter Brock, “Ivan Vahylevych (1811–1866) and the Ukrainian National Identity,” in *Nationbuilding and the Politics of Nationalism: Essays on Austrian Galicia*, edited by Andrei S. Markovits and Frank E. Sysyn (Cambridge: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1982), 111.

The people who would eventually comprise the Ukrainian state came from two distinct empires, each with its own historical set of circumstances. Two areas, Galicia and Bukovina, belonged to the lands of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This region, which has become known as Western Ukraine, emerged from under Polish rule to become part of Austria as a result of the 1772 partition of Poland. Owing primarily to a relatively liberal Habsburg policy toward nationalist aspirations, a national movement focused initially on differentiating Ukrainians from Russians in terms of national origin, culture, and language was established here. In the words of Myron Kuropas, a historian of the Ukrainian immigration movement, eastern Galicia was by the late 1880s “the most ethnonationally conscious region in Ukraine.”¹⁴

Within this same empire, another region that is referred to by Ukrainians as Carpatho-Ukraine came under Hungarian jurisdiction in 1867. Although the occupants of the geographic area more commonly known as Subcarpathian Rus’ shared the religio-cultural heritage of the rest of the areas that would later form Ukraine, the national revival that swept the other provinces in the nineteenth century barely touched this isolated region in the Carpathian Mountains. The generally illiterate masses remained devoted to their religious traditions, but oblivious to — perhaps unconvinced of — their national origins. Thus, Carpatho-Ukraine was the least nationally conscious of Ukrainian regions. As a result, these people have been more easily swayed in their political allegiances, for example during periods of exile and emigration or when confronted by imperial armies.

A third region, known as Eastern Ukraine, found itself within the boundaries of the Russian Empire at the end of the eighteenth century. Following the partitioning of Poland, close to eighty-five percent of the population and lands that were once a part of the Kievan state

¹⁴ Myron Kuropas, “Foreword” to *Ethnicity and National Identity*, edited by Oleh Wolowyna (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), ix.

were increasingly incorporated into the Russian Empire. Thereafter, a population composed principally of Orthodox Ukrainians and Belorussians was subjugated to the rule of the Russian tsars, which generally meant a lack of recognition for differences in language, culture, and tradition.

As an absolutist state, the Russian Empire attempted to extend and consolidate its central authority vis-à-vis the periphery. Under optimal conditions, the tsar embodied a territorial sovereignty and unity wherein the rule of the center was recognized as legitimate by the periphery. "Center" not only entailed a geographic concept, but included political, economic, cultural, and linguistic factors. The Muscovite tsars established a pattern of incorporating recently annexed borderlands into a Russian administrative framework, politically dominating the given territory. As long as Russia's expansion was limited to sparsely settled areas inhabited by nomads or small cossack formations, direct administrative incorporation encountered little resistance. In its western expansion, however, Russia acquired territories and peoples who had a well-developed concept of judicial separateness, regional prerogatives, and corporate rights, and, as a result, Russia's drive for uniformity had to accommodate itself to the reality of what another historian of Ukraine calls "separate privileged areas."¹⁵

On the surface, the entire Russian Empire shared a common historical development owing to its expanding bureaucratic control. However, while the empire functioned through the process of centralization, the implementation of imperial policies could not entirely overcome problems deriving from the empire's size. National divisions and regional diversity were increasingly felt as tensions mounted in the twentieth century between the centripetal forces favoring uniformity in administration, social structure, and culture, and those centrifugal forces

¹⁵ Zenon E. Kohut, *Russian Centralism and Ukrainian Autonomy: Imperial Absorption of the Hetmanate, 1760s–1830s* (Cambridge, Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1988), 1.

demanding recognition and self-determination for national territories. As a means of curtailing the demands for political independence that could potentially have erupted from some regions, the new Soviet leaders granted, even encouraged, selected regional cultural autonomy.¹⁶

It is in this light that we must consider the distinctive symbolism of the Ukrainian nation, including its azure-yellow flag; the trident, the official Ukrainian coat of arms; and the anthem "Shche ne vmerla Ukraïna" (Ukraine has not yet perished). Although many Ukrainians may ascribe great antiquity to them, these emblems gained their widespread acceptance as national symbols only in the twentieth century during the struggle for national independence following the collapse of the Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires. The Ukrainian national movement effectively added to what had been primarily traditional regional images a strong political significance, thus allowing them to remain prominent as the symbols of protest that united Ukrainians against foreign — mainly Soviet — domination.

2. Ukrainian Nationalism

John-Paul Himka's *Galician Villagers and the Ukrainian National Movement in the Nineteenth Century* demonstrates how the peasant community in the Austrian Empire was drawn into national politics. Political consciousness was forged by serfdom, reforms initiated by the state,

¹⁶ A. J. P. Taylor, "Nations in History," in *The Crown and the Thistle: The Nature of Nationhood*, edited by Colin MacLean (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1979), 5–6. Taylor notes that cultural nationalism is offered as an alternative to political autonomy, and therefore the Soviet achievement in creating new nationalism was "staggering." "Peoples who had no idea they existed have been drawn into full consciousness. They were given alphabets and their language was artificially transformed into high literary forms." As an example of this, Taylor notes that Shakespeare's plays were performed in Uzbek and other remote tongues as often as they were performed in English, in English-speaking countries.

The purposes behind this policy of promoting ethnic particularism have been explained by Yuri Slezkine. Both Lenin and Stalin felt that by allowing the development of local cultures along with national beliefs, customs, and institutions, the Bolsheviks would overcome national distrust and therefore effectively reach the national audiences. Yuri Slezkine, "The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism," in *Becoming National: A Reader*, edited by Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 207.

and the penetration of the money economy.¹⁷ Following the 1848 emancipation of the serfs, peasant leaders voiced the need for education as a means of liberating “beasts” and creating “people.” The political reforms of the 1860s were a step toward this goal, while also offering the civil freedoms, particularly of the press, association, and compulsory education, that drew the peasantry into national politics.

Himka also details how the diffusion of national consciousness was linked to the formation of institutions associated with the national movement, such as reading clubs and credit unions. The first phase, the period of national awakening, resulted in the collection of legends, folk songs, and various lore that established the identity of the Ukrainians. In the second stage, the movement assumed organized forms and was reflected in the growing importance of village-based associations. With the aid of village priests, cantors, and teachers, nationally oriented institutions — especially the popular press and reading clubs — penetrated the countryside and carried the national message to the peasants. This movement became more complex in the 1880s owing to the rise of the intelligentsia and the popularity of mass assemblies in the district capitals.¹⁸

That the imperial government was disturbed by the Ukrainian national aspirations growing on its borders and that during World War I it undertook a systematic and draconian program to eradicate the movement amplifies the different climate that existed for national movements in the Russian Empire. The period beginning with Catherine II’s full-scale integration of the Hetmanate into the Russian system has been studied by Zenon Kohut in his work *Russian Centralism and Ukrainian Autonomy: Imperial Absorption of the Hetmanate*,

¹⁷ John-Paul Himka, *Galician Villagers and the Ukrainian National Movement in the Nineteenth Century* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1988).

¹⁸ This essential relationship between power, education, and a shared culture has also been promulgated by a prominent scholar of nationalism, Ernest Gellner. See, for example, his *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986).

1760s–1830s, the most significant recent study focusing on this question. The Russian leaders hoped that the Ukrainian autonomous states, as under the Hetmanate, would be subordinated to imperial authority. Then, the Ukrainian populace would become aware of the “benefits” of imperial rule in contrast to the “misgovernment” of the previous administration under the hetmancy.¹⁹

Kohut’s thesis, that the drive toward centralism and uniformity in the Russian Empire was almost irreversible, is beyond dispute. The process itself was based on three crucial elements: the traditional tsarist autocracy, which concentrated unlimited power in the tsar; Muscovite political centralization, which designated Moscow as both the legitimate heir of Kievan Rus’ and the gatherer of all Russian lands; and the secular concept of a well-ordered police state, featuring administrative rationality and uniformity as the most effective means to govern society. Between 1782 and 1786, regional self-government was summarily replaced by an imperial provincial administration. By 1785, there were no autonomous regions on Ukrainian territory.

Two attitudes toward integration into the Russian Empire were apparent. One was assimilationist. In his work *The Ukrainian Impact on Russian Culture, 1750–1850*, David Saunders asserts that between the mid-eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries, an intellectual convergence occurred between Ukraine and Russia.²⁰ Although the assimilation process meant the loss of Ukrainian institutions and social forms, it provided Ukrainians with new outlets. Many individuals traveled north to take advantage of potential civil, military, or religious careers, encouraged by the central government.²¹

¹⁹ Kohut, *Russian Centralism*, 107.

²⁰ David Saunders, *The Ukrainian Impact on Russian Culture, 1750–1850* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1985).

²¹ For a pioneering study of the Ukrainian influence on Russian church life in the eighteenth century, see Konstantin V. Kharlampovich, *Malorossiiskoe vliianie na velikoruskuiu tserkovnuiu zhizn'* (Kazan': M. A. Golubev, 1914; reprinted in *The Hague: Mouton*, 1968).

Once in St. Petersburg, Ukrainians showed in a variety of ways how an understanding of the south could contribute to the complexion of the empire as a whole. In politics, for example, although not separatist, the Ukrainians had a distinct understanding of the problems of imperial diversity. They founded journals containing information about the south and thus constituted Russia's introduction to the wider Slavic "awakening," which was a feature of the early nineteenth century. Further, the Ukrainians played a substantial part in the Slavophile debates about Russian national identity that dominated intellectual life in the decades after the Napoleonic Wars.

Saunders asserts that when the imperial government saddled the Slavic identity with the "full weight of autocracy," the Ukrainian allegiance to the center began to wane and Ukraine and Russia began to diverge.²² To some extent this is true. With the arrest of the intelligentsia affiliated with the Brotherhood of Cyril and Methodius (1847) and the subsequent prohibitions of publishing in Ukrainian (1863, 1876), the Romanov autocracy firmly blocked the Ukrainian movement. It is perhaps more accurate, however, to observe that the parting of the two nations occurred a bit earlier in the 1830s and 1840s, when some Ukrainians reasserted views held prior to the eighteenth century and came to the conclusion that they did not simply represent a "colorful variant" in an all-Russian empire, but were rather a separate people with their own language and culture worth developing and promoting. The most prominent figure from this time is Taras Shevchenko (1814–1861), a poet whose climb from serfdom in the territory of eastern Ukraine to literary prominence is taken to symbolize the emergence of a Ukrainian nation. Under the autocracy of Nicholas I, some elements of Ukrainian culture were still

²² Saunders, *The Ukrainian Impact*, 253.

allowed to flourish under the banner of *narodnost*.²³ However, since this response to Russia's search for an identity was acceptable to neither the tsarist regime nor its Westernizing or Slavophile critics, the gulf between nation and empire increased.

After a relaxation under Paul I, during which the Ukrainian territory was administered along the lines of the former Hetmanate, all remnants of autonomous Ukraine were eliminated by Alexander I and the leveling of Ukrainian institutions and traditions continued under Nicholas I. What resulted was a basic polarization: the towns, with their ethnically mixed population and numerous officials, became Russified; the countryside, inhabited by cossacks, peasants, and nobles, remained, on the whole, Ukrainian.²⁴ When in the 1840s, Ukrainian common law and the Lithuanian Statute were abolished, the last vestiges of Ukrainian autonomy were obliterated.²⁵ Ukraine could thus no longer be considered as a borderland. Any subsequent forms of Ukrainian particularism seemed treachery, if not treason.

What Kohut calls the "traditionalist view" came to form a strong contrast to the assimilationist position. In their anxiety about the future, some Ukrainians looked back to an idealized, largely mythical past,

when noble officers had been the unquestioned highest authority in a virtually independent polity, when cossacks had been an elite of privileged warriors, when burghers had controlled bustling towns and cities, and when the clergy had administered their own branch of the Orthodox church.²⁶

²³ In the aftermath of Napoleon's invasion, Count Sergei Uvarov proposed, in an official report of 1832, that the realm should be based on the three principles of autocracy, orthodoxy, and nationality. This third element was a novel concept, given that half of the population was still enserved and that more than half of the population spoke a mother tongue other than Russian. Russification did not become an official dynastic policy until the reign of Alexander III (1881–1894), long after Ukrainian, Finnish, Lett, and other nationalisms had appeared within the empire. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 87.

²⁴ Kohut, *Russian Centralism*, 303.

²⁵ Saunders, *The Ukrainian Impact*, 9.

²⁶ Kohut, *Russian Centralism*, 190.

Some revolts arose in the vigorous assertion of traditional rights by various cossack hosts and ethnic groups against the steady incursion by Russian imperial authority.²⁷ The long and bitter struggle with the gentry produced an outburst of local patriotism, generated a keen interest in the past, and kept alive a sense of dissatisfaction with and opposition to the imperial center. Paradoxically, many individuals first acquired their sense of Ukrainian identity after the Russians had strengthened their hold on the south, a response encouraged by the apparent encroachment of the empire on the nation.²⁸ But since the Ukrainian gentry could not envision any alternative to continued service to the tsar, even the most outspoken malcontents could do little more than accept the imperial system.²⁹

The revolutions of 1905 and 1917 within the Russian Empire unleashed the modern drive for Ukrainian national independence.³⁰ The process of Ukrainian nationalism as nation-building reached its goal with the declaration of the independent Ukrainian state in 1917.³¹ In March 1917 the national leaders forming the Ukrainian Central Rada under the direction of Mikhailo Hrushevsky (1866–1934) called for Ukrainian autonomy within a Russian federal republic. The Provisional Government later recognized the Rada as the autonomous Ukrainian government in July 1917. Then, following the October Revolution, the Rada adopted a proclamation of independence and formed the Ukrainian National Republic. Ukraine remained

²⁷ Kohut, *Russian Centralism*, 191.

²⁸ Saunders, *The Ukrainian Impact*, 5.

²⁹ Kohut, *Russian Centralism*, 258, 276.

³⁰ Stephen K. Batalden and Sandra L. Batalden, *The Newly Independent States of Eurasia: Handbook of Former Soviet Republics* (Phoenix, AZ: The Oryx Press, 1993), 70.

³¹ Jack E. Reece, "Outmoded Nationalisms and Emerging Patterns of Regional Identity in Contemporary Western Europe," in *Concepts of National Identity: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue*, edited by Peter Boerner (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1986), 106. Reece differentiates this act of nation-building from that of nation-preserving, which would subsequently occur after the formation of an independent national state.

independent until 1921, by which time the Soviet government had established itself throughout most of the region.

3. Forging National Identity

Ethnic constructs rely on the establishment of boundaries between self and other. A scholarly deconstruction of this type of identity reveals that in addition to an established territory, a common language, and a minimum number of adherents, nationalism builds on a historical existence to gain legitimacy. According to scholars such as Ronald Grigor Suny, the key to the “rise” of the post-imperial nations were historical patriotic intellectuals and activists who submerged certain identities, localist or universalist, in order to promote paramount loyalty to the nation.³² These individuals found, borrowed, or invented the social and ethnic “traditions” they needed, reviving symbols and rituals that soon appeared to have a naturalness and authenticity that originated deep in history and possessed clear legitimacy for shaping the future. For example, the Ukrainian president Hrushevsky, a historian, successfully promoted his theories that an independent Ukraine was the legacy of the Kievan Rus’ state and that it culturally belonged to Eastern Europe, not to Russia.

Similarly, according to Eric Hobsbawm, “traditions” that appear to be old are often quite recent in origin.³³ Such “invented traditions” seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior, with an implication of continuity with the past. Especially during periods that witness the attainment of national states or in the aftermath of political revolutions, this historic continuity often must be invented. Hobsbawm also notes that these practices tend to inculcate

³² Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, 2d ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), ix–x.

³³ Eric Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Inventing Traditions,” in *The Invention of Tradition*, edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1.

such notions as patriotism, loyalty, and duty.³⁴ They symbolize the membership of artificial communities; legitimize institutions and relations of authority, and provide a means of socialization along with the inculcation of beliefs and value systems. The crucial element is the invention of emotionally and symbolically charged emblems of club membership, in this case a national identity. Through symbols such as a national flag or national coat of arms, an independent country proclaims its identity and sovereignty, and as such commands instantaneous respect and loyalty.

Hobsbawm's study is enhanced by an examination of invented traditions within the British Empire, where commercial exploitation of specific ceremonies began to include postage stamps. In most European countries, special stamps were regularly issued for anniversaries and jubilees between 1890 and 1914. Beginning with George V's silver jubilee, the British post office also designed special commemorative stamps for every royal jubilee, coronation, major wedding, and wedding anniversary. This innovation to the regular means of celebrating such occasions was further promoted after World War II; it was seen as a means of uniting the population and instilling confidence in the British monarchy and the reign of Elizabeth II, especially following the struggles for independence that emerged in the British colonies.³⁵

In the decades following the consolidation of the Soviet Union, the process of Ukrainian nation-building was partially undertaken by exiles from the formerly independent Ukrainian state. The government institutions of the Ukrainian National Republic were evacuated from Ukraine as Bolshevik troops occupied the country, relocating first to Tarnów and Czestochowa in Poland and later to Warsaw, Paris, and Prague. In various forms, the govern-

³⁴ Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," 10.

³⁵ David Cannadine, "The British Monarchy, c. 1820–1977," in Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, 154–155.

ment-in-exile continued the ideological and legal tradition of the independent Ukrainian state even after the creation of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. Thousands of Ukrainians who were either caught in wartime combat or who otherwise could not reconcile themselves to the lack of cultural freedom and independence in the latter "republic" chose to remain abroad. In these unique circumstances, a new purpose for the government-in-exile arose, namely the continued opposition to the Moscow regime on behalf of Ukrainians both in and outside the state's boundaries. In other words, the political emigration, having no desire to abrogate its struggle to see an independent Ukraine, viewed the creation of the Soviet Union not as a signal to disband but merely the prologue to a new era. Until the creation of the newly independent Ukraine, the group worked to keep alive the spirit of an independent and democratic nation-state.³⁶

In addition to this formal structure, the preservation of Ukrainian culture also fell to individuals. The Ukrainians in the diaspora, particularly those of North America where more settled than elsewhere, considered it imperative for the continued existence of the Ukrainian people as a nation to inform the world about the history of their native land and the traditions of its people.³⁷ Prominent members of the intelligentsia considered it their task to preserve and carry on the Ukrainian culture abroad in view of what they believed to be its total destruction in Soviet Russia. This was especially important given that many émigrés had left with the firm conviction that they would return home to lead the Ukrainian community as soon as their country had been liberated from the "Bolshevik usurpers."³⁸

³⁶ This argument is adapted from one put forth concerning the Polish government-in-exile. See George V. Kacewicz, *Great Britain, the Soviet Union and the Polish Government-in-Exile (1939-1945)* (Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1979), 213.

³⁷ Myron Kuropas, *The Ukrainian Americans: Roots and Aspirations, 1884-1954* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991).

³⁸ Hilde Hardeman, *Coming to Terms with the Soviet Regime: The "Changing Signposts" Movement among Russian Emigres in the Early 1920s* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1994), 9-10.

In discussing the popular consciousness of nations, the British scholar Neil MacCormick has commented that a sense of the common past, including the shared sufferings and shared achievements of the group, must be preserved as the basis for the common culture. This historical experience represents a form of cultural continuity, which unites the past and present and which is capable of being projected into the future as an interrupted tradition. Moreover, this continuity is not static but rather organic: the common culture, traditions, and language may change over time but these alterations occur within the community and stem from each generation's own choices, as distinct from having been imposed *ab extra*.³⁹

In the context of recently proclaimed sovereignty and independence, Ukrainian political leaders are now attempting to reassert the historicity of their state by employing new or newly modified narratives of the past. The efforts of the new Ukrainian statesmen have been subject to the views of the Ukrainian diaspora, which typically posits the nation as an innocent victim of the "other" in a "litany of valiantly heroic but ultimately tragic struggles for national independence."⁴⁰ Although Ukraine is a very modern state, with little firmly established precedent in the national past, the potential exists that through the enshrinement of a new integral nationalist dogma, the new version of Ukrainian history, a one-sided national perspective, could be as dogmatic as the one it replaced.

Such representations of Ukrainian history offered to the outside world have not been without controversy. In his article "Does Ukraine Have a History?," Mark von Hagen acknowledges the tremendous role played by the Ukrainian diaspora in promoting the historical nature of Ukraine. Moreover, "mainstream" historians characterize Ukrainian history as "searching for

³⁹ Neil MacCormick, "Nation and Nationalism," in *The Crown and the Thistle*, 100.

⁴⁰ Mark von Hagen, "Does Ukraine Have a History?" *Slavic Review* 54, no. 3 (Fall 1995): 665.

roots,” national advocacy, or partisan pleading by scholars who are mostly of Ukrainian descent, and thus the field has been denied the valorization it seeks as “objective history.”⁴¹

The debate that has emerged concerning Ukraine’s history is not unrelated to the ideas proposed by Katherine Verdery in her *National Ideology under Socialism*.⁴² Verdery theorizes that intellectual groups often compete to produce rival images of their nation in attempts to become the community’s acknowledged cultural representative. The resulting national discourse features the definition and redefinition of cultural canons, the appropriation and reappropriation of national symbols, and conflicting revalorizations of accumulated cultural values. These symptoms have indeed been reflected in the months following Ukraine’s recent independence as representatives of the diaspora confronted various members from the Ukrainian government, ranging from the conservative to the radical sides.

Today, as the leaders of Ukraine attempt to forge a new path for their country, the Soviet legacy and the diaspora experiences are being incorporated into the new image of the nation. The dilemma faced by the independent Ukraine of how, if at all, to recapture its pre-Soviet identity and integrate it with its Soviet experience in the process of creating the new state, takes on a wider significance. Although too drastic a set of changes may bring criticism from more conservative circles, too great a degree of continuity with either “past” will almost surely be contested.

⁴¹ von Hagen, “Does Ukraine Have a History?,” 658–659.

⁴² Katherine Verdery, *National Ideology Under Socialism: Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceausescu’s Romania* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

4. Postal History

A popular thesis underlying several key volumes of postal history is the idea that as regions are united, the federal postal service provides a common thread to bind together a state.⁴³ In the preface to *The American Mail: Enlarger of the Common Life*, Daniel J. Boorstin convincingly argues that for much of American history, the mail was the main form of organized communication, and that no other institution has been more effective in cementing community or more essential to the function and growth of a democratic government.⁴⁴ Similarly, in his recent study of the U.S. postal system, Richard R. John notes that “no other institution had the capacity to transmit such a large volume of information on such a regular basis over such an enormous geographical expanse.” Until the development of the telegraph, the post office formed the linchpin of the American communications infrastructure.⁴⁵

Admittedly, the post office is as much a key factor behind a country’s progress as an index of it: an increasing volume of mail results from a burgeoning industry and a growing population.⁴⁶ Therefore, organized postal systems also reflect the needs of government leaders: the control of communication is tied to control of the government.⁴⁷ This factor can be clarified using examples from the American Civil War period. Jefferson Davis saw the

⁴³ In the context of the United States, Wayne Fuller states that the post office was a means of strengthening the ties among regions, and of regions to the central government. Wayne S. Fuller, *The American Mail: Enlarger of the Common Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 80. Similarly, Rohrbach and Newman assert that the postal service became a vital part of the country’s life, providing an essential bond in the young American republic. Peter T. Rohrbach and Lowell S. Newman, *American Issue: The U.S. Postage Stamp, 1842–1869* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1984), 7.

⁴⁴ Daniel J. Boorstin, “Preface” to *The American Mail*, ix.

⁴⁵ Richard R. John, *Spreading the News: The American Postal System from Franklin to Morse* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), vii.

⁴⁶ Fuller, *The American Mail*, 2.

⁴⁷ Fuller, *The American Mail*, 3.

establishment of an efficient postal service as a vital factor in the development in his country.⁴⁸ During the growth period of southern nationalism, the circulation of newspapers through the mail served to unify the South behind the ideas of the Confederacy.⁴⁹ This fact takes on an additional significance given the fact that "southernness" included more than one geographic region, more than one mindset, and a whole conglomerate of local histories.⁵⁰ Simultaneously, abolitionist postmasters removed from the mail anything considered to be antislavery propaganda.⁵¹ In this light, it is easy to see how the growth of national states where a priority was given to the centralization of authority doomed the private posts.⁵²

The extent to which *modern* society has come to depend on postal systems is probably best stated by Herbert Samuel, a former postmaster general of Great Britain:

The whole of our social organization has come to depend in large degree upon the post. Commerce, in all its departments, relies upon it. All the variety of associations which are, in their wide expansion, distinctive of modern civilization and necessary to its life and energy — employer's associations, trade unions, co-operative societies, friendly societies, religious bodies, political and propagandist organizations of every kind, local, national, and international — the whole nervous system of the modern state, depends upon the quick transmission of information and ideas: it would never have reached and could not maintain its present development without cheap, reliable, and speedy means of communication.⁵³

Great Britain had anticipated in many respects the wider patterns of modern postal history. The postal system in England was already well established by the end of the eighteenth

⁴⁸ Rohrbach and Newman, *American Issue*, 187.

⁴⁹ Fuller, *The American Mail*, 99.

⁵⁰ This is the idea developed in Sue Bridwell Beckman, *Depression Post Office Murals and Southern Culture: A Gentle Reconstruction* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), xiv.

⁵¹ Rohrbach and Newman, *American Issue*, 21.

⁵² Fuller, *The American Mail*, 6.

⁵³ Quoted in Rohrbach and Newman, *American Issue*, 8.

century. In 1710, the postal act of Queen Anne was passed, which regulated the mails and set up uniform postal rates throughout the British Empire.⁵⁴ During the early nineteenth century, the British post office began to experience financial problems owing in part to the misuse of the franking privilege. Further, because postage was not prepaid but rather collected on delivery, letters were often refused by the addressee and the government had to return the letter to the sender. Therefore, the government delivered the same letter to two different addresses with no amount being paid for either delivery.

A system for the prepayment of mail was put into effect in 1840 when England introduced the world's first postage stamps: letters were one penny if prepaid and twopence if paid when delivered. Between 1840 and 1850, only seven other countries issued stamps: Brazil and Switzerland (1843), United States (1847), Belgium, France, and the Kingdom of Bavaria (1849), and the Austrian Empire (1850). By 1880, seventy-five more countries were producing stamps.⁵⁵ Imperial Russia's first stamp appeared on 1 January 1857, showing the armorial bearing of the Romanov dynasty.

a. Postage Stamps

According to Peter T. Rohrbach and Lowell S. Newman, postage stamps — proof of the prepayment of postage for letters and all other materials sent by mail — are the most familiar embodiment of postal services.⁵⁶ Although primarily issued by government authorities to show the prepayment of postage in national and international mails, philatelists recognize that there is

⁵⁴ In 1874, the Universal Postal Union was established to regulate the traffic of international mails and to fix a scale of postal rates. Barbara Moore and Honor Holland, *The Art of Postage Stamps* (New York: Walker and Company, 1979), 10.

⁵⁵ Moore and Holland, *The Art of Postage Stamps*, 10.

⁵⁶ Rohrbach and Newman, *American Issue*, 9.

an added importance in postage stamps related to what they say about their issuing country. J. Bruce Chittenden argues that a representative collection of stamps and philatelic history carries one far into the related fields of geography and history, leading to considerable knowledge of a particular country's language, coinage, government, and topography.⁵⁷ This opinion is supported by Edward I. P. Tatelman, who states that "stamps are designed with a thought to the background and history of the stamp-issuing jurisdiction."⁵⁸ In his *Geography and Stamps*, Kent B. Stiles notes that the postage stamp precedes the mapmaker's pencil ninety percent of the time: "A colony is captured . . . or given into the political keeping of a major power and before the geography publisher has time to revise boundary lines . . . postage stamps appear which in vignette and inscription indicate the [political] development."⁵⁹ In general, then, it is not an oversimplification to say that it is possible to trace a country's social and political history and to gain a graphic picture of its customs, people, and concerns through the postage stamps issued by its postal administration.⁶⁰

Although greater numbers of people began to take advantage of the various postal operations as literacy spread in the nineteenth century, most of the services were financially inaccessible to the general public. Therefore, the earliest stamps were of purely local validity and there was no need to include the name of the issuing country.⁶¹ The majority of stamps had at least two characteristics in common: the name or abbreviation of the country for which they

⁵⁷ J. Bruce Chittenden, *Mexico: Issue of 1874-1883* (New York: The Collectors Club, 1919), 5.

⁵⁸ Edward I. P. Tatelman, "Introduction," in *Canal Zone Postage Stamps* (Mount Hope, Canal Zone: Canal Zone Postal Service, 1961), xi.

⁵⁹ Kent B. Stiles, *Geography and Stamps* (New York: Whittlesey House, 1931), viii.

⁶⁰ Moore and Holland, *The Art of Postage Stamps*, 1.

⁶¹ Mackay, *Stamp Collecting*, 11.

were issued and a number specifying the face value of the stamp.⁶² However, by the mid-nineteenth century, an additional element was considered necessary. An indication was given to denote the appropriate use of certain stamps, such as the payment of taxes on documents or the payment of a postage-due amount.⁶³

Kenneth A. Wood's *Basic Philately* has acknowledged that an additional identifiable design element was helpful in determining the origin of many stamps. Many countries had national design characteristics that became apparent in the study of their stamps while other issues bore national emblems that were common to many of its stamps.⁶⁴ For example, South Korean stamps frequently featured the yin-yang symbol.⁶⁵ In the 1870s, stamp designers in Japan replaced the otherwise traditional elements, of a dragon and cherry blossoms, with the conspicuous design of the imperial family's chrysanthemum crest.⁶⁶ The star and crescent appeared as the badge of Islam on many stamps of the world's Moslem countries.⁶⁷ For the last decade, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has issued all-Arabic language stamps that are best identified by an emblem of crossed swords beneath a palm tree.⁶⁸ And, until the 1950s, a majority of stamps issued by communist countries prominently featured the hammer and sickle as a national emblem, or in the Soviet case, characteristic portraits of Lenin, smiling workers, or determined Red Army soldiers.

⁶² Donna O'Keefe, ed., *Linn's Stamp Identifier* (Sidney, OH: Amos Press, Inc., 1993), vi.

⁶³ Richard McP. Cabeen, *Standard Handbook of Stamp Collecting*, rev. ed. (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, Publishers, 1979), 261. According to O'Keefe, text, letters, or symbols indicating the currency in which the stamp is denominated are also considered to be an essential design element. O'Keefe, *Linn's Stamp Identifier*, vi-vii.

⁶⁴ Kenneth A. Wood, *Basic Philately* (Albany, OR: Van Dahl Publications, 1984), 5.

⁶⁵ Wood, *Basic Philately*, 19.

⁶⁶ Yokiti Yamamoto, *Japanese Postage Stamps* (Tokyo: Japanese Tourist Bureau, 1940), 9, 10.

⁶⁷ R. J. Sutton, *The Stamp Collector's Encyclopedia* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1955), 278.

⁶⁸ O'Keefe, *Linn's Stamp Identifier*, vii.

Similarly, one of the most interesting postally related developments of the Civil War era was the production and use of patriotic envelopes in both the North and South. These privately produced items displayed a wide variety of patriotic symbols on the envelope, which a correspondent could use to “show the colors” while sending messages through the mail. Portraits of Abraham Lincoln, Jefferson Davis, and war heroes of both sides, as well as flags and scenes of battles won or lost were popular subjects for the patriotic artists who produced these items.⁶⁹

The use of national symbols takes on a special significance for this study. On any stamp, an overprint — additional text that is printed over a previously completed stamp — may indicate that the stamp is prepared for use in another country than the one denoted on the original underlying design.⁷⁰ Following the collapse of the Russian Empire, imperial Russian coat of arms stamps were overprinted with a stylized trident design for use in Kiev as well as other Ukrainian cities while in western Ukraine, various Austrian and Bosnian stamps were overprinted with initials signifying the Western Ukrainian National Republic.

While the study of overprints forms a specialized branch of stamp collecting, the general philatelic literature also distinguishes other stamp genres that are important for this study.⁷¹ **Definitives** are the permanent stamp series, remarkably uniform in concept, that form the backbone of a country’s postal requirements. Beginning in the 1840s, there were several different approaches regarding the subject matter to be depicted on definitive stamps. Portraits of reigning monarchs were not as popular as might have been expected and were often overlooked in favor of heraldry, historical landmarks, and mythological/allegorical figures. Scandinavia favored

⁶⁹ Rohrbach and Newman, *American Issue*, 173.

⁷⁰ O’Keefe, *Linn’s Stamp Identifier*, vii. Overprints are not to be confused with surcharges, which are applied to the face of the stamp to alter its denomination. Boggs, *Foundations of Philately*, 170.

⁷¹ The following categories do not include the production elements and errors that are also studied by some philatelists.

numeral designs; the German states opted for armorial designs; and Latin American countries mixed presidential portraits with republican allegory.⁷² Most definitives tend to be of small size and undistinguished in appearance.⁷³ In any case, a certain trend (entirely unofficial) is apparent in the issuing of definitives: in most countries, the definitive series changes on average every ten years or so; most colonial territories change their issues about every five years; and Third World countries adopt new designs every other year.⁷⁴ The reason for new stamps being issued so frequently in less economically developed areas will be discussed below.

In addition to the stamps that are issued for ordinary postal needs and in an extended range of denominations,⁷⁵ a second genre of stamp is formed by **commemoratives**. These stamps are issued either as a single stamp or a set to honor a person or event, to mark an anniversary, or to salute “just about anything that human imagination can devise.”⁷⁶ A normal feature of commemorative stamps is a date or set of dates. Because they are usually topical, commemoratives are issued for a shorter duration than definitives. Although generally described as being produced in “limited” quantities, this number is often quite large. Commemoratives remain on sale until all of the design(s) have been sold; in exceptional cases, additional printings may be generated.⁷⁷

⁷² Mackay, *Stamp Collecting*, 11.

⁷³ Wood, *Basic Philately*, 30.

⁷⁴ Mackay, *Stamp Collecting*, 13.

⁷⁵ These are the definitions applied to definitive stamps by Russell Bennett and James Watson, *Philatelic Terms Illustrated*, 2d ed. (London: Stanley Gibbons Publications Ltd., 1978), 28, and Wood, *Basic Philately*, 30.

⁷⁶ Wood, *Basic Philately*, 32. Wood (page 35) notes that commemoratives generally reflect the art, culture, and history of the issuing country. Mackay (*Stamp Collecting*, 14) adds to this definition by stating that commemoratives are also used to publicize a current event.

⁷⁷ Wood, *Basic Philately*, 32.

Perhaps the greatest opportunity for worldwide commemorative issues is sporting events and competitions. According to the recognized philatelic expert James Mackay, Australia set an awkward and much-criticized precedent in 1954 by issuing a stamp as advance publicity for the 1956 Melbourne Olympics.⁷⁸ Many other countries picked up on the potential of such a program. For example, the Soviet Union began issuing stamps for the 1980 Olympics in 1977, producing well over a hundred collectable items in the period before the event.

In recent years, the criteria governing commemoratives have become rather blurred. In many cases, a historic event is “little more than a peg on which to hang an issue.”⁷⁹ Similarly, another philatelic scholar notes that the unimportance of many commemorative stamps suggests that they are intended more to obtain revenue from collectors than to mark an event of significance.⁸⁰ As a sub-category, Russell Bennett and James Watson comment that **speculative** stamps — commemoratives with “little or no postal requirements” — are issued almost exclusively for the “benefit” of collectors.⁸¹ The American Philatelic Society and the International Philatelic Federation regularly blacklist stamps that seem to have been issued solely for collectors. Among the worst offenders have been the countries of the former Warsaw Pact: collectors were warned that it was “advisable to avoid all current stamps except those that have been used in the international mails.”⁸²

⁷⁸ Mackay, *Stamp Collecting*, 17.

⁷⁹ Mackay, *Stamp Collecting*, 14.

⁸⁰ Wood, *Basic Philately*, 33. This same criticism is also extended to souvenir sheets, which will be discussed below.

⁸¹ Bennett and Watson, *Philatelic Terms Illustrated*, 156.

⁸² Cabeen, *Standard Handbook of Stamp Collecting*, 27.

Indeed, philatelic sales are likely to be an important source of revenue for many small countries that are barely able to maintain their economic independence.⁸³ For example, stamps are the chief source of revenue in the Pitcairn Islands.⁸⁴ Thus, commemorative stamps have come to be associated with “small and impecunious countries that are quick to appreciate the tremendous revenues to be gained from collectors.”⁸⁵ To this end, most designs rely heavily on large formats and a greater use of pictorialism to achieve startling effects.⁸⁶ Similarly, some smaller countries issue large-sized definitives bearing subjects known to be popular among topical collectors and these series are changed somewhat more often than necessary. Further, definitives in many small postal entities tend to be more colorfully printed — therefore physically resembling commemoratives — than those of countries where the mail volume is high and where large volume stamp-printing precludes the use of elaborately produced stamps.⁸⁷

Finally, to encourage the collecting of entire sheets (philatelically referred to as panes) attention is given to sheet margins and greater ornamentation so that the entire sheet becomes more desirable as a unit than its component stamps.⁸⁸ There are several interesting examples of **souvenir sheets** — a stamp surrounded by an extension of its design and a commemorative inscription — issued in Europe. Czechoslovakia issued one of the most famous such sheets in 1934: it contained fifteen stamps with appropriate titles and borders as well as the musical score and words of “Kde domov můj,” the country’s national anthem. Another unusual souvenir sheet

⁸³ Wood, *Basic Philately*, 31.

⁸⁴ Cabeen, *Standard Handbook of Stamp Collecting*, vi.

⁸⁵ Mackay, *Stamp Collecting*, 15.

⁸⁶ Mackay, *Stamp Collecting*, 14.

⁸⁷ Wood, *Basic Philately*, 30, 31.

⁸⁸ Mackay, *Stamp Collecting*, 24.

was issued in Belgium in 1941. It featured nine different stamp values, each depicting a different Belgian city's coat of arms in full color.⁸⁹ A more recent example emanates from Abkhazia. The first stamp of this formerly Soviet region parodies Marx and Lenin by featuring Groucho Marx and John Lennon.⁹⁰

The third category of stamps to be considered consists of **charity** issues, which are recognized by their two figures of denomination that are usually linked by a "+" sign. The cost of charity stamps is the sum of the two figures that appear on the design. The first represents the amount of postage and the second indicates that amount being devoted to some specific purpose other than the transmission of mail.⁹¹ Russia was the third country to issue charity stamps, following Great Britain and Australia. In cases where the surtax is more than fifty percent of the face value, the stamp is routinely condemned in philatelic circles.

Although the present use of these semi-postal stamps by mail users is generally optional, it has not always been so. For example, between 1925 and 1942, letters in Bulgaria would be delivered on Sundays only if they were franked with special Sunday delivery stamps in addition to normal postage. The money collected from these charity issues went to the construction and maintenance of tuberculosis sanitariums.⁹² In recent years, however, the practice of issuing charity stamps has been declining. Instead, postal administrations usually arrange that a portion of the philatelic revenues accruing from the sales of stamps issued as part of the campaign is

⁸⁹ Cabeen, *Standard Handbook of Stamp Collecting*, 108–109.

⁹⁰ The uncut 4 3/4" x 6" sheet has become a popular feature in home-shopping catalogues, where it retails for \$29.00 US to gullible shoppers. See, for example, the *Signals Catalog*, New Year 1996, insert D. However, the item is worthless as postage, since Abkhazia is not a member of the Universal Postal Union and its "independence" is not recognized by any other countries.

⁹¹ Wood, *Basic Philately*, 36.

⁹² Mackay, *Stamp Collecting*, 23.

donated to the charity involved without a specific marking on the stamp.⁹³ Given this situation, philatelic organizations now reproach members who continue to pursue collections of modern charity designs.

The final group of stamps that must be considered for this paper is that of **cinderellas** (also referred to as labels). These unofficial stamps are issued by a specific locality or by private individuals or organizations without the authority or license of the governing postal administration.⁹⁴ Cinderellas generally lack a denomination or country name and few, if any, have an inscription that would indicate that they are postally valid.⁹⁵ *Linn's Stamp Identifier* mentions numerous examples of stamps that were not prepared by a government postal administration, most dating from periods of political unrest: the stamps of the governments-in-exile from Albania and Montenegro are unofficial issues because they did not come from the relevant national postal authorities; issues from Azerbaijan and Turkestan (1921) are similarly unofficial because they were issued while the republics were part of the Soviet Union and therefore within the Soviet postal administration; Georgia's "Day of the National Guard, 12-12-1920" stamp is considered a cinderella because, following the communist occupation of the region, it was overprinted in Italy on the remainders of another issue; in other cases, certain overprints were applied by favor of specific postal employees; Latvia's 1919 Western Army "Unity and Freedom" design was privately issued, while certain stamps from post-1917 Belorussia were likely propaganda issues.⁹⁶

⁹³ Mackay, *Stamp Collecting*, 20.

⁹⁴ Bennett and Watson, *Philatelic Terms Illustrated*, 165.

⁹⁵ O'Keefe, *Linn's Stamp Identifier*, x.

⁹⁶ O'Keefe, *Linn's Stamp Identifier*, 98, 101, 102, 108, 110, 111, 117, 129.

However, this is not to say that nations must be on their own sovereign territory in order to issue official stamps. As various countries were overrun during World War II, their governments were often transferred to other countries, usually to Great Britain. Under their rights as members of the Universal Postal Convention, Poland, Norway, and Yugoslavia issued stamps for use on their naval vessels as expatriated posts. The Czech government-in-exile was granted the use of a postmark commemorating the twenty-third anniversary of the foundation of the Czechoslovak Republic, for use on letters posted from Czech forces stationed in Britain. Similarly, when Germany occupied Belgium during World War I, the Belgian government was moved into France and continued to function in a limited fashion from the port of Le Havre. The Belgian postal service also continued and, as a special concession, Belgian stamps were accepted for the prepayment of postage in Le Havre.⁹⁷

In such circumstances, the debate as to whether the stamps are recognized as official or cinderella relates to international recognition and agreements. Although one of the first responsibilities of a new country is to define and publicize itself by issuing its own postage stamps,⁹⁸ the governing body must be recognized internationally as having constitutional authority. Thus, because the Confederacy was not recognized diplomatically, its postage stamps would not carry a letter beyond the boundaries of the territory under its jurisdiction.⁹⁹

As an additional issue to be addressed, this dissertation will investigate why the Ukrainian government-in-exile and émigré community persisted with issuing cinderella stamps and maintaining a postal presence while the Ukraine itself was a republic within the Soviet

⁹⁷ Bennett and Watson, *Philatelic Terms Illustrated*, 37.

⁹⁸ Moore and Holland, *The Art of Postage Stamps*, 10.

⁹⁹ August Dietz, *The Confederate States Post-Office Department, Its Stamps and Stationery* (Richmond, VA: The Dietz Press, Inc., 1950), 27.

Union. Were the stamps an integral part of the diaspora's existence, playing vital roles in commerce, civilian, and social activities? Were they meant to publicize Ukrainian achievements or to gain revenue from stamp collectors, frequently the motive behind the printing of stamps? And lastly, what was the relationship between these activities and those of the Soviet state and the newly independent Ukraine?

5. Art History

The subject matter on most countries' first stamps was usually political, featuring the head of state or the ruling coat of arms. Later, commemorative stamps were issued to describe the growth and development of the country, to chronicle its acquisition and exploration of land, and to commemorate important personalities.¹⁰⁰ Countries publicize their successes, adulate their heroes, pay tribute to achievements on an international scale, and convey important aspects of cultural heritage through these issues. Thus, postage stamps provide the outside world with points of reference for the specific country.

Richard Carline, a scholar of graphic arts, builds on this foundation and theorizes that postage stamps belong to a country's printing heritage, which includes posters and political broadsides. By combining graphic invention, artistic skill, and imagination, graphic artists make stamps into vehicles of popular art within the reach of all classes of society, instead of serving only in functional roles.¹⁰¹ Therefore, in addition to indicating the prepayment of services,

¹⁰⁰ Edwin A. Bathke and Nancy E. Bathke, *The West in Postage Stamps* (Palmer Lake, CO: Filter Press, 1973), iii.

¹⁰¹ Richard Carline, *Pictures in the Post: The Story of the Picture Postcard and its Place in the History of Popular Art*, 2d ed. (Philadelphia: Deltiologists of America, 1972), 12.

postage stamps carry national emblems and patriotic messages to the general public, their printers providing art for the common people.¹⁰²

Karal Marling makes an important distinction between historians looking at art and art historians in the introduction to her work *Wall-to-Wall America: A Cultural History of Post-Office Murals in the Great Depression*. Marling argues that while the form of a given picture comes from the history of social and governmental institutions, its content is derived from the history of art.¹⁰³ Further, Marling notes that while art historians ask what does a piece of art look like, historians ask why and how it was made as well as focusing on what its content meant to the people.¹⁰⁴ Such ideas build on the theories of another scholar of art, F. Graeme Chalmers, who notes that while art can be used for decoration and enhancement, it may additionally create an awareness of social issues or provide a rallying cry for action and social change. Most importantly, to fulfill its total function, art has to achieve communication with its audience, otherwise it cannot either maintain or change a given culture.¹⁰⁵

Surprisingly, art historians typically focus their attention on so-called postal stationery, instead of on actual stamps. Most countries also print or emboss non-adhesive stamp designs on postal cards, stamped envelopes, aerograms, and lettercards. In general, postage stamp and stationery imprint designs are virtually identical.¹⁰⁶ Through them, historians can obtain a vivid impression of tastes and hobbies of the given period and evaluate how the environment

¹⁰² Carline, *Pictures in the Post*, 18.

¹⁰³ Karal Ann Marling, *Wall-to-Wall America: A Cultural History of Post-Office Murals in the Great Depression* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), vii.

¹⁰⁴ Marling, *Wall-to-Wall America*, viii.

¹⁰⁵ F. Graeme Chalmers, "Culturally Based versus Universally Based Understanding of Art," in *Art in a Democracy*, edited by Doug Blandy and Kristin G. Congdon (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1987), 4.

¹⁰⁶ O'Keefe, *Linn's Stamp Identifier*, viii.

and circumstances surrounding their production changed.¹⁰⁷ The following two examples will illustrate how postal card designs expand on the basic functionality of stamps by fulfilling additional roles.

During the decade preceding World War I, the “language of stamps” was a popular device on postcards published in France and England. These items would show representations — facsimiles were forbidden — of postage stamps, usually twelve in number, placed at different angles. Each stamp would bear a different message such as “You occupy my thoughts,” “I will not survive,” or a preemptory “Answer at once.” These designs were aimed at correspondents who were shy about expressing sentiments in handwriting but who could boldly place a cross against the stamp carrying the required message on the printed postcard.¹⁰⁸ These cards were slightly modified in the Russian Empire. In turn-of-the-century examples, users were instructed to express their feelings by placing a 3- or 4-kopeck postage stamp over the illustrated stamp that was accompanied by the appropriate phrase: “Are you thinking of me?”; “Do you love me?”; “My heart is free”; “I love you!”; “I think of you constantly”; “Your absence grieves me”; “Be happy!”; “My heart longs for you!”; “Yes!”; or “Will I see you soon?”¹⁰⁹

The second example shows how the Russian Empire adopted the postal card as a means to spread its own political messages. In September 1914, after initial successes against Austro-Hungarian forces, Russian postal cards with the following message were publicly distributed:

To the Austro-Hungarian People

The Vienna government has declared war on Russia because Russia, loyal to its historic vows, was unable to leave Serbia unprotected and to allow its subjugation. . . . Russia, on the contrary, strives toward one goal, that each of

¹⁰⁷ Carline, *Pictures in the Post*, 9.

¹⁰⁸ Carline, *Pictures in the Post*, 62.

¹⁰⁹ Gary A. Combs, “She Loves Me, She Loves Me Not,” *Rossica Journal* 120 (April 1993): 77.

you can develop and be prosperous, keeping the precious heritage of your fathers — language and faith — and in unity with native brothers, to live in peace and in harmony with neighbors, respecting their independence. Certain that you will cooperate with all your power to achieve this goal, I call upon you to meet the Russian forces as true friends and fighters for your best ideals.

In addition to domestic propaganda to gain native support for the war effort, such cards were also intended for the largely non-Germanic populace in occupied Galicia along the Carpathian Mountains.¹¹⁰

Although the majority of postal histories focus on the philatelic purposes of stamps, postage stamps have, similarly to the above mentioned postal card, been employed to express political opinions. Historical precedents for this type of activity range from the issues of the U.S. Civil War to Sinn Fein cinderellas, which were issued by the Irish rebels in 1907 as a gesture of defiance against the British authorities.¹¹¹ In conjunction with a stamp exhibition in 1943, the Czechoslovak government-in-exile, based in London, issued a souvenir sheet of cinderellas to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of Czechoslovak independence (1918–1943). More recently, the Lithuanian and Belorussian exile communities in Great Britain were allowed to organize private posts and issue a variety of official, local postage stamps to mark payment for services during the 1971 British postal strike. To this category may be added the Ukrainian National Council cinderella stamps and other related issues, which apparently ignored the contemporary political reality in favor of propagating the notion of an independent Ukrainian state.

In this light, the nearest comparable work to this dissertation is Anatol Kobylinski's *Six Years of the Underground Post in Poland 1982–1988*, which investigates the issuing of postage stamps and the functions of the underground postal system operated by Poland's civil society as a

¹¹⁰ The postal card is illustrated and discussed in George Shalimoff, "A World War I Propaganda Postcard," *Rossica Journal* 102/103 (1983): 104–105.

¹¹¹ Sutton, *Stamp Collector's Encyclopedia*, 265. There is evidence that the Sinn Fein labels were postally used during the 1916 "Easter" Rebellion.

means of opposition to the pro-Soviet communist government.¹¹² Kobylinski explains that the Solidarity stamps served a twofold purpose. First, they provided much needed finances for the underground organizations. And of equal significance, through their designs, the stamps reminded the Polish people of those parts of their history that the official sources preferred to either ignore or corrupt.

While the policy of artistic pluralism became a standard throughout much of Europe in the 1930s, many scholars recognize that state patronage in Nazi Germany, fascist Italy, and Soviet Russia turned art, including postage stamp designs, into a blunt instrument of propaganda.

As Marling notes:

When content was the calculated propaganda of a totalitarian regime and form was the most expedient method of driving the message home, orderly rules governing the creation of public art were easy to frame. Ends justified and mandated the means.¹¹³

Further, according to Nicos Hadjinicolaou, the social function of an ideology is not to provide people with a real understanding of the structure of society, but is rather to give them a motive for continuing the practical activities that support the structure. Ideology, therefore, is an illusion because it is interwoven with an imaginary view of life.¹¹⁴ In these circumstances, art became ideological; it propagated a system of ideas that reproduced and legitimized a particular social order as well as a specific system of domination.¹¹⁵ Most recently, Victoria Bonnell's *Iconography of Power* has reinforced this theory, based on Bonnell's observation that "the Bolsheviks attempted to gain control over the sphere of public discourse and to transform

¹¹² Anatol Kobylinski, *Szesc Lat Podziemnej Poczty w Polsce 1982-1988* (Rapperswil, Switzerland: Muzeum Polskie, 1989). There is no evidence to suggest that any of these stamps were honored for mail destined for addresses outside of Poland.

¹¹³ Marling, *Wall-to-Wall America*, 13.

¹¹⁴ Nicos Hadjinicolaou, *Art History and Class Struggle* (London: Pluto Press Limited, 1978), 9-10.

¹¹⁵ Robert W. Witkin, *Art and Social Structure* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), 83.

popular attitudes and beliefs by introducing new symbols, rituals, and visual imagery. Their aim was nothing less than the redefinition of ‘all social values by an immense message designed to liberate, but also to create a new mystique.’”¹¹⁶

The artists of the fledgling Soviet Union depicted their country as a brave new world with its future before it. It was a utopia in the making. After the unionization of artists in 1932, social realism became the official creative method with its accompanying themes of nature’s abundance, the joys of labor, social courage, and a satisfied population. In *The Total Art of Stalinism*, Boris Groys states that social realism was meant to educate and was unappealingly didactic.¹¹⁷

Historically, art that is universally regarded as good has frequently served to embellish and glorify power.¹¹⁸ Philatelists commonly identify the stamps issued by the Soviet Union as being politically oriented because many carry national or political slogans and have pictorial and symbolic designs related to contemporary events or anniversaries. Others have been classified as propaganda stamps, which convey messages or are designed to further a campaign or cause either by their inscription, design, or a combination of both elements.¹¹⁹ However, Kenneth Wood makes an appropriate observation on this topic. Although recognizing that stamps can serve as vehicles of propaganda, Wood notes that “there are few countries whose commemorative stamps don’t reflect this to some degree . . . Stamps of the [c]ommunist nations are heavily propaganda-

¹¹⁶ François Furet made this statement with reference to the French Revolution. François Furet, *Interpreting the French Revolution*, trans. Elborg Forster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 114; cited in Victoria E. Bonnell, *Iconography of Power: Soviet Political Posters under Lenin and Stalin* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 1.

¹¹⁷ Boris Groys, *The Total Art of Stalinism: Avant-Garde, Aesthetic Dictatorship, and Beyond* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 8.

¹¹⁸ Groys, *The Total Art of Stalinism*, 7.

¹¹⁹ Bennett and Watson, *Philatelic Terms Illustrated*, 140.

oriented, and there are those of the United States marking American achievements, quality of life, victories in battle, etc., that could be said to have a nationalistic message."¹²⁰

6. Method and Scope

In terms of its approach, this study parallels Donald J. Lehnus's *Angels to Zeppelins*, a topical examination of U.S. postage stamps.¹²¹ In his text, Lehnus surveys the history of the postage stamps in the United States and provides statistical data on the persons, objects, topics, and themes featured from the time the United States began producing stamps until the publication of his book (1982). In my own study, I have modified Lehnus's more detailed categorization to fit the stamps of the Soviet Union, while also drawing from Lehnus ideas related to the presentation of this data.

Since 1917, when the first post-imperial Russian stamps were issued bearing allegorical representations of the new social order, the Soviet Union released many stamps depicting persons, events, organizations, anniversaries, and a wide variety of topics. This study deals with the postage stamps of the Soviet Union issued during its seventy-four-year period of existence, 1917–1991. These issues include definitive and commemorative stamps, with lesser attention to other categories of stamps such as those used on airmail and fiscal documents.

Since 1918, when the Ukrainian National Republic produced its first postal issues, the Ukrainian community, both state and nation, has released numerous stamps honoring its history, personalities, and ethnic heritage. This study examines Ukrainian postage stamps from 1918 to the present. This includes definitive and commemorative cinderella stamps as well as overprints

¹²⁰ Wood, *Basic Philately*, 33.

¹²¹ Donald J. Lehnus, *Angels to Zeppelins: A Guide to the Persons, Objects, Topics, and Themes on United States Postage Stamps, 1847–1980* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982).

on official issues to a limited extent. The main focus will be on the years up to the end of World War II. During these decades, the Soviet government consolidated its power, while the Ukrainian nation fought for independence, forming various autonomous states.

Philatelists are interested in variations of the same stamps that often result due to printing errors, flaws in printing plates, reprintings, different types or colors of paper, the absence or presence of grill marks, watermarks, the number of perforations or the lack thereof, different colors or shades of ink used in printing, and slight changes in the design caused by redrawing. Because the purpose of this study is to analyze the persons, themes, and objects that have been used on Soviet and Ukrainian postage stamps, these phenomenon are not considered. However, because the same designs were frequently repeated on different stamp issues used for different purposes — and are recognized as being distinct issues by philatelists — for statistical purposes these occurrences have been counted separately.

Whenever possible, the actual postage stamps themselves were examined. In those instances where the stamps were not available, descriptions of the stamps were carefully studied. To this end, I have relied extensively on the publications of the Ukrainian Philatelic and Numismatic Society and the Rossica Society for Russian Philately, as well as on other related journals and relevant stamp catalogs. Their value as sources for this dissertation is addressed in the next section.

7. Sources and Secondary Works

Although there are many works covering the growth of the Thurn and Taxis postal system in Western Europe, there is a dearth of scholarship on the postal system in the Austrian Empire. The most comprehensive, accessible study is Richard E. Coons, *Steamship, Statesmen, and Bureaucrats: Austrian Policy towards the Steam Navigation Company of the Austrian Lloyd*,

1836–1858.¹²² While the work focuses on the relations of the Austrian government with the Steam Navigation Company of the Austrian Lloyd, many aspects of Austrian postal history are necessarily covered. Indeed, other than the ongoing publication series *Österreichische Postgeschichte*,¹²³ no new titles in this area have appeared in the last thirty years.

In contrast, several works form the foundation for studies of the Russian postal service. Originally published in Moscow in 1927, Konstantin Vasil'evich Bazilevich's *The Russian Posts in the Nineteenth Century* provides one of the most detailed overviews of the imperial postal system.¹²⁴ A popular account, the text portrays the post as one of the elements of the empire's economy and culture. Against this background, Bazilevich focuses on the daily life of the post during a period that saw tremendous changes in economic and social conditions.

Bazilevich is a compelling historian. Born in 1892, in Kiev, into the family of a military teacher, Bazilevich graduated from the artillery and flight schools in St. Petersburg, took part in World War I, and was one of the first Russian military pilots. After graduating from Moscow University in 1922 with a degree in history, he worked in the Historical Museum and, from 1930, taught — apparently as a devoted communist — at higher educational institutions in Moscow. Concurrent with his teaching duties, from 1936 to 1950 Bazilevich was a senior scholar at the Institute of History of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. His main works are

¹²² Richard E. Coons, *Steamship, Statesmen, and Bureaucrats: Austrian Policy towards the Steam Navigation Company of the Austrian Lloyd, 1836–1858* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GmbH, 1975).

¹²³ Under the direction of Dr. Rüdiger Wurth, the series of annual studies *Österreichische Postgeschichte* is based in Klingebach, Austria. The first volume appeared in 1978. In 1982, a volume on the history of the post in Galicia and Bukovina was published; however, I was unable to locate a copy through the interlibrary loan service.

¹²⁴ K. V. Bazilevich, *The Russian Posts in the Nineteenth Century*, translated by David M. Skipton (n.p.: Rossica Society, 1987). Originally published as *Pochta v Rossii v XIX veke* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo NKPT, 1927).

devoted to the history of the class struggle and to the social and economic history of the Russian state in the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries.¹²⁵

Sergej Vasil'evich Prigara's *The Russian Post in the Empire, Turkey, China and the Post in The Kingdom of Poland*¹²⁶ forms a companion volume to that by Bazilevich. Written in New York in 1941 and intended as an authoritative source for the North American stamp-collecting community on Russian postal history and the empire's international postal relations, Prigara's work is the standard upon which many Western studies and conclusions have been based.

¹²⁵ During the 1930s, Bazilevich was one of the most important contributors to the study and collection of historical sources. He undertook valuable analyses of custom duties records from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; his were the first attempts to demonstrate ways in which these records could be used. On the basis of this research, Bazilevich prepared his first book, *Krupnoe torgovoe predpriiatie v Moskovskom gosudarstve v pervoi polovine XVII v* (A Major Commercial Enterprise in the Muscovite State in the First Half of the Seventeenth Century), published in Leningrad in 1933; his studies were also published as the first two volumes of the journal *Problemy istochnikovedeniia* (Problems of Historical Research).

In addition to a series of articles on the history of Russian trade in the seventeenth century, Bazilevich wrote several works on the postal service. His first study in this area, *Zemskaia pochta v Rossii (1865–1917)*, was published in 1926. The more detailed *Russian Posts in the Nineteenth Century* appeared in 1927 (see footnote 122 above for publication details). A third work, *Robotniki sviazi v gody reaktsii: professionalnoe dvizhenie rabotnikov sviazi* (1929), focused on the political role of communications and the influence of the trade unions on the industry.

Along with several other historians, in the 1930s Bazilevich undertook a reinterpretation of the nature of feudal monarchy in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Russia. His work stimulated a complete re-evaluation of Muscovite politics. Bazilevich found that Muscovy had a well-developed money economy as early as the fifteenth century, as well as a rapidly growing urban society. His theses were built on the opinion that the nobility was involved in economic expansion in Russia in a way that their western counterparts were not and thus, along with the merchants, they contributed to the creation of a feudal society that was completely centralized.

Bazilevich's work was not limited to research on the state system. As one of the leading economic historians of the 1930s, he also wrote on internal and foreign trade relations and mercantilism under Aleksei Mikhailovich. In 1936, he published a monograph on the city riots in seventeenth-century Moscow, titled *Gorodskie vosstaniia v Moskovskom gosudarstve v XVII veke* (Town Uprisings in the Muscovite State During the Seventeenth Century). He was a prominent author of textbooks and handbooks on the history of the Soviet Union for secondary and higher schools, and he also prepared literary-historical essays, including an examination of the image of Boris Godunov in the works of A. S. Pushkin (published in 1936).

In the late 1940s, Bazilevich came under attack for promoting the themes of "bourgeois cosmopolitanism" and "economic materialism." However, in a keynote essay on the first fifty years of Soviet scholarship, A. L. Sidorov praised Bazilevich's works for their contributions to the study of urban communities and trade. For his monograph *The Foreign Policy of Russia in the Period of the Formation of the Centralized State, the Second Half of the Fifteenth Century*, Bazilevich received posthumously — he died in 1950 — the M. V. Lomonosov Prize First Class and a Medal of Honor.

A complete listing of Bazilevich's works was published in *Voprosy istorii* 7 (1950). For general biographical information, see the entries in *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia* (Moscow: Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia, 1970), 2: 525; *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* (New York: MacMillan, Inc., 1973) 2: 660; *The Modern Encyclopedia of Russian and Soviet History*, edited by Joseph L. Wiczyński (Gulf Breeze, FL: Academic International Press, 1977), 3: 179–181.

¹²⁶ S. V. Prigara, *The Russian Post in the Empire, Turkey, China and the Post in The Kingdom of Poland*, translated by David M. Skipton (n.p.: Rossica Society, 1981). Originally published as *Russkaia Pochta v Imperii, v Turtsii, v Kitaye i pochta v Tsarsvye Pol'skom. Podrobnyi Spravochnik dlia sobiraiushchikh pochtovyia marki, tsel'nyia veshchi i pochtovyie shtempelia*. (New York: Rossica, 1941).

Admittedly, much information that was unavailable or unknown to Prigara has come to light over the last fifty years. Errors and omissions aside, his text can still be credited as an outstanding one-volume compilation of Russian postal history.

Postal Censorship in Imperial Russia, by David M. Skipton and Peter A. Michalove, is another work crucial for understanding the Russian postal system.¹²⁷ This examination of the surveillance of correspondence highlights the important role played by the flow of information between and within countries. Moreover, the reasons why monarchs have sought to control postal systems, especially private postal initiatives, are clarified.

Although the analysis of this dissertation is centered around specific postage stamps, and therefore has relied primarily on Western texts for descriptions of these issues, a more in-depth investigation of Russian and Soviet postal history would require a reading of the various official Russian sources. Because I have turned to these texts for several specific questions, some comment on their nature and evolution is in order.

Nineteenth-century Russia produced a number of specialist journals, and the postal and telegraphic department was no exception. The most important publication of the post, the *Pochtovo-telegrafnyi zhurnal (Biulleten')*, was published by the Main Office of the Post and Telegraph from 1886 to 1919. The journal's immediate ancestor was a miscellany (*sbornik*) of instructions that were first produced beginning in 1873. The first editor of the *Biulleten'* was one of the department's officials, N. E. Slavinskii, who also wrote the section on the Telegraph Department in the official history of the Postal and Telegraph Department, which forms an appendix to the history of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (published in St. Petersburg in 1902).¹²⁸

¹²⁷ David M. Skipton and Peter A. Michalove, *Postal Censorship in Imperial Russia* (Urbana, IL: John Otten, 1989). Both authors are renowned experts of Russian postal censorship and prominent members of the Rossica Society of Russian Philately.

¹²⁸ The history was one of a series commemorating the centenary of the various ministries established by Alexander I in 1802 shortly after his accession to the throne.

Between 1884 and 1919, the *Pochtovo-telegrafnyi zhurnal* was composed of two distinct parts: the *Chast' offitsial'naia* (Official section) and the *Chast' neoffitsial'naia* (Unofficial section). From 1884 to 1891, both parts appeared in one volume and there were twenty-four issues every year. Beginning in 1892, the official part was published weekly while the unofficial part appeared monthly until 1913. With the outbreak of World War I, the number of issues dropped to ten in 1914 and six in both 1915 and 1916. Understandably, because of the war and revolutions, no issues appeared in 1917. The journal lingered on after the revolution until 1919. In a variety of forms and under various titles, it continued under the Soviet regime as the main publication of the postal administration.¹²⁹

Mention should also be made of two other official journals that were published for postal and telegraph officials. These were the *Pochtovo-telegrafnyi vestnik* (published in Kishinev from 1910 to 1913) and the *Pochtovo-telegrafnoe ekho* (published in St. Petersburg from 1913 to 1916). Both publications contained an occasional historical article in addition to the more standard regulations related to operations. Other interesting sources of information are the volumes of translations from the Universal Postal Union journal, which were titled *Pochtovyi soiuz* and published on an occasional basis in Khar'kov from 1875 to 1884.¹³⁰

Much of the information concerning the reorganization of stamp collecting as a hobby by the Bolshevik and Soviet governments has been derived from two contemporary periodicals, both of which were official publications of the All-Russian Society of Philatelists (Vserossiiskoe

¹²⁹ Between 1919 and 1921, eighteen issues of *Tekhnika narodnoi sviazi* were printed in Moscow. The journal then continued publication, between August 1921 and March 1924, as the quarterly *Tekhnika sviavi*. From April 1924 to 1929, the monthly *Zhizn' i tekhnika sviazi* was printed. It was followed by another monthly journal, *Tekhnika sviazi*, which appeared until 1938. *Master sviazi* was briefly produced in 1939–1940, and then replaced by *Vestnik sviavi*. An index of articles published in the journal was compiled and issued in Moscow in 1929.

¹³⁰ Although no copies could be located, three issues of the separate postal *Vestnik sviazi i informatsii* were apparently published in Kiev in June and July 1919. See Rudolf Smits, comp., *Half a Century of Soviet Serials 1917–1968: A Bibliography and Union List of Serials Published in the USSR*, 2 volumes (Washington: Library of Congress, 1968), 2: 1477, 1528.

obshchestvo filatelistov). The first, *Sovetskii filatelist*, was edited by V. A. Bessonov and published between 1922 and 1928. It was then absorbed by a second journal, *Sovetskii kollektioner*, which was published until 1932 under the direction of Fedor Grigor'evich Chuchin. A third publication, *Radio de Filintern*, was also prepared between 1925 and 1927 by Leongard Karlovich Eichfus as the organ of the Filintern; in 1927, the journal was also absorbed into *Sovetskii kollektioner*. After a break in publication that began in the mid-1930s, annual issues of *Sovetskii kollektioner* were reissued again from in 1963, supplemented by the monthly bulletin *Filateliia SSR*, which was first printed in 1966.

I have also relied rather extensively on publications derived from the international philatelic community, most especially the Ukrainian Philatelic and Numismatic Society and the Rossica Society for Russian Philately. In general, although these publications are quite valuable for philatelic questions, some caution must be used when reading their presentations of relevant historical events. The journals are produced by amateur historians and their presentation of fact is often unsubstantiated. Moreover, because the journals are produced by members of the emigre communities, some ethnic grudges are given a forum through the essays. However, because some of the stamp collectors who submit articles to the journals do have access in their own collections to historical documents and newspapers that are not available to the wider academic community, the publications cannot be discounted as unimportant.

Of the two émigré journals, the *Rossica Journal* has been more helpful. The Russian Philatelic Society, Rossica, was formed in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes in April 1928 by Russian (pro-monarchist) exiles, and the first issue of its journal, dated April 1929, was prepared by the organization's founder Evgenii Mikhailovich Arkhangelskii. Because of international political events, war, and the composition of the membership, the journal was

subsequently published in Latvia, Estonia, China (Shanghai), and the United States. In December 1997, I was appointed editor of the *Rossica Journal*.

The majority of the early *Rossica* members brought with them from Russia not only their stamp collections but also a wide range of contemporary newspapers. Their translations of various articles related to Russian postal history have proved invaluable for this dissertation. Further, a series of columns provided translated passages from the notebooks of V. G. Belkin, a former employee of the Russian post office. Belkin had transcribed these items from official documents and manuals of the imperial postal administration.

The *Ukrainian Philatelist* is a similar publication, although the coverage is limited to Ukrainian topics (while the *Rossica Journal* understandably includes information for a much wider geographical region and for a longer period of time). The International Society of Ukrainian Philately and Numismatics was founded in Vienna in January 1925 by a well-known collector, Ivan Turyn; the first issue of the *Ukrainian Philatelist* appeared in the same month. The journal was issued until December 1939 when its publication was discontinued due to the political situation in German-occupied Austria.

By the end of World War II, a number of Ukrainian collectors, including members of the original society, had moved to the United States. The Society of Ukrainian Philatelists was then established in New York on 17 December 1950, while publication of the journal resumed in June 1951. In addition to the journal, the association also produced a quarterly newsletter and, beginning in the 1980s, a series of catalogs and philatelic research tools. Because of economic concerns (and internal disagreements among the executive committee), the last issue of the *Ukrainian Philatelist* was published in 1996.

Final mention should also be made of several union catalogs of stamps, which were used as basic reference tools for identifying the various stamp issues discussed in this paper. For the

stamps of the Soviet Union, the most important of these were the two-volume set *Katalog pochtovykh marok SSSR 1918–1980* and *Pochtovie marki SSSR (1918–1968): Kratkii spravochnik*.

For the official issues of Ukrainian stamps, I used the listings in *Michel Europe-Katalog Ost* as well as *Scott's Standard Postage Stamp Catalog*. Although several smaller brochures are available, there is no comprehensive catalog covering the Ukrainian cinderella labels.

8. Note on Transliteration

The system of transliteration used for both Russian and Ukrainian in this paper is that of the Library of Congress. In the fourth chapter, specific conventions have been followed for the transliteration of Ukrainian. Thus, for example, the letter “h” is used in instead of “g” and an “i” instead of an “i.”

Names and places that are well known are given in their more familiar English forms, based on the guidelines presented in the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 14th edition. Place names on Ukrainian territory have generally been used according to Russian (not Ukrainian) except when specific stamps have been catalogued using the Ukrainian form (i.e., the Stanyslaviv issues). A few more commonly accepted English names (such as Kiev and Cracow) have also been retained, with the Russian or Ukrainian versions provided in parentheses for clarification where necessary.

CHAPTER ONE: AN OVERVIEW OF THE POST OFFICE IN THE RUSSIAN AND AUSTRIAN EMPIRES

The postal system reflects the overall cultural conditions of the particular country in which it develops. Its evolution is related to important social, political, and economic indicators such as the expansion of industry and increases in literacy rates and the circulation of newspapers. Perhaps more significantly, during the struggles for modernization that any country confronts, there is an added connection between the post and politics as the communications network responds to territorial expansion and efforts to control newly acquired and peripheral regions.

The post, therefore, becomes a crucial bureaucracy in any modern state that is assigned various tasks related to communications. Historically, these have included improving postal connections, creating telegraph links, organizing passenger coach travel, and maintaining roads. Because it serves both the state and its subjects, and because of its contact with all aspects of public and political life, there has been an historical need for governments to control postal operations. Moreover, as a consequence of their proximity to the population and their inherent ability to monitor popular behavior, European post offices have been associated with censorship since early in their development.

In chronicling the administrative developments of the post office in two European empires, the Russian and Austro-Hungarian, this chapter demonstrates how the expansion of the postal network was used as a means to unite widely dispersed and ethnically mixed populations behind the centralized administrations they served. Although both of these empires shared certain common characteristics, including rule by an absolute monarch, important differences do emerge. While in the Russian Empire the emphasis was placed on the maintenance of the state's monopoly over communications and the development of perustration — the unauthorized

examination of mail for the purpose of surveillance and censorship — greater liberties were given to private and regional initiatives in the Austrian Empire.

Further, the characteristics of these two emerging postal systems are also reflected in the stamps and stationery that were released by the two regimes. Although all postal issues bear the symbols and icons of the country they represent, in the Austrian case variations — including the use of the regional languages — were tolerated by the Habsburg rulers. In the Russian Empire, however, controversy surrounding local zemstvo stamps ultimately led to their circumscription.

The well-developed networks of postal communications that emerged from the Russian and Austrian empires would be used especially in the early twentieth century by nationalist Ukrainian leaders to spread their messages.

1. The Russian Empire

In the decades between 1722 and 1793, the Russian postal system expanded from the minor adjunct of a medieval bureaucracy to an essential administrative apparatus of a highly organized, centralized state. This remarkable transformation was set in motion by several important pieces of postal legislation that were enacted primarily under the rule of Catherine the Great (1729–1796). Prior to this time, the postal system remained constrained by the assumption that the service existed only as a potential source of personal income for whoever was in charge of it, and thus it served only secondarily as a means of transporting correspondence. Yet as a result of Catherine's initiatives, the post office was rapidly transformed into a dynamic institution that exerted a major influence on Russian commerce, politics, and political thought.

a. Muscovite Russia

Until the start of the eighteenth century, postal communications in Russia were sporadic at best and reserved exclusively for the government, its complex bureaucracy, and an expanding military. In its initial stages, Russia's post office performed three primary functions. It carried commercial mail to and from foreign countries, it conveyed diplomatic reports to and from Russia's ambassadors abroad, and it transported travelers along postroads. As it evolved, the post became the primary means of receiving and issuing reports between the central government and its subordinate institutions. Moreover, as it began to carry private domestic mail, the system became an effective means of surveillance over the population.

Given the demographic composition of the Muscovite state, the services offered by the post office appropriately reflected cultural conditions. The population was primarily rural with sparsely populated regions extending far beyond the outlying provincial centers. As late as 1724, 97 percent of Russia's population lived in the countryside and by 1796 the figure had decreased only slightly to 95.9 percent. Additionally, the overwhelmingly agricultural rural population was composed primarily of illiterate serfs who did not necessarily require any postal facilities.¹

Four factors characterize the pre-Catherinian postal system. First, the postal system was confined to a chain of stations that were linked by a network of postroads that originated in Moscow. This specifically Muscovite service, the *iamskaia gonba*, was initially organized in the thirteenth century to facilitate the regularized conveyance of written messages.² The skeleton

¹ Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 282.

² The foundations for the *iam* system were laid by an earlier series of courier networks. According to the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* (20: 465–466), as early as the tenth century, there existed in Rus' a special obligation called the *povoz*, which required the population to supply carts and horses for princes' messengers. With the later expansion of the economy, the appanage princes corresponded among themselves and kept the boyars informed of orders and instructions on governmental matters by means of couriers. The men who performed these messenger services were known as *boiare putnye* (*put'* = way or road). This duty fulfilled the requirement of state service, and thus meant that the men did not have to enlist in the army. See George Vernadsky and Ralph T. Fisher, Jr., *Dictionary of Russian Historical Terms From the Eleventh Century to 1917* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 110.

for this system was the relay station (*iam*) where messengers would change their horses and pass on mail to the next courier. The relay stations also served as places where travelers could obtain fresh horses, food and lodging for the night, and also the necessary drivers and guides for the continuation of their trip. The maintenance of the buildings fell primarily on a special class of peasants (*iamshchiki*). These postriders were exempt from taxation as well as other government duties, with the exception of conscription. In those areas where there were no *iamshchiki*, the postal obligation was fulfilled by peasants in addition to their regular government taxes. With the exception of a few roads where the *iamshchiki* received travel expenses (*progony*), the service was, according to one postal historian, “a profitless duty.”³ Administratively, this system of internal communications was directed by the *Iamskoi prikaz* (relay department), which was not organized until 1567.⁴

Based on these relay stations, Russia’s first internal posts were haphazard and unreliable. Riders were not sent out according to any schedule but rather only as the need arose to carry messages and orders between the rulers and the general population. In one instance, a report from Kiev concerning “most pressing matters” reached Moscow after thirty-six days.⁵

The establishment of more regularized postal services allowed for the systematic censorship of the mail, the second characteristic. As a result of the Truce of Andrusovo (1667) between Russia and Poland, a post was established in 1669 running from Moscow through

³ K. V. Bazilevich, *Russian Posts in the Nineteenth Century* (Pochta v Rossii v XIX veke), trans. David M. Skipton (N.p.: Rossica Society, 1987), 2.

⁴ I. Ia. Gurliand, *Iamskaia gonba v Moskovskom gosudarstvie do kontsa XVII veka* (Iaroslavl: Tip. gubernskago pravleniia, 1900), 297–299. Another good source on the history of the relay system is I. Ia. Gurliand, *K voprosu ob istochnike i vremeni proiskhozhdeniia iamskoi gonby v Drevnei Rusi* (Iaroslavl: Tip. gubernskago pravleniia, 1900).

Initially, the *iamshchiki* were hired and selected by the local communities; they later formed professional communities. The Russian postriders lived in special settlements (*iamskaia sloboda*) and owned arable land and pastures for their horses.

⁵ Bazilevich, *Russian Posts in the Nineteenth Century*, 2. By comparison, it took ten days for mail from Kiev to reach St. Petersburg in the 1820s, when mail left three times per week.

Smolensk to Vilna. This was not the first international postal route: in 1665, a Dutch entrepreneur named Jan “van Sweden” had organized Russia’s first international post linking Russia with Riga, then in Sweden. At that time, Afanasii Lavrentievich Ordin-Nashchokin (c. 1605–1680), the chief negotiator of the *Posol’skii prikaz* (consular department) and an advisor to Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich (1629–1676), had encouraged the maintenance of diplomatic communications with Russia’s northern enemy.⁶ What set the Vilna and Riga posts apart from other courier networks was their schedule — once a week in each direction regardless of the amount of mail to be carried — and their content. For the first time, foreign commercial correspondence was permitted to be sent by the state’s post.

More significantly, as a result of these specific conditions, institutionalized censorship over the mail could be organized.⁷ First, a regular post with announced schedules told the censors when the mail would be sent and often by whom. Second, foreigners and merchants who were not part of the state’s administrative apparatus were allowed access to these two routes; otherwise in Russia, the few pieces of private and business correspondence that required transmittal still had to be sent with travelers or servants. Third, the state controlled the communications and there was no legal alternative to the official post. Merchants were forbidden to hide letters in their shipments or to send their own messengers; it was illegal for ship captains to take private letters aboard without the knowledge of the authorities; and foreign diplomats were obliged to use the Russian state posts. Even when the practice of using private diplomatic

⁶ In his study *Alexis: Tsar of All the Russias*, Philip Longworth ties the creation of the first regular postal routes as well as improvements of the old courier service to the tsar’s personal “quest for speedier, direct, reliable communications both internally and abroad.” Moreover, Longworth downplays Ordin-Nashchokin’s involvement in the program and instead emphasizes Aleksei’s supervision of the service points. Longworth, *Alexis, Tsar of All the Russias* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1984), 243, 278 n. 31. For further information on Ordin-Nashchokin’s role in contemporary reforms, see Ivan Vasil’evich Galaktionov, *A. L. Ordin-Nashchokin — russkii diplomat XVII v.* (Moscow: Izd-vo sotsialno-ekon. lit-ry, 1961).

⁷ David M. Skipton and Peter Michalove, *Postal Censorship in Imperial Russia*. 2 volumes (Urbana: John Otten, 1989), 1: 26.

couriers emerged in later years, not all embassies could afford to send every dispatch in this manner. Fourth, the practice of censorship was centralized, along with postal operations, under either the *Posol'skii prikaz* (from 1665 to 1668) or the *Prikaz tainykh del* (department of secret affairs, between 1668 and 1727). And fifth, all mail from the Riga and Vil'na routes was channeled through Moscow.

As a related issue, the Russian postal system offered no special facilities for the press. It was not until 1837 that the well-known bookseller Aleksandr Filippovich Smirdin (1795–1857) and the publishers of several newspapers approached the St. Petersburg postal administration, requesting that their publications be delivered in the city. It was agreed that newspapers and magazines would be turned in directly to the local post office, with annual payments set between one and ten rubles for each subscription. By 1843, almost 380,000 copies of newspapers and periodicals were directed through the St. Petersburg post. The *Zemledel'cheskaia gazeta* (Agricultural Journal) was the most popular periodical, accounting for 221,400 of these copies, followed by the *Biblioteka dlia chteniia* (Library for Reading).⁸

The final characteristic to be noted here was that the post was expected to generate a revenue that would help the central government defray its routine expenses. This meant, for example, that the level of postal operations in provincial and district capitals was subject to considerable fluctuation. As late as 1786, ninety-seven offices in the Samara region where the postal collections did not cover the operating costs were closed, while the services at an additional sixty-five offices were reduced. Several years later, only those offices where the postmasters had agreed to serve without pay, “to serve only for honor, to expect rewards with

⁸ Bazilevich, *Russian Posts in the Nineteenth Century*, 73. Smirdin was the first large-scale literary publisher and bookseller in Russia. The empire's first great publishing success came in 1829 when Smirdin paid Faddei Bulgarin 2,000 rubles for exclusive rights to his *Ivan Vyzhigin*, a moralizing novel which set a record for sales. In January 1834, Smirdin then launched the *Biblioteka dlia chteniia*. For information on Smirdin's role in expanding the press in Russia, see Charles A. Ruud, *Fighting Words: Imperial Censorship and the Russian Press, 1804–1906* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 56, 72–75.

promotions to higher ranks and for the advantage of protecting his house against the burden of any civil obligation,” continued to operate.⁹

b. College of Foreign Affairs

Developments during the reign of Peter I (1682–1725) marked the start of the transition from the existing medieval courier network to postal institutions of the more modern sense. The first changes affected the administrative structure of the post, coinciding with Peter’s reform of the overlapping and unwieldy *prikaz* apparatus. The first state postal establishments (*postamt/pochtovii dvor*) were set up in the capitals of Moscow (1711) and then St. Petersburg (1717). At both of these post offices there was a postmaster and a number of postal employees, as determined by necessity. All high-ranking postal officials were German and fell under the jurisdiction of the St. Petersburg post office director (*general-pocht-direktor*), who, along with the *Iamskaia kantseliariia* (the former *Iamskoi prikaz*), fell under the College of Foreign Affairs (*Kollegiia inostrannykh del*).¹⁰ Although the two institutions remained separate entities — one dealing with the private correspondence of foreigners and merchants, and the other, the relays, for governmental correspondence and the transportation of officials and the Russian nobility — this new organization marked a shift toward the centralization of authority over postal communications in Russia as well as the basis for integrated postal operations. Although levels of staffing were not yet set, and a definite overall administrative system was not yet in place, these steps were essential in laying the foundation for the future Russian post office.

⁹ Cyril Smirnov, “Historical Review of the Posts in Russia” (in supplements to the Main Postal Administration’s General Circulars of 1843 (no. 5), 1844 (nos. 12, 15), 1845 (nos. 25, 27, 28), and 1846 (no. 37); cited in Bazilevich, *The Russian Posts in the Nineteenth Century*, 3–4.

¹⁰ In 1720, the *Posol’skii prikaz* was transformed into the College of Foreign Affairs. A good documentary source on the history of the Russian postal service beginning in the eighteenth century is *Materialy po istorii sviazi v Rossii, XVIII-nachalo XX vv.: Obzor dokumental’nykh materialov* (Leningrad: Ministerstvo sviazi SSSR, 1966).

c. Main Postal Affairs Board

By the mid-eighteenth century, municipal postal institutions still did not have any permanent staffs and officials and employees were appointed only as the need arose. The receipt and dispatch of correspondence in many locations were managed by mayors, magistrates, officials in the town halls, persons entrusted by local authorities, and relay-stationmasters. Of all the roads where postal stations existed during the late eighteenth century and where, consequently, relays for conveying travelers were maintained, few actually carried much mail. The following examples illustrate how seldom mail was sent from even the largest cities in the empire. Until 1793, mail was dispatched only bi-weekly from Moscow to St. Petersburg, Smolensk, Bielgorod, Voronezh, Astrakhan', Siberia, and Arkhangel'sk, while to other cities the frequency was once a week.¹¹ On the post road from St. Petersburg to Moscow at the end of the eighteenth century, four letter and four package posts left each week. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the St. Petersburg post office still dispatched mail on only eight posts (five bi-weekly, two weekly, and one bi-monthly). The majority of the correspondence was of an official nature, not only in provincial capitals but in many district seats as well. In contrast, the volume of personal correspondence was insignificant and was conducted almost exclusively between those larger cities that were distinguished by their commerce and number of residents.

Yet, with Catherine's ascension to the throne and her desire to bring all governmental matters under her own control, Russia's postal system underwent tremendous change and improvement.

¹¹ The examples given here are all taken from Bazilevich, *Russian Posts in the Nineteenth Century*, 4.

According to Sergei Vasilevich Prigara, the number of postal establishments in the empire in the late eighteenth century did not exceed twenty. Prigara, *The Russian Post in the Empire, Turkey, China, and the Post in the Kingdom of Poland* (*Russkaia pochta v imperii, v Turtsii, v Kitaie i pochta v tsarstvie Pol'skom. Podrobnii spravochnik dlia sobiraiushchikh pochtoviiia marki, tsel'niia veshchi i pochtovie shtempelia*), trans. David M. Skipton (n.p.: Rossica, 1981), 3.

During the last quarter of the eighteenth century, a general administrative organization of postal establishments gradually took shape. Beginning with the 1763 reform of municipal postal institutions, postmasters were appointed for the various smaller postal establishments and district offices. At the head of these postmasters were placed senior postmasters (*oberpochtmeister*), who had their residences in the major provincial cities of Riga, Vyborg, Revel, Narva, Arkhangel'sk, and Vologda. To oversee these provincial offices was the second level of the postal administration; these were the postal departments of St. Petersburg and Moscow, which had been established by Peter. After 1782, the Malorossiiskii department was added, as was the Ol'viopol' border office (in 1781). Finally, the highest level of postal administration was shifted in 1782 from the Public Office (*publichnaia ekspeditsiia*) of the College of Foreign Affairs to the independent Main Postal Affairs Board (*Glavnoe pochtovykh del pravlenie*), which was itself under the supervision of the State Senate.¹²

The appointment in 1781 of Aleksandr Andreevich Bezborodko (postal director 1781–1798) as chief director of the posts further accelerated improvements in operations. Although the postal service continued to focus on conveying diplomatic correspondence and business mail, Bezborodko recognized the demands raised by private correspondence. Thus, beginning in 1781, an additional category of mail was accepted for delivery, namely the transfer of money by post.¹³ At first only currency bills were accepted, but gold and silver coins were later added.

Bezborodko also proposed a network of postroads to connect not only provincial capitals with district seats but also all district seats among themselves. However, because traffic

¹² Brzhozovskii, *Istoricheskoe razvitie postanovlenii russkago zakonodatel'stva po pochtovoi chasti* (1855), 399; cited in Skipton and Michalove, *Postal Censorship in Imperial Russia*, 1: 34. In two related measures, Catherine replaced the former relay stations with postal stations in 1781, and after 1790, replaced the post offices in several cities with postal dispatch offices.

¹³ At the end of the eighteenth century, there were two categories of mail: heavy packages and parcels weighing the equivalent of more than five pounds; or, light parcels, official packets of normal size, and private letters.

between the majority of district towns was so insignificant this project remained unfulfilled even in the nineteenth century. At the time, it was felt that the maintenance of permanent postal stations would have posed an unnecessary tax burden on the populace and might have led to excessive expenditures from the treasury.

Yet, while the establishment of postal stations in the Russian interior was postponed, offices were established as a means of attaching peripheral borderland regions to the central government administration. During the eighteenth century, Russian frontiers expanded to include access to the Baltic, Azov, and Black seas. Under Catherine, the Russian Empire also expanded to the west. For its role in the second partition of Poland, in 1793, Russia received the central part of Belorussia, including Minsk, as well as the territories of right-bank Ukraine. Then, in 1795 when Poland was partitioned for the third time, Lithuania, western Belorussia, and Volhynia were ceded to Russia. As part of the effort to assimilate these territories, new provinces (*gubernii*) were established and postroads laid to connect the center of Russia with its distant regions.

Historical records reflect the need to enter into contracts for the transport of mail in these new areas, to lease buildings for postal stations and horses, and to find postal employees. In July 1796, one of the directors of this work informed the Kievan governor-general:

For the immediate connection of the city of Voznesensk with the city of Kiev, and through it with St. Petersburg and other cities in the interior of Russia, a road has been opened through the cities of Bohopil, Katerynopil, to the town of Zvenyhorodka, the last station on this road within this lieutenancy, and from there going on to Kiev.¹⁴

¹⁴ Internally quoted in L. Stepkovskii, "Documents Speak: The Transport of Mail in Ukraine during the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries," *Ukrainian Philatelist* 36, no. 2 (56) (1989): 4; translated from the original article in *Filateliia SSSR*, 10 (1988) by John-Paul Himka. The original article lists its source as the *Kievskii oblasnyi derzhavnii arkhiv*, fond 2, opys 3, odinitsia zberezhennia 1222, pages 43–48, and 5151, page 3. I have employed Himka's spelling of names in the quote rather than those of the Russian original.

In the Ukrainian context, the process of administrative assimilation had started much earlier. Following the Treaty of Pereiaslavl (1654), as part of the annexation of left-bank Ukraine to Muscovy, the Russian government began in 1674 to establish a postal service separate from that already in operation on Ukrainian territory. Roberto Bandinelli, an Italian merchant, organized the region's first post in 1637 to connect Lviv with other cities in Poland via two routes: Zamosc–Lublin–Turin–Gdansk and Yaroslav–Ryashiv–Tarnów–Cracow.¹⁵ The new network was designed to link Kiev with Moscow. Mirroring the Muscovite *iam* network, the Zaporozhian Host was required to establish postal routes based on relay stations, horses, and trained cossack messengers. As a result, by the mid-eighteenth century an elaborate system of mounted couriers operated along eight communications routes, all of which fell under the Russian state's postal monopoly.¹⁶

Other efforts to improve postal operations before the end of the eighteenth century were impeded by repeated changes within the office of the postal director, a position held by six men between 1798 and 1801.¹⁷ Postal efficiency was also affected by a restructuring of the postal administration and a further bureaucratization of the posts. According to Bazilevich, the Provisional Regulations of 1799 gave the postal hierarchy "a more systematic character" and

¹⁵ G. Semyonov, *Lvov Tourist Guide* (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency, 1970); cited in D. P. Belesky, "Lviv: Postmarks Through the Centuries," *Ukrainian Philatelist* 41, no. 1/2 (65/66) (1993): 8. However, another historian attributes the establishment of Lviv's first post office to 1629 and to Bartolomeo Bandinelli, a Florentine sculptor who was Roberto's grandfather. See V. Sichynsky, "Architecture and Art of the City of Lviv," in *Lviv: A Symposium on its 700th Anniversary*, ed. W. Mudry (New York: Shevchenko Scientific Society, 1962), 154. See also the *Bulletin of the Association of Philatelists in Ukraine* (in Ukrainian), 15 (1995): 14–15.

¹⁶ Kiev's first postal service apparently opened around 1725, but its frequency of contact with the outside world is unknown. Michael F. Hamm, *Kiev: A Portrait, 1800–1917* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 34.

¹⁷ Some of the changes surround the murder of Paul on 23 March 1801. One of the conspirators was the governor-general of St. Petersburg, Count Petr Alekseevich von Pahlen, who had been appointed postal director only a short time before, on 18 February. The new emperor, Alexander I, relieved von Pahlen of his duties on 17 June; his successor was Dmitrii Prokofevich Troshchinskii (postal director 1798–1799, 1801–1806), who had joined the postal department in 1793 during the reign of Catherine. For details see Skipton and Michalove, *Postal Censorship in Imperial Russia*, 1: 37 and Ian W. Roberts, "Nineteenth Century Russian Postal Ministers and Officials," *Rossica Journal* 108/109 (1986): 75.

reflected the territorial expansion of the empire.¹⁸ Permanent staffing for the administration was coordinated and seven offices (*ekspeditsii*) were created to conduct the administration's business.¹⁹ According to the first charters (*shtaty*) for imperial postal establishments, initially six, then seven, main post offices (*pochtamt*) were put in charge of the empire's daily postal affairs: Moscow (est. 1711), St. Petersburg (1717), the Malorossiiskii (in Chernigov, 1782), the Lithuanian (in Vil'na, 1797), Tambov (1799), Kazan' (1799), and the Siberian (in Tobol'sk, 1800). Each of these directorates administered the postal establishments that were operated in several provinces: Moscow oversaw twelve provinces; St. Petersburg oversaw eight provinces; Malorossiisk, five provinces, later nine; Lithuanian, five provinces, later eight; Tambov, six provinces, later nine; Kazan', four provinces; and the Siberian, two provinces, later six. Therefore, all post offices (*pochtoviia konton*), dispatch offices, and field posts throughout the empire were subordinated to these seven main post offices.

Bazilevich further describes how administrative changes that occurred in the main postal affairs board at the beginning of the nineteenth century were connected with the initial hopes for reform during the reign of Alexander I (1775–1825), specifically his ministerial reforms. The colleges formed by Peter were replaced by eight ministries as a result of the 1802 manifesto. The imperial ministries and State Council of Ministers were organized into the following structure: the ministries (*ministerstvo*) were divided into sections known as a main office (*glavnoe upravlenie*), department (*departament*), division (*otdel*), or office (*upravlenie*). At the time, the empire had 101 administrative units: seventy-eight provinces (*gubernii*), twenty-one regions (*oblasti* or *kraia*), and two independent districts (*okrugi*) in the Caucasus. This act resulted in the post office becoming

¹⁸ Bazilevich, *Russian Posts in the Nineteenth Century*, 6.

¹⁹ Prigara, *The Russian Post in the Empire*, 3; Skipton and Michalove, *Postal Censorship in Imperial Russia*, 1: 37.

a main office (*glavnoe upravlenie*) under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (*Ministerstvo vnutrennykh del*).²⁰

d. Ministry of Internal Affairs

Alexander's reform of the colleges was completed in 1810–1811 when the ministry of commerce was abolished. Although the newly created Ministry of Police had a special postal section (*pochtovoe otdelenie*) within it, this does not mean that the postal department was run by the ministry. After 1810, the main postal administration was downgraded to an office (*pochtovoe upravlenie*) within the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Still another upheaval in the postal bureaucracy occurred during the second half of Alexander's reign. In 1819, management of the postal system was taken away from the Ministry of Internal Affairs as a consequence of the elimination of the Ministry of Police. Thereafter, the postal department was assigned to the authority of Aleksandr Nikolaevich Golitsyn (1773–1844, postal director 1819–1842), who became chief administrator of the postal department (*glavnonachal'stvuiushchii nad pochtovim departamentom*). This is not to say, however, that the post office became part of the prince's Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Instruction (*Ministerstvo dukhovnykh del i narodnago prosvieshcheniia*). Golitsyn served in both roles simultaneously until 1824, when he was relieved of his ministry but retained as postal chief. The postal department was then elevated to the status of a "special ministry," although its name was not changed.²¹ These changes affected neither the general character nor the staffing of the individual post offices.

²⁰ Bazilevich, *Russian Posts in the Nineteenth Century*, 6. Bazilevich (page 2) states that at the time, there were 3,222 postal stations in the Russian Empire.

²¹ *Podita i telegraf v XIX stolietii, iubileinoe izdanie MVD* (St. Petersburg, 1902), 4; cited in Skipton and Michalove, *Postal Censorship in Imperial Russia*, 1: 42.

In the wake of the 1825 Decembrist Rebellion and Alexander's death, Nicholas I (1825–1855) assumed the throne. His reign, characterized by reaction, led to several important changes in the post office. An 1830 reform introduced precise regulations for postal service and a uniform method of postal operations. As noted by Bazilevich, the foundation of the new administrative apparatus was based on the English postal system, "which by its speed, economic results, organization, and level of service to the populace was considered the best among the European states."²² In England, the post office was organized with the least number of administrative levels needed to maintain operations. The highest organ of authority was the London Post Office, whose director also managed the entire country's postal system. Directly subordinate to him were postal inspectors, who headed the individual postal districts. All postal establishments within these districts had the privilege of direct communication with the London Post Office should the need arise.²³

The new postal arrangements adopted in Russia were "an exact copy of the English system and a partial copy of the Prussian."²⁴ According to the 1830 postal reform, the duties of the postal department director were combined with those of the St. Petersburg post office director.²⁵ As before, the highest person in management was the postmaster general (*glavnonachal'stvuiushchii*), for whom the Main Post Office (*Glavnoe upravlenie pocht*) was formed

²² Bazilevich, *Russian Posts in the Nineteenth Century*, 7.

²³ Winthrop Boggs provides a good overview of the development of the post office in England in his *The Foundations of Philately* (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1955): 17–25. In Prussia, the administrative set-up was similar to that in England, where postal establishments were organized into districts under the supervision of postal inspectors.

²⁴ Bazilevich, *Russian Posts in the Nineteenth Century*, 7. For an anecdotal account of the Russian inspectors' trips to London and Berlin and their reports, see A. B. Granville, *St. Petersburg: A Journal of Travels To and From That Capital* (London: Henry Colburn, 1828): 86–87.

²⁵ The dual position of postal department director/St. Petersburg postal director lasted from 1830 to 1835, was split from 1835 to 1841, then restored again until 1868. N. I. Sokolov, "Kratkii ocherk istorii pochtovago upravleniia v Rossii," *Pochtovo-telegrafnyi zhurnal* (April 1893; May 1893); cited in Skipton and Michalove, *Postal Censorship in Imperial Russia*, 1: 45.

with an equal rank as a ministry. With the exception of the longstanding St. Petersburg and Moscow offices, the other five main post offices were stripped of their former administrative rights and turned into provincial post offices (*gubernskiiia pochtoviia kontori*). All postal establishments, with the exception of Moscow and St. Petersburg provinces, were divided among eleven districts, each headed by a postal inspector. The district postal units (*uezdniia pochtoviia kontori*) were placed under the supervision of provincial and territorial (*oblast'*) post offices. These latter post offices, the border post offices, and those located in Moldavia and Wallachia, as well as those set up in the Ottoman Empire by the Russian Steamship Line and Trade Society (*Rossisskoe obshchestvo parokhodstva i torgovli/ROPiT*)²⁶ enjoyed direct communication with the main postal administration.²⁷

The subsequent decades of organizational stability within the postal administration paralleled a period of rapid economic and social development that magnified the overall evolution of the Russian Empire. Advances in private enterprise eventually led to an industrial boom in 1870–1872. Because of increases in the rates of rural literacy and the migration of workers to the cities following the emancipation of the serfs, the population placed increasing demands on the postal system. Thus, by the mid-nineteenth century, the post responded increasingly to the needs of the growing population.

The first innovation was the introduction of a city post designed to serve the populace for local correspondence patterned after those in London and Berlin. Until the 1830s, postal patrons were obligated to go to the post office for their mail and, when corresponding locally,

²⁶ Russia's postal relations with the Ottoman Empire date back to the late eighteenth-century. In 1783, a treaty was signed between Russia and the Sublime Porte in which, to facilitate mutual trade and correspondence, the Sublime Porte took upon itself the obligation to ensure the safety of all postal communications. Acting upon this clause, the Russian Empire established a postal agency in Constantinople, which used a packet-boat route between Kerch' and Kherson in Russia and Constantinople, with vessels leaving once a month.

²⁷ Bazilevich, *Russian Posts in the Nineteenth Century*, 7.

residents would generally send their servants to deliver letters. However, once the Russian towns expanded beyond certain territorial limits, when direct communication between residents became difficult, the need for a service within the towns became apparent. Most merchants at this time were still not interested in a postal network because their business was transacted in person. Thus, the city posts were intended primarily for private communications.

The first municipal postal system was organized in St. Petersburg, an urban center with a large population and a more developed cultural life than other Russian cities.²⁸ In 1830, Nicholas I granted the postmaster general the right to establish a city post for St. Petersburg on a two-year provisional basis, "for the delivery of letters with no money or articles enclosed from one part of the city to another."²⁹ The first year of operations showed favorable results. As of 17 January 1834, 79,417 letters and 4,759 cards had been accepted and delivered. Postal income in 1834 was 16,350.30 rubles and by 1835, the net profit was 662.15 silver rubles. Convinced by the experiment that the revenues would not only cover the costs of maintaining the posts but that a profit could be made, the postal administration approved the existence of the city post on a permanent basis.³⁰

City posts were later opened in major cities throughout the empire: in Moscow in 1845,³¹ Warsaw in 1858, Kazan' and Astrakhan' in 1866, Khar'kov and Odessa in 1869, Saratov

²⁸ The first proposal for a city post in St. Petersburg was raised in 1828 by Samuel Aller, the collegial advisor to the Education Society for Training Noble Girls in Household Management. His idea was that cabmen acting as city postillions could accept letters at street-side cabstands. The senders of the letters could then give further instructions, in addition to the written address, to aid the cabmen in finding the addresses. See Bazilevich, *Russian Posts in the Nineteenth Century*, 72.

²⁹ Opinion of the State Council, 27 October 1830; cited in Prigara, *The Russian Post in the Empire*, 93.

³⁰ Bazilevich, *Russian Posts in the Nineteenth Century*, 73.

³¹ Although not insignificant, the Moscow post's volume was considerably exceeded by that of St. Petersburg, where according to Bazilevich (*Russian Posts in the Nineteenth Century*, 75) in 1849, 445,753 cards and letters moved through the city post. The regular functioning of the city post in Moscow was hampered primarily by the widely scattered populace in a city that retained many of its traits as an old Russian town well into the nineteenth century and by the lack of conveyances. Consequently, mail delivery in Moscow was scheduled only once a day, in contrast to three times per day in St. Petersburg.

in 1871, and Kiev in 1872. By 1874, municipal postal networks existed in forty-seven cities.³² Another interesting example of a local postal service arose in Kiev, where a substantial Jewish community had established itself. In the 1880s, the Jewish community opened its own postal service in the city, which quickly established a reputation for efficiency. *Zaria*, the progressive city paper of Kiev,³³ used Jewish postal couriers to deliver newspapers to its subscribers in the surrounding region, preferring them to the government postal service.³⁴

Proposals also emerged in the nineteenth century for the creation of a rural post. Until this time, post offices in provincial capitals and district seats served vast areas, and rural residents had to go to the district post offices to receive or send mail. The situation was further complicated by a decree promulgated in 1800, which forbade postillions from accepting letters or packages from individuals along the postroads.³⁵ In 1805, the Kazan' provincial post office suggested that at a general set of operating principles for a rural post be adopted. Thus all regional post offices were permitted to delivery standard correspondence and parcels at those postal stations where it was "deemed necessary."³⁶ Beginning then in 1810, rural correspondence was accepted at thirty-two stations, the majority of which (twenty-three) were under the direction of the Lithuanian provincial post office.

Other improvements centered around changes in transportation. In 1838, the Russian Empire's post office became one of the first to use railroads to help deliver mail, following the

³² Prigara, *The Russian Post in the Empire*, 95.

³³ In the 1830s, *Zaria* periodically published articles in Russian that were sympathetic to the plight of the Ukrainians, Poles, and Jews.

³⁴ Hamm, *Kiev: A Portrait*, 128; Karen Lemiski, "Kyiv's City Post and Jewish Postal Network," *Ukrainian Philatelist* 44, no. 2 (76) (1996): 125–126.

³⁵ *Pochtovo-telegrafnyi zhurnal* (1897); cited in Bazilevich, *Russian Posts in the Nineteenth Century*, 67.

³⁶ Bazilevich, *Russian Posts in the Nineteenth Century*, 67.

construction of the Tsarskosel'skaia line between St. Petersburg, Tsarskoe Selo, and Pavlovsk³⁷ This private railway also facilitated the expanding city post: local letters were accepted along the railroad and at the three localities.³⁸ The first state railroad line, the Nikolaevsk linking St. Petersburg with Moscow, was completed in 1851. By the end of the 1860s, the Russian post office had access to 352 railway lines that linked the major cities in the empire with smaller provincial towns.³⁹

Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, telegraph offices were opened in the major cities of the Russian Empire. Odessa, for example, had been a major center for the dispatch and receipt of mail and money from the time of its foundation at the end of the eighteenth century, in part due to its location on the Black Sea. The telegraph office was opened here on 26 May 1855. By 1869, the number of telegrams received and sent had increased almost tenfold with a corresponding increase in revenue: in 1859, 34,727 telegrams were transmitted and by 1869, this figure had reached 292,752 telegrams. In terms of revenue, this meant a increase from 89,071 rubles 46 1/2 kopecks in 1860 to 150,527 rubles 39 kopecks in 1869.⁴⁰

³⁷ *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* (20: 466). See also Bazilevich, *Russian Posts in the Nineteenth Century*, 63, for more details on the expansion of mail delivery based on the railroad.

³⁸ For information on the expansion of steamship routes especially by private companies, beginning in the 1830s, see Bazilevich, *Russian Posts in the Nineteenth Century*, 63.

³⁹ An administrative department for the administration of railway mail (*Upravlenie perevozki poch po zheleznym dorogam*) was formed in 1869. The Russian Empire was divided into nine railway postal departments, each with a regional headquarters. For the purpose of tracking the mail that was carried via the railroad, each line was numbered, with an odd number indicating one direction of transport and even numbers indicating the reverse direction. For details on this system, see Patrick Campbell, "The Spreading Vine," *Rossica Journal* 110 (1987): 67–69. For information on railway mail routes in the Soviet Union, see M. M. Sokolov, *Traktovyi ukazatel' pochtovykh vagonov-gazatnykh traktov SSSR* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo sviazi, 1927) and R. Iu. Zonnenburg and I. N. Ilinich, *Geografiya pochtovoi sviazi SSSR* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo sviazi, 1928).

⁴⁰ Ian W. Roberts, "Odessa Postal and Telegraph Services, 1808–1869," *Ukrainian Philatelist* 38, no. 2A (60A) (1991): 55. As a comparison, in 1808, 37,374 ordinary letters and 50,863 insured/money letters passed through the Odessa post office. The income for the post office in 1808 was 88,237 rubles. The importance of the telegraph for Odessa's commercial operations cannot be underestimated. Indeed, in the 1850s the telegraph linked Odessa to its foreign customers. The network to the outer world ran to St. Petersburg and from there to western markets and capitals (all communications had to pass through the capital). Patricia Herlihy, *Odessa: A History, 1794–1914* (Boston: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1986), 108, 333 n. 53.

Administratively, from 1842 to 1865, telegraph operations had been controlled either by the Telegraph Section (*Telegraficheskaia chast'*) or the Telegraph Office (*Telegrafnoe upravlenie*) of the Ministry of the Ways of Communication (*Ministerstvo putei soobshcheniia*). In 1865, the post and telegraph administrations were united to form a separate Ministry of the Post and Telegraph (*Ministerstvo pochty i telegrafov*). This situation did not last, though. Beginning in 1868 and lasting until 1880, the administration was again subordinated to the Ministry of Internal Affairs (*Ministerstvo vnutrennykh del*) as the Postal Department (*Pochtovyi departament*).

Alongside these bureaucratic changes, government expenditures were rapidly increasing, with a resulting decrease in the value of paper money. In order to meet expenses and accumulate sufficient gold reserves to buoy the exchange value of paper money, the government increased taxation, especially indirect taxes. Connected to this process was the post office. The Ministry of Finance viewed revenues from postal and telegraph operations (weight rates, insurance charges, port fees, travel fees, and verst charges) as major sources of revenue for the imperial treasury.

Yet until 1858, Russian postmasters generally accepted letters with the understanding that the addressee would pay the required delivery charges on receipt of the correspondence. However, in many cases collection proved impossible because either the addressee would not have the money or the letter would be refused. In both of these scenarios, the post's efforts went unremunerated.

By 1855, most of the civilized world had followed England's lead in reforming their postal services and issuing adhesive labels.⁴¹ The plan to introduce postage stamps in Russia belonged to railway mail transportation manager A. P. Charukovskii, who in 1856 prepared a detailed report "on stamps" following a two-year tour through Great Britain, France, Belgium,

⁴¹ Boggs, *The Foundations of Philately*, 2.

Holland, Austria, Switzerland, as well as regions of the still un-united Germany and Italy.⁴²

The Opinion of the State Council concerning their introduction was confirmed on 12 November 1856, whereupon production was started at the Department for the Preparation of State Papers (*Ekspeditisiia zagotovleniia gosudarstvennykh bumag/EZGB*), which fell under the authority of the Ministry of Finance.⁴³ Three denominations of stamps (10, 20, and 30 kopecks) were prepared in accordance with the contemporary weight rates; the proofs were approved on 20 October 1857.

There were many opponents to the new postage stamps. The main criticisms from the population were that the new system required letters to be fully franked at the time of delivery to the post office and that letters whose weight exceeded the established rate were not dispatched. A year after the introduction of postage stamps, a constant ratio of about three to one between letters in envelopes with applied stamps and those in envelopes that had a pre-printed indicia was established, which thereafter held steady.⁴⁴

A traveler's tale from 1895 also sheds light on an interesting area of confusion that arose related to the use of stamps. In her diary *Russian Rambles*, Isabel Hapgood wrote:

⁴² Bazilevich, *Russian Posts in the Nineteenth Century*, 103.

⁴³ The Circular for General Implementation, dated 10 December 1857, concerning the introduction of postage stamps is transcribed in Prigara, *The Russian Post in the Empire*, 175–177.

⁴⁴ For details on the statistical ratios between franked letters and letters in prestamped envelopes, see Bazilevich, *Russian Posts in the Nineteenth Century*, 103. Prigara (*The Russian Post in the Empire*, 5) gives additional data on the development of postal operations in the Russian Empire at this time. In 1860, 11,045,000 stamps were sold in 1860; 27,020,000 in 1870; 81,149,000 in 1880; 121,792,000 in 1887; 505,567,502 in 1905; and 530,174,784 in 1906. Simultaneously, the number of postal establishments in Russia also increased: 1,868 with 9,059 postal employees in 1867; 3,186 with 16,303 employees in 1884; 4,410 with 37,525 employees in 1900; and 5,494 with 51,744 employees in 1906.



a. 1889–1904
Michel Catalog, 41.



b. 1908–1917
Michel Catalog, 66.



c. 1889–1904
Michel Catalog, 55.



d. 1906
Michel Catalog, 62.

Figure 1: Imperial Russian Stamps, Arms Series

The most prominent instance of minute thoughtfulness and care on the part of the post-office officials which came under my notice occurred in the depths of the country. I sent a letter with a ten-kopeck stamp on it to the post town, twelve versts distant. Foreign postage had been raised from seven to ten kopecks, and stamps, in a new design, of the latter denomination (hitherto non-existent) had been in use for about four months. The country postmaster, who had seen nothing but the old issues, carefully removed my stamp and sent it back to me, replacing it with a seven-kopeck stamp and a three-kopeck stamp. I felt, for a moment, as though I had been both highly complimented and gently rebuked for my remarkable skill in counterfeiting!⁴⁵

e. The Zemstvo Posts

The abolition of serfdom in 1861 and the growth of cultural and economic ties among rural and urban communities consequently increased the demands placed on the post by the population. An especially acute need for postal service was felt by people in industrial areas where seasonal trades were well developed. A rural post would allow peasants to correspond and send money back to their families while away working in other provinces.

The organization of zemstvo self-government in 1864 again raised the question of developing rural postal operations, which the new zemstvo institutions viewed as essential for the extensive correspondence that would be exchanged with the smaller rural districts (*volosti*).⁴⁶ The first resolution to set up a rural post was adopted in Vetluga (Kostroma

⁴⁵ Isabel F. Hapgood, *Russian Rambles* (1895; reprint, New York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1970), 21. Hapgood (1850–1928) is chiefly known for her translations into English of works by Tolstoy, Turgenev, Gogol, Gorky, Leskov, and other prominent Russian writers. She was also a shrewd observer of the Russian scene and reported on Russian literature and society. Her first trip to Russia lasted for two years (1888–1890), during which time she extensively toured the empire.

⁴⁶ Kermit T. McKenzie, "Zemstvo Organization and Role Within the Administrative Structure," in *The Zemstvo in Russia: An Experiment in Local Self-Government*, ed. Terence Emmons and Wayne S. Vucinich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 31; see also James T. Shotwell, preface to *Russian Local Government During the War and the Union of Zemstvos*, by Tikhon J. Polner (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930), xi. An effort by the imperial postal administration to construct "mobile postal dispatch offices" for rural localities came almost simultaneously with the first zemstvo resolutions. These mobile offices were supposed to be sent at scheduled intervals from a district post office to the nearby villages, where they would conduct postal operations for several hours. However, the results of this experiment were unsatisfactory and experiments were soon ended. Thus, hesitant to allocate funds to establish new post offices in areas where revenue couldn't guarantee a profit for the Treasury, the government left the organization of a rural post entirely to the zemstvos. See Bazilevich, *Russian Posts in the Nineteenth Century*, 143.

Province) at the zemstvo assembly of 17 February 1865. The decision was quickly followed by the Stavropol (Samara Province) and Demiansk zemstvos (Novgorod Province). Over the next five years, rural zemstvo postal operations were established in sixty-five districts.⁴⁷ Details on the functions of the zemstvo post were set out in a decree of the Alexandria zemstvo (Kherson Province):

The difficulties encountered by inhabitants of localities far from posts are well known. Often mail reaches them so late that they cannot carry out orders enclosed in letters. Thus, this zemstvo . . . has organized a zemstvo post with two mail carriers, who will go every week into the district to deliver mail to all twenty-five volosts of the district. The zemstvo post will send out all ordinary mail, except registered and money letters. Official mail will go out free, but on ordinary mail, letters, and newspapers zemstvo stamps of 10 kop[eck] value shall be affixed. These will be sold in the offices of the zemstvo Uprava, and in the twenty-five volosts of the district.⁴⁸

Thus, the zemstvo post not only established communications between *volosti* and government postal establishments but within the districts themselves.

Although the imperial government had given its permission for the zemstvos to set up their own post, the zemstvo postal service very quickly faced obstacles that hampered its activities and, consequently, the benefits it could provide to the rural population. Most likely, the imperial government perceived the system as a threat to its own postal monopoly while at the same time fearing a decrease in postal revenue. Another impetus for increasing government

⁴⁷ Polner, *Russian Local Government*, 50. Bazilevich (*Russian Posts in the Nineteenth Century*, 143) describes how the zemstvo post was organized: The district zemstvo council building became the central postal point through which the exchange of mail with the volosti and the district post office was conducted. Depending on its size, a district was divided into several sections, and each section, as far as possible, would have one circular postal route in it; the time required for a round varied between one and two days. One, two, or three times a week, ordinary correspondence and notices announcing the arrival of money letters were distributed among the volosti, with the zemstvo postman simultaneously collecting mail in the district.

⁴⁸ The document, dated 1 September 1869, was translated and transcribed in Sviatoslav de Shramchenko, "The Provisional Stamp of Alexandria, Virginia and the Zemstvo Stamp of Aleksandria, Kherson Gubernia," *Ukrainian Philatelist* 42, no. 2 (68) (1994): 111.

strictures was that by the beginning of the 1870s, zemstvo activities had begun to arouse a generally negative attitude in conjunction with reactionary policies in all internal politics.

Among the worst impediments was the restriction against the zemstvo posts from either transmitting money through the mail or using the roads reserved for the state post.⁴⁹ It was almost impossible to comply with this requirement. For example, of the thirty-nine volost' offices in Sarapul district (Viatka Province), only four could be reached without using state postroads. The necessity of taking roundabout roads significantly lengthened the route, created more expense for the post, and ultimately slowed communications.

Another restriction related to stamps. The first zemstvo to issue stamps to indicate the prepayment of postal delivery was Schlüsselburg (St. Petersburg Province). From 1865 to 1917, a total of 2,427 zemstvo stamps were released.⁵⁰ The stamps were either based on the designs of the Ardatov or Bakhmut zemstvo stamps, which were proposed by the imperial post and printed at the EZGB in St. Petersburg, or an arms-type that represented the coat of arms of the issuing town or province (figure 2).⁵¹ In comparison with the imperial government-issued stamps, zemstvo stamps were often much larger. This allowed them to help seal postal stationery, which was routinely used when envelopes were scarce in remote rural areas.

⁴⁹ Bazilevich, *Russian Posts in the Nineteenth Century*, 144. In contrast, passenger postal coaches could use any road they wanted.

⁵⁰ Richard McP. Cabeen, *Standard Handbook of Stamp Collecting*, rev. ed. (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, Publishers, 1979), 449. Of the 317 zemstvos in European Russia — there were none in Siberia — only 161 issued their own stamps. To these can be added Fatezh (Kursk Province) and Toropets (Pskov Province), which issued only stamped envelopes. For details on the individual zemstvo post offices, see *Bol'shoi filatelistsheskii slovar'* (Moscow: Radio i sviaz', 1988), 82–103; and Fred W. Speers, *The Zemstvo Gazetteer* (London: The British Society of Russian Philately, n.d.).

Of the zemstvo stamps produced, some 800 were issued on Ukrainian territory at thirty-nine locations in eight provinces. The first of these were circulated in 1866 at Verkhne-Dneprovsk (Ekaterinoslav Province), and in Dneprovsk (Tavrida Province). Paul Spiwak and Ingert Kuzych, "The Zemstvo Posts of Ukraine," *Introductory Handbook of Ukrainian Philately/Ukrainian Philatelist* 40, no. 1/2 (63/64) (1993): 9.

⁵¹ The keyplate system was especially prevalent in colonial situations. It allowed for colonies to produce the same stamps as the mother country, with the addition of their distinct name and currency. For details, see James Mackay, *Stamp Collecting* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company Inc., 1983), 16.

Because zemstvo stamps were issued for use only within each separate district, the zemstvo posts were forbidden to send correspondence to places in other districts without additional postage being paid. More specifically, a single stamp prepaid a letter addressed within the zemstvo's administration, but when a letter had to be transported by the imperial post, an imperial stamp of the proper value had to be added.⁵² For example, an envelope franked with an imperial 2-kopec stamp and mailed from outside the Khar'kov zemstvo to the village of Budy (inside the zemstvo) additionally required a 5-kopec Khar'kov zemstvo stamp, affixed at the zemstvo administration office, to carry it into the district.

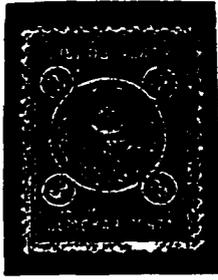
In 1869, several zemstvo postal systems were judged to be infringing on the imperial monopoly and were suppressed.⁵³ However, it soon became obvious that their services had been beneficial. Therefore in September 1870, the Minister of the Interior, Prince Lobanov-Rostovskii, authorized local assemblies to establish postal services within their jurisdiction to augment the general post. At the same time, operational principles for the zemstvo posts were codified and operations were expanded to include the delivery of money and packages. Under these new regulations, the production of zemstvo stamps was authorized providing their design was not similar to the imperial issues (see appendix II).⁵⁴

Although some of the restrictions on the zemstvo posts were eventually lifted, the network never attained complete independence from the imperial system. For example, the zemstvos never succeeded in gaining the right to use state postroads but gained the right to cross

⁵² Cabeen, *Standard Handbook of Stamp Collecting*, 449. In some cases this rate may have been paid by an equivalent value in local stamps.

⁵³ Spiwak and Kuzych, "The Zemstvo Posts of Ukraine," 9.

⁵⁴ Cabeen, *Standard Handbook of Stamp Collecting*, 449. Nearly 150 rural districts issued stamps ranging from simple handstruck impressions to elaborate hand-colored issues such as those from Tikhvin (Novgorod Province). They were current, in many cases, for over twenty years. R. J. Sutton, *The Stamp Collector's Encyclopedia* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1955), 321.



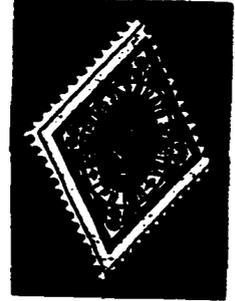
a. Belozersk (Novgorod)



b. Konstantinograd (Poltava)



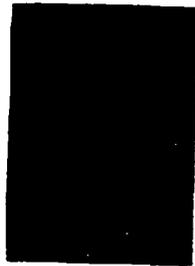
c. Novouzensk (Samara)



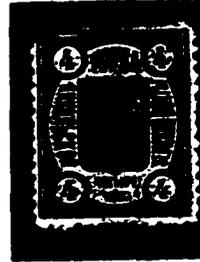
d. Pskov (Pskov)



e. Shadrinsk (Perm')



f. Ves'egonsk (Tver)



g. Nikol'sk (Vologda)



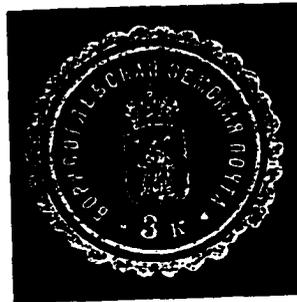
h. Zen'kov (Poltava)



i. Zolotonosha (Poltava)



j. Solikamsk (Perm')



k. Borisoglebsk (Tambov)

Figure 2: Imperial Russian Zemstvo (Local) Stamps

a postroad where a zemstvo road intersected it. Yet despite these limitations and the modest funding that the zemstvos allocated for its operations, by the end of the nineteenth century the zemstvo post was widespread, especially in those districts where the population was so dispersed that it could not rely on state post offices. According to the 1896–1897 census, zemstvo posts existed in 190 districts, or 53 percent of the total number of districts in which zemstvo establishments had been introduced. There were many provinces, including Perm', Viatka, and Kazan', in which zemstvo posts were active in all districts. In Verkhotur'e (Perm' Province) alone, zemstvo postroads totaled 474 versts and during the year the postmen there covered 85,592 versts.⁵⁵

Among the improvements that were made to postal operations in the late nineteenth century was the codification in 1871 of the use of postcards as a new form of mail.⁵⁶ The original statute, which introduced a cheap and simplified form of communication initially costing five kopecks, was amended in 1873 to forbid anyone to write "anything contrary to law, public order, morals, or decency." This clause was engendered by a secret report from the Third Department (*Tret'e otdelenie*), which stated that people were writing lampoons of women and officials while also alluding to memberships in secret societies.⁵⁷ As a later example of this phenomenon, the occasion of the seventieth birthday of Count Leo Tolstoy (1828–1910)

⁵⁵ Bazilevich, *Russian Posts in the Nineteenth Century*, 145. With an increase in the number of state postal establishments, the network of zemstvo post offices began to lose its prominence in rural areas. Ninety-four zemstvo post offices were still operating in 1896, and it was not until after the 1917 revolution that the last was discontinued.

⁵⁶ At the time, the head of the post offices was Baron Ivan Osipovich Velio (director 1868–1880), who was credited as being the only postal director to have acquainted himself with actually postal conditions. The 1872–1873 tour throughout postal establishment in all parts of the empire was prompted by the Provisional Decrees on the Postal Department, which was aimed at expanding postal operations and decreasing the complicated postal paperwork. Skipton and Michalove, *Postal Censorship in Imperial Russia*, 1: 53.

⁵⁷ File [of the Postal Department] of 1873, Section 1, Article 1, No. 7; quoted in Bazilevich, *Russian Posts in the Nineteenth Century*, 96. Initially, nothing could be written on the back of postcards in the Russian Empire except for the address. To circumvent this stricture, some people wrote messages in the borders on the front of the cards. In 1903 this rule was rescinded and the back of Russian cards was divided into two, one side for the message and the other for the address. See Petro Fostiak, "Cartophilia" (in Ukrainian), *Ukrainian Philatelist* 34, no. 1 (51) (1987): 26–27.

prompted the publication of a series of postcards showing him in peasant costume at work in the fields or at home with his wife. Fearful of this new device for spreading Tolstoy's liberal views, the Russian government subsequently took steps to prevent their circulation.⁵⁸

Contemporary with various improvements in the domestic post of the late nineteenth century was the adoption of a variety of international agreements. The most important of these was the Universal Postal Union of 9 October 1874, set up as a means to regulate the traffic of mail to and from signatory countries and to fix a scale of postal rates.⁵⁹ The convention was based on the basic principle of delivering correspondence from the sender to the addressee by the fairest, most efficient means. The signatories to the document agreed to form a unified postal territory — regardless of natural or political boundaries — for the mutual exchange of various kinds of correspondence, ensure the free transit of correspondence across their territory, and to apply uniform postal rates to similar types of correspondence.

As a means of coordinating the exchange of international mails, member states agreed to adopt uniform colors for stamps of specific purposes: namely, green was designated for stamps indicating the payment of wrappers, red for postcards, and blue for letters of an established basic weight. As one of the founding states of the Universal Postal Union, Russia adopted its postal services to comply with the UPU conventions.⁶⁰ In this regard, the empire was in advance of

⁵⁸ *The Country Gentlemen's News*, April 1904; cited in Richard Carline, *Pictures in the Post: The Story of the Picture Postcard and its Place in the History of Popular Art*, 2d ed. (Philadelphia: Deltiologists of America, 1972), 68.

⁵⁹ On 9 October 1874 at the First International Postal Congress, twenty-two states signed the Treaty of Berne regarding the establishment of a General Postal Union, the name of which was changed in 1878 to the Universal Postal Union. The Treaty of Berne came into force on 1 July 1875. Since 1947, the UPU has been a specialized institution of the United Nations. Moore and Holland, *The Art of Postage Stamps*, 10.

⁶⁰ The adoption of specific colors on certain stamps was first reflected on the 1883 Russian issues. Prior to the Universal Postal Union, the colors on Russian stamps had remained unchanged for eight series: yellow was chosen for the 1-kopec value, green for 2 kopecks, red for 3 kopecks, lilac for 5 kopecks, and blue for 7 kopecks. Several deviations from the standard colors were tolerated for the 1913 jubilee issue. For more information on the changes in the ninth series of imperial arms stamps, see K. A. Bergard, "The Early and Late Issues of the 1883–1888 Stamps," *Rossica Journal* 79 (1970): 15–18; translated from *Filateliia SSSR* (Moscow) 10 (1969): 9–10.

many countries of Western Europe, which did not move toward the international standardization of stamp colors until some years later: Sweden in 1886, Germany in 1889, France in 1900, and Great Britain in 1902.

The signing of the international postal convention as well as other postal treaties with specific individual countries effectively expanded the existing Russian postal network to an even wider geographic area. Ultimately, the international postal agreements led to a greater volume of mail as well as to an increase in territory covered by the mail, which undoubtedly followed in the footsteps of commercial and political interests. This meant that the population could communicate not only with other citizens in the local districts (as a result of the development of the municipal and rural postal operations) but also with people beyond the empire's borders. By 1900, Russia's postal exchanges with foreign countries stood at 89,729,920 items with a revenue of 103,547,747 rubles.⁶¹

The reassignment in 1880 of Velio from the Postal Department (*Pochtovyi departament*) to head the newly formed Department of State Police coincided with an overall shift in government, which also saw Alexander II assign Count Mikhail Tarellovich Loris-Melikov (1826–1888) to head the Ministry of Internal Affairs.⁶² Lev Savvich Makov, the former minister, was appointed as the director of the post office, which was again upgraded to an independent ministry (*Ministerstvo dukhovnykh del inostrannikh isповiedanii i pocht i telegrafov*). However, Makov lost his ministerial position on 16 March 1881, when the Ministry of Posts

⁶¹ Bazilevich, *Russian Posts in the Nineteenth Century*, 147. The following statistics further attest to the dramatic growth in the number of items mailed, both internationally and domestically beginning in the late nineteenth century: 1878, 204,095,894 pieces; 1880, 219,737,213 pieces; 1882, 252,402,345 pieces; 1884, 270,546,931 pieces; 1886, 307, 216, 065 pieces; 1900, 848,952,613 pieces; 1902, 947,574,912 pieces; 1903, 1,139,605, 069 pieces; and 1905, 1,458,658,914 pieces. Data taken from the 1878 postal statistics, and the statistics sections of the *Pochtovo-telegrafnyi zhurnal* for 1900, 1902, 1903, and 1905; cited in Skipton and Michalove, *Postal Censorship in Imperial Russia*, 1: 84.

⁶² The assassination of Alexander II on 1 March 1881 by a grenade-throwing member of People's Will was followed two months later by the resignation of Loris-Melikov.

and Telegraphs was dissolved for the final time and placed within the Ministry of Internal Affairs; in 1884, the Main Office for the Posts and Telegraph (*Glavnoe upravlenie pocht i telegrafov*) was established within the ministry.

The Russo-Japanese War and the July Days of 1903 provided the immediate setting for a series of violent strikes, mutinies, and pogroms that culminated in Bloody Sunday (22 January 1905) and the rebellious events of 1905. That entire year was marked by one crisis following on the heels of another. By autumn, the surge of militancy and revolution turned to open revolt. As a complication of the existing disruptions, which left the population without water and electricity, a series of strikes further interrupted communications. The October railway strikes resulted in vandalism of locomotives and wagons, while postal and telegraph employees struck in December. The disputes within the communications branches took on a special significance. Because checks were seldom used and money transactions were usually effected by telegraph, the strike dealt a major blow to the empire's commerce.⁶³

Following the rebellion, the press and Duma complained loudly about the clandestine surveillance of mail. It is clear that the Okhrana, the tsarist secret police, intercepted and examined many letters sent, not only through normal postal channels but also via the postal "underground," which was one of the ingenious methods employed by the growing revolutionary movement to smuggle people, arms, literature, and letters into imperial Russia. In her letters to the Bolshevik Mikhail Veniaminovich Kobetskii (1881–1937), Lenin's wife

⁶³ Adam B. Ulam, *The Bolsheviks: The Intellectual and Political History of the Triumph of Communism in Russia* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1965), 227–228, 233–235; Herlihy, *Odessa*, 221. For a more detailed account of the October 1905 general strike and the disruption of communications, see Walter Sablinsky, "The All-Russian Railroad Union and the Beginning of the General Strike in October, 1905," in *Revolution and Politics in Russia: Essays in Memory of B. I. Nicolaevsky*, ed. Alexander and Janet Rabinowitch (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972): 113–133. On the twentieth anniversary of the strike, *Zhizn' i tekhnika sviazi* (no. 11, November 1925, pages 15–27) printed an article covering the events of the 1905 strike. Although it is easy to discern the bias of the piece, it nonetheless presents an interesting account. For a translation of the original article, see Dale Walker, "The First Stage in the Development of Our Union," *Rossica Journal* 116 (April 1991): 12–18.

Nadezhda Krupskaja verified that “correspondence to Paris is examined particularly closely by the Russian police,” and that “letters arriving in Finland from Paris via Stockholm are all opened.” Krupskaja also advised Kobetskii that he must not post all his letters together but rather spread the mailings over several days in several different mail boxes; use different kinds of envelopes; and if possible, alter his handwriting.⁶⁴

Other complaints highlighted the pitiful state of postal affairs in general. By 1913 there were still only eight-thousand post offices in the entire country, and only three percent of these were in its vast rural areas. Delivery was usually by horse-drawn vehicle, and the average person received four letters a year.⁶⁵ The majority of complaints focused on the low level of service. In letters to his family, the Orientalist scholar Agafangel Efimovich Krymskii (1871–1942) commented that it “seemed as if the Russian post office existed primarily for the benefit of stamp collectors,” because it was apparently not occupied with transporting the mail efficiently. He also noted that the post office he frequented often did not have any stamps available and that light-fingered postal workers regularly removed the stamps that were on the envelopes.⁶⁶

Yet, throughout the nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries, the Russian post had partly responded to the increasing mobility of the population and the ongoing needs for the expansion of communication links within the empire. As a result, the populations in the larger and more urban districts could easily gain access to the postal network. By June 1915, for

⁶⁴ Internally quoted in Michael Futrell, *The Northern Underground: Episodes of Russian Revolutionary Transport and Communications Through Scandinavia and Finland 1863–1917* (London: Faber & Faber, 1963), 64, 65. Futrell (page 63) also describes the method employed by the revolutionaries to distribute the paper *Proletary*: “The newspaper went by post from Copenhagen to Russia. It was wrapped in paper covered with writing and then put in an envelope, together with a note from the editor, apologizing to the recipient for using his address (‘learnt by chance’) without permission, in order to safeguard him if the missive fell into the hands of the police.” This study makes it clear that although the law on censorship was different in Russia proper and Russian Finland, examination of the mail took place in both countries.

⁶⁵ Ronald J. Jennrich, “Turmoil of Revolution Reflected in Stamps,” *The American Philatelist* 105, no. 2 (February 1991): 144–145.

⁶⁶ Internally quoted in Ian W. Roberts, “A Ukrainian Scholar’s Comments on the Russian Post Office in Beirut at the End of the Nineteenth Century,” *Ukrainian Philatelist* 42, no.1 (67) (1994): 61.

example, it was projected that in the postal district of Kiev there would be 393 post offices, and in 336 offices in Odessa. These numbers compared well with the 339 outlets in St. Petersburg and 324 in Moscow.⁶⁷

When disorders initially broke out in Petrograd in late February 1917, few believed that this would be the end of the old regime. Nicholas II ordered the suppression of all signs of unrest, but this turned out to be impossible. The street fighting developed into a large-scale rebellion that in a few days toppled the tsar and the monarchy itself. Vladimir Borisovich Pokhvisnev (director 1913–1917) remained in charge of the post during the final years of the Russian Empire (see appendix III for a list of imperial Russia's postal directors). In May 1917, the postal administration was once again, briefly, reorganized under the Provisional Government as an independent ministry.

f. Postal Communications within the Soviet Union

As in any other modern country, the Soviet postal network was an amalgamation of various communications enterprises (post offices, communications centers, mail transportation sections, and branch offices), which received, sorted, carried, and delivered mail. Because of the expansive geography, mail in the Soviet Union was carried by railroad mailcars, planes, helicopters, automobiles, sea and river ships. The process and organization of postal communications

⁶⁷ David Skipton, "Development of the Post and Telegraph Office Network in 1916," *Rossia Journal* 102/103 (1983): 94. Skipton's article is a translation of one appearing in the *Pochtovo-telegrafnyi zhurnal (Chast' neofitsial'naia)* (April 1917): 44–64. For a detailed listing of postal establishments in the Russian Empire, see *Mestnyia uchrezhdeniia pochtovo-telegrafnago viedomstva: Volostnyia pravleniia i zhelieznodorozhnyia stantsii proizvodiasluchiiia pochtovyya operatsii. Spisok miestnykh uchrezhdenii pochtovo-telegrafnago viedomstva* (St. Petersburg: Tip. ministerstva putei soobshcheniia, 1907) and *Pochtovyi dorozhnik Rossiiskoi Imperii: S prilozheniem numerei karty* (St. Petersburg: Ministerstvo vnutrennykh del), which were updated annually.

in the Soviet Union described below is based on information in the *Handbook for the Communications Division*.⁶⁸

Following the October Revolution, the People's Commissariat of Post and Telegraph (*Narodnyi kommissariat pocht i telegrafov/Narkompochtrel*) assumed the administration of communications in Russia. The final administrative change resulted from the 15 March 1946 law "On the Transformation of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR Into the Council of Ministers of the USSR," under the terms of which the People's Commissariat of Post and Telegraph was reorganized within the Ministry of Communications. All postal communications were supervised by the Main Postal Communications Administration (*Glavnoe upravlenie pochtovoi sviazi*), which was in turn part of the central apparatus of Soviet Council of Ministers. The postal administration directly controlled all the relevant enterprises and organizations: the Moscow Mail Transportation Administration, the Moscow International Post Office, and the Board for the Issue and Dispatch of Postal Stamps and Stationery (*Direktsiia po izdaniuu i ekspedirovaniuu znakov pochtovoi oplaty*). Through the ministries of communications in the union republics, the main postal administration regulated postal services in the republics, territories, and oblasts.

Within the Russian Federation, Belorussia, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine, the postal systems were controlled by the Main Postal Communications Administration for the ministries of communications for those republics. The ministries of communications in the other union republics had Postal Communications Administrations (as opposed to Main Administrations). Post offices included main post offices and communications centers, the latter also having branch post offices. Main post offices (*pochtamty*) were set up in republic, territory (*kras*), and oblast'

⁶⁸ *Spravodnik nachal'nika otdeleniia sviazi*, 3d ed. (Moscow: Radio i sviazi, 1981), 49–52. For more information on the development of telecommunications in the Soviet Union, see *Razvitie sviazi v SSSR, 1917–1967* (Moscow: Sviaz, 1967).

administrative centers, while communications centers were established in cities under republic and oblast' jurisdiction and in raion centers.

In the post-World War II period, there were four main categories of postal communications associated with the postal organization: main-line, intra-oblast', intra-raion, and city. Main-line (*magistral'naia*) postal communications supported service between Moscow and the capitals of unions and republics, the territorial and oblast' centers, as well as between the republic, territorial, and oblast' centers themselves. Intra-oblast' (*vnutrioblastnaia*) postal communications connected territorial and oblast' centers, and autonomous republic capitals with raion centers of a given territory, oblast' or republic. They also linked the capitals and centers with cities subordinated to the oblasts, as well as raion centers and the aforementioned cities among themselves.

Intra-raion (*vnutriraionnaia*) postal communications supported lines between the raion centers and the towns within those raions, and also the latter among themselves. City (*gorodskaiia*) postal communications were responsible for postal exchanges within each city and city-type settlements.

A central feature of the Soviet postal communication organization was the "hub/radial" system. This meant that the most important political and economic regions of the country had direct (radial) communications between them. This principle also applied to oblast' centers, territorial centers, and republic capitals that were tied together for economic, political, or other reasons. The rest of the localities were connected to each other by means of one or more postal centers (*uzli*). Thus, a letter sent from Kiev to Lviv did not need to go through Moscow but was transported directly to Lviv.

There were six types of postal centers in the Soviet Union. These were communications enterprises, or groups of such centers, located at points where ground or air routes intersected.

Here, the sorting and exchange of transit mail occurred, providing for its movement over postal routes specifically designated for that purpose.

Main postal centers (*glavnie pochtovie uzli*) were situated in the largest economic centers of the Soviet Union, where the most important main-line, railroad, air, and waterway routes intersected. The most highly mechanized and automated postal establishments were constructed at Arkhangel'sk, Baku, Barnaul, Kiev (the only city outside the Russian S.F.S.R.), Moscow, Novgorod, Saratov, and Ul'yanovsk. The main postal centers were connected by air and railroad transportation. Oblast' postal centers (*oblastnie pochtovie uzli*) were established in oblast' and territorial centers and autonomous republic capitals where there were no main postal centers. The oblast' centers were also organized in other highly populated cities through which there was a large flow of inter-oblast' mail. The oblast' postal centers were interconnected by means of direct air or railroad lines to major or other oblast' centers. Both the main and oblast' postal centers were part of the main-line postal communications system. Many of them also served as international main exchange points, where correspondence was received from, sorted and dispatched to foreign destinations.

Postal centers that were not a part of the main-line postal communications system were either inter-raion or raion postal centers, usually organized in raion capital cities. Inter-raion centers were invariably located in raion capital cities that were situated where railroads, airlines, roads, and waterways intersected. Raion postal centers, on the other hand, together with mail-transportation sections and those communications branch offices located at such junctures, formed the basis for the intra-raion postal system. Yet, it was the raion postal centers that made up the basic organization of intra-raion communications. They were directly linked with all the branch offices in their respective areas, or indirectly through intra-raion postal centers.

Intra-raion postal centers were considerably smaller, and existed to expedite the transit of mail through each raion. Branch offices that had a direct exchange with railroad mailcars, airplanes, riverboats, and sea vessels also served as intra-raion postal centers, as did those located at the junction of roads or along the approaches of a postal route to a raion postal center. City postal centers were concerned with sorting and delivering incoming, outgoing, and local mail within the cities. Their function was usually fulfilled by the post offices (*pochtamty*) —including railroad-terminal post offices — mail transportation sections and city communications centers.

By the early 1980s, the highly organized postal network consisted of 140 city post offices, the same number of railroad terminal post offices and mail transportation branch offices, over 3,500 communications centers (*uzli sviazi*), and more than 85,000 communications branch offices. Of the latter, more than 62,000 were located in rural villages. In addition to this formal structure, postal services were also made available to rural inhabitants by means of mobile post offices, auxiliary communications workers (i.e., individuals not listed on the staff of any communications office), and a virtual army of mail carriers. There were over 600,000 mailboxes in the Soviet Union, of which more than 430,000 were in rural areas. Apparently, there was not a single locality without some sort of postal service.⁶⁹

Undoubtedly, the early consolidation of the post under imperial Russian authorities contributed to the internal integration of the extensive landmass that fell under Soviet jurisdiction. The courier routes that evolved into postal carriage routes were easily transformed into the main imperial mail routes and only further developed as the key communications lines under the Soviets. Yet by connecting regional center to themselves and further expanding mail delivery throughout regional areas to include rural households, the Soviet government altered

⁶⁹ A good summary of statistics concerning the Soviet postal apparatus is provided in the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, s. v. "postal service."

the character of centralized communications. Communications were no longer controlled from the center but rather regionalized postal administrations maintained and supervised operations.

This new character was important for the Ukrainian national movement. Because control over provincial post offices had been significantly reduced, the political leaders of the independent Ukrainian states easily gained access to the postal network. In practical terms, this meant there would be little difficulty in preparing and circulating the stamps of the new regimes. Moreover, the extensive postal network meant that the new authorities could easily communicate with the dispersed population in their efforts to gain a wide base of support.

2. The Austro-Hungarian Empire

The Austrian Habsburg rulers trace their postal history to ancient Rome and its far-flung imperial courier network.⁷⁰ However, what initially began as a system for royalty evolved in western Europe to create distinct messenger services that catered to universities, municipalities, religious institutions, and other social groups. The establishment of private postal contracts reflected the belief that private enterprise rather than the state should undertake improved communications in the empire.⁷¹ Thus, in contrast to the Russian Empire where all postal operations began under the absolute jurisdiction of the imperial rulers and private initiatives were transformed only into additional arms of the state post, in the west private monopolies and rival postal companies created the foundations for the later development of state postal systems.

Because private initiatives were accepted by the authorities and because of a smaller geographic area, the development of the post in the west was accelerated. Indeed, by 1505 the

⁷⁰ Post- und Telegraphenmuseum Wien, *Jubiläumsführer, 1889–1959* (Vienna: Generaldirektion für die Post- und Telegraphenverwaltung, 1959), 5.

⁷¹ Ronald E. Coons, *Steamships, Statesmen, and Bureaucrats: Austrian Policy Towards the Steam Navigation Company of the Austrian Lloyd, 1836–1848* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GmbH, 1975), 92.

Habsburg's first international postal connection was established by the Taxis family, an event that has been interpreted as laying the groundwork for the vast polyglot Habsburg Empire.⁷²

Foreign postal connections continued to evolve throughout the seventeenth century so that the postal route operated by the Taxis family between Vienna and Constantinople became one of the most important of European connections. In contrast, it would be almost a century and a half before the Russian Empire's postal service would extend to foreign ports. As another example, a municipal post was organized in 1772 in Vienna, followed by similar operations in Graz and Prague. This type of service did not emerge in the Russian Empire until sixty years later.

Yet despite these operational differences between the Russian and Austrian posts, consolidation of the postal systems in both empires contributed to the integration of distant regions and ethnically diverse populations behind the central imperial authorities.

The first letter-carrying systems in western Europe were set up by the ruling monarchs for their own personal use and, as with Russia's Romanov dynasty, the royal houses of western Europe were concerned with keeping themselves in power. Because the Habsburg realm became so expansive and was populated more densely than the Romanov realm, the emperors needed swift and secure postal links between different regions in order to rule efficiently. The royal messengers and relay posts served precisely this purpose: through the communications network, monarchs were kept in touch with events throughout their empire. However, the larger the kingdom, the more difficult it was to obtain information in a timely manner. At the height of his problems in late 1789, Emperor Joseph II (1765–1790) complained bitterly that he was helpless in the face of the Belgian revolt because reports took eight days to reach him and any response on his part took eight more days to return, by which time both documents had been

⁷² *Jubiläumsführer*, 5.

rendered irrelevant by changing circumstances.⁷³ Further, plans that seemed lucid in Vienna often appeared illogical by the time they reached their intended target in the distant provinces.⁷⁴

Based on the development of both private and state networks, Western Europe was crisscrossed by various postal systems that covered vast regions. Indeed, along certain routes many competing posts carried the mail. However, postal links to more remote regions remained unavailable until the nineteenth century. Understandably, because of the high costs involved and the requirement of literacy, the posts were used primarily by the affluent members of society. The usual practice was for the carrier to collect the fees from the recipient of the letter; otherwise, one risked having any money paid in advance for the service pocketed and the letter "lost." Interestingly, this philosophy differs from that adopted in England, Russia, and later the United States, where the post offices complained that when the fees were to be collected from the receiver, many letters were simply refused.

No discussion of Habsburg postal history is complete without mention of the House of Taxis, whose story gathers momentum throughout its five centuries of postal history.⁷⁵ The family's private postal operations began in 1305, when the Company of the Couriers of the Most Illustrious Signoria was formed, based in Italy's Bergamo Valley. By 1490, the Taxis routes had crossed the Alps and were carrying mail into Innsbruck, where the imperial court was situated, and between Vienna and Brussels. In 1505, Philip I (the Handsome) of the Spanish

⁷³ Ernst Wangermann, *The Austrian Achievement, 1700–1800* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973), 119.

⁷⁴ T. C. W. Blanning, *Joseph II* (New York: Longman Publishing, 1994), 13–14.

⁷⁵ Two commemorative histories chronicling the growth of the Thurn and Taxis system are Fritz Sebastian, *Thurn und Taxis: 350 Jahre Post* (Hannover: Bruno Wilkens Verlag, 1948) and S. D. Johannes, Fürst von Thurn und Taxis, *500 Jahre Post Thurn und Taxis* (Regensburg: Fürst Thurn und Taxis Zentralarchiv, 1990). Martin Dallmeier, *Quellen Zur Geschichte Des Europäischen Postwesens, 1501–1806*. Thurn und Taxis Studien 9/1 (Regensburg: Verlag Lassleben Kallmünz, 1977) is an annotated collection of documents related to the developing Thurn and Taxis postal system.

Habsburgs granted the Germanized Francesco Tassi (Francis Taxis) the right to further routes and a royal monopoly over the areas it trafficked, an agreement that was renewed and expanded by his heir Charles V (1516–1556) in an attempt to rule efficiently the scattered Habsburg lands.

It was Philip I's failure to live up to his agreement with Francis that in 1506 opened the Thurn and Taxis post to the public, in addition to serving the nobility. The public quickly took advantage of the Taxis operations, which continued to expand until they comprised the greatest European postal organization. The Taxis family made huge profits while running the royal post, partly because it did accept letters from the public. At the height of its power, the post operated throughout the areas of present-day Germany, Austria, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Spain. Postal traffic also grew quickly because the main Taxis routes coincided with the great trade arteries, and thus the system appealed to commercial interests. That by 1800 the net income of the Taxis post was estimated to be over one million florins annually is a sign of its efficiency. As late as the mid-nineteenth century, Europe's monarchs were making postal treaties with the Taxis organization as with a sovereign body.⁷⁶

The demise of the Taxis postal network followed the break-ups of the Holy Roman and Spanish empires. The Netherlands revolted against their Spanish king, and subsequently the vassal states sought their independence from the empire. Religious differences were crucial in this struggle. The Taxis organization was itself a fief of the zealously Catholic emperor and thus as each Protestant state broke away, its ruler abolished the Taxis post and set up his own system. The French Revolution and Napoleon's conquests virtually completed the destruction of the Taxis postal network. Despite being compensated for lost lands at the 1815 Congress of Vienna — indeed some territory was restored to the Thurn and Taxis family — the Taxis system was

⁷⁶ In 1844, a treaty was concluded between His Majesty the King of the French and His Most Serene Highness the Prince de la Tour and Taxis. A search for genealogy linked the House of Torre with the Taxis family in the 1650s. The Taxis family had itself been ennobled in 1512.

doomed by the rise of the independent nation-states. The Taxis system prevailed until July 1867, when the last of the family's postal monopolies⁷⁷ was ceded to the Prussian postmaster, General Stephan, for an indemnity of three million thalers.

When Maximilian Otto Ritter von Ottenfeld was appointed director of the Habsburg imperial posts in April 1829, he worked toward rationalizing and improving a system that needed reform. By the early nineteenth century the state had granted so many hereditary postal privileges to private individuals that the postal department no longer controlled the services it allegedly supervised. Motivated by modern ideas of how the state should administer the mails, one of Ottenfeld's major goals was to eliminate all existing private mail concessions. This process started in 1833 when the director obtained funds to finance a program of buying out hereditary privileges wherever possible.⁷⁸ Moreover, one year earlier, Emperor Francis II (1804–1835) had ordered the preparation of a modern, uniform postal code, which took effect in 1838. The new program was based firmly on the premise that only the state, through its postal department, should be allowed to forward mail between any two points in the empire and that all letters were to be subjected to the prescribed postal tariff, instead of postage being collected for private accounts.⁷⁹ As a result, the private companies gradually became couriers for the state rather than operating their own systems.

Similar to the situation in the Russian Empire, the rise of the state post in the early nineteenth century was a turning point in western European social history. Prior to this time, letter services were limited to select groups and individuals, while after this transformation attempts were made to reach the entire population. Being under a single control — state

⁷⁷ In 1615, the emperor Matthias I had converted the Taxis family's postal service into a hereditary fiefdom.

⁷⁸ Coons, *Steamships, Statesmen, and Bureaucrats*, 50.

⁷⁹ Coons, *Steamships, Statesmen, and Bureaucrats*, 50–51.

ownership — the postal network spread to where it was needed, without either the wasteful duplication of routes or the neglect of less profitable stations.

But because the Habsburg post was subject to the nationalist principle, the potential existed for communications in the empire to be disrupted.⁸⁰ Within national boundaries, domestic services and agents were favored while rival foreign offices and competitors confronted difficulties in reaching agreements and postal treaties. To carry mail across national frontiers thus required the cooperation and permission of foreign governments, which would in all probability charge prohibitively high tariffs. This factor, along with the need to purify letters in accordance with Austrian quarantine regulations, and the time-consuming clearance of couriers, passengers, and mail through customs repeatedly threatened to undermine communications in the Habsburg Empire.⁸¹

Yet within the empire itself, the important role played by the postal network in uniting the population was not overlooked. Here, one final example from Habsburg postal history is enlightening. When in the mid-nineteenth century discussions arose concerning the purchase of the Danube Company's maritime fleet by the Steam Navigation Company of the Austrian Lloyd, Governor Carl Friedrich Freiherr Kübeck von Kübau warned:

If another company establishes itself on this stretch [between Galatz and Semlin], then foreign ships will penetrate upstream deep into Hungary, and with the disappearance of Austrian ships the *political* influence of Austria in the lands of the lower Danube will be weakened. Therefore not merely *commercial interests* but *political considerations* demand that the state intervene to keep communications between the Danube and Constantinople in Austrian hands.⁸²

⁸⁰ Zilliacus, *Mail for the World*, 200.

⁸¹ Coons, *Steamships, Statesmen, and Bureaucrats*, 30.

⁸² Excerpt from an undated Vortrag of Baron Kübeck, sent by the Hofkammer president to Count Stadion on 1 April 1844; quoted in Coons, *Steamships, Statesmen, and Bureaucrats*, 116. Emphasis in the original.

a. Austrian Administration in Galicia and Bukovina

After more than four hundred years under Polish administration, the regions of Galicia and Bukovina came under Habsburg ministries as a result of the demise of the Polish Commonwealth in the late eighteenth century. Although initially “appalled at the idea of sharing in the spoliation of a friendly Catholic kingdom,” according to one Habsburg historian, the logic of contemporary diplomacy was such that Austria “could not refuse a share” of the crumbling Poland. “If Russia and Prussia expanded at the expense of Poland, Austria also had to do so in order to keep a balance of power” in the region.⁸³

Thus, on 5 August 1772, Austria, Prussia, and Russia signed the first Treaty of Partition in St. Petersburg. Austria’s share was the second largest in area (55,595 square miles), containing the richest salt mines in Europe and much fertile soil, and the largest in population (2.1 million). The territory was given the historically doubtful name of the Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria. The annexation was justified by resurrecting an old, vague Hungarian claim to the ancient principalities of Galich (Galicia) and Vladimir (Lodomeria), which, in fact, lay to the northeast of the Austrian share of Poland. Two years later, as compensation for mediating the Peace of Kuchuk-Kainardji, which ended the Russo-Turkish War, Austria received the northernmost districts of Moldavia that were known as Bukovina. The region was administratively attached to Galicia until 1849.

After having been excluded from the Second Partition of Poland (1793), in 1795 Baron Johann Thugut negotiated with Russia compensations in Poland. Prussia left the First Coalition (Peace of Basel, 5 March 1795) at this time to join Russia and Austria in the Third Partition of Poland, on 24 October 1795. Austria received Cracow and a substantial area in west-central

⁸³ Victor S. Mamatey, *Rise of the Habsburg Empire, 1526–1815* (Huntington, NY: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Company, 1978), 124.

Poland, which was given the name of West Galicia.⁸⁴ Although it is clear that these regions brought together divergent cultures, the shared postal history that followed became an important unifying element.⁸⁵

Although there had been no central imperial Polish administration in Galicia, only organs of local self-government, an Austrian bureaucratic organization was introduced beginning immediately after the First Partition as part of ongoing Habsburg political reforms.⁸⁶ Joseph II took a special interest in the province, which he viewed as an area where he could experiment with various means of restructuring society, and, more specifically, of improving its productive capacity.⁸⁷ At the outset, Habsburg goals in Galicia were twofold: first, to replace the nobility-dominated administration with a disciplined, centralized bureaucracy, and second, to improve the socio-economic conditions of the peasant population. Therefore, as a result of Joseph's commitment to enlightened absolutism, social and political reform flourished in Galicia while suppressed in the parts of Poland and other Ukrainian territories that fell under tsarist jurisdiction.

The annexed territories were organized into an Austrian province (*Land*) that was divided into nineteen regions (*Kreise*), including one for Bukovina. At the top of the bureaucratic hierarchy was the imperially appointed governor and a diet representing the estates — unrecognized in Poland — of the clergy, upper and lower nobility, and the townsmen. This

⁸⁴ Mamatey, *Rise of the Habsburg Empire*, 147.

⁸⁵ Ludwig Kalmus, "History of the Post in Galicia and Bukovina" (in German), part 1, *Ukrainian Philatelist* (Vienna) 10, no. 1-2 (1934): 6.

⁸⁶ A revision and unification of the civil codes of the various imperial possessions had begun in 1753 under the direction of Maria Theresa (1740-1780), who recognized that the empire needed strengthened central institutions along with local offices of the government administration.

⁸⁷ Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press/Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1988), 216.

government apparatus was based in Lviv (Lemberg), which became the administrative and judicial center of the province.

By 1786, the administrative reorganization of Galicia was accomplished, with Austrian laws replacing Polish ones. Because of the importance of a unified communications network in any empire, the post was among the first departments to be incorporated into the Austrian system.⁸⁸ Administratively, the state's *Hofpostkommission* combined the two separate departments that managed the forwarding of letters (*Briefpost*) and of merchandise, currency, and passengers (*Fahrpost*); in the early nineteenth century, this body was replaced by the *Oberste Hofpostverwaltung*, which was the central postal administration. The postal department was a subsidiary bureau of the *Hofkammer*, a central government agency directly responsible for the administration of commercial and economic policy. At the lower levels, the post offices were organized into four divisions: the first consisted of the main post offices (*Oberpostamter*) that were located in Lviv and Cracow; at the second level were the post offices (*Absatzpostamter*) in Dukla, Jaroslaw, Lublin, Przemysl, Tarnów, Zamosc, and Czerniewice; postal stations (*Poststationen*) were located along postal routes; and at the lowest level were the mail pick-up points (*Briefsammlungen*) that were not along the postal routes but that had connections with postal stations via mounted or foot messengers.⁸⁹

The *Hofkammer* as well as the *Staatskanzlei* and *Hofkanzlei*⁹⁰ — departments of state that served the same functions as a modern foreign office and ministry of the interior — and the departments responsible for administering the internal affairs of the Habsburg monarchy prior to

⁸⁸ Kalmus, "History of the Post in Galicia and Bukovina," part 1: 6.

⁸⁹ Stanislaw Mikstein, *Postal Markings in Poland during the Eighteenth Century (1762–1800)*, trans. by Ryszard Poddubiuk (Bialystok: Ikaros, 1936), 107–116. The *Postpatent* was the constitutional document that outlined the various postal laws and governed the postal administration.

⁹⁰ All provincial governors were subject to supervision by the *Hofkanzlei*.

1848 were not ministries. Rather they were *Hofstellen* or court offices that operated according to the collegiate form of administration. Except for matters merely requiring the implementation of previously established policy, important business was brought before each bureau's voting members, discussed, and settled by majority vote. It was the duty of the bureau's presiding officer, who managed its affairs and chaired meetings of the collegium, to submit to the emperor in the form of a written report any vote of his department that modified or initiated policy and therefore required imperial authorization. When returned to the bureau with the emperor's resolution, these reports (*Vorträge*) then empowered the department head to issue decrees executing policy approved by the monarch, who, at least in theory, exercised supreme executive and legislative power.⁹¹

On 16 November 1772, Empress Maria Theresa (1740–1780) initiated the incorporation of the post office organization on the former Polish territories into the Austrian system. She sent her agent Zacharias Cosa to Lviv on a fact-finding mission, to become acquainted with the existing postal network. Among the problems Cosa noted was the complicated distinction between the six categories of mail that were based on destination. Indeed, he commented that in order for a Polish postmaster to properly determine the rates to be charged, he would have had to have either traveled the world or had very specific geographical knowledge concerning every foreign "province, city, or parcel of land."⁹²

Another problem that Cosa discovered during his investigation related to the postal routes. Although Lviv was connected postally with the major cities in Poland, mail transports only left from Lviv for these centers when there were letters addressed to residents in the distant cities. Therefore, for example, during the week of 16 to 23 December 1772, no mail was taken

⁹¹ Coons, *Steamships, Statesmen, and Bureaucrats*, 13.

⁹² Kalmus, "History of the Post in Galicia and Bukovina," part 1: 7.

to four cities in the territory, even though there were letters to be picked up at their post offices. In a related matter, for smaller towns without direct mail connection, letters were often passed to private individuals from the area for delivery even though the postal couriers retained the delivery fee.⁹³ As might be expected, adherence to regulations in the more remote regions, where enforcement was difficult, was erratic at best.

The issue of messengers was “especially complicated.”⁹⁴ Private messenger deliveries were less expensive than the services offered by the post office under the Polish administration. The Polish nobility also did not want to lose the right to employ messengers to carry its correspondence. Moreover, because these messengers also accepted letters from private persons, they became good sources of income for the nobles. The problem for the Habsburg administration was that because of these private arrangements, the possibility existed of subversive messages being sent without government censors being able to intercept them.⁹⁵

Because of the urgency placed on the transformation of communications, Maria Theresa undertook speedy negotiations with the former postal administrators. The empress’ advisors explained that Galicia would be given equal postal status to the distinct German and Hungarian regions within the Hofpostkommission. However, the centralizing and Germanizing tendencies of the Habsburg administration were resented and feared by the Galician delegation. Although the Austrians viewed the unification as beneficial, the territorial representatives felt that it would

⁹³ These two areas of concern, namely postal operations and routes, were also discussed in a report Staatskanzler Kaunitz submitted to the empress on 29 March 1773. Kalmus (“History of the Post in Galicia and Bukovina,” part 3, *Ukrainian Philatelist* (Vienna) 10, no. 5–6 (1934): 6–8) provides details on the changes in specific areas of operations including rates and categories of mail. In the period between the first and third partitions of Poland, when many disputes arose between the regional and the royal posts, a representative of the Hofpostkommission named von Dornfeld was sent repeatedly to Galicia and Bukovina. His report of 27 December 1786 focuses on the mishandling of the mail at borders by postal officials; Kalmus, “History of the Post in Galicia and Bukovina,” part 4, *Ukrainian Philatelist* (Vienna) 10, no. 7–8 (1934): 7.

⁹⁴ Kalmus, “History of the Post in Galicia and Bukovina,” part 3: 6.

⁹⁵ In 1775, costly fines and penalties were placed on materials carried outside the official Habsburg postal network.

be simpler to allow the post to operate as it had prior to 1772, under a separate administration.⁹⁶ As expressed most fervently by the Galician delegate Izdenczy, the old postal hierarchy had a better understanding of the region and its people than did the Hofkammer. Faced with an impasse in negotiations, with both sides refusing to compromise, Maria Theresa turned to the president of the Hofkammer, Kollowrat, and the Galician Hofkanzler, Wrbna, to reach an agreement. Finally, in February 1775 it was decided that for routine operations, the post would remain under Galician jurisdiction and that for more important decisions, consultations and agreements with the Hofkanzlei and Hofkammer would be required.⁹⁷

In an act symbolic of the new Habsburg authority and as a sign of allegiance to the empire, early Austrian postmarks in the newly acquired territories eliminated the Polish crown and replaced it with the double-headed eagle; some variations combined the double-headed eagle and the posthorn.⁹⁸ The stamps were produced by the Imperial and State Printer (Hof- und Staatsdruckerie) in Vienna.

With Lviv serving as the hub of east Galician commercial and administrative activities, five new postal routes — with postal stations every two to four miles — were set up to connect the territory with the rest of the empire as well as to improve connections with Poland, Russia, and Hungary. As legal communications in Galicia found their way into the well-organized Austrian postal system, one of the more interesting Habsburg-era mail delivery systems emerged based on the heritage of privately operated postal networks. At the end of the nineteenth

⁹⁶ Kalmus, "History of the Post in Galicia and Bukovina," part 2, *Ukrainian Philatelist* (Vienna) 10, no. 3-4 (1934): 7.

⁹⁷ Kalmus, "History of the Post in Galicia and Bukovina," part 2: 8. The question of postal employees was solved similarly to how it had been in the Russian Empire. Soldiers were taken on by the post as either letter carriers or as station attendants. Until the Seven Years' War, postal duties were hereditary. For more information see Kalmus, "History of the Post in Galicia and Bukovina," part 3: 7.

⁹⁸ D. P. Belesky, "Lviv: Postmarks Through the Centuries," *Ukrainian Philatelist* 41, no. 1/2 (65/66) (1993): 8.

century, the Lviv Supreme Crownland Court (*Oberlandesgericht*), which fell under the jurisdiction of the Ministry for Justice in Galicia, was granted the authority to develop its own separate mail system. The situation is unusual because it represents one of the few historical instances in which two separate government-operated mail systems coexisted for an extended period of time.⁹⁹

The Supreme Crownland Court presided over the territories of eastern Galicia and Bukovina.¹⁰⁰ These areas formed the most backward part of the empire even though they consisted of 21,609 square miles and hosted a population — predominantly illiterate — of 4.3 million residents.¹⁰¹ Communication links into the area were underdeveloped: no railways ran through regularly through the region and the existing roads were in a generally poor condition. Further, there were also only a few post offices. On average, one post office served 8,087 residents and a territory of thirty-eight square miles.¹⁰² Undoubtedly, it was difficult for the regular mail service to reach distant hamlets, which were sometimes more than thirty miles from the nearest post office.¹⁰³

Because of the slow, unreliable delivery of court mail, which consisted primarily of subpoenas as well as notifications of court decisions and summonses, many individuals did not

⁹⁹ Stanley Kronenberg, "Poland — Court of Justice Mail Stamps," *The American Philatelist* (April 1980): 346.

¹⁰⁰ The province of Galicia had two supreme courts. One was located in Cracow to serve most of the region west of the San River. The second was situated in Lviv for eastern Galicia, including an area west of the southern part of the San River. This area contained the cities of Sanok (Sianik), Brozow (Bereziv), Dynow, and Rymanow, which were all connected by good military roads to Lviv. Subordinate to the supreme court in Lviv were two lower courts (*Landesgerichte*), one in Lviv for eastern Galicia and one in Chernivtsi, the capital city of the Crownland of Bukovina. Additionally, there were thirteen district courts (*Kreisgerichte*) in eastern Galicia and one in Suczawa, Bukovina, as well as 110 local courts (*Bezirksgerichte*) for towns that did not have a district judge. S. Ivanytsky, "Stamps of the Supreme Crownland Court in Lviv," *Ukrainian Philatelist* 43, no. 1/2 (71/72) (1995): 17; Erwin Lindenfeld, "The Court Delivery Stamps of Austria," *Ukrainian Philatelist* 43, no. 1/2 (71/72) (1995): 26.

¹⁰¹ These official statistics from 1899 are cited in Ivanytsky, "Stamps of the Supreme Crownland Court in Lviv," 17.

¹⁰² These official statistics from 1899 are cited in Ivanytsky, "Stamps of the Supreme Crownland Court in Lviv," 17.

¹⁰³ Lindenfeld, "The Court Delivery Stamps of Austria," 26. For details on the expansion of postal services in the Tarnopol region under the Habsburgs, see Alexander Malychy, "Chortkiv y Filateli," *Ukrainian Philatelist* 42, no. 3/4 (69/70) (1994): 198–216.

receive their judicial communications on time and trial notifications were often delivered after the trials had taken place. For this reason, the courts petitioned the imperial administration to remedy the situation. Thus, beginning on 3 July 1854, the Department of the Interior, Justice, and Finance allowed courts of the first order and district courts employ specially appointed letter carriers (*Gerichtsboten*) for situations where the regular post service, under the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs, could not be depended on to deliver court correspondence in a timely manner or in cases of special urgency. Although decrees and laws regulating the use of this messenger network — particularly special instructions no. 66 and no. 74 that regulated the actions of the messengers — were written for the whole of the Dual Monarchy, only the Lviv Supreme Crownland Court took advantage of the ruling.¹⁰⁴

b. The *Ausgleich* and Hungarian Postal Administration in Transcarpathia

Following Austria's defeat in the Seven Weeks' War with Prussia, an agreement was reached in 1866–1867 between the Habsburg establishment, headed by Count Beust, and moderate Hungarian politicians, led by Ferenc Deák and Gyula Andrásy. The Austrian Empire was transformed into the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary, thus restoring the autonomist Hungarian Constitution of April 1848. The first Hungarian government began functioning on 17 February 1867. By late March, discussions began in Pest concerning a provisional postal agreement, which was later signed on 13 April. As of 1 May 1867, postal matters were

¹⁰⁴ Lindenfeld, "The Court Delivery Stamps of Austria," 26. See Lindenfeld, "The Court Delivery Stamps of Austria," 27, for more details on the regulations. After the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in November 1918, the Lviv Supreme Crownland Court continued to function under the independent Ukrainian government, as it did after the July 1919 occupation by the Polish army. See Kronenberg, "Poland — Court of Justice Mail Stamps," 345–346 for details on how it functioned under the Polish Ministry of Justice. However, its authority in Bukovina was curbed following the Romanian occupation of 1918.

administered in Hungary and Transylvania by the Royal Hungarian Ministry of Agriculture, Industry, and Commercial Affairs.¹⁰⁵

The area of Transcarpathia that fell under Hungarian rule was composed of Bereg and Ugocsa counties, about half of Máramaros county, and practically all of Ung county. As a reflection of the 1868 Nationalities Law, Magyar place-names were adopted for the post offices in the region. Although the overall volume of mail carried in the region was limited — understandable considering the sparse population — new post offices were opened throughout Transcarpathia as a way of connecting the remote population to the larger state (see appendix IV).

The establishment of the *Ausgleich* reflected the continued interplay of centralized imperial politics and regional nationalisms within the empire. Undoubtedly, the Habsburg attempt to placate the various national groups within its borders weakened the overall strength of the empire. The recognition of the rights of all citizens of the empire to preserve their languages and culture ultimately focused popular allegiances on regional centers and local ethnic leaders instead of the centralized state. The ethnic diversity of the empire can also be appreciated by the variety and combination of languages appearing on imperial and privately printed postal stationery. In contrast to the situation in the Russian Empire, where all stationery was printed in Russian only, German-Polish and German-Polish-Ruthenian¹⁰⁶ variants were standard in Austria.

The Austro-Hungarian Empire pioneered the use of postcards on 1 October 1869, initiating a worldwide trend. In an article in the *Neuen Freien Presse*, Emanuel Herrmann explained that for short notes, letters were too formal, thus the motivation behind the postcards.

¹⁰⁵ Andrew Cronin, "Pre-Stamp Mail and Adhesives Used in Carpatho-Ukraine until 1871," *Ukrainian Philatelist* 36, no. 2 (56) (1989): 45. See also Andrew Cronin, "Pre-Stamp and Stampless Mail from Carpatho-Ukraine," *Ukrainian Philatelist* 36, no. 1 (55) (1989): 24. On 8 June, the Austrian Emperor Franz Josef I was crowned Apostolic King of Hungary although self-rule was granted except for dynastic, diplomatic, and military matters.

¹⁰⁶ The *Eneida*, written by Ivan Kotliarevskii in 1798, was the first text printed in Ruthenian, which although a Cyrillic language, is distinct from Russian. Ruthenian formed the basis for the Ukrainian language.

A brief examination of the early issues further clarifies the concessions to the empire's minorities. For example, the first issue for Hungary featured the German inscription "Correspondenz-Karte" and the Hungarian coat of arms. However, because its reception in the kingdom was less than enthusiastic, a second, amended version with indications in Magyar was soon introduced.¹⁰⁷

The debates surrounding the use of Ruthenian on postal forms in Galicia was covered in the local press. In 1890, the daily newspaper *Dilo* (The Deed)¹⁰⁸ reported that several complaints from the city of Drohobich were sent to the post and telegraph administration because the local post offices did not have any Ruthenian-language postal cards. When asked, the director of the local post explained that he did not stock Ruthenian-language forms because he simply did not want to.¹⁰⁹ Similar complaints also came from Lviv, where national sentiments were offended by the short supplies of postal forms with Ruthenian inscriptions; in response, Postal Director Shifren ordered trilingual forms — German-Polish-Ruthenian— to be made available from certain post offices in the city.¹¹⁰

But the language dispute did not center solely on postal forms. During one legislative session in the late 1870s, a government representative called attention to the fact the Galician Postal Directorate did not have a single employee who could speak fluent proper Ruthenian; he also noted that every document that was produced in the language contained so many grammatical errors as to make it incomprehensible. The representative summed up the situation

¹⁰⁷ Both issues were available in Transcarpathia. Cronin, "Pre-Stamp Mail and Adhesives Used in Carpatho-Ukraine until 1871," 47.

¹⁰⁸ The newspaper *Dilo* was launched in 1880 by Volodymyr Barvins'kyi on behalf of the Ukrainian national movement. Its title implied a polemic against the Russophile paper *Slovo* (The Word). This latter publication was an old Ruthenian newspaper, which while stressing loyalty to Austria, also proclaimed the ethnic and cultural unity of the "Russian nation" from the Carpathians to the Urals.

¹⁰⁹ *Dilo* 11, no. 145 (28 June [10 July] 1890): 3.

¹¹⁰ *Dilo* 11, no. 204 (10 [22] September 1890): 1.

by saying that despite equal language rights in the empire, “one may think that the postal service in Peremyshl exists for Poles and Germans only.”¹¹¹ Indeed, one incident reveals that the Ruthenian population faced almost comical circumstances when dealing with the post:

One merchant, L., was trying to send a parcel to Russia, addressed in Ruthenian. The postal worker at the Central Post Office did not accept the parcel, and the merchant changed the address by re-writing it in Polish. At the destination, the [Ruthenian post office] did not accept the parcel addressed in Polish, and returned it back to Lviv, and the merchant had to pay double postage. After much difficulty and scandal, the parcel with its address in Ruthenian was finally accepted [at the post office in Lviv].¹¹²

c. The “Ukrainian” National Awakening

When news of revolutionary events in Vienna reached Galicia in March 1848, and after the Poles established a Polish National Council demanding extensive autonomy for what they considered a purely Polish land, the Galician governor Count Stadion urged Ruthenian leaders to make their own demands. Thus, a petition dated 19 April 1848 was addressed to the Habsburg emperor, calling for recognition of the Ruthenian nationality and for the division of Galicia into Polish and Ruthenian regions; this was a proposal that Stadion had originally put forward in 1847. Then, on 2 May, under the leadership of Hryhoriï Yakymovych, Lviv’s Greek Catholic auxiliary bishop, the first Ruthenian political organization was established, the Supreme Ruthenian Council (*Holovna Rus’ka Rada*). One week later, the group issued a manifesto, arguing that Ruthenians were a people distinct from both Poles and Russians and that they

¹¹¹ *Slovo* 16, no. 61 (29 May [10 June] 1870): 1.

¹¹² *Slovo* 16, no. 61 (29 May [10 June] 1870): 1.

“belong to the great Ruthenian nation who speak one language and count fifteen millions, of whom two and one half inhabit the Galician land.”¹¹³

October 1848 also witnessed the convocation of the first Galician Ruthenian cultural society, the Congress of Ruthenian Scholars (*Sobor Uchenykh Rus'kykh*), which met in Lviv. Its ninety-nine participants discussed problems concerning education, scholarship, and linguistics. More lasting were the efforts of the Galician Rus' Matytsa (*Halyts'ko-Rus'ka Matytsia*), a society established in Lviv to promote education and popular culture. By the 1860s it began to publish an important scholarly and literary journal. The Supreme Ruthenian Council also founded a cultural organization, the National Home (*Narodnyi Dim*). First housed in a building donated by the Austrian government, the body included a museum, library, and printing shop. Another important cultural achievement came as a result of the imperial government's decision in December 1848 to establish a Chair of Ruthenian Language and Literature in the philosophical faculty of the University of Lviv.¹¹⁴ Moreover, although official imperial documents used the term “Ruthenian” for those Ukrainians living under the Habsburg monarchy in Galicia, Bukovina, and Transcarpathia until the collapse of the empire, nationally conscious individuals began to abandon that name and its equivalent *rusyny* around the turn of the century in favor of the self-designation “Ukrainian” (*ukraintsi*).

So, although it has become a cliché to speak of the 1848 as the “spring of nations,” the significance of the revolutionary events cannot be overstated for Ruthenians living under the

¹¹³ Kost' Levys'kyi, *Istoria politychnoi dumky halyts'kykh ukraintsiiv 1848–1914* (Lviv, 1926), 21; cited in Ivan L. Rudnytsky, “The Ukrainians in Galicia Under Austrian Rule,” in *Nationbuilding and the Politics of Nationalism: Essays on Austrian Galicia*, eds. Andrei S. Markovits and Frank E. Sysyn (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 32. The Supreme Ruthenian Council established thirty-four branches throughout eastern Galicia.

¹¹⁴ The Galician Ukrainians also created their own military units. Responding to the emperor's call for the creation of provincial national guards, the Ukrainians formed two units — a peasant frontier defense and the Ruthenian Sharpshooters. Both were voluntarily constituted as an indication of loyalty to the Habsburgs, while the second group had as its specially stated goal the defeat of the revolutionary Magyars.

Habsburg monarchy. In contrast to the rapidly developing Ruthenian-Ukrainian national awareness, centered around Lviv, and while Ruthenians in the Habsburg Empire were making remarkable advances in their national life, the first efforts in the Russian Empire at organizing a nationalist organization, the Brotherhood of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, were quashed and the leading members of the intelligentsia, included the prominent literary figure Taras Shevchenko, exiled. As a consequence of the liberal Austrian attitude toward minority groups, newly arrived refugees from tsarist oppression in the east and Prussian-occupied regions of Poland resulted in an influx of creative individuals to the relative freedom of Galicia. The population of Lviv thus grew rapidly and by 1900 approached 160,000 persons.¹¹⁵

Thus, all the basic elements that make possible a viable national life — historical ideology, language, literature, cultural organizations, education, religion, and politics — were being firmly grounded in Austrian Galicia. Further, because the Austrian Empire was still German at the imperial level, Ruthenians could function within the socially and politically acceptable framework of a hierarchy of multiple loyalties without having to give up their own national identity. In short, a Galician or Bukovinian could be both a Ukrainian national patriot and a loyal Habsburg subject; both identities were compatible.

This situation was in decided contrast to the Russian Empire, where accepting the idea of a hierarchy of loyalties meant that a resident of what was seen as Ukrainian territory could only be a Russian from “Little Russia,” or simply a Russian. Being a Ukrainian in the Russian Empire, in the sense of something distinct, meant rejecting the dominant social and political values of tsarist society. Austrian Galicia therefore provided the setting in which a distinct Ruthenian nationality could exist, adapt, and flourish in a modern social environment; it would be from here that the drive for the modern Ukrainian state was launched.

¹¹⁵ C. Macartney, *The House of Austria: The Later Phase, 1790–1918* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1978); cited in Belesky, “Lviv: Postmarks Through the Centuries,” 16.

CHAPTER TWO: THE BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION AND REORGANIZATION OF PUBLIC LIFE

In contrast to the largely unexplored field of postal history, Western scholarship has produced a wide range of studies on art and iconography from the revolutionary period in Russian history and the early years under the new Soviet regime. Yet the survival of ephemeral materials, particularly those that originated during the civil war, was to a large extent a matter of chance. The case of Soviet posters highlights the difficulties faced by scholars who have attempted to use these types of items to study the development of artistic styles: posters were not always systematically collected; they were often prepared from poor quality materials, which deteriorated over time; some of the major collections were destroyed by fire and war damage, while other pieces suffered from neglect at the hands of untrained Soviet museum employees.

In recent years, however, the resources of private collectors in Europe and North America have resulted in several touring exhibitions of poster art and other pieces of ephemera. In their accompanying catalogues, the analyses by prominent art historians have highlighted how trends in artistic works, especially poster and graphic arts, have corresponded to political and economic issues, while also unraveling the artistic debates within the Bolshevik leadership. The field has further been rounded out by works such as Stephen White's *The Bolshevik Poster*, which systematically demonstrates how a series of bold images that emerged after the 1917 revolutions became crucial elements in Soviet iconography.

At the same time, several scholars have gained prominence with their studies of Soviet cultural history. Works such as Richard Stites' *Revolutionary Dreams* have examined the development of the new Soviet iconography while also emphasizing the important role played by visual expressions of popular culture in maintaining and spreading the new Soviet ideology. Further, *Mass Culture in Soviet Russia: Tales, Poems, Songs, Movies, Plays, and Folklore, 1917-*

1953, a collaborative effort of Stites and James von Geldern, demonstrates how the population of the Soviet Union evolved in response to economic, technological, and political changes, and thus were transformed into loyal comrades, self-sacrificing patriots, and paeans to industrialization. That society had adapted and became unified behind the goals of the state ultimately helped to maintain the Soviet Union when it was faced with the events of World War II.

This chapter builds on the foundations of these two areas of historical scholarship to explore ephemeral works produced within the artistic genre of social realism. In its original meaning, this term referred to leftist political art produced in the 1920s and 1930s, primarily in the United States, Mexico, Germany, and the Soviet Union. According to one art theoretician, the phrase was not initially intended to mean any particular style, yet the “bias of social realism” toward the “didactic illustration of political subjects” lead the pieces to have distinct characteristics. As it developed, “social realism became a pejorative term for banal, realist images of the working class meant to be accessible to every viewer, of any age or IQ.”¹

Social realism has been frequently, although not exclusively, identified with communist countries including the Soviet Union. According to Matthew Cullerne Brown, one of the leading scholars of the genre, Stalin himself was revealed if not as the originator, then as the leading proponent in the adoption of the artistic genre in the 1930s.² Because in the Soviet Union art was considered to be an ideological phenomenon, both reflecting and acting in the interests of a certain set of social attitudes, then its highest arbiter was not the artist, critics, or

¹ Robert Atkins, *Artspeak: A Guide to Contemporary Ideas, Movements, and Buzzwords* (New York: Abbeville Press Publishers, 1990), 150. Atkins (page 150) explains the term social realism is “often mistakenly called *Socialist Realism*.”

² Matthew Cullerne Brown, *Art under Stalin* (Oxford: Phaidon Press Limited, 1991), 89.

public opinion, but rather the ruling ideologist. Thus Stalin became, among other things, the Soviet Union's chief art critic.³

The artistic theoretician Nicos Hadjinicolaou has developed an interesting theory related to the application of social realism. In his work *Art History and Class Struggle*, Hadjinicolaou argues that ideology does not necessarily cover just the rudiments of knowledge and ideas, but that it can also be extended "to myths, symbols, taste, style, fashion, and the whole 'way of life' of a particular society."⁴ Consequently, the Russian Revolution developed a new visual style that gave the epoch its own distinctive images. Although diverse in the extreme, labels, money, stamps, and other ephemeral items all "bore the mark of an ascetic elegance, a special harsh and angular clarity."⁵ Once created, the country's new heraldry and symbols of Soviet rule were extended to every facet of daily life, from large monuments to the new postal cancels, all of which featured the hammer-and-sickle-in-a-star emblem.⁶

Moreover, just as the new regime centralized all creative activity and left its visual mark on society, between 1921 and 1939 the new leadership also altered the population's lifestyle, socially reconstructing it in terms of the regime's values. This was an elaborate process, one that revealed a great deal about the extent of the state's obsession with total control. In addition to the arts, another example of this drive toward centralization centered around the hobby of stamp collecting. Philately did not threaten any vital state interest nor did stamp collectors as a group represent a mass following. Yet the regime quickly attempted to penetrate and monitor this mundane circle and to redefine its activities to serve state interests. Indeed, the party would not

³ Brown, *Art under Stalin*, 89.

⁴ Nicos Hadjinicolaou, *Art History and Class Struggle*, trans. from the original French by Louise Asmal (London: Pluto Press Limited, 1978), 9–10.

⁵ Mikhail Guerman, comp., *Art of the October Revolution* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1979), 29.

⁶ Guerman, *Art of the October Revolution*, 30.

tolerate a hobby as an autonomous realm of social activity. Although focused on more prominent social and cultural organizations, Peter Kenez's theories concerning government-sponsored mass societies can be extended to include philately. According to Kenez, the fusion of state and social interests within centralized organizations and the control of these groups by the Bolshevik leadership "contributed to the development of the particular flavor of Soviet totalitarianism: They represented counterfeit spontaneity, they filled a void. . . . The societies enabled the regime to channel genuine enthusiasm."⁷

There is an added significance to the formation of these statewide associations. By replacing the smaller groups, which may have reflected regional variations, with large organizations the Soviet government further advanced the notion of a new "Soviet man." Individuals were united with multitudes of other members who shared common interests or who were engaged in similar professional activities. Thus, the official associations helped to overcome distinct regional identities and further bond the population behind the centralized state.

The establishment of communist rule in Russia was brought about by two revolutions in 1917. The first, in February, destroyed the autocracy of the monarchy. But Alexander Kerensky's weak leadership and his refusal to withdraw from World War I emboldened Vladimir Il'ich Lenin, the Bolshevik leader, to return from exile and stage a second revolution. The Bolsheviks overthrew the Provisional Government in October and seized power in the name of the people. Fear of being overrun by the advancing German army led the new government to move Russia's capital from St. Petersburg back to Moscow. From his Kremlin office, Lenin then issued the directives that consolidated his power — despite ongoing civil conflicts — and that, by giving priority to the needs of the collective society as opposed to the individual, turned

⁷ Peter Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization, 1917–1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 153.

Russia into the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics. Eventually, the Romanov's double-headed eagles were replaced by red, five-pointed stars, glowing symbols of communist power.

Although there had been great advances in literacy rates during the first decades of the twentieth century,⁸ the Bolshevik leaders' interests centered around practical programs, with the main focus on mass agitational art that could quickly and easily communicate the values of the new order and bring the revolution to the greatest number of new Soviet citizens. "Art is breaking out of walls onto the streets" became a popular slogan in the post-revolutionary period, celebrating the fact that art would now reach all the people instead of only a narrow group of connoisseurs.⁹

Every form of public art — a concept accepted as vital and basic — was encouraged to embody the ideals of the new regime, as explained by the graphic artist and advocate of futurism Vladimir Mayakovsky (1893–1930):

Starting today, with the abolition of the tsar's regime, the *domicile of art* in the closets and sheds of human genius — palaces, galleries, salons, libraries, theatres — is *abrogated*. . . . In the name of the great march of equality for all, in the field of culture, let the *Free Word* of the creative personality be written on the walls, fences, roofs, and streets of our cities and villages, on the backs of automobiles, carriages, streetcars, and on the clothes of all citizens. . . . Let *pictures*, in color, be flung like colored rainbows across streets and squares, from house to house, delighting and ennobling the eye of the passer-by.¹⁰

⁸ Jeffrey Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read: Literary and Popular Literature, 1861–1917* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 4. According to the census of 1897, only 21 percent of the population could read. Yet literacy rates had risen to an estimated 40 percent by the onset of World War I. Literacy among new recruits in the army rose from 2.1 percent in 1874, the first year of the new national service army, to 68 percent in 1913. Although literacy among the rural population was low — no more than 6 percent in the 1860s and 25 percent in the 1910s — male literacy was relatively high throughout the industrialized provinces of central Russia. According to the 1897 census, male literacy outside the cities was over 70 percent in Moscow Province and nearly 68 percent in the nearby Vladimir Province. Literacy was also particularly high among the young. The 1920 census showed that among children aged twelve to sixteen (the last generation to pass through the prerevolutionary school system) in European Russia, 71 percent of boys and 52 percent of girls were literate. See Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read*, 4.

⁹ *Tradition and Revolution in Russian Art: Catalogue of the "Leningrad in Manchester" Exhibitions* (Manchester: Cornerhouse Publications, in association with the Olympic Festival, 1990), 135.

¹⁰ "Decree No. 1 [of the Moscow futurists' movement] on the Democratization of Art"; translated and cited in Victor Terras, *Vladimir Mayakovsky* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1983), 11. Emphasis in the original.

Indeed, the Bolsheviks employed every kind of propaganda medium to shore up their regime. Mass pageants and parades replaced the familiar religious and court ceremonies. The windows of empty shops were filled with posters while entire squares were filled with dynamic images and shapes. Artists decorated propaganda trains that were sent across the country filled with speakers and brass bands to rouse enthusiasm for the revolution, while propaganda boats, similarly decorated by avant-garde artists, plied the rivers. Poets wrote special verses not only praising the Soviet regime but urging peasants to brush their teeth, take precautions against venereal disease, and learn to read and write. Even street banners and commemorative decorations, "which by their very nature are destined to a short life, were carefully planned."¹¹

In addition to providing a forum for various political parties and programs in 1917, so too did the revolutions stimulate an outburst of creative activity that took such varied forms as agitational art, street art, productivism, and constructivist theater. Although factional activity was a sign of independence and ensured that innovation would continue, the artists collaborated with political leaders in the search for new forms and symbols to create a recognizable, standardized iconography to assert the success and legitimacy of the new regime. Group debate and conflict remained a feature of Soviet art into the 1920s, but with the difference that the government itself became a participant.

Although different assessments of artistic works are acceptable, it is possible to create a rough periodization of post-1917 art in the Soviet Union corresponding to political developments in the new country. Indeed, understanding the early years of Soviet art means looking at the context in which artists were working and the way political values were reflected in art. Initially, an uncertainty over how art would represent the new world the Bolsheviks wanted to create left both the artists and the politicians caught between highly theorized

¹¹ Guerman, *Art of the October Revolution*, 17.

constructivism, which was collective and modern but not widely accessible, and a fully available realism that often perpetuated moribund artistic concepts and forms. Thus from 1921 to 1928 — i.e., primarily during the New Economic Policy (Novaia Ekonomicheskaiia Politika/NEP) years — the party did not stress conformity in style and artists were free to indulge in their revolutionary spirit.

One art historian has divided the art produced at this time into three broad categories.¹² The first included those pieces that adapted the neoclassical styles and images of imperial designs, exchanging imperial emblems and mottoes for their new Soviet counterparts. The second group, in contrast, departed radically from traditional styles to feature abstract, boldly colored designs similar to those of avant-garde posters and street decorations. Between these two poles, a third group presented a variety of styles evoking traditions other than those of luxury court arts, such as images inspired by Russian legend and village life and forms drawn from icon painting and folk arts. Most apparent in these works were the artists' obvious efforts to relate Bolshevik themes to the experience of the Russian people.

The second period, from 1927 to 1933, revealed a state that already saw itself operating as a cohesive unit. In the wake of an economic revival, the majority of art was devoted to a society on course to the first five-year plan (1928–1932) for economic and social development as well as to the major restructuring of community and public life around the principles of socialism. In contrast to the earlier period, one of “revolution for all,” this era is a “revolution for none,” as art was made to conform to the party's doctrine and life under Stalin.

¹² Alison Hilton, “Soviet Propaganda Porcelain and the Russian Folk Heritage,” in *News from a Radiant Future: Soviet Porcelain from the Collection of Craig H. and Kay A. Tuber*, ed. Ian Wardropper, Karen Kettering, John E. Bowlit, and Alison Hilton (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago, 1993), 50.

1. The Soviet Redefinition of Art

Among the decisive effects that the October Revolution had on art were changes in the content of art, its forms and methods, and, above all, the audience to which it was addressed. Indeed, all creative works became involved in the struggle for societal transformation. Under socialism, Lenin insisted that art would no longer serve the elite of society, that “upper ten thousand suffering from boredom and obesity; it will rather serve the millions and tens of millions of [laboring] people, the flowering of the country, its strength and its future.”¹³

Thus in the midst of developing plans for technical and scientific work, Lenin became concerned with policies for artistic education.¹⁴ His “Plan of Monumental Propaganda” was based on the Italian utopian Tommaso Campanella’s 1602 treatise *Civitas Solis* (City of the Sun), which described an ideal town whose walls would be decorated with frescoes to provide young people with a visual education in natural science and history and to arouse civic feelings. Lenin explained the motivation behind replacing memorials to the tsars and members of the royal courts with monuments to socialists and political rebels by saying that he was:

anxious to have as many revolutionary monuments erected as possible, even if they were of the simplest sort, like busts or memorial tablets, to be placed in all the towns, and, if it could be managed, in the villages as well, so that what had happened might be fired into the people’s imagination, and leave the deepest possible furrow in the popular memory.¹⁵

¹³ Lenin, *Complete Collected Works*, 12: 104; cited in Tolstoy, “Art born of the October Revolution,” introduction to *Street Art of the Revolution: Festivals and Celebrations in Russia, 1918–1933*, ed. V. Tolstoy, I. Bibikova, and C. Cooke (London: Thames and Hudson Limited, 1990), 11.

¹⁴ V. Tolstoy, “Art born of the October Revolution,” 12.

¹⁵ *Agitatsionno-massovoe iskusstvo pervykh let Oktyabr’skoi revoliutsii. Katalog vystavki* (Moscow: Sovetskii khudozhnik, 1967), 15; cited in Stephen White, *The Bolshevik Poster* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 21.

Indeed, Lenin explained to Anatolii Vasil'evich Lunacharskii (1875–1933), head of the People's Commissariat for Education (*Narodnyi kommissariat prosveshcheniia/Narkompros*),¹⁶ how he wanted Russia's cities decorated:

[S]hort but expressive inscriptions should be placed in various significant places, on suitable walls or on special constructions. These inscriptions should contain the most basic Marxist principles and slogans as well as, perhaps, tightly worked out formulations evaluating one or another great historical event. . . . Even more important than these slogans are in my opinion statues — be they busts or bas-reliefs of figures and groups.¹⁷

Not only would these markers replace the statues of former imperial rulers that were to be taken down, but there were to be many more of them. According to Richard Stites, Lenin wanted “cities that talked: engraved solemnities on the walls and unveiling speeches for the new statues placed at strategic places, constant reminders for the pupils of his gigantic new revolutionary school.”¹⁸

The roots of Lenin's ideas date back to the humanistic traditions of the Renaissance and the experience of earlier revolutions, in particular to the Paris Commune and the French Revolution. The link between Lenin's plan of monumental propaganda and the general enthusiasm of the revolutionary period for festivals is significant and coincides with the ideas of Robespierre: on 7 May 1794, the French leader announced to the Convention that popular

¹⁶ An overview of the work of Narkompros is provided in Sheila Fitzpatrick's study *The Commissariat of Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970). Fitzpatrick explains that the central organizational task facing the organization was the administration of the school system, which included the reform of the imperial education system. Additionally, under its administration, public libraries, art collections, and museums were preserved and opened to the public. In this area, Lunacharsky pursued the idea that an enlightened government recognized that creative work, such as the arts, could be used to the ultimate advantage of the state; it was therefore in the government's interests to provide subsidies to artists. For details, see Fitzpatrick, *The Commissariat of Enlightenment*, especially pages 110–161.

¹⁷ A. V. Lunacharskii, “Lenin o monumental'noi propagande”; translated and cited in Tolstoy, “Art born of the October Revolution,” 13.

¹⁸ Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 89.

festivals were to be used as an important means of civic education.¹⁹ However, according to some art historians, such historical precedents do not lessen the novelty and originality of Lenin's proposals. In the plans for monumental propaganda was the conception of the artist's social role and the "aspiration to link fine arts with other forms of mass agitational and propaganda work in the name of larger tasks of ideological education."²⁰

The link between the Soviet ideology and artistic endeavors became increasingly important in the 1920s. Lenin and his colleagues strongly held to their belief of the noble mission of art and its ability to be the country's conscience and guide. The idea of art's subservience to politics, put forward in Lenin's writings, became a provision of primary significance in almost all the regulations governing the artistic associations and institutions that were set up in the Soviet Union prior to 1983.²¹ Moreover, according to one Soviet art historian, art had a new audience in the post-revolutionary decades: "people who sought answers in it, who used art as a means of understanding what was going on around them."²² What this meant was that the ideas expressed in post-revolutionary art were based on the programs of the new government; while the public may not have always understood the rhetoric, the images were to become clear expositions of the official plans.

The art historian Aleksandr Sidorov recites four processes that eventually transformed art into an arm of the Soviet government. First, public awareness was transformed into an object of demagogic manipulations and speculations. Second, aesthetic requirements were depersonalized,

¹⁹ Robespierre declared: "Man is nature's greatest phenomenon and the most magnificent of all spectacles is that of a large popular festival"; cited in Tolstoy, "Art born of the October Revolution," 13.

²⁰ Vladimir Tolstoy, Irina Bibikova, and Catherine Cooke, *Street Art of the Revolution*, 13.

²¹ Aleksandr Sidorov, foreword to *Art under Stalin*, 10.

²² Sidorov, foreword to *Art under Stalin*, 12. Moreover, because under the new government the personal possession of art came under the category of "bourgeois relics," the public was thought of exclusively as viewers, by no means the owners, of decorative pieces of art.

and the interests of the individual were completely dissolved in ideological and artistic programs that were imposed by the state. Thirdly, leaders appeared who acted as mediators of culture and invariably took up a position above the viewer, reader, and listener, and who supposedly knew best what to teach, what the people needed to know and not know, and what was “good” and what was “bad.” Finally, art criticism was reduced to a concrete exposition of ideas sent down from on high. Consequently, unlike in democratic societies, the public ceased to be an effective participant with equal rights in the artistic process.²³

Early Soviet artistic policy can be seen in terms of an ongoing debate about the purposes of art that eventually ended with the imposition of a fixed program within a static system.²⁴ In 1917–1918 there was a broad consensus in the new government for continuity in order to make the best use of the talent of all the groups that wanted to be involved in the revolution. However, there was less agreement on a related issue: did Russia need a shared art of the masses as an essential force within the movement toward a new socialist society? — or, conversely, would the establishment of a proletarian art come about with the actual achievement of the new order?

Among the leaders, Trotsky adhered firmly to the second position and to the belief that the enjoyment of art needed leisure and that attention for the moment should be concentrated elsewhere. Trotsky was interested in futurism because he saw that it was trying to bring art to working people. However, he realized that most workers had no appropriate experience to help them evaluate it. Culture depended on knowledge and the people needed a period in which to learn. Lenin and Lunacharskii took a conservative middle position, believing that given political direction, art would maintain good relations with the existing intelligentsia. Both of these men

²³ Sidorov, foreword to *Art under Stalin*, 12–13.

²⁴ Andrew Causey, “Art and Revolutionary Society: Factions and Debates,” in *Tradition and Revolution in Russian Art*, 22.

preferred the art of the nineteenth-century realists of the Itinerant (Peredvizhniki) circle and individual artists such as Ilya Repin.²⁵ Aleksandr Bogdanov (1873–1928) took a different stance. As the intellectual leader of Proletkult (Proletarskaia kultura/Proletarian Culture), a cultural and educational organization under Narkompros, Bogdanov wanted to bring all the people into education and artistic activity as makers of cultural change who would help form the character of the new society.²⁶

Within the broad guidelines that art was to be aesthetically pleasing and politically correct, between 1917 and 1921 the government did not initially regulate the contents of art or stress conformity in style. Inspired by the revolution that had promised new economic and social relationships, the artists took advantage of this opportunity for greater aesthetic freedom. Their

²⁵ In 1923, Lunacharskii declared himself a champion of realism, "the sort of realism that would proceed approximately from the Itinerants." Letter to A. K. Voronskii; cited in Causey, "Art and Revolutionary Society," 23.

Ilya Efimovich Repin (1844–1930), a pillar among artists of the nineteenth century and an artist sympathetic to the revolution, was the exemplary practitioner looked up to by many Bolsheviks. He had said of late tsarist society that the role of art was to "criticize mercilessly all the monstrosities of our vile reality." His ideological mentor, the revolutionary and critic Nikolai Chernyshevskii (1828–1889), held that "the content of art is life in its social aspect." Elliot, *New Worlds*, 8.

The young group of painters who, in 1870, rebelled against the dead-handed classicism of the St. Petersburg Academy were known as the Itinerants. The name was in recognition both of their efforts to make their work more widely available through traveling exhibitions and of their travels throughout Russia in search of a subject. Genre scenes showing social conditions were the most typical subjects of the group. Elliot, *New Worlds*, 8.

²⁶ According to one scholar, Bogdanov sought a proletarian art that owed nothing whatsoever to Russian history. He maintained that art before the revolution was inevitably imbued with the hierarchical values of tsarism and therefore diametrically opposed to the new order. David Elliot, *New Worlds: Russian Art and Society 1900–1937* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986), 18.

Marc Slonim has further developed Bogdanov's ideas. Adhering to Marx's theory that art was a product of the social system, Bogdanov believed that since the proletarians were now in power they should have their own class art. As a first step toward the creation of a truly proletarian culture, he felt that the art of the past should be restricted and in some cases actively suppressed. Indeed, some of his supporters were zealous in translating words into action and embarking on a campaign of active iconoclasm. Bogdanov organized state-supported workshops through which he attempted to train the participants in writing techniques. Considering that most of them were people of working-class and peasant origin, with little formal education or knowledge of the past, his approach had some practical value. However, the work his proletarian writers produced was negligible and Lenin declared in 1920 that "proletarian culture must be a legitimate development of all the reserves of knowledge that mankind has accumulated under the pressure of capitalist society, or landlord society, or bureaucrat society." Slonim, *Soviet Russian Literature: Writers and Problems 1917–1967* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 35.

Lenin, with his advocacy of the gradual evolution of socialist culture and steady assimilation of existing ideas, mistrusted the zeal of Proletkult. Although the group had pre-dated the October Revolution as a radical, independent body, in 1920 Lenin brought the organization under the control of Narkompros.

experimentation was reflected in some of the civic decorations that appeared in the early months after the revolution. One of the decorative panels erected in Moscow in November 1918 honored Saints Cyril and Methodius, and others depicted popular but non-socialist figures such as the seventeenth-century peasant leader Stenka Razin.²⁷ Some of the work was almost exaggeratedly avant-garde: the lawns, flower-beds, and trees in front of the Bolshoi Theatre were colored purple and red, while the shops along Okhotnyi Riad were painted in brilliant colors.²⁸ Such displays were even more widespread in Vitebsk and its environs where the artist Marc Chagall (1887–1985), the suprematist Kazimir Severinovich Malevich (1878–1935), and the visionary architect El Lissitzkii (1890–1941) lived.

Despite the outpouring of experimental works, the desire of the Bolshevik leaders to avoid artistic risk was apparent. Their preference for images that were conventional and realistic rather than avant-garde was based on the theory that the designs should be comprehensible to the masses and neither shock the public taste nor alienate public opinion. Consequently, although two well-known artists, Natan Isaevich Altman (1889–1970) and Sergei Vasil'ievich Chekhonin (1878–1936), were declared the winners of the stamp competition organized by Narkompros in 1918, their entries were not recommended for issue. Similarly, the designs by Ivan Al'bertovich Puni (1892–1956) for the seal of the Council of People's Commissars (Sovet Narodnykh Komissarov/Sovnarkom) and by the sculptor Sarra Dmitrievna Lebedeva (1892–1967) for a one-ruble coin were rejected as being too outlandish.²⁹

²⁷ *Agitatsionno-massovoe iskusstvo pervykh let Oktyabr'skoi revoliutsii*, 14; cited in White, *The Bolshevik Poster*, 21.

²⁸ *Agitatsionno-massovoe iskusstvo pervykh let Oktyabr'skoi revoliutsii*, 15; cited in White, *The Bolshevik Poster*, 21.

²⁹ Elizabeth Waters, "The Female Form in Soviet Political Iconography, 1917–32," in *Russia's Women: Accommodation, Resistance, Transformation*, eds. Barbara Evans Clements, Barbara Alpern Engel, and Christine D. Worobec (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 226. The designs of Altman, Chekhonin, Puni, and Lebedeva are reproduced in P. N. Shterenberg, "Otchet o deiatel'nosti Otdela Izobrazitel'nykh Iskusstv Narkomprosa," *Izobrazitel'noe iskusstvo* (1919): 50–81.

The wide use of artistic mediums to convey the messages of the new regime was also a consequence of the major obstacles that existed to the widespread circulation of printed propaganda materials, particularly books and newspapers. As with other sectors of the economy, the printing industry had been seriously affected by the disruptions of revolution and civil war. Stocks of paper were depleted, partly because of the loss of the Baltic provinces which had previously supplied about half of the total printing requirements.³⁰ The printing works themselves were generally inoperable because of a decrease in qualified staff, a lack of spare parts and fuel, and the hostile attitude of the pro-Menshevik printers' union. By 1921, only about half the printing presses that had been in operation before the war were still working.³¹ The situation was further complicated because the public transportation system, which was necessary for the distribution of books and newspapers outside the major urban areas, was in a state of chaos as a result of military action and a lack of fuel and equipment.

Within this scenario, the circulation of newspapers in the early post-revolutionary years was relatively low by comparison with both earlier and later years. For example, the daily print of *Pravda* during the civil war was about 138,000 copies per issue, and the total daily print of Red Army newspapers was less than 250,000.³² Book publishing also suffered: the number of titles produced between 1918 and 1920 was only one-sixth of the pre-war average, and the number of copies amount to less than half.³³ Clearly, even allowing for multiple readership,

³⁰ A. I. Nazarov, *Oktiabr' i kniga* (Moscow: Nauka, 1968), 167; cited in White, *The Bolshevik Poster*, 19.

³¹ E. L. Nemirovskii and V. I. Kharlamov, eds., *Istoriia knigi v SSSR, 1917–21*. 3 volumes (Moscow: Kniga, 1983–1986), I: 65, II: 152–153; cited in White, *The Bolshevik Poster*, 19.

³² S. I. Stykalin, *Okna satiry ROSTA* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo Universiteta, 1976), 7–8; cited in White, *The Bolshevik Poster*, 19.

³³ Nazarov, *Oktiabr' i kniga*, 189; Nemirovskii and Kharlamov, *Istoriia knigi v SSSR*, I: 71; cited in White, *The Bolshevik Poster*, 19.

reading aloud, and other such practices, the printing press was not likely to provide an effective means of communication.³⁴

The Bolsheviks therefore relied heavily on poster art in their bid to gain popular support for their policies.³⁵ This continued a trend that emerged after the 1905 revolution when artists of various schools joined in the revolt. For a short period when the censorship laws were relaxed, they flooded the presses with viciously satirical anti-establishment publications and posters.³⁶ For one magazine in 1906, Boris Mikhailovich Kustodiev (1878–1927), a realist painter and pupil of Repin, created as the figure of death a blood-stained skeleton stalking the barricades. He later revived and altered this image in *The Bolshevik*, a large oil painting in which

³⁴ A good analysis of this issue is available in Jeffrey Brooks, "The Breakdown in Production and Distribution of Printed Material, 1917–1927," in *Bolshevik Culture*, 151–174.

³⁵ The development of Russian poster art was stimulated by the International Exhibition of Art Posters in St. Petersburg in 1897, which marked the first appearance in Russia of a new type of graphics. Some seven hundred works were shown, from thirteen countries, but only twenty-eight Russian designers participated. By the time of the 1912 St. Petersburg exhibition *Art in Books and Posters*, works by forty-nine Russian artists were shown. Nikolai Shkolnyi, "Persuading the People: Posters of the First Soviet Years," in *Tradition and Revolution in Russian Art*, 98.

The Bolsheviks obviously placed a high priority on posters. As early as 6 October 1918, *Pravda* devoted an editorial to them, commenting that:

the poster should become a new and powerful weapon of socialist propaganda, influencing the broadest possible public. Attracting to itself the attention of the masses, it makes the first impression on their consciousness, which lectures and books can subsequently deepen.

Pravda also regularly reviewed posters, and these critiques were usually then reprinted in the peasant paper *Benota* and other journals that were intended for a wide readership in the countryside. Many posters included the warning "anyone tearing down this poster commits a counter-revolutionary act," which clarified the connection between political posters and the party's wider purposes. White, *The Bolshevik Poster*, 112; the quotation from *Pravda* is also taken from White (page 112). The most recent study of early Soviet posters is Victoria E. Bonnell, *Iconography of Power: Soviet Political Posters under Lenin and Stalin* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

³⁶ According to recent calculations, no fewer than 249 satirical journals appeared during 1905–1907, excluding journals of a general political and literary character and those that were available prior to 1905 or continued to be published after 1907. Z. A. Pokrovskaja, comp., *Russkaia satiricheskaia periodika 1905–7gg.: Svodnyi katalog* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennaia biblioteka im. Lenina, 1980), 10–11. This was also a time when provincial journalism was spreading and thus, many works that were banned from the capital attracted great, clandestine attention in the provinces. Satirical periodicals were produced in more than thirty different towns, while many others were suppressed before they could bring out a single issue; Pokrovskaja, *Russkaia satiricheskaia periodika*, 8. Between 1905 and 1907, fifty satirical journals were published in Yiddish and twenty in Ukrainian; several journals published in Ukraine were written in Russian. David King, *Images of Revolution: Graphic Art from 1905 Russia* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), 43–44. The total print run of these publications is estimated to have approached forty million copies. G. Iu. Sternin, *Ocherki russkoi satiricheskoi grafiki* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1964), 240. Postcards were also sold featuring images of political criticism. For the development of picture postcards in Russia, see M. Chapkina, *Khudozhestvennaia otkritka: k stoletiiu otkritkei v rossii* (Moscow: Galart, 1993).

the figure of death was replaced by a robust worker, the savior of the Russian people.³⁷ The importance of these types of works is found not only in their content but in their very existence: the subject of these satirical posters points out that while the imperial government may have, in theory, controlled the artistic circles, there remained underlying currents that could not be completely destroyed by official policy.³⁸

The means of disseminating these popular images also forms an interesting parallel to later events in the Soviet Union. Among the posters produced at this time was an appeal, composed by the portrait painter Leonid Osipovich Pasternak (1861–1945) in 1915, for funds for victims of the First World War. The work, titled *Help for War Victims*, was an unexpected success. Consequently, a postcard version was prepared, which sold in hundreds of thousands of copies, while smaller reproductions appeared on candy wrappers, packaging labels, and stickers. This capitalizing on the effectiveness of bold images became a prevalent practice under the Soviets, who transferred poster images to a variety of mediums, thus ensuring their recognition by the greater population.

³⁷ Elliot, *New Worlds*, 11.

³⁸ There is an additional connection between post-1917 developments in art and earlier revolutionary events. In 1905, the artists Mstislav Valerianovich Dobuzhinsky (1875–1957), Evgeni Evgen'evich Lansere (1875–1946), Konstantin Andre-evich Somov (1869–1939), and Alexander Benois composed a manifesto, which foreshadowed the position of art in the new Soviet society:

Beauty will be abolished and forgotten in the mighty wave of urgent practical needs. . . . In constructing the new life, artists must contribute to the common cause but not only as citizens. . . . Artists are confronted with the task to decorate this new unknown life. . . . Our appeal must be for . . . the masses to be educated in the spirit of beauty.

The document was published on 11 November 1905 in the newspaper *Rus* under the heading "Voice of Artists." A letter of similar content was also published in January 1905 in the Petersburg newspaper *Ruskiye vedomosti*; this earlier letter was prepared and signed by the four individuals named above as well as eleven other prominent artists. For details on these letters, see *The World of Art Movement in Early Twentieth-Century Russia* (Leningrad: Aurora Art Publishers, 1991); the passage above is cited on pages 68–69.

Other artists of more modernist tendencies also participated in direct criticism of the regime following the events of 1905, many of whom were associated with Sergei Diaghilev's World of Art circle and affiliated with the Constitutional Democratic (Kadet) Party.

In posters, further development of content was only made during World War I, when patriotic works were issued in large editions. Shkolnyi, "Persuading the People," 99.

Soviet Russia produced over thirty-six hundred posters between 1918 and 1921, promoting a wide variety of virtues from economic productivity to literacy and health.³⁹ Under the direction of the new Bolshevik leaders,⁴⁰ campaigns celebrated the developments brought about by the revolution, emphasizing women's rights and literacy, as well as calling for the exchange of goods between rural and urban areas. Because the posters were aimed at changing lives, they offered a range of images that could strike chords of recognition and empathy while also inspiring trust and emulation. According to Victoria Bonnell, "not since the

³⁹ To some extent, the Provisional Government had also relied on posters to spread its message. For example, a newspaper campaign to drum up support for its "Freedom Loan" to help fight the war was extended in May 1917 to include a poster design competition. The Petrograd winners were P. Buchkin and Kustodiev; Kustodiev's poster featured a single, epic figure of a bearded soldier holding a rifle, which was a precursor to the heroic compositions of the civil war period. Shkolnyi, "Persuading the People," 99–100.

The following table of the themes presented on early Soviet posters is adapted from B. S. Butnik-Siverski, *Sovetskii plakat epokhi grazhdanskoi voiny 1918–21* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Vsesoiuznoi knizhnoi palaty, 1960), 23, which appears in White, *The Bolshevik Poster*, 91.

Type of Poster	Soviet Poster Production, 1918–1921				
	1918	1919	1920	1921	Total
Political	42	86	532	175	835
– percent	33.1	23.4	30.9	19.1	26.7
Military	21	170	718	106	1015
– percent	16.5	46.4	41.8	11.6	32.5
Economic	43	58	313	458	872
– percent	33.9	15.8	18.2	50.2	27.9
Cultural	21	53	156	174	404
– percent	16.5	14.4	9.1	19.1	12.9
Total	127	367	1719	913	3126
– percent	100	100	100	100	100

⁴⁰ In November 1918, the Bolshevik Party set up a publishing agency, Tsentropechat, which functioned under the All-Russia Central Executive (VTsIK) of the Congress of Soviets, Russia's legislative body, and had branches in the regional soviets. In 1920, Tsentropechat became part of the State Publishing House (Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo). The production of posters was given equal importance to that of newspapers and pamphlets. Publishing departments were also formed in the military organizations serving the civil war fronts, under the authority of the Revolutionary-Military Council of the Republic. Shkolnyi, "Persuading the People," 100.

French Revolution of 1789 had there been a regime so unequivocally committed to the transformation of human beings through political education.”⁴¹

In accordance with Lenin’s hopes, posters spreading the revolution’s messages became a prominent feature of the urban scene. In fact, they had become so noticeable that visitors to post-revolutionary Russia often commented on them. About his visit to Moscow in the spring of 1920, German economist Alfons Goldschmidt commented, “You find posters on all the walls, in thousands of Moscow shops, on telegraph poles, in pubs, in factories, everywhere you find posters.”⁴² The radical British journalist H. N. Brailsford visited Russia at about the same time, and found that even in the town of Vladimir, one hundred-twenty miles east of Moscow, “the usual efforts of [c]ommunist propaganda, posters in colour, posters in print and clever stencilled drawings, imprinted in black on the whitewashed walls, formed your mind for you, as you walked, by their reiterated suggestion.”⁴³ One American journalist wrote that “the visitor to Russia is struck by the multitudes of posters — in factories and barracks, on walls and railway-cars, on telegraph poles — everywhere.”⁴⁴ Finally, the writer Theodore Dreiser was overwhelmed by the “endless posters of this most ambitious of governments,” describing the scene as a “nightmare of propaganda.”⁴⁵

⁴¹ Bonnell, *Iconography of Power*, 3.

⁴² Alfons Goldschmidt, *Moskau 1920* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 1920), 57; cited in White, *The Bolshevik Poster*, 108.

⁴³ H. N. Brailsford, *The Russian Workers’ Republic* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1921), 11, 40; cited in White, *The Bolshevik Poster*, 108–109.

⁴⁴ Albert Rhys Williams, *Through the Russian Revolution* (London: Labour Publishing Company, 1923), 5; cited in White, *The Bolshevik Poster*, 109. Williams’ book is itself richly illustrated with posters of the period.

⁴⁵ Theodore Dreiser, *Dreiser Looks at Russia* (London: Constable, 1928), 90; cited in White, *The Bolshevik Poster*, 109. Russians themselves also remarked on the poster phenomenon of this period. As conditions gradually returned to normal in Odessa, Valentin Kataev noted: “The town became more beautiful. At every corner and every crossroads, ‘huge posters’ appeared with sailors, Red Army men and workers represented upon them. The sailors were particularly fine; done by leftist artists in the decorative style of Matisse, their angularity, sharp colors and lack of detail somehow matched the spirit of the times.” Valentin Kataev, *Sobranie sochinenii v devyati tomakh* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1971), 8: 22; cited in White, *The Bolshevik Poster*, 109.

In the effort to reach other audiences, the symbols and slogans of the emerging Soviet Union were transposed onto a variety of surfaces, including porcelain.⁴⁶ Unlike most other forms of Soviet propaganda art, these porcelains conveyed the revolutionary ideals and a positive image of the Soviet state to a sophisticated and elite audience. Such handcrafted objects were primarily sold abroad for needed hard currency or displayed in Soviet embassies.⁴⁷

This program was neither new nor unique to Soviet Russia. For instance, the Russo-Turkish wars of the eighteenth century had been commemorated in figures made by St. Petersburg's Imperial Porcelain Factory. Portraits of the heroes of the 1812 war against Napoleon — Kutuzov, Bagration, Platov, and others — appeared on vases, plates, and cups made in various Russian factories during the early nineteenth century. Similarly, political events and feelings were also recorded on ceramics during the French Revolution. Small factories in Nevers and elsewhere created revolutionary plates decorated with the portraits of victorious generals or civic maxims and symbols of the revolution, such as tricolor ribbons, a red bonnet, or a rooster crowing "I Sing to Liberty."⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Perhaps the two best sources on agitational porcelains are Nina Lobanov-Rostovsky, *Revolutionary Ceramics: Soviet Porcelain, 1917–1927* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications Inc., 1990) and Wardropper et al., *News from a Radiant Future*.

⁴⁷ Hilton, "Soviet Propaganda Porcelain," 50. As head of the State Porcelain Factory in Petrograd, Sergei Chekhonin advised the government that for ceramics destined for export in the period 1920–1923, silhouette designs by the well-known Ukrainian graphic designer Heorhiy Narbut (1886–1920) should be used. John Milner, *A Dictionary of Russian and Soviet Artists 1420–1970* (Woodbridge, England: Antique Collectors' Club, 1993), 308.

What is interesting here is that Narbut never worked for the State Porcelain Factory. In fact, by the time his designs were used, Narbut was dead. The popularity of his designs and their appeal to foreign audiences was probably related to his use of decorative motifs from Ukrainian folk art.

⁴⁸ Lobanov-Rostovsky, *Revolutionary Ceramics*, 12; Ian Wardropper, "Red Stars on White Plates: Soviet Propaganda Porcelain and the Tradition of Russian Imperial Ceramics," in *News from a Radiant Future*, 14. Another example of ceramics carrying political messages occurred in communist China. As most of the country was confronted by the Cultural Revolution, in 1975 Mao Tse-tung's aides ordered tea cups, bowls, wine vessels, and other pieces of white porcelain dappled with plum and peach blossoms to gain his favor. "Mao items are red-hot at auction," *The Arizona Republic*, 15 December 1996, A22. The practice of issuing these types of ceramic pieces was not new or restricted to communist states, however. Following the American Revolution, statues of George Washington — the image used was actually Benjamin Franklin — were made in Staffordshire, England, and sold as "an old English country gentleman." Alistair Cooke, *America* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1974), 122–123.

One of the problems faced by the Bolshevik government in its propaganda campaign was a shortage of materials. However, this problem was easily overcome at the State Porcelain Factory, which the new management found full of unpainted plates. Many of the wares produced by the factory were therefore inscribed with the same slogans and revolutionary themes that were appearing in newspapers, posters, and newly erected monuments.⁴⁹ Class struggle and the new revolutionary morality were used along with extracts from speeches by or about Lenin, quotations from European socio-utopian writers, revolutionary activists of many nationalities, and the *Communist Manifesto*. Other designs directly related to the priorities of Lenin's domestic programs and emphasized labor, science, and art as a means of re-educating the masses.

By the early 1920s, the first signs appeared that the revolution was not going to bring about the boundlessly creative environment that Russia's artists had envisaged.⁵⁰ Some individuals continued to advance revolutionary artistic forms to express the political changes, while others argued that modernist art interfered with communicating the message. Official criticisms lashed out against the avant-garde. Concerning a competition for posters to commemorate the first anniversary of the founding of the Red Army, the prominent Bolshevik Lev Borisovich Kamenev (1883–1936) wrote that although intended to decorate the town and rally working people for the struggle, the posters were rather a “mockery of the taste and sense of working people . . . an unnecessary and senseless waste of money.”⁵¹ The decoration of

⁴⁹ In addition to the State Porcelain Factory, agitational porcelains were also produced at the Kornilov Brothers and Kuznetsov factories and in the Abramtsevo and Talashkino workshops.

Many of the aphorisms that appear on agit-porcelain are from the list of slogans that Lenin ratified in connection with his Plan of Monumental Propaganda. In accordance with this resolution, Lunacharsky formed a committee composed of Valerie Briusov, Vladimir Friche, and Mikhail Pokrovskii to collect and edit slogans that could accompany this monumental propaganda. By September 1918, the committee had selected twenty-eight sayings attributed to Mikhail Bakunin, Nikolai Chernyshevskii, Confucius, Georges Danton, Fedor Dostoevsky, Ferdinand Lassalle, Karl Marx, Sir Thomas More, Ovid, Dmitrii Pisarev, John Ruskin, Max Stirner, Leo Tolstoy, and the Bible. John Bowlit, “Tempest in a Teacup: Soviet Porcelain and the October Revolution,” *News from a Radiant Future*, 38.

⁵⁰ Harrison E. Salisbury, *Russia in Revolution, 1900–1930* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1978), 249.

⁵¹ *Vechernye izvestiia*, 1 March 1919; cited in White, *The Bolshevik Poster*, 112.

Moscow for May Day 1919 led the city soviet to resolve that “under no circumstances would the organisation of the festival again be entrusted to ‘futurists from the Department of Fine Art.’”⁵² Similarly, the party committee from Smolensk complained that a worker “drawn in a square with a wagging bottom and a collapsed spine” would hardly conquer the sympathies of the broad masses; nor would a poster urging “study literacy” be of much assistance to those for whom it was intended. The committee declared that such posters were not simply a waste of paper but actually “harmful propaganda against Soviet power.”⁵³

The year 1922 was a watershed as sharper divisions emerged among the artists.⁵⁴ The New Society of Painters (*Novoe obshchestvo zhivopestsev/NOZh*), a group of artists recently graduated from the academy, declared: “We, former Leftists in art, were the first to feel the utter rootlessness of further analytical and scholastic aberrations. . . . We want to create realistic works of art.”⁵⁵ The Association of Artists of Revolutionary Russia (*Assotsiatsiia khudozhnikov revoliutsionnoi rossii/AKhRR*), which was to become the largest artists’ organization in the 1920s, was formed at this time, bringing together NOZh artists, former Itinerants, and young painters who had not passed through a modernist phase. The group’s platform was “documentary” realism, and promised “a true picture of events and not abstract concoctions discrediting our revolution in the face of the international proletariat.”⁵⁶ A circular issued in

⁵² E. A. Speranskaia, ed., *Agitatsionno-massovoe iskusstvo pervykh let Oktiabr’skoi revoliutsii, materialy i issledovaniia* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1971), 37; cited in White, *The Bolshevik Poster*, 112.

⁵³ *Pechat’ i revoliutsiia*, 1921; cited in White, *The Bolshevik Poster*, 112.

⁵⁴ Causey, “Art and Revolutionary Society,” 26.

⁵⁵ Manifesto quoted in John Bowl, *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde: Theory and Criticism* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1988), xxxix; cited in Causey, “Art and Revolutionary Society,” 26.

⁵⁶ “Declaration of the Association of Artists of Revolutionary Russia”; cited in Causey, “Art and Revolutionary Society,” 27.

1924 advocated an “invigorating,” heroic realist style that would be concerned with such subjects as “the production worker, electrification and the heroes of labor.”⁵⁷

As its name suggested, constructivist art was to be used to exemplify a spirit of production. With this aim, some members visited industrial plants looking for subjects. Further, because workers were now being glorified as the ruling class, artists devoted themselves to making all aspects of factory life aesthetically pleasing, from clothing, furniture, and household objects to the machinery and actual factory buildings.⁵⁸ Thus, the premonitions of social realism could already be found in 1922.

Lenin’s death in 1924 marked the beginning of a period of political repression and conflict as well as an end to artistic pluralism. While Lenin was elevated to a kind of sainthood — giving employment to thousands of painters, sculptors, writers, and musicians — Stalin moved toward a new autocracy. He eliminated his opponents both in and outside the party, decreed a new ideological orthodoxy, and prepared for a rigorous economic program of industrialization and land collectivization. And through what was later called a “cult of personality,” he became a model for much of the painting and sculpture done in the Soviet Union during his reign.

Abetted by the dawn of Stalinism, the proletarian artistic groups who proved more suitable to the party’s propaganda purposes successfully established their authority over the avant-

⁵⁷ Circular quoted in Bowlit, *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde*, 269; cited in Causey, “Art and Revolutionary Society,” 27. The theme of the heroic worker had its immediate source in post-revolutionary street and agitational art; although the suffering of the toiling people was an established Itinerant subject.

⁵⁸ Tobia Frankel, *The Russian Artist: The Creative Person in Russian Culture* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1972), 107. Constructivism in this period also focused on the creation of three-dimensional “collages” made of industrial materials such as coal, glass, paper, wood, and metal.

In terms of clothing, style was not the order of the day, but rather utilitarian clothes. The emphasis for garment design was on *standatizatsiia*, the creation of prototypes that could be mass produced. This was in marked contrast to the principle of handmade, tailored items. Further, in their dress designs for the new Soviet woman, the artists Liubov Popova and Varvara Fedorovna Stepanova (1894–1958) used abstract, geometric patterns that could not be “ruined” by seams, cuts, or tucks. See Bowlit, “Tempest in a Teacup,” 46 and John Milner, *Russian Revolutionary Art* (London: Oresko Books Ltd., 1979), 84.

garde.⁵⁹ Stalin, less educated than most early Bolshevik leaders, had not, like them, had his cultural horizons broadened by long periods of foreign exile. He was not interested in the arts for their own sake, but only insofar as they had a part in his program of national regeneration. His arts policy was contained in the April 1932 Central Committee decree "On the Restructuring of Literary and Artistic Organizations," which, according to art historians, "paved the way for the official introduction of social realism."⁶⁰ Imposed from above, artistic limitation was a logical extension of other policies pursued at the time.

Social realism set up models for art to conform to and established compliant groups within the art world to assess projects and pictures. Art was to be optimistic and create a favorable attitude to work, family life, and to recreation as the reward of labor. Qualities associated with modernism were rejected: stylistic innovation in particular, but also surprise, wit, irony, and ambiguity, all of which permitted flexibility of interpretation, encouraged the use of critical faculties, and left the ultimate meaning of a creation open. Although the theorization of social realism made it appear a positive movement, offering service to the state or party loyalty, according to Andrew Causey, its effects were mainly negative, "leading to static, reductive art that asserted its authority as of right rather than persuading through argument."⁶¹

Stalin became the dominant influence on a generation of Soviet life and art starting in 1928, the year marking the imposition of the first five-year plan for the development of the socialist economy. Designed to raise Soviet industrial levels to those of the west, it demanded the elimination of all "bourgeois" elements. Every possible means of propaganda and force was

⁵⁹ Frankel, *The Russian Artist*, 119. Moreover, the innovative spirit the avant-garde artists offered the government would have to be destroyed because the need for conformity conflicted with the artists' quest for freedom of style and content.

⁶⁰ See for example, Causey, "Art and Revolutionary Society," 30.

⁶¹ Causey, "Art and Revolutionary Society," 31. Another scholar has criticized social realism as "Stalin's grey and somber cliché . . . dusty, servile, sterile, bureaucratic"; see Salisbury, *Russia in Revolution*, 270.

mobilized by Stalin for his campaign to industrialize Russia.⁶² For artists, it meant their collectivization. The once-independent and varied groups of artists that had been formed in the 1920s were disbanded in 1932 and replaced by one union, encompassing graphic and decorative artists, sculptors, and architects. The union was given the “exclusive control of the facilities for creative work: exhibit halls, studios, working materials and supplies, orders for specific works, etc.”⁶³ The union was in turn controlled by the Commissariat of Culture and the Communist Party. All orders for paintings were transmitted through state and party-run organizations, while the artists’ wages were fixed by a union scale. Artists were instructed to paint on patriotic themes, such as the anniversary of the Red Army or workers on a collective farm.⁶⁴ Further, members of the Artists’ Union had to attend political courses and were expected to volunteer their time for state projects, such as the building of the Moscow subway.

A new principle of aesthetics was to be applied in all creative endeavors. Andrei Alexandrovich Zhdanov (1896–1948), a member of the Politburo and the head of the Party in Leningrad during the Stalinist assault against the artistic community, explained the concept in 1934:

Socialist realism, being the basic method of Soviet literature and criticism, requires from the artists truthful, historically concrete representations of reality in its evolutionary development. Moreover, truth and historical completeness of artistic representation must be combined with the task of ideological transformation and education of the working man in the spirit of socialism.⁶⁵

⁶² Salisbury, *Russia in Revolution*, 278.

⁶³ Frankel, *The Russian Artist*, 123. According to another art historian, Stalin’s declaration was intended to end factional strife and subsume all cultural activities under the leadership of the Communist Party; see Vera Grosvenor Swanson, introduction to *Hidden Treasures: Russian and Soviet Impressionism 1930–1970s*, catalogue to accompany the exhibition, January 15–April 30, 1994 (n.p.: The Fleischer Museum, 1994).

⁶⁴ According to one scholar, any artist who was willing to depict socialist imagery, “scenes of factories, collective farms, patriotic wars, straining muscles, outstretched arms, tired smiles, dialectical optimism” was charted for success. Rene Stiembler, “Pictures From an Exhibition,” *Survey: A Journal of Soviet and East European Studies* 48 (London, 1963): 5–18; quoted in Selma Holo, ed., *Keepers of the Flame: The Unofficial Artists of Leningrad*, catalog to accompany the exhibition November 14, 1990–January 19, 1991 (University of Southern California: Fisher Gallery, 1990), 9.

⁶⁵ Internally quoted in Marc Slonim, *Russian Theater, From Empire to the Soviets* (New York: Collier Books, 1962), 332.

The concept of art as a social tool was not unique to the Soviet Union. In the nineteenth century, Chernyshevskii, Tolstoy, and Repin, among others, also acknowledged art as a social tool that could arouse in people an awareness of society's problems. The communists similarly valued art for its utility in encouraging the diverse population to accept the new political philosophy. It is ironic, however, that this "revolutionary" movement looked back for its models to the realism of imperial Russian art rather than creating its own classics.

Social realism required art to deal with contemporary themes such as collectivization and industrialization, and to have as their heroes people on whom the Soviet masses could model their own behavior. The "positive hero" never did anything wrong: he was the irreproachable New Soviet Man whom the party expected to create with its new economic system. Besides being socialist in theme, the culture was also to be "realistic." It had to educate the masses and be easily understandable. Therefore, smiling cheerful faces, for example, had to be faces, not distorted abstractions.⁶⁶

In general, social realism had two main purposes: first, to enlist artists as the party's agents in the indoctrination of the people, and second, to maintain strict control on artistic

⁶⁶ Frankel, *The Russian Artist*, 124.

According to Frankel (page 117), the emphasis on revolutionary themes was accompanied by a recognition of the Soviet Union's multinational character and a revival of folk motifs. For the Soviets, social realism provided unprecedented opportunities for the development of the art of all the Soviet Union's nationalities, thus encouraging the advancement of national forms of art. The creative endeavor of non-Russian artists in the cultural centers of the Ukraine, Georgia, and Armenia "enriched Soviet art, contributing to its many-sided character, and furthered its development." *Art in the Soviet Union: Painting, Sculpture, Graphic Arts* (Leningrad: Aurora Art Publishers, 1978), 9, 10. To this end, subsidiary bodies of AkhRR were organized in Leningrad, Kazan, Astrakhan, and other cities. A variety of national art festivals were also organized: Kazakh art in 1934; Ukrainian in 1935 and 1937; Georgian in 1937; Armenian and Kirghiz in 1939; Byelorussian and Buriat in 1940; Tadzhik in 1941.

Stalin's pronouncements of 1925 and 1930, and in particular his talk of culture "socialist in content and national in form," seemed to countenance stylistic variety in the art of various Soviet republics, as long as these styles could be characterized as springing from national traditions. However, from the mid-1930s onward, waves of arrests swept away the intelligentsia and artists of the non-Russian republics as Stalin attempted to destroy what he perceived to be a widespread nationalist threat. His chosen antidote to nationalism in the field of culture was an increased emphasis on Russian traditions, while non-Russian decorative elements were condemned as formalism. See Matthew Cullerne Brown "Painting in the Non-Russian Republics," in Matthew Cullerne Brown and Brandon Taylor, eds., *Art of the Soviets: Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture in a One-Party State, 1917-1992* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1993), 140-153.

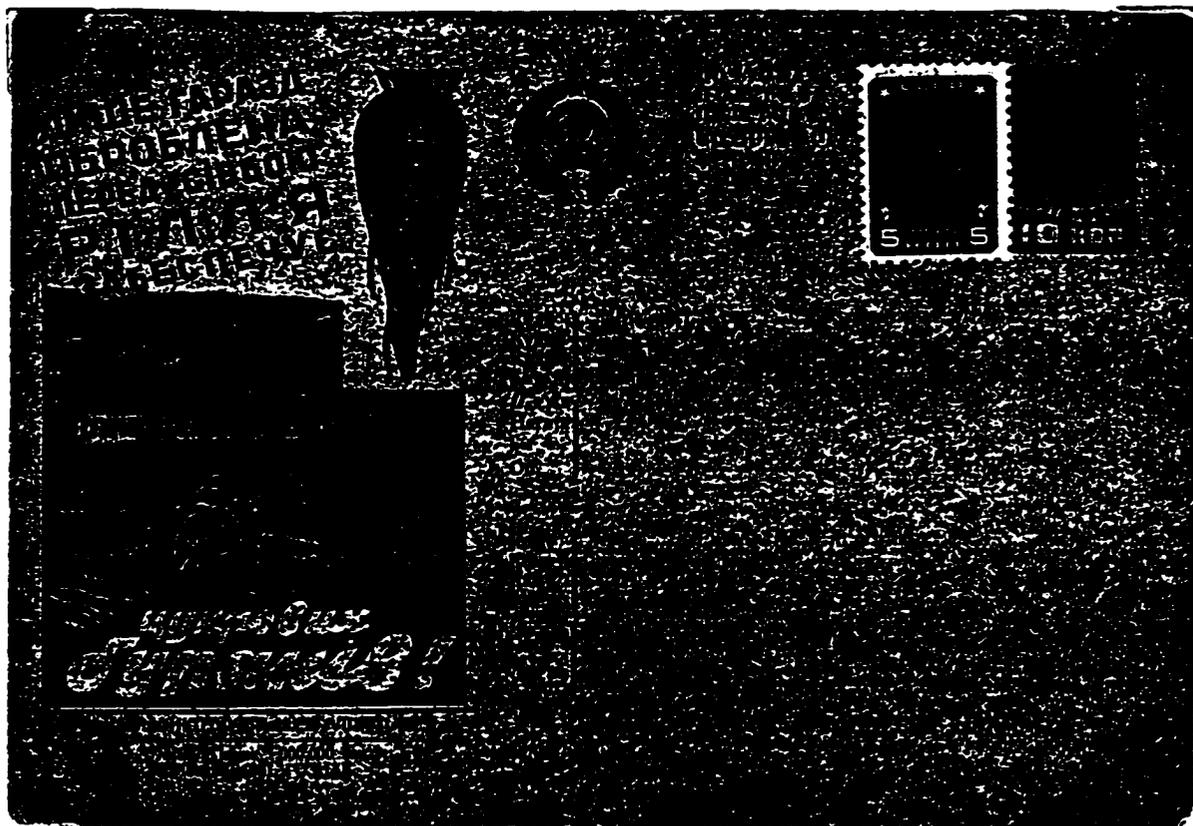
production so that art would serve no hostile ideology or faction.⁶⁷ However, in practice the doctrine came to mean much more than socialist themes in realistic settings. It meant that art had to portray life not as it was but as it would be. The tone of the painting had to be optimistic, showing people enthusiastically building communism. It also meant that artists, especially writers, could not describe Soviet life as they saw it. Instead, they had to omit anything that reflected badly on the accomplishments of the new system and include whatever the party wished was true. The art historian Hadjinicolaou has explained that social realism had to be an illusion because the Soviet ideology was so interwoven with an imaginary view of life. The social function of art was not to provide the population with a real understanding of society's structure, but rather to give them a motive for continuing the practical activities that supported the structure.⁶⁸ It was therefore not realism, but a distortion of realism into fantasy that eventually eroded the creative will of many artists.⁶⁹

A lesser-known example of the works that were produced at this time illustrates the extent to which social realism was applied. Over three hundred illustrated postal cards were issued between 1927 and 1934 by the People's Commissariat of the Post and Telegraph (Narodnyi komissariat pochty i telegrafov/Narkompochtel). Often resembling the stark revolutionary posters of earlier years, the "advertising-agitation" cards carried emphatic messages, slogans, and bold illustrations on the left half of the address side of the cards. Two elements were common to the cards: all of the designs were printed in red ink on beige paper and all of the cards featured the state seal of the Soviet Union (figure 3).

⁶⁷ Frankel, *The Russian Artist*, 124.

⁶⁸ Hadjinicolaou, *Art History and Class Struggle*, 9–10.

⁶⁹ Frankel, *The Russian Artist*, 125.



b. 1931: "Lishe harazd obroblena pered sivboiu nillia zabespechyie
odnostaini skhodu tsykrovikh byriakiv"
(in Ukrainian: "Only good preparation before sowing the soil ensures
the vigorous sprouting of sugar beets")
Listov catalogue, 2B-182.

Figure 3: Soviet "Advertising-Agitation" Postal Card, continued

The majority of these cards had texts in either Russian only, bilingual Russian–French, or bilingual Russian–Esperanto. Yet, in recognition of the multilingual composition of the Soviet population, the main slogans of some of the cards were translated into one of seven other languages — Ukrainian, Belorussian, Georgian, Armenian, Azerbaijanian (in Latin letters), Tadjik (in Arabic letters), or French; the twenty-five cards that featured Ukrainian as the primary language are listed in appendix V. Many of the cards also carried the inscription “postal card” as well as the address headings “kuda” (to where) and “komu” (to whom) in all eight languages.

That the use of other republican languages was not only tolerated but officially encouraged is significant. As a new doctrine, Lenin’s socialism had to be preached to the people in the languages that would be easily understood and, for identification purposes, with reference to local agencies. Thus, for example, cards printed for the Ukrainian S.S.R. included information related to the specifically Ukrainian branch of the State Import-Export Trade Office (*Gosudarstvennaia importno-eksportnaia torgovaia kontora/Ukrgorstorg*).⁷⁰ Moreover, by allowing for the development of national languages, both Lenin and Stalin felt that the Communist Party would overcome national distrust and therefore effectively reach the various republican audiences.⁷¹

In accordance with the aims of the first five-year plan, Narkompochtrel solicited messages and advertisements from various state cooperatives and organizations. It then coordinated the messages as well as the design, production, and distribution of the cards. The general, as well as

⁷⁰ All of the postal cards discussed in this section are listed by their identification number in G. M. Listov, *Markirovann'e pochtoy'e kartochki SSSR 1923–1979 gg* (Moscow: Radio i svyazi, 1982). The Ukrgorstorg example discussed here is Listov 2B–67.

⁷¹ This policy of promoting ethnic particularism is explained by Yuri Slezkine, “The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism,” in *Becoming National: A Reader*, edited by Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 207.

the specific, themes of these cards provide a sense of the economic, political, and social goals of the Soviet government.⁷²

The economic theme is overwhelmingly concerned with collectivization and increasing agricultural output. For example, one card produced in 1931 carried the slogan "The fulfillment of the sowing plan is a guarantee of fulfilling the five-year plan during the fourth year" (Listov 2B-120). Another dramatic card from 1930 read: "By the development of collective market gardens and livestock breeding in collective farms and state farms, we can eliminate food shortages and raise the level of real wages" (Listov 2B-83). In terms of design, the top part of the card shows peasants engaged in these two agricultural activities, while on the lower half are trucks loaded with meat and vegetables pulling up to the Workers Cooperative of the Moscow Regional Consumer Cooperative Association.

These relatively innocent designs are not as intense, though, as others. One 1931 card bears a statement that is unequivocal about the political goals of collectivization: "The successful carrying out of the spring sowing can lead to the wholesale collectivization of agriculture and the complete elimination of the kulak as a class" (Listov 2B-121). The image on the card shows a large tractor bearing down on a fleeing peasant, who appears to be carrying all his worldly goods out of the village. The intent was then reinforced by a 1932 card, which is even more graphic and insistent: "Kulak, speculator, disenfranchised citizen, wrecker. GET OUT of the industrial cooperative enterprise!" (Listov 2B-242).

Another way the economic theme was pushed was through a quasi-patriotic appeal, which was a common basis for many of the activities undertaken in the 1930s in both industry and agriculture. Some cards targeted a strengthening of the national defenses and developing air

⁷² William Moskoff, "Philately as Propaganda: The Case of the Collectivization of Soviet Agriculture," *The American Philatelist* (January 1986): 54-58.

power; others encouraged the population to become leaders or “shock workers” in all endeavors to promote the growth of the socialist system. Another set of designs were aimed at stirring up the workers to strive for better production in factories, fields, and farms. One card from 1930 exclaimed: “Collective Farms, Peasants and Workers. BREED RABBITS! A rabbit yields nutritious meat and valuable fur! In exchange for rabbit skins we receive tractors and machines from abroad” (Listov 2B–79). On the one hand, this message appealed to the self-interest of the peasants: breed rabbits and you will have more to eat. On the other, it urged the substitution of moral incentives for material incentives. Society was asked to breed rabbits so that the state could earn foreign exchange privileges and import the technology it needed for economic development.

This last card also relates to a basic Soviet political theme, namely the identification of private behavior with the social good. This theme is more obvious in another 1930 card that declares: “He who does not repay loans from the agricultural trade credit association on time is an enemy of the five-year plan and the socialist reconstruction of agriculture” (Listov 2B–25). In this and similar messages, private virtue coincided with public will.

Political and economic goals are also combined on a card from 1931: “All forces for the sowing campaign, for the expansion of sown area, for drawing in new millions of poor and middle peasants into collective farms” (Listov 2B–119). At first glance, the emphasis seems to be on the expansion of output. But there is also concern for continuing the recruitment of more peasants into the new model of agricultural organization.

Of the state’s social goals, education, especially agricultural education, was perhaps the most prominent. Here, the government attempted to teach and resocialize collective farm workers in the use of various agricultural techniques. One of their ongoing efforts in this regard was to persuade them to mechanize their farming operations. One card from 1931 reads: “Beet

collective farmers and individual peasants! Mechanize the harvesting of sugar beets!" (Listov 2B-128). In addition to promoting the use of advanced agricultural technology, a card from 1932 reminded farmers that "Machinery in good repair secures a high quality harvest!" (Listov 2B-256). The educational function is shown most clearly on a number of cards from 1931 that featured step-by-step instructions and a sequence of pictures that instructed peasants on how to reduce the spoilage of beets. But not all cards dealt with agricultural education. Other examples explained how to open a savings account, practice conservation, participate in organizations, promote good health, and purchase mail-order items.

Because another category of cards featured advertisements for various goods and services available to individuals and collectives, not all of the postal cards can be considered as pure products of social realism. These cards built on an earlier pattern (1926-1927) of postal cards that carried announcements from journals, banks, stores, libraries, and cinemas about their services. Here we can include the seven cards that were produced in English: one promoted Best Safety Matches (Listov 2B-30), two discussed the means of transferring money and personal items from abroad to relatives in the Soviet Union through the All-Union Association on Trade with Foreigners (*Vsesoiuznoe ob'edinenie po torgole s inostrantsami/TORGSIN*) (Listov 2B-259, 2B-278), one advertized a chain of hotels (Listov 2B-223), and three others, sponsored by the Main Administration for Foreign Tourism under the Council of Ministers of the USSR (*Glavnoe upravlenie po inostrannomu turizmu pri sovete ministrov SSSR/Intourist*), invited travelers to "Visit Caucasus, The Crossroads of Nations!" (Listov 2B-40), "See Crimea, The Pearl of U.S.S.R.!" (Listov 2B-42), and "Travel on the Volga, The Cradle of Russian Song!" (Listov 2B-48). (A thematic analysis of the postal cards is provided in appendix VI.)

Although most of the texts were written as exclamations, therefore taking on the appearance of pure propaganda, the cards were primarily directed at the Soviet population (with the exception of the English series mentioned above). The design of the cards included the appropriate postage stamp for domestic, intercity mail: until 1931, the rate was five kopecks while after 1 June 1931, the rate for intercity postal cards was raised to ten kopecks. The cost of a card corresponded to the indicated value of the printed stamp. To send one of these cards to a foreign address would have required the sender to purchase additional postage. It is interesting to note that the images on the printed stamps related well to the messages: the five-kopeck stamp featured a Red Army soldier and the ten-kopeck stamp carried the image of a factory worker. A few designs were also prepared in 1932 for local mail; the postcards were preprinted with a three-kopeck stamp that depicted a collective farm worker.

Through the production and dissemination of these post cards, the post office fulfilled two important functions in addition to simply providing a means for communication. First, it assumed the task of informing the population about the economical and political achievements of the U.S.S.R. as well as the cultural way of life in the new order. Moreover, the slogans encouraged the population to become involved in the growth and development of their domestic economy. And second, through the non-political messages, such as those concerning how to subscribe to a newspaper, the post office maintained and publicly displayed the traditional Russian characteristic of the state overseeing aspects of everyday life that in the West would be considered private matters.

There is an interesting correlation between the images on these postal cards and examples of the so-called "tobacco stamps" that were produced in the Soviet Union at approximately the same time. These labels were produced in massive quantities and then put into packages of cigarettes; this was a common practice in many countries, including the United

States. Other designs were gummed and could therefore be glued — similarly to our modern Christmas seals — onto the outside of envelopes. As with the postal cards, while some carried non-politicized announcements concerning annual fairs, exhibitions, sporting events, and tourist destinations, others featured messages more distinctly related to the prevailing ideology.

Among the less politicized labels are those that stressed the importance of clean drinking water in preventing typhoid and dysentery; this message is not unlike the several postal cards that promoted the programs of the Russian Red Cross Society (Rossiiskoe obshchestvo krasnogo kresta/ROKK). A more striking parallel exists between the postal cards devoted to the International Organization for Aid to Fighters for Revolution (Mezhdunarodnaia organizatsiia pomoshchi bortsam revoliutsii/MOPR): both the postal cards and the labels prominently displayed a hand holding a red flag on which the letters MOPR are written. Finally, another label featured the image of a young man breaking free from his chains and the slogan “in memory of the emancipation of Russia”; a similar design was used on the first post-1917 postage stamps, as will be discussed in the next chapter, as well as an actual 1932 postage stamp commemorating the tenth anniversary of MOPR.

The relaxation and redirection of the arts during the years of World War II was shattered by a new campaign launched in 1946. Zhdanov’s restoration of the purge atmosphere, complete with denunciations and threats of severe punishments, once again condemned some of the most creative names in the Soviet arts to silence. This period coincided with efforts by the party to restore its sway over the country and an economic recovery that would require more decades of hardship, sacrifice, and discipline. Simultaneously, the United States emerged as a new

foreign threat and rival. As a capitalist nation, it was feared not only physically and because of its nuclear weapons but also because of its cultural, economic, and political ideas.⁷³

With Stalin's death in 1953, many artists hoped that artistic tenets, purges, and ideological conformity that he had imposed would also pass. However, even without Stalin there was a limit to the freedom that the Communist Party would allow. And, although the Soviet people had grown vastly more sophisticated and educated since social realism had first been proclaimed, the party leadership continued to value the dogma as a prescription of ideological conformity and political orthodoxy. The basic fear was that cultural diversity would ignite demands for political diversity as well.

Still, the obvious need to dissolve the atmosphere of repression that Stalin had bequeathed produced some better days for artists. When Nikita Khrushchev (1894–1971) finally prevailed over his rivals and took charge of the party, his theoretical relaxation — “the thaw” — helped stimulate the economy and win support for his policies. Although the effects of de-Stalinization were observed most clearly in literature and the cinema, all branches of art saw some rehabilitations of those who had been purged or exiled by Stalin, along with a whole range of previously unacceptable themes for creative works.

This easing of regulations was shortlived. Following an exhibition of seventy-five canvases — modern and by Soviet standards even extreme — in 1963, Khrushchev issued an impassioned public critique that ultimately delayed the development of modern painting in the Soviet Union. Just as the young artists believed that they had finally carved their place on the

⁷³ Thus, in the middle of the twentieth century, with communications technically easier than ever before, the Soviet rulers shunned cultural relations with the West. According to Frankel (*The Russian Artist*, page 2), in the ideological battle between capitalism and communism, between democracy and totalitarianism, the U.S.S.R. put “blindfolders on their nation” to avoid all distraction from the course they decreed for it. This forced estrangement from the West is significant because it denied artists contact with the ideas of their colleagues abroad. In her analysis of post-revolutionary design, Hilton interprets the use of national folk motifs as a means of Soviet artists asserting their independence from European academic traditions. Hilton, “Soviet Propaganda Porcelain,” 53.

Soviet scene, Khrushchev announced that as long as he was president of the Council of Ministers, “we are going to support a genuine art. . . . What is hung here is simply anti-Soviet. . . . Art should ennoble the individual and arouse him to action.”⁷⁴ Khrushchev followed with a policy address that was so sweeping in its discussion of the arts that it reminded many of the two-year campaign Zhdanov waged for Stalin in 1946–1948. Social realism was upheld as Khrushchev denounced “objectivism” in art and generally defended Stalin’s cultural policies.

His successors, Leonid Brezhnev (1906–1982) and Aleksei Kosygin (1904–1980), set their course in cultural policies by putting on trial two writers, Andrei Sinyavsky and Yuli Daniel, who had pseudonomously sent work abroad for publication. Thus in the years following Stalin’s death, Soviet cultural life traveled almost a full circle, from purge to thaw and back to repression. For a time the fortunes of artists soared to new latitudes of freedom. But when this generated demands for more freedom, the reaction set in. The iconography of Stalin himself told the story. When his pictures disappeared, the climate for arts was friendly and warm. However, when his image reappeared in movies, books, and exhibits, and his bust appeared at his grave at the Kremlin wall, repression reigned again.⁷⁵

The only uncensored artistic work in the Soviet Union was the considerable amount produced surreptitiously for friends or private adoration. Non-conforming writers, painters, sculptors, and composers often created to government order by day, but in a wholly different style at night. Some of the work was hidden away for a time when it would be accepted by the state authorities. Some was reproduced by private means and circulated illegally. And some was smuggled out of the country with the hopes of foreign dissemination. In this way, a younger

⁷⁴ Cited in Priscilla Johnson, *Khrushchev and the Arts: The Politics of Soviet Culture, 1962–1964* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1965), 103.

⁷⁵ Frankel, *The Russian Artist*, 173–174.

generation of artists managed to lift the suffocating blanket somewhat, but the significance of their work is more political than cultural. The best of it was a literature and graphic art of protest and defiance, borrowing forbidden western styles and themes but yet not linked to the daring innovators who were silenced in the 1930s.⁷⁶

2. The Creation of Soviet Symbols

The Bolsheviks understood the power of art in general as well as of specific symbols to convey and reinforce political messages. Thus, the October Revolution swept away not only the tsarist autocracy but also its symbolic order: flags and banners were torn down, double-headed eagles were wrested from their perches, and portraits of the tsars were destroyed.⁷⁷ However, the Russian revolutionary movement had not developed any elaborate iconographical system of its own. For example, the intricately embroidered banners of western trade unions had no parallel in prerevolutionary Russia. Such incriminating evidence would have been dangerous in an empire where unions were banned or heavily policed. Even after the 1905 Revolution, demonstrators usually carried only a simple strip of red cloth, either unadorned or with a slogan.

Although the Provisional Government did not create any lasting symbols of its own, the public campaigns against imperial motifs began under its authority. The body had addressed the problem of remaking the national seal and emblem, which were essential for conducting business in chancery and mint. Although the Romanov eagle had obviously become too repugnant for continued use, a juridical council judged that the eagle in and of itself did not connote monarchy. Therefore, when the Provisional Government commissioned the well-known artist Ivan Bilibin (1876–1942) to design a new emblem for its seal, money, and stamps, the symbol

⁷⁶ Frankel, *The Russian Artist*, 185.

⁷⁷ Waters, "The Female Form in Soviet Political Iconography," 226.

was retained: now perched astride the Tauride Palace — home of the Provisional Government — the double-headed eagle was shown with its wings folded down and devoid of all monarchical ornaments.⁷⁸

Elizabeth Waters divides the political iconography produced in the Soviet Union between 1917 and 1932 into three categories, each with its own conventions and purposes.⁷⁹ The first category comprises the paraphernalia of statehood such as the Soviet flag and emblem, whose design never varied. The second includes stamps, coins, and banknotes. These are regarded as official icons with a national circulation, whose design changed regularly albeit infrequently. The third category consists of public monuments and posters, both having educational as well as symbolic meaning. The monuments are semi-permanent and usually of unique design; the posters short-lived and mass-produced. Monuments and posters have already been mentioned, Soviet state emblems will be considered here briefly, and a lengthy discussion of stamps follows in the next chapter.

The most acceptable entry for a new state coat of arms, submitted by an unknown Petrograd artist in early March 1918, contained a crossed hammer and sickle with handles pointing downward,⁸⁰ a wreath of grain, a rising sun, and a sword rising from below. The conception obviously combined various historic symbols. The hammer, often with an anvil, was widely used in the imagery of nineteenth-century European labor and socialist movements. Russian armorial art traditionally used crossed sickles, crossed industrial hammers, and sometimes both as representations of the rural and urban environments. Another entry, by Sergei

⁷⁸ While a veritable hunt was mounted for imperial emblems in the capital, as late as August 1918, Soviet authorities had to order the removal of imperial arms, portraits, and crowns from official buildings in the provinces.

⁷⁹ Waters, "The Female Form in Soviet Political Iconography," 227.

⁸⁰ Although the first Soviet constitution, adopted in July 1918, established the crossed hammer and sickle as the new state symbol, the respective position of the two tools was not specified. As a result, they were often placed the wrong way around in the early years, even on Moscow tram cars and other public places. White, *The Bolshevik Poster*, 134 n. 58.

Chekhonin, featured a peasant woman holding a sickle against a rural setting beside a male worker with a hammer against a factory background. The hammer and sickle, therefore, was a natural combination to celebrate the Bolshevik belief in the October Revolution as the product of the unified energies and aspirations of workers and peasants.⁸¹ In 1924, the first constitution of the U.S.S.R. specified that a five-pointed star was to be included in the state arms.

The representation of the new regime in the form of a worker and a peasant was popularized during the civil war; it may also have owed something to an influential drawing, *Brothers-in-Arms*, that appeared on the front cover of *Zritel* (Spectator) in 1905. A worker, peasant, soldier, and sailor were depicted in a close and symbolic union. In any case, the worker-peasant imagery was repeated in many forms during the early post-revolutionary years. For instance, it was a “Workers-Peasant Red Army” and a “Worker-Peasant Red Fleet” that were established in 1918, and a “Worker-Peasant Inspectorate” that was created in 1920.⁸²

As mentioned above, the winning entry had included a sword to signify the Russian soldier, who constituted the third element of the popular trinity of revolution. But Lenin objected to its aggressive character during the aftermath of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, when he wanted to project the R.S.F.S.R. as a peacemaking and peace-loving state. Although its precise issues are unknown, a controversy over the inclusion of the sword broke out, with some members of the jury actually suggesting a party conference to decide the matter.⁸³ However,

⁸¹ Sites, *Revolutionary Dreams*, 86. Sites further explains that a side effect of Chekhonin’s much-copied idea that set male-hammer-city against female-sickle-country was subliminally to link women with nurturing and passivity of the rural order and to link men with building, action, and power. Various emblems using the hammer-sickle-star combination appear as plates 155–167 in Mikhail Anikst, *Sowjetisches Reklame Design: Der Zwanziger Jahre* (Munich: Bangert Verlag, n.d.).

⁸² White, *The Bolshevik Poster*, 36.

⁸³ Sites, *Revolutionary Dreams*, 86.

after two months of debate, Lenin's opinion ultimately prevailed and the sword was removed from the design for the state seal.

The sculptor Nikolai Andreevich Andreev (1873–1932) embellished the original sketch by thickening the wreath of grain and adding some Grecian designs.⁸⁴ Thus, the resulting coat of arms was a meaningful ensemble of symbols: the newly arranged but central motif of hammer and sickle suggesting a social alliance of toilers; the slogan "Proletarians of All Countries, Unite!" as an international component; the reassuring frame of the rising sun as the promise of a new day; a sheaf of wheat for prosperity; and a classical scroll. Variants appeared in the early months. One of them from July 1918, on the cover of the R.S.F.S.R.'s first constitution, contained the Third French Republic's medieval *fransiques* crossed behind the emblem. This element would later be adopted by the emerging fascist movement in Italy but dropped by the Soviets. In August 1918, all other seals and emblems were forbidden and this combination became the national emblem.⁸⁵

Individual aspects of this design were soon established in Soviet iconography. The sun, which had traditionally represented knowledge and new life, was widely used to illuminate distinctively Soviet scenes, such as education and female emancipation, in contrast to the misery

⁸⁴ As an artist of the period, Andreev is an interesting figure. Only a select few artists were allowed to draw Lenin from life. Among these were Andreev, Natan Altman, and Isaak Brodski (1884–1939). A few other chosen artists were allowed access to one of the death masks created by Sergei Dmitrievich Merkurov (1881–1952). All other artists were required to work from photographs of Lenin. Throughout the 1920s, Andreev developed the Lenin theme, especially in sculpture and paintings; he completed over 120 sculptures of Lenin. In 1922, he also produced the first known official portrait of Stalin. In 1931, he was named as an "honored art worker of the R.S.F.S.R."

Yet with the revision of Soviet artistic policy in the 1930s, some of Andreev's works fell under criticism. For example, a statue Andreev completed in 1912 of Nikolai Gogol was removed, in 1935, from its prominent site in Moscow. The work was judged as presenting too "pessimistic" an image of the writer.

Between 1919 and 1928, Andreev worked jointly with his brother Viacheslav Andreevich Andreev (1890–1945). V. A. Andreev was himself well known as the creator of the statue "Worker with a Star," which was exhibited at the Soviet pavilion at the New York World's Fair in 1939. V. A. Andreev completed the plaster cast (1931–1932) of the "Lenin-Leader" statue. This work was the culmination of a series marked by Lenin's inner composure and heroic purposefulness. His designs of Lenin were frequently used by Goznak for postage stamps honoring Lenin.

⁸⁵ Sites, *Revolutionary Dreams*, 86–87.

and oppression of the old regime. In general, light became a metaphor for everything good, just as darkness stood for poverty, evil, and prejudice. A strong arm represented the working class, a red bayonet symbolized the Red Army, and a fortress personified the invincible Soviet Union. The notion of the “locomotive of history” was also reflected in visual imagery: a red locomotive, for instance, illustrated the state moving forward, while presenting the revolution as an agent of social change.⁸⁶

Similarly, the image of broken chains was used frequently. Although the scene of a worker breaking free from his chains had appeared in socialist publications before World War I, it received a new and powerful expression in Kustodiev’s cover for the journal *Communist International*, which first appeared in the spring of 1919. The emancipation of man from his bonds of servitude contained echoes of ancient Greece’s Promethian myth, which had inspired earlier radical writers such as Shelley.⁸⁷ Perhaps more obviously, the concept drew on the *Communist Manifesto* with its well-known conclusion that the workers of the world had “nothing to lose but their chains.”

In her study of the female form in Soviet political iconography, Elizabeth Waters demonstrates that when the human form was used in the new symbols it was much more likely to be male than female.⁸⁸ The political iconography produced in the years immediately after 1917, when revolution and civil war gripped the country and the state propaganda and agitational system was still in the process of formation, already showed this preference for the male form. A government medal minted to commemorate the second anniversary of the October Revolution has on its reverse a male allegory of the new society, recognizable by the

⁸⁶ White, *The Bolshevik Poster*, 36–37.

⁸⁷ White, *The Bolshevik Poster*, 34–36.

⁸⁸ Waters, “The Female Form in Soviet Political Iconography,” 227.

hammer he carries in one hand and the sheaf of wheat in the other, by the factory and cornfield in the background, and by the encircling slogan "Proletarians of all countries, unite." The worker in the bas-relief for the Petrovskii Passage in Moscow, executed by Matvei Genrikhovich Manizer (1891–1966), is also male: clad in classical drapery, he leans forward, one hand on his chin in the pose of Rodin's *Thinker*, the other gripping a wheel. Finally, among the first sets of stamps (1921) issued by the R.S.F.S.R. was a design — the only one of the five to include a human figure — representing "liberated labor" as a young man stripped to the waist, sword in hand, kneeling over the slumped body of a slain dragon.

There was apparently no debate over the Soviet flag. The Provisional Government had retained the tricolor flag of Peter I, pronouncing it politically neutral. However, the Bolsheviks outlawed all pennants, banners, and flags of the old regime, including the white, blue, and red national tricolor — which has come to be interrupted as representing Belorussians, Ukrainians, and Great Russians — and the Romanov family banner. In 1917, the first Soviet flag was issued by the new state to foreign legations, consisting of a simple red field with the letters R.S.F.S.R. on the canton. In the summer of 1918, a new flag was prepared, adorned at the canton with the hammer and sickle from the Soviet emblem surmounted by the army's star. Thus, for the first time, the red flag, which had been carried through the empire's cities as a sign of defiance by the labor movement, became the central symbol of a state.

The red color of the star and the flag not only linked the Russian Revolution to the century-old traditions of Europe's labor movements, but also lent itself to the etymological linking in Russian of "red" (*krasnyi*) with "beautiful" (*krasivyi*) and to the new center of Soviet power, Red Square. It also became a popular element, "singing out against the stone-colors of the reconstructed city."⁸⁹ Indeed, one art magazine enthused:

⁸⁹ Brown, *Art under Stalin*, 78.

The red color of innumerable pennants, flags, clusters of banners and huge canvases on the houses glows especially brightly on such a day. Born as a symbol of the people's oppression and revolt, as a symbol of hatred of each and every oppressor, the color red acquires at the time of our revolutionary ceremonies a joyful and ringing tone never seen before.⁹⁰

The creation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics at the end of 1922 increased the output of political icons, still based the hammer and sickle and worker and peasant figures, as the central government sought to strengthen its place in society. Moreover, its emblems were transferred onto other, seemingly innocent items, some of which received widespread circulation. For example, the new Soviet coins, like the new state emblem, incorporated a red star, rising sun, and hammer and sickle in their designs. In addition and unlike more modern issues, they featured the human figure. A modern Soviet numismatist observed:

For the first time [in the history of post-revolutionary numismatics] . . . coins carried images of people who with their own hands created and grew the earth's riches, instead of the profiles of emperors and empresses. Thus on the silver ruble of 1924 we see a worker and peasant standing side by side: We gather from the arrangement of the figures that the worker is calling the peasant to the new life, and the rising sun is lighting the path to the industrial town.⁹¹

Other coins minted during the NEP period similarly featured images of the people who were building the new Soviet state. The gold chervonets minted by the R.S.F.S.R. in 1923 featured a peasant sowing seeds, while a blacksmith appeared on the fifty-kopek pieces issued between 1924 and 1927 by the U.S.S.R. Another bold design from the mid-1920s featured a muscular figure preparing to strike an anvil with a sledge hammer; a plow and several mechanical gears rest at the base of the anvil.

⁹⁰ On the inside front cover of "Iskusstvo Khudozhestvennogo Oformleniya," *Tvorchestvo* (Creativity), 3/1938; cited in Brown, *Art under Stalin*, 78.

⁹¹ A. A. Shchelokov, *Monety v SSSR* (Moscow, 1986), 9; cited in Waters, "The Female Form in Soviet Political Iconography," 233.

Arguably, the essence of artistic representation is the making public of a private vision. Thus, the new republic became a canvas and a stage for various creative tendencies. Moreover, the revolution provided opportunities previously denied non-Russians, the young and inexperienced, and female creators. These artists helped to legitimize the revolution by combining their artistic innovation with the government's political propaganda.⁹² One conclusion by Richard Stites is especially relevant. In Stites' opinion, the reliance of the Soviet government on unambiguous images and bold symbols in art was a counterpart to their insistent rhetoric, which was designed to persuade the world and themselves that they were indeed in power and would stay there.⁹³ Thus, while art became a powerful medium for spreading the programs of the new government, the new symbols were in part intended to help the population visualize its own role and position in the new state.

3. The Soviet Organization of Philately

The postage stamps of any given state can be classified among its ephemera. On these small pieces of paper are the graphic images and motifs that have been chosen by the government for widespread circulation. As such, the stamps are a valuable reflection of a country's visual arts. In the Soviet case, the stamps also form an interesting extension to other displays of graphic arts, such as posters, in that they were intended for dissemination both within the state and beyond Soviet borders.

Although most people do not pay close attention to the images on postage stamps — their primary purpose being the proof of payment for mail services — collectors engage

⁹² Robert C. Williams, *Artists in Revolution: Portraits of the Russian Avant-garde, 1905–1925* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), vii.

⁹³ Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams*, 88.

themselves in ongoing analyses of stamp designs (as well as other factors surrounding their printing and usage). Ironically, the timing of the 1917 Russian revolutions coincided with an expansion of images that were portrayed on stamps. While the stamps of most countries had originally featured either a portrait of the head of state or the ruling coat of arms (the color of the background corresponding to both the level of service and payment) commemorative stamps were first issued in the early twentieth century to portray additional aspects of the state. In this way, designs that had otherwise offered little to hold a collector's attention were now frequently changed and, more importantly, regularly provided a new range of scenes and subjects. Thus, the hobby of stamp collecting became attractive to greater numbers of people.⁹⁴

Just as the Bolsheviks and subsequent regimes attempted to maintain control over the artistic community, so, too, was the hobby of stamp collecting redefined. The activities of philatelic circles were re-organized and placed under the government's supervision, with the aim of channeling this otherwise private activity into the programs of the central Soviet state. By highlighting the changes that affected the hobby, this explanation will help to illuminate how stamps and stamp collectors were used to spread the government's messages to the international community. The images on the stamps themselves will be explained in greater detail in the next chapter.

Although few sources contain information on stamp collecting in imperial Russia, it was apparently a popular hobby. In 1883, philatelic societies were founded in St. Petersburg and Moscow, and in 1884, a museum devoted to the Russian post and telegraph services was established in St. Petersburg near the Central Post Office. Still, such organizations had difficult

⁹⁴ Moreover, stamp collectors are also interested in stamps produced by states that are undergoing political upheavals. In some cases, the new states are short-lived so that any stamps that are released become even more valuable. Other philatelists will look to new states to form the focus of their collections simply because it is possible to obtain the first issues without having to search for them. This makes a "complete" collection a realistic goal.

existences in their early years. Following the assassination of Alexander II in 1881, the authorities began to view philatelic meetings as pretexts for other activities. In 1887, the governor general of Moscow imposed a ban on the gatherings; the decree was rescinded one year later, but reimposed again in January 1889. It was not until after the 1905 Revolution that the Moscow Society of Stamp Collectors (Moskovskoe obshchestvo sobiratelei pochtovykh znakov/MOSPZ) published its first official rules.⁹⁵ The situation then eased in the years leading to the October Revolution, when there was apparently no interference with the philatelists' international correspondence, exchanges of stamps or information, or subscriptions to journals and catalogs.⁹⁶

A series of letters written around the turn of the century by the Ukrainian Orientalist Agafangel Efimovich Krymskii (1871–1942) provides some insight into collecting practices in imperial times. Krymskii recorded that while visiting in the Near East with the Gagarian family, representatives of the Russian diplomatic service, “the samovar cheerily and cosily simmered. The princess would leaf through her stamp album and from time to time ask my advice.”⁹⁷ In one of this letters to the poet Ivan Franko, Krymskii noted:

On the packages of books I sent you were some high-value Russian stamps; if perhaps you haven't thrown them out, could you please send them back to me, because I am being asked for them insistently. And I am also being asked to acquire some used Austrian stamps of the 8 and 17 kreuzer values. If you can, send them.

⁹⁵ *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, s.v. “philately,” 408; *Bol'shoi filatelisticheskii slovar'* (Moscow: Radio i svyazi, 1988), 196–197.

⁹⁶ The first commercial stamp publication produced in the Russian Empire was an illustrated monthly, titled *Marki*, which was published in Kiev in a bilingual Russian–French format; the first issue appeared in 1896. The editor was a stamp dealer named S. D. Solomkin, who also issued a pricelist of world stamps in 1897. Ian W. Roberts, “Early Russian Philatelic Journals and Writers,” *Rossica Journal* 108/109 (1986): 44.

⁹⁷ All information on Krymskii and the three extracts from his letters presented here is taken from Evhen Pshenychny, “Ahatanhel Krymsky: Send Me Stamps!”; translated and adapted from the original by John–Paul Himka, *Ukrainian Philatelist* 39, no. 1 (61) (1992): 45–46. For further information on Krymskii's philatelic activities in the Near East, see V. Mohylny, “Iz istorii pochtvy ROPiT,” *Sovetskii kollektioner* 25 (1987).

Another letter written to Franko in 1892 continued this discussion:

A strange thing: here even important people collect stamps. When I try to turn down their requests, they say that what they are requesting is not very difficult to do. So I ask you: please send me the aforementioned Russian stamps and, from time to time, also any other stamps from Slavic countries that come your way.

Krymskii later clarified his stamp dealings in letters to Borys Hrinchenko, the editor of a four-volume dictionary of the Ukrainian language:

You ask why someone would want many copies of the same stamp. For exchange. You see, there are over 100 specialized journals devoted to stamps, and in them collectors from all parts of the world advertise their desire to exchange stamps. (N.B.: And since Russia is considered Halb-Asien [Semi-Asia], its stamps are valued more highly).

He instructed his colleagues to “keep the envelope in which I am sending this letter whole.

These envelopes should not be opened on the side where the stamp is printed. In general, collect stamped envelopes entire.”⁹⁸

Nicholas II was himself an avid stamp collector, as were many members of the Russian nobility. The tsar’s stamp collection, which contained all the proof variations of every stamp produced by the Russian Empire, was confiscated when the Romanov family was moved from its confinement at Tobolsk to Ekaterinburg, subsequently smuggled out of Russia, displayed at Selfridge’s in London, and then sold for the benefit of a hospital.⁹⁹

One of the reasons that the Bolsheviks regarded stamp collecting with suspicion was that it encouraged contact with collectors abroad. It was a relatively objective way to learn about

⁹⁸ As a final comment on Krymskii’s activities, the profit he earned from selling his duplicate stamps was regularly donated to the Ukrainian nationalist movement. Some of the money was sent “to Galicia for some worthy cause; and sometimes I will buy a book for the Prosvita library.” Similarly, in 1903 Krymskii “sold a whole box of old stamps to a store in Moscow, and sent the money . . . to Poltava.” The money was donated to a project aimed at erecting a monument to the poet Ivan Kotliarevskii. All comments are internally quoted in Himka, 46.

⁹⁹ Leonard L. Tann, “The Romanov Jubilee Issue,” *British Journal of Russian Philately* 53 (Nov. 1976): 28. The collection, largely of revenues and charity stamps, that was formed by Grand Duke Alexis is now housed in the British Royal Stamp Collection.

other countries, which could lead to inevitable comparisons with the domestic situation. Therefore, during his first years as leader of the new Soviet state, Lenin moved toward total control over philately by creating a number of institutional structures and by establishing legal constraints on stamp trading. Under Article 136 of the 1922 R.S.F.S.R. criminal code, foreign stamp exchange fell into the category of a state monopoly, and anyone violating the law faced a six-month jail term.¹⁰⁰ The government required anyone who wished to exchange single pieces abroad in order to complete their collections to register officially.¹⁰¹ Under no circumstances was commercial stamp trading legally permitted. The government reinforced the seriousness of this decree in 1922 when the State Political Administration (Gosudarstvennoe politicheskoe upravlenie/GPU) arrested in Moscow a number of stamp collectors and traders who were exchanging philatelic materials. Four years later, when Russia's participation at the International Philatelic Exhibition in New York led to extensive correspondence between Russian and foreign collectors, several prominent philatelists were similarly arrested.

Certain provisions to govern the importation of stamps into Soviet Russia were also enacted. For example, the postal regulations from 1926 prohibited postage stamps (canceled or new), philatelic collections, bonds, and bills of exchange from being sent to private individuals. These types of materials were permitted entry only when they were addressed to the Philatelic Delegate of the U.S.S.R. (Tverskoi Boulevard 12, Moscow), or later to the Soviet Philatelic

¹⁰⁰ Cited in F. G. Chuchin, "Filateliia i deti," *Sovetskii filatelist* 2 (1922): 1. In the 1926 Criminal Code this violation of the Statute on the Foreign Trade Monopoly was categorized together with such crimes as mass disorders, attacks by armed bands, the theft of firearms from the army, damaging of railways, violation of international flight regulations, evasion of military service, counterfeiting, forgery of commercial papers, smuggling, and the violation of foreign-exchange regulations. For details, see Harold J. Berman, *Soviet Criminal Law and Procedure: The RSFSR Codes* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 24.

¹⁰¹ "Zagranichnyi obmen," *Sovetskii filatelist* 2 (1922): 11; see also B. Raevskii, "Novaia zagranichnaia fal'sh'," *Sovetskii filatelist* 7-8 (1923), 32, and "Filateliia i spekuliatziia," *Sovetskii filatelist* 2 (1922), 26.

Association.¹⁰² A final means of curtailing the international traffic of postage stamps centered around postal rates: when the new rate scale was introduced in April 1922, the schedule for international correspondence was set at extraordinarily high levels: postcards, 120,000 rubles; ordinary letters, 200,000 rubles; and 200,000 for the registration fee.

Another reason that the Bolsheviks objected to philately is because they viewed stamp dealing as speculation — and therefore explicitly contrary to Soviet ideology — because the traders could earn a profit based on the demand for stamps and their rarity in a given market, not by expending productive labor. To counter this, the new government tried to eliminate the market forces and change the basis of determining the price of a stamp with the idea that “the estimation of stamps was not to depend anymore on the whim of this or that foreign firm and its stamp reserves, but only on the figures of an issue, the only real measure of a stamp’s value.”¹⁰³ The state insisted that collectors abandon their old bourgeois concept of philately associated with capitalism: no longer could stamp collecting function as a metaphor for the free-market system, where the hobby emulated the models of merchants, investors, and

¹⁰² See the *Daily Bulletin of Orders Affecting the [United States] Postal Service*, 22 August 1922, 26 January 1924, and the *United States Official Postal Guides* for 1923, 1924, 1925, and 1926; cited in Don Heller, “Postage Stamps Prohibited Importation into Russia – Why?” *Rossica Journal* 90/91 (1976): 78–80.

¹⁰³ B. Raevskii, “K godovshchine sovetskoi filatelii,” *Sovetskii filatelist* 9–10 (1923): 10; cited in Jonathan Grant, “The Socialist Construction of Philately in the Early Soviet Era,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 37, no. 3 (1 July 1995): 483.

speculators.¹⁰⁴ In the mid-1980s, a philatelic official explained that according to the Soviet conception of stamp collecting, “once a postage stamp is used, it is without value.”¹⁰⁵

Yet, recognizing that a tax could be levied against the stamp exchanges, in 1922, the R.S.F.S.R. began overprinting stamps — with the usual phrase “Upolnomochennyi po filatelii i bonam/zagranichnyi obmen” — to show that certain taxes had been paid on all stamps exported from, or imported into, Russia, a practice that continued under Soviet leaders (figure 4). Some imperial charity issues were marked with export surcharges in December 1923, as were the definitive Soviet issues of 1921. The government also issued specific philatelic tax stamps in 1925, 1928, 1931, and 1932.¹⁰⁶

In order to monitor the stamp monopoly, the government established the Organization of the Authorized Representative for Philately and Voucher Collecting (Organizatsiia upolnomochennogo po filatelii i bonam/OUFB). Originally, in March 1922, this organization was placed under the authority of the People’s Commissariat of Foreign Trade (Narodnyi komissariat vneshnei torgovli/NKVT). Five months later, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee (Vserossiiskii tsentral’nyi ispolitel’nyi komitet/VTsIK) and the Council of People’s Commissars enlisted the stamp monopoly into the efforts to provide famine relief through the Committee for Famine Relief (Komitet pomoshch golodaiushchem/POMGOL), which was

¹⁰⁴ This metaphor was recently advanced by Steven Gelber, “Free Market Metaphor: The Historical Dynamics of Stamp Collecting,” *Comparative Studies of Society and History* 34, no. 4 (1992): 742–769. According to Gelber, the merchant model for collectors was followed when collectors sold or traded stamps to fill their own collections or make a modest profit; the investment model focused on an increase in the value of the stamps over time rather than through trading activity; and the speculator model involved buying low and selling high in the hopes of striking it rich through stamp sales.

¹⁰⁵ Nikolai Yakolevich was an official at the Leningrad chapter of the All-Union Society of Philatelists during the 1980s. His comment is taken from William J. Shinn, Jr., “The Philatelic Scene in Leningrad,” *The American Philatelist* (August 1984): 812.

Although less important, there were two other reasons that the Soviets objected to stamp collecting. First, it provided a historical record in a land where history was often altered after the fact. And, during the imperial period, philately was associated with the upper classes, which were, of course, the principal antagonists of the new Soviet order.

¹⁰⁶ Moscow, Khar’kov, Tashkent, Tbilisi, Petrograd, Rostov-on-Don, Vladivostok, and Simferopol served as points of arrival, where mail involved in the stamp trade was monitored. Grant, “The Socialist Construction of Philately,” 481–482.



- a. November 1922: "RSFSR / Ts[entralnoi] K[ommissii] P[o likvidatsii posledstvii] G[oloda] / obmen"
Katalog pochtovykh marok SSSR, tom 2, K1.



- b. December 1923: "S.S.S.R. Upolnomochennyi po filatelii i bonam / Zagranichnyi obmen / 3 kopeiki zolotom"
Katalog pochtovykh marok SSSR, tom 2, K4.

Figure 4: Revenue Stamps, for the Exchange of Postage Stamps

directed by Fedor Grigor'evich Chuchin (1883–1942).¹⁰⁷ An executive order declared that philatelists were to pay both a tax to aid the famine relief and a special fee to participate in the foreign exchange of philatelic items.¹⁰⁸ This decree ostensibly legalized philately in the R.S.F.S.R.

Although one philatelic scholar has explained that all countries of Eastern Europe abolished private commercial stamp dealing and controlled the export and import of stamps through philatelic agencies,¹⁰⁹ the practice of taxing philatelists engaged in international stamp trading was a policy unique to the Soviet government. The state regarded stamp traders as another category of the petit-bourgeois entrepreneurs whose activities were grudgingly tolerated during the NEP period. To a large extent the state's attitude of restrained ideological hostility was appropriate. According to one historian, even among the 643 collectors who joined the official stamp collectors' society and did cooperate with its agenda, a number

¹⁰⁷ Chuchin had a considerable presence in the history of Soviet philately. He was a professional revolutionary who came from a peasant family. He took part in the 1905 Revolution and was subsequently arrested and exiled to Siberia. Following the October Revolution, Chuchin played a leading role in the campaign to abolish illiteracy in the Soviet Union. Simultaneously, he was appointed to the NKVT commission that was attempting to raise hard currency to counter the effects of famine, which had resulted from bad harvest in many regions in 1921. Chuchin developed the idea of using the interest of foreign collectors in Russian stamps for this purpose and thus he proposed that a state monopoly in philately be created. Through his friendship with Krupskaja, he was able to obtain Lenin's approval for his proposal. The following year, Chuchin wrote a pamphlet titled "By saving a postage stamp, you are giving a piece of bread to a hungry person." The financial success of this venture was immediate, and even Lenin apparently found time to save postage stamps and send them to the newly created Soviet philatelic organization. Under his direction, the first Soviet catalogues of postage stamps were issued. Chuchin was also an active participant in the VOF from its inception in 1923. He organized the youth section and served as one of the chief editors of the journal *Sovetskii filatelist*. In 1927, Chuchin gave up his work in philately to take up pedagogical work at the Moscow Zoological Technical Institute. He retired in 1931 after contracting tuberculosis.

¹⁰⁸ *Bol'shoi filatelisticheskii slovar'*, 214. In the lead article of the January 1924 issue of *Sovetskii filatelist*, Chuchin wrote:

A year has passed since the recognition of philately on the part of Soviet authorities as a secondary means of fighting against physical and spiritual hunger of the Soviet republics' working class and for the material, intellectual, and moral betterment of childrens' lives.

Famine stamps will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

¹⁰⁹ Richard McP. Cabeen, *Standard Handbook of Stamp Collecting*, rev. ed. (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1979), 28.

“continued to conduct affairs in the old way and therefore faced the state’s coercive power.” The specialists in “the export bureau proved to be especially prone to illegal trading,” and consequently a number of them were arrested. Although the majority of stamp collectors spoke out against commercialization, in practice “they still based their activities on commercial interests.”¹¹⁰

Another group of institutions also constrained the activities of the philatelists. In 1921, Narkompohtel created a special organ, the Russian Bureau of Philatelists (Rossiiskoe biuro filatelii/RBF), to deal with all questions regarding the organization and development of philately. Two years later, in March 1923, the People’s Commissariat of Internal Affairs (Narodnyi komissariat vnutrennikh del/NKVD) authorized the formation of a voluntary organization, the All-Russian Society of Philatelists (Vserossiiskoe obshchestvo filatelistsov/VOF), to operate under its auspices.¹¹¹ According to the statute, members of the VOF had to be at least eighteen years old, free of any court-imposed legal restrictions, and have no forgery convictions. Additionally, the organization was to submit a list of its members annually to the NKVD. According to Article VII of the society’s charter, the VOF could be closed by an NKVD decree or by the VOF’s own choice; in either case, the society’s inventory would revert to the state.¹¹²

Thus, the government was able to prescribe official limits for stamp collecting through the OUFB and VOF, thereby eliminating any autonomy on the part of stamp collectors or their

¹¹⁰ Grant, “The Socialist Construction of Philately,” 482.

¹¹¹ *Bol’shoi filatelisticheskii slovar’*, 244 (RBF), 48 (VOF).

¹¹² “Ustav vserossiiskogo obshchestva filatelistsov,” *Sovetskii filatelist* 3–4 (1923): 30–32; cited in Grant, “The Socialist Construction of Philately,” 478.

organizations. Indeed, in 1922 Chuchin, the head of the OUFB, clarified the government's intent to control the hobby:

The particular characteristic of communism is not the destruction of property in general, but the destruction of bourgeois property . . . and several collectors call the destruction of this kind of bourgeois relation by the introduction of the monopoly for philately the destruction of personality and freedom! They are right. The question concerns actually the destruction of *bourgeois* personality, *bourgeois* independence, and *bourgeois* freedom. . . . Such freedom we intend to destroy by means of the introduction of the monopoly for philately *in the interests of philately itself*.¹¹³

A telegram sent in November 1925 from the Lubny division of the United State Political Administration (Obshchесоiuznoe glavnoe politicheskoe upravlenie/OGPU) to its delegates in Poltava province highlights the contemporary attitude toward philatelists who attempted to make international contacts:

The OGPU of the U[krainian] SSR has uncovered and arrested . . . a group of philatelist-spies, who under the guise of collecting various foreign postage stamps in fact were engaged in espionage activities and sent abroad Soviet postage stamps that had a special agreed-upon meaning in their deftly worked out ciphers and codes. We suggest that you immediately find out whether similar "hobbyists" are to be found in your raions. We are especially interested in those who have received postage stamps from abroad and have sent them there. Upon discovering such persons, immediately inform the okru[g] division by means of a coded telephonogram.¹¹⁴

One ideological factor behind the official conceptualization of philately was undoubtedly found in the regime's overall drive for the centralized control of social organizations. In this way, the imposition of control over stamp collecting followed the same pattern as that exerted over other cultural activities. The Soviet state did not permit dispersed organizations to function, but instead monitored a single, centralized institution and eliminated all competition to it. For

¹¹³ F. G. Chuchin, "Filateliia i monopoliiia," *Sovetskii filatelist* 1 (1922): 6; cited in Grant, "The Socialist Construction of Philately," 479.

¹¹⁴ The document, first published in *Ukrains'kyi zbirnyk* in 1957, was reproduced in S. Maksudov, *Cheka na Ukraine* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1989), 139; cited in John-Paul Himka, "The Soviet Secret Police and Ukrainian Philatelists in 1925," *Ukrainian Philatelist* 38, no. 2 (60) (1991): 61.

example, the regime supported the Communist Youth League (*Kommunisticheskii soiuz molodezhi/Komsomol*) but not organizations of Boy Scouts or Jewish students because these were seen as potential rivals. In the case of philately, the VOF was the only legitimate collecting society, and other societies with similar interests were compelled to disband or join it. Thus, although the VOF was not a mass society, it had much in common with other single-issue voluntary mass organizations of the 1920s including those opposed to illiteracy, alcoholism, and religion. Moreover, organizations like the VOF tapped popular participation in specific activities and eventually harnessed it for the regime's goals.

In response, Soviet philatelists both resisted and accommodated these official efforts to define their activities. As noted by Grant:

Despite the state's heavy tutelage, the VOF's membership in 1924 did not have an overly large official component. The organization included some [communist party] representation, but the vast majority of its members (596 of 643) lacked party affiliation. The typical participant was male (97 percent), had a white-collar job (84 percent), was twenty-five to forty-five years old (60 percent), and lived in Moscow (90 percent). Judging by the society's small number of members, it is apparent that many stamp collectors simply refused to join.¹¹⁵

Faced with the possibility of being labeled as criminals, official philatelists attempted to justify their place in socialist society. These collectors sought to demonstrate that philately, far from being a bourgeois hobby, was in fact a revolutionary one and argued that even Marx and Engels had actively supported it. Their proof consisted of quotations from two letters Engels had sent to Marx in which Engels referred to some stamps he had included for Marx's daughter. Based on this precedent, one philatelist proclaimed that "if none other than Marx and Engels

¹¹⁵ Grant, "The Socialist Construction of Philately," 489–490; for an analysis the VOF membership in the 1920s, see V. Kulakov, "Filateliia v Moskve," *Filateliia SSSR* 2 (1991): 50 and 3 (1991): 19.

systematically helped an eight-year-old child to collect these stamps, then they correctly appreciated their cultural significance.”¹¹⁶

Having thus managed to manufacture the endorsement for their hobby from two eminent revolutionary thinkers, the official philatelists emphasized the potential role of philately in constructing socialism in the Soviet Union. In order to contribute to the imminent cultural revolution, the stamp collectors organized lectures and presented papers in workers' clubs throughout the state. The July issue of *Sovetskii kollektioner* instructed collectors to

go to the factory and show the workers that they can and should become interested,” so that “workers will be convinced by their own eyes that the postage stamp plays such a serious role . . . in the matter of the class struggle, propaganda, economics, and politics. . . . Only then will collecting become a tool of the class struggle and an element of the building of socialism.”¹¹⁷

According to the catalogue prepared for the 1932 All-Union Philatelic Exhibition, “stamps reflect the social structure, the economy, and the political order of a given country.”¹¹⁸ In this light, the collectors promoted stamp collecting as an aid in studying history. One philatelist discussed examining a stamp as “an official document of an epoch, as a means of agitation, as a manifestation of triumph, victory and power of some party, i.e. as a primary historical source,” while the editors of *Sovetskii kollektioner* concluded that “philately aids the passing of a school program, consequently it is useful for the matter of the cultural

¹¹⁶ D. B. Valeron, “Postavim na nogi,” *Sovetskii kollektioner* 1 (1930): 3, 4; cited in Grant, “The Socialist Construction of Philately,” 490.

¹¹⁷ D. B. Valeron, “Kolleksionirovanie-v rabochie massy,” *Sovetskii kollektioner* 7 (1930): 165.

In this light, they displayed a strong streak of what Sheila Fitzpatrick calls “pseudoproletarianism.” That is, they made contacts with industrial workers in order to establish their own legitimacy. See Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928–1931* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), 32.

¹¹⁸ *Filatelii: Vsesoiuznaia filatelicheskaia vystavka narodnogo Komissariata Sviazi SSSR* (Moscow, 1932), 12; cited in Waters, “The Female Form in Soviet Political Iconography,” 225.

revolution.”¹¹⁹ Even collecting foreign stamps could be justified on educational grounds.

Sovetskii kollektioner published a series of articles about stamps of the British colonies on the grounds that “it is necessary to know better our friends and especially our enemies. In particular, it is necessary that our young people should be fundamentally oriented in the world surrounding the U.S.S.R.”¹²⁰

Other efforts were directed toward international activities. The collectors proposed that a proletarian section of correspondence and exchange be created under Filintern (Filatelisticheskiĭ international), the philatelic association whose chief task consisted of, first, waging class struggle on behalf of philatelist-workers against bourgeois-traders and their stamp firms, and second, conducting a print war against all forgers, speculators, and the bourgeois philatelic press. Such a department would “strengthen the foreign sections of the Filintern and will give the possibility to the proletariat of capitalist countries to join us in a cultural bond.”¹²¹

As a related measure, when Chuchin addressed a June 1924 conference devoted to the creation of Filintern, he promoted the introduction of “Esperanto into philately and thus the establishment of lively communication between philatelists around the world” as well as the “wide popularization of ideological philately.”¹²² The speech effectively united philatelists with scripphilitists and Esperantists, and allowed them to achieve some measure of security. They

¹¹⁹ M. Soiuzmov, “O Filatelii v shkole,” *Sovetskii kollektioner* 2 (1930): 55, 56; cited in Grant, “The Socialist Construction of Philately,” 491.

¹²⁰ “Kolonii britanskoi imperii i ikh-pochtovye marki,” *Sovetskii kollektioner* 4–5 (1930): 112; cited in Grant, “The Socialist Construction of Philately,” 491–492.

¹²¹ Erikh Shmengefer, “Za sektiui po mezhdunarodomy obmeny pri Filinterne,” *Sovetskii kollektioner* 2 (1930): 63. Leongard Karlovich Eikhfus, who held a position in the OUFB and served as a representative in its export bureau, played a key role in establishing the Filintern in June 1924. According to the *Bol'shoi filatelisticheskiĭ slovar'* (page 280), the group's slogan was, appropriately, “Kolleksionery vsekh stran, soediniates” (Collectors of the world, unite). Unlike Chuchin, Eikhfus was a stamp collector and had engaged in philately long before he joined the party in 1919.

¹²² *Sovetskii filatelist* 7 (1924); cited in R. Polchaninov, “From the History of Philately in the USSR,” *Rossica Journal* 108/109 (1986): 47.

were allowed to collect stamps and paper money, publish bulletins, journals and catalogs, and, perhaps most importantly, to conduct foreign exchange. The Soviet authorities recognized that while hard currency could be obtained for stamps and paper money, the communist program could be spread through messages depicted both graphically and in Esperanto.

Apparently, the stamp collectors could not convince the government of the role philately could play in building the new state. In 1932 the government suspended their journal and by the end of the 1930s had disavowed the philatelic organization completely. As Grant explains, with the liquidation of VOF, the sole "voluntary" stamp organization in the Soviet Union disappeared, leaving only the state organs that sold Soviet stamps to foreign dealers.¹²³

Although several small philatelic gatherings were tolerated in the 1930s,¹²⁴ it was not until after World War II, when many veterans returned to the Soviet Union with stamp collection "trophies," that an interest in stamps resurfaced. From 10–15 August 1946, an "Exhibition of Soviet Postage Stamps" was held in Leningrad to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the first Soviet issues; this show later traveled to the republican capitals of Kiev, Moscow, Minsk, Tbilisi, Erevan, Baku, and Tashkent. What is interesting about the event is that it falsely promoted the idea that the first Soviet issues appeared in August 1921, when in fact they were designed in 1918.

With the post-Stalinist thaw, philatelic associations again emerged in the 1950s in many cities throughout the Soviet Union. These associations became members of the All-Union Society of Philatelists (*Vsesoiuznoe obshchestvo filatelistov/VOF*), which was founded in March 1966. Under its administrative board in Moscow, the organization continued the earlier party

¹²³ Grant, "The Socialist Construction of Philately," 492.

¹²⁴ For example, a gathering for Ukrainian school children-philatelists was held in Kiev on 20–22 September 1936. In 1937, on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the October Revolution, adult philatelists were allowed to hold an exhibition in Moscow.

doctrine by officially encouraging philately “as a socially beneficial pastime that provides mental relaxation, expands the cultural horizons of the collector, and contributes to communist upbringing.”¹²⁵

With the greater recognition of the individual nationalities within the Soviet Union, regional collecting circles were allowed to produce semi-official cachets and postmarks that reflected their specific ethnic traditions. Several examples demonstrate this trend: on 20 September 1959, a semi-official cover was issued in Lviv depicting the Lviv City Hall and the heraldic lion, the traditional symbol of the city; on 5 June 1960, the Stanislav (?) Collectors Club released a semi-official cover featuring the natural history museum in the village of Krylos, a historical site of the medieval Halych-Volynian Kingdom; and, on 9 March 1964, the Ivano-Frankovsk Collectors Society produced a cover marking the 150th anniversary of Taras Shevchenko’s birth.

Yet, despite the move toward more regional topics, those allowed still respected the communist doctrine. For instance, on 24 August 1960, the Stanislav Voluntary Collectors Club released a semi-official cover commemorating the 215th anniversary of the death of Oleksa Dovbush, who had struggled against social injustices in the Carpathian region; and similarly, on 1 November 1959 the Kiev Collectors Society produced a semi-official cover to mark the 20th

¹²⁵ *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, s.v. “philately,” 408. In its second incarnation, the VOF did become a mass organization. By 1974, its adult members numbered 88,173; the youth section had 93,405 members. Moreover, the social activity of the collectors lost its fervent edge. As one philatelist remarked: “The fundamental aspect of activity of philatelists at meetings became exchange, and then the buying and selling of stamps, envelopes, etc. Public speeches with papers began to occur rarely.” M. M. Gleizer, *Istoria filatelii v Peterburge, Petrograde, Leningrade* (Moscow: Radio i Sviaz’, 1989), 48; cited in Grant, “The Socialist Construction of Philately,” 493. For western perspectives on the hobby during the last decades of the Soviet Union, see “Current Philatelic Conditions in the USSR,” *The American Philatelist* (June 1980): 507–510 and Shinn, “The Philatelic Scene in Leningrad,” 811–856. The rules under which Soviet collectors could exchange philatelic materials with foreigners were printed frequently in *Filateliia SSSR*; see, for example, the December 1978 issue, page 29.

The regime’s pervasive distrust of philatelists in the earlier era had so completely evaporated by 1989 that the collectors’ society received one seat in the Congress of People’s Deputies as a social organization. See Peter Gumble, “Philatelists Give Stamp of Approval To One of Their Own,” *Wall Street Journal* (21 March 1989): A18 and Bill Welch, “All Power to the Philatelists!” *The American Philatelist* (May 1989): 405. The elected member, Viktor V. Gorbatko, was featured on the 1977 10-kopeck stamp to commemorate his flight aboard the Soyuz 24 and Salyut 5 spacecraft.

anniversary of the "Union of the [Western Ukrainian] People into a Single Ukrainian Soviet State."¹²⁶

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The codification of social realism as the preferred art of the emerging Soviet state — extending to the level of stamp and postal card designs — was a fitting culmination to the radical changes in Russian public life that had been set in motion by the October Revolution. Although not entirely different from that of the displaced Russian monarchy, a key element in the Bolshevik's vision was the conviction that the central government ought to play a major role in shaping the values and beliefs of the public at large. Thus, the dramatic augmentation in the capacity of the central government to politicize all activities ranging from public forms of art to stamp collecting proved that the 1917 revolution was simply the first step toward a much larger goal.

In order to adapt the population's principles and lifestyle to the new Soviet system, it was absolutely necessary that the government circulate its message in every possible way through every part of the expansive state. In their efforts to bring about this anticipated reform, the leadership of the communist party looked to the postal service as perhaps the only means of conveying enlightenment and truth to every individual in the diverse union of socialist republics. To this end, the old imperial postal system was expanded into an integrated network embracing practically every city, town, and village in the country, while, as will be explained in the next chapter, the government initially allowed mail to circulate both domestically and also to international addresses without applying the standard postal charges.

¹²⁶ Leo Halicki and Inger Kuzych, "Philatelic Clubs and Semi-Official Postmarks in Ukraine," *Ukrainian Philatelist* 37, no. 2 (58) (1990): 90–94.

From a contemporary standpoint, these acts had a bold, utopian cast. For according to Stites, the “revolutionary dreamers” were a united community of Bolshevik intellectuals, political figures, economic planners, and artists who sought to construct a new world.¹²⁷ Inspired by sweeping visions of perfection, radical measures that required discipline and a suppression of individual differences were initiated to create a monolithic, theoretically totalitarian state, and then to hopefully spread this ideal into the international arena.

Within this context, the fiscal/bureaucratic rationale for imperial postal policy was supplanted by an educational rationale that was far more ambitious than almost anything any other state leader had contemplated prior to the early twentieth century. Rarely before had any public figure envisioned such an expansive role for a country’s postal system. Yet, once the communist leadership had gained a firm hold on the government structure, using the creation of an informed citizenry as a cherished ideal as a rationale for postal and philatelic policies became firmly enshrined in the law of the land.

¹²⁷ Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams*, 251.

CHAPTER THREE: THE POSTAGE STAMP PROGRAMS OF IMPERIAL RUSSIA AND THE SOVIET UNION

All societies are distinguished by the power of the symbols they generate.¹ Those in power have used symbols, both to signify their own status and to forge a bond of identity between themselves and the people they rule. Symbols, in turn, help to explain the relationship between individuals and the society in which they live. Based on these ideas, this chapter examines the images and themes that were selected in Bolshevik Russia and the Soviet Union for reproduction on contemporary postage stamps.

As in any post-revolutionary situation, it was not enough for the Bolsheviks to launch new symbols.² To be effective, the designs had to become incorporated into the lifestyle and traditions that were newly established within the Soviet Union. Because most of the old traditions were connected with the Orthodox Church and the Russian monarchy, it was a question of creating new Soviet traditions, or, to borrow from Eric Hobsbawm, of “inventing traditions.”³ Religious holidays were downgraded, while May Day and the anniversary of the October Revolution became important national holidays. International events also had to be recognized, especially those celebrating the rise of communism in foreign states.

Because their borders included various ethnic groups and regional populations that had been severed from the central authority during the period of civil war, the Soviet leaders needed to move beyond an elite’s construction of symbols by also creating “nationness,” which

¹ Lars Erik Blomqvist, “introduction” in *Symbols of Power: The Esthetics of Political Legitimation in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe*, edited by Claes Arvidsson and Lars Erik Blomqvist (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell International, 1987), 1. In his essay, Blomqvist (page 8) argues that in the case of the Soviet Union, symbols were used to “express a collective experience” that all members of society were to participate in. He also develops the theme that specifically Stalinist symbols were used in Eastern Europe as a means of “tying the fringe states” together within the Warsaw Pact.

² Anders Aman, “Symbols and Rituals in the People’s Democracies during the Cold War,” in *Symbols of Power*, 44.

³ Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger, eds. *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1.

Catherine Wanner describes as an “emotional response of belonging”⁴ to this new centralized state that would stem from a recognition of shared historical experiences and a common political culture. The general acceptance of the historical and cultural foundations that were advanced by the new Soviet state, which this chapter shows were promoted and spread through the images depicted on postage stamps, would lead to the creation of a Soviet people (*sovetskii narod*). And once society embraced the policies — whether political or cultural — of the government and incorporated its goals into their own activities, this would in turn generate legitimacy for the state. A recognition of the representations of the Soviet state, its people, and culture, as authentic by the entire population would in turn breed a sense of solidarity. The feeling of oneness, of the individual’s fate as tied to that of the greater state, is what would create nationness for the new Soviet Union and overcome regional, ethnic allegiances, and more importantly, the potential flourishing of sub-nationalisms.⁵

Therefore, offering yet another way to advance the goals of the first socialist state and to consolidate the population behind the new regime, the introduction of Soviet postage stamps as well as the stamp designs themselves became part of a well-constructed program. Indeed, the production of stamps in the Soviet Union reflected the goals of the leaders and later the five-year plans for industrial production as well as the policies generally governing art and specifically focusing on the use of symbols.⁶ Along with coins and banknotes, postage stamps announced

⁴ Catherine Wanner, “Historical Narratives, Personal Narratives: Ethnographic Perspectives on Nationness in Post-Soviet Ukraine,” in *Peoples, Nations, Identities: The Russian-Ukrainian Encounter. Selected Papers from the Fourth Workshop, September 21–23, 1995, Columbia University in the City of New York/The Harriman Review* 9, nos. 1–2 (spring 1996): 12.

⁵ Wanner, “Historical Narratives, Personal Narratives,” 13, 15.

⁶ Because the government so intimately tied the themes on its postage stamps to political goals, post-revolutionary “stamps can be regarded as visual statements of the values the regime espoused and desired to foster among the population.” Jonathan Grant, “The Socialist Construction of Philately in the Early Soviet Era,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 37, no. 3 (1 July 1995): 484. The basis of this article is Grant’s examination of the relationship between the Soviet government and philately and the Soviet regime application of totalitarian goals onto the realm of hobbies. According to Grant (page 476), the fact that the government circumscribed something as seemingly insignificant as stamp collecting reveals how strongly the state aspired to have total strict control over society. Moreover, Grant shows that this

the new political order. Here were to be found not only the Soviet coat of arms but a completely new iconography based on seven key symbols: the red flag, the symbol of working-class power; the hammer and sickle, along with various other elements, to represent the union of workers and peasants; the five-pointed star, the symbol of communism; a combination of these three first elements to form a fourth motif, the country's flag, which, by combining the color red with symbols of the new state, stood for the leading role of the Soviet Union. Along with these four basic features went three others: a stylized group portrait of Marx-Engels-Lenin to symbolize the Marxist-Leninist ideology; a soldier, who would liberate the people from fascism and other enemies; and the white dove, a token of peace.⁷

As in other countries, the issuance of stamps in post-revolutionary Russia and the Soviet Union reflected the expansion of the country's mails in several ways. First, as additional methods of postal communication were developed and perfected, stamps appeared for new classes of mail, such as airmail and special delivery. Secondly, successful attempts at polygraphic printing led to varied means of producing stamps and to the creation of multicolored miniatures, elaborate souvenir sheets, and a variety of envelope covers.

Thirdly, changes in postal rates dictated the revaluation of contemporary stamp values and resulted in new definitive issues and various surcharges.⁸ Thus, tariff levels can be linked to the number of stamps printed and the length of their circulation. Within the Soviet Union, rate schedules for the dispatch and delivery of internal postal shipments were changed about thirty times between 1918 and 1971. In general, the legislation was effected by special decrees of the

urge sprang not from the top of the Soviet apparatus but rather from mid-level Party and state functionaries, including representatives of the officially sanctioned philatelic organizations.

⁷ Aman, "Symbols and Rituals in the People's Democracies," 46-47.

⁸ Vladlen Aronovich Karlinskii, "Soviet Postal Rates," *Rossica Journal* 73 (1967): 62; translated from the original article that appeared in *Filatelii SSR* 4 (Oct. 1966) and subsequent issues.

government and announced by the People's Commissariat of Posts and Telegraphs (Narodnyi komissariat pocht i telegrafof/Narkompochtel), later the Soviet Ministry of Communications, and only in a few cases by circularized orders of the postal administration. However, during the period of civil war that followed the revolutions in 1917, postal rates were not standardized throughout the former empire. Different stamps were used in various outlying regions just as different tariffs from those in Soviet Russia were applied in the areas ruled by anti-Bolshevik forces and the temporary governments convened in South, North, and Northwest Russia; Siberia; the Far East; Ukraine; and Transcaucasia.

Finally, the desire for increased postal revenues influenced stamp production. After 1929, the Soviet government devoted its efforts to selling more stamps abroad. This type of sale had both propagandistic and financial functions. One Soviet historian remarked on the rising quality and agitational content of Soviet stamps beginning in the early 1930s, noting that increasing attention was given to 7-, 14-, and 28-kopeck stamps because these "were issues for international correspondence and were supposed to tell the truth to the world about the victories of the workers' country of the Soviets."⁹

In addition to their value in advertising the Soviet cause, the revenue from stamp sales through philatelic organizations proved to be quite substantial. For example, the November 1922 financial report for the All-Russian Central Executive Committee (Vserossiiskii tsentral'nyi ispolnitelnyi komitet/VTsIK) indicated that the office had received deposits worth 2,970,000 rubles from the international sale of stamps and banknotes.¹⁰ As another example, over 85 percent, or 17.28 million rubles, of Narkompochtel's total income for 1939–1940 was derived

⁹ O. N. Bukharov, *Marki-svideteli istorii* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Radio i Sviaz, 1982), 37; cited in Grant, "The Socialist Construction of Philately," 481.

¹⁰ The statement about the profits from the sale of stamps and paper money appeared in *Sovetskaia kultura* on 10 March 1923; cited in R. Polchaninov, "From the History of Philately in the USSR," *Rossia Journal* 108/109 (1986): 47.

from the sale of stamps to philatelic organizations.¹¹ Consequently, the number of different stamps issued annually by the USSR rose steadily.

1. An Overview of Stamp Production

During the last decades of the Romanov monarchy, the quality and production of imperial Russian stamps noticeably deteriorated. The changes reflected such factors as political uprisings, an international war effort, and economic decline, which affected the whole of Russian society. When F. M. Kepler and G. Skamoni had earlier directed the Department for the Preparation of State Papers (*Ekspeditsiia zagotovleniia gosudarstvennykh bumag/EZGB*),¹² the department achieved a high level of quality in the engraving arts and their designs continually received the highest awards at international exhibitions.¹³ However, following the 1905 Revolution when other individuals were appointed to EZGB, stamp designs became less

¹¹ Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv narodnogo khoziastva (TsGANKh), fond 3527 (NKPT), opis 26, delo 3, 1. 3. ; cited and translated in Grant, "The Socialist Construction of Philately," 481. The Soviet government was not the only state to recognize the fiscal potential of selling postage stamps. According to one U.S. postal historian, beginning in the 1920s, most stamps "lost their purely postal character in favor of other ends. Some countries began to give philatelic issues their special attention in order to derive a sizable part of the national income from the sale of stamps." Carlos Stotzer, *Postage Stamps as Propaganda* (Washington, DC: Public Affairs Press, 1953), 2.

¹² At the time of its formal establishment on 21 August 1818, EZGB was divided into four departments: paper-making, printing, engraving, and mechanical matters; a photographic department was added in 1864 as well as an typographical experimental department in 1890. In addition to the imperial definitive stamps, EZGB produced stamps for the various Russian post offices in the Ottoman Empire and China, the Grand Duchy of Finland, and a number of the zemstvo post offices. Also, after the end of the Russo-Turkish War in 1878, EZGB printed the first set of stamps issued by the newly independent Bulgaria.

The engraver F. M. Kepler produced the essays for the first Russian postage stamps. Because of a reluctance of the management of EZGB to take on the task of printing postage stamps, he approached the Postal Department with a request of setting up his own printing firm for this purpose; the suggestion was, predictably, rejected.

Because of the potential threat of occupation by oppositionary forces, EZGB was evacuated during the Civil War from Petrograd to Penza. When the Bolsheviks moved the capital to Moscow, EZGB established its headquarters there, under the new People's Commissariat of Finance. *Bol'shoi filatelisticheskii slovar'*, 309.

¹³ C. Schmidt, "Unaccepted Stamp of Russia," *Rossica Journal* 58 (1960): 53.

artistic as is obvious by looking at the 1906 ruble stamps and the arms series that was issued on 14 January 1909.¹⁴

World War I and (to a lesser extent) the 1904–1905 Russo–Japanese War also left their marks on stamps. The wars, combined with numerous strikes and demonstrations, depleted much of the skilled work force and lessened the availability of parts for Russia's aging printing and perforating presses. Consequently, there was an overall deterioration of printing quality. Numerous printing errors, such as inverted and omitted centers, misregistrations, and double impressions became common. Perforation gradually deteriorated until it appears that the issues were almost torn. Harsher colors became prevalent because of a shortage of aniline dyes, while the stamps showed little evidence of the embossed imperial eagle, which had been so clearly defined on earlier issues. Indeed, Ronald Jennrich, a philatelic scholar, has commented:

Pride of workmanship was gone, but so were the workers who had excelled at it. What had been one of the world's most beautifully designed series of stamps, printed almost continuously since 1889 by the Imperial State Printing Office, had fallen as far and as fast as the Romanov dynasty. The tsar was gone and so were the beautiful stamps that had symbolized his dynasty.¹⁵

Some other changes in production were necessitated by increasing attempts at forgery and other illegal acts. As a standard measure, most sheets of stamps had their margins trimmed before they were issued to the post offices. This was a precaution against the margins being used to print forged stamps on genuine government paper.¹⁶ Between 1909 and 1918, a vertical varnish pattern was routinely overprinted on all definitive stamps. This was to prevent, or at least discourage, the fraudulent removal of cancellations and the subsequent re-use of stamps. The

¹⁴ Schmidt, "Unaccepted Stamp of Russia," 53.

¹⁵ Jennrich, "Turmoil of Revolution Reflected in Stamps," 148.

¹⁶ Leonard L. Tann, "1916–17 Romanov Currency Tokens," *British Journal of Russian Philately* 54 (1977): 20.

varnish was a clear, soluble solution that readily washed off, carrying the design of the stamp with it. Thus, it became obvious if any tampering had taken place.¹⁷

This problem was neither new nor uniquely Russian. Several discoveries had been made during the second half of the nineteenth century of both individuals and groups who were illegally duplicating and washing stamps, therefore decreasing the imperial government's postal revenue. One entry in the December 1889 issue of *Pochtovo-telegrafnyi zhurnal* provided some insight into the actions taken by the postal administration to counter the problems:

Used stamps as well as stamps not valid for postage like foreign, tax, zemstvo, etc. are not counted as part of the fee, and are therefore designated with the numeral "0" next to the stamp. If a letter with a used stamp is retrieved from the mailbox, it is forwarded as "not paid." If the [stamp] is forged, an investigation will be conducted.¹⁸

Those convicted of postal forgery were exiled into hard labor and fined the equivalent value of the recirculated stamps.¹⁹ The Austrian postal administration had similarly resorted to bands of shiny varnish on their 1901 and 1905 issues as a means of curtailing abuses.²⁰

As a result of post-war paper shortages, makeshifts — stamps printed on paper normally used for other purposes — also appeared. The degree of improvisation is illustrated by looking at the makeshift varieties that the Ukrainian and Latvian postal authorities produced during 1918–1920. These measures were typical of those taken by almost all contemporary postal

¹⁷ Jennrich, "Turmoil of Revolution Reflected in Stamps," 145–146.

¹⁸ *Pochtovo-telegrafnyi zhurnal* 82 (12 December 1889): 147; cited in George G. Werbizky, "From the Belkin Books," *Rossica Journal* 122 (1994): 42.

¹⁹ For details, see A. Vigilev, "The Grandiose Stamp Scandal," *Rossica Journal* 90/91 (1976): 76–77. Other later attempts at forgeries were made as a way of depriving the central government of postal revenues or to finance various counter-revolutionary forces. See also Ia. Fegchin, "Fal'shivi marki Batuma," *Sovetskii filatelist* 3–4 (March–April 1923): 24–26; Edward Stern, "Philatelic Conditions As I Found Them in Russia," *Collectors Club Philatelist* III, no. 3 (New York: The Collectors Club, 1924), 106–107; and Gregory Salisbury, "Romanov Currency Stamps of 1915, 1916–17," *Rossica Journal* 59 (1960): 22.

²⁰ C. de Stackelberg, "Reply by Dr. C. de Stackelberg to Mr. Foh's Comments," *Rossica Journal* 61 (1961): 30.

authorities. Some sheets of the so-called Vienna Issue of the Ukrainian Council of the Republic were printed on the reverse of military maps. Various Latvian stamps were printed on the backs of unfinished Bolshevik banknotes, on paper intended for the manufacture of cigarettes, and on ruled writing paper. Another interesting example are the stamps printed in Berlin on ration coupons that had been manufactured for the Lithuanian Post Office.²¹

Undoubtedly, in the later months of 1917, the attention of the Russian authorities was diverted from postal issues to more pressing matters. This laxity allowed numerous breaches of conduct within the postal administration. For example, after the revolution EZGB employees began selling "first pulls" and printer's wastes to collectors.²² Fantastic postmarks also appeared, such as "Riga Latvija, 12.5.19," which supposedly was issued by the Red Army. Other irregularities involved overprints. Especially prominent were overprints of Armenian symbols and the Ukrainian trident on currency tokens and various denominations of stamps that gained circulation in Bolshevik Russia.²³

Finally, the political events of 1917 had an impact on the design elements of Russia's stamps. Beginning with the first postal issue of 1857 and ending with that from 1909–1923, all of imperial Russia's stamps had featured the coat of arms of the Russian Empire: a double-headed eagle holding a scepter in one claw and an orb in the other. The eagle was surmounted by the imperial crown; below the eagle were posthorns to symbolize the post office, and on some issues there were also thunderbolts, to represent the telegraph system (figure 1).²⁴

²¹ Russell Bennett and James Watson, *Philatelic Terms Illustrated*, 2d ed. (London: Stanley Gibbons Publications Ltd., 1978), 88.

²² C. de Stackelberg, "A New Check List of the Arms Type Issues of 1909–1923," part 2, *Rossica Journal* 58 (1960): 35.

²³ Salisbury, "Romanov Currency Stamps," 25.

²⁴ Donna O'Keefe, ed., *Linn's Philatelic Gems 4* (Sidney, OH: Amos Press Inc., 1989), 103; Sutton, R. J., *The Stamp Collector's Encyclopedia* (New York: Philosophical Library), 1955.

The only exceptions to this practice were the zemstvo stamps, semi-postal charity issues of 1905, 1914, and 1915/16, and the Romanov jubilee series of 1913.²⁵ However, once the Bolsheviks assumed power, the familiar portraits of the tsars and the imperial coat of arms were replaced with elements from the new Soviet iconography.

The various factors listed above that affected the production of postage stamps were reflective of an overall breakdown in postal efficiency that followed the October Revolution. By far the greatest problem within the new Soviet postal service was the inexperience and incompetence of the chief postal administrators — both in Petrograd and Moscow — who were unable to deal with the difficulties encountered during a period of accelerating inflation and an acute paper shortage. By chronicling the inability of the central postal authorities to produce and distribute postage stamps with the proper denomination and to inform local postmasters of the most current postal rates, the ineffectiveness of the early Soviet postal administrators becomes apparent.

There were five main failings of the post-revolutionary postal department. First, the central authority was unable — possibly unwilling — to effectively use and distribute existing stocks of imperial stamps from the EZGB in Petrograd. Second, the central planning commission, which determined the issuance of new stamps, did not understand the dynamics of inflation and was therefore unable to foresee postal needs even a few months in advance. Third, this shortsightedness of the planning commission forced citizens to use dozens of stamps on each envelope, thus aggravating the paper shortage. Fourth, local authorities were frequently ignorant of the latest postal rates established by the central administration despite the fact that the local post office was also the telegraph office and consequently the hub of the town's communications

²⁵ When a series of seven stamps was proposed in 1915 to honor the postal service, they were rejected precisely because they did not feature either a portrait of the tsar or the Romanov coat of arms.

with the central government. And finally, local authorities regularly took the initiative to solve the problems created by the central authorities' lack of foresight by applying their own values to available stocks of stamps.

2. Zemstvo/Rural Postal Operations

As the state system expanded and theoretically became capable of handling all previous zemstvo postal routes, the need for zemstvo postal activity diminished. Indeed while Lenin would in no way willingly tolerate the independent postal activities, by 1917 there was moreover essentially no need for zemstvo postal organizations.²⁶ However, at least forty former zemstvo post offices continued to function independently from the central postal administration and of these, seventeen issued locally printed stamps after the February Revolution: Shadrinsk, Kamyshlov, and Solikamsk (Perm' Province); Ust'-Syssol'sk (Vologda Province); Bugul'ma and Buzuluk (Samara Province); Skopin (Riazan Province); and Nolinsk (Viatka Province). In 1918, Lebedin (Khar'kov Province), Zmeinogorsk (Tomsk Province), Perm' City and Cherdyn' (Perm' Province), and Kotel'nich (Viatka Province) produced stamps, as did the rural governments in Krasnoufimsk (Tomsk Province) and Zmeinogorsk in 1919.²⁷ The activities of these rural post offices continued virtually unchanged from the period of zemstvo operations primarily because they were in regions distant from the government centers and thus beyond the proximity of easy control.

Without any noticeable change from the designs used earlier by the zemstvos, the designs of these rural stamps were based on the regional coat of arms. The upper portion of the

²⁶ George G. Werbizky, "Zemstvo Post Office Operations At The Turn Of The Century," *Rossica Journal* 120 (1993): 43.

²⁷ Shneidman, "Russian Postal Administration," 10.

design usually contained the province's coat of arms, while the lower portion featured that of the town in which the government seat was located; all of the stamps retained the word "zemstvo" to signify their issuing authority. In most instances, the number of stamps printed for any particular issue was under three thousand. However, in some cases the issues were much larger such as the Kadnikov (Vologda Province) issue of 1916 and the Vol'sk (Vologda Province) issue of 1914–1916 — respectively 10,000 and 34,750 copies. Although there are apparently no records by which to determine how much mail was carried by the rural post offices during this period, the fact that the regional government of Kotel'nich, for example, issued a 50-kopeck stamp in 1920 would seem to indicate that the former zemstvo postal system remained useful after the Bolshevik seizure of power. Also, in at least two cases — Luga (Petrograd Province) in 1918 and Cherdyn' in 1919 — the local soviets that replaced the zemstvo officials issued their own stamps. When the Central Committee realized that Luga had issued stamps not only for local mail, which was what the original zemstvo had been authorized to do, but also for interprovincial mail, they demanded that the series be immediately surrendered.

The ultimate Red Army victory in 1921 corresponded with the demise of the zemstvos, which were freely elected and politically independent organizations. To best take advantage of the already established routes, the Soviet postal administration established its rural mobile post, which almost exactly mirrored the zemstvo system. Soviet mailmen travelled along the rural routes that originated at state post offices, picking up and delivering mail to various nearby settlements. In most cases, the same routes were followed after the revolution as those established by the zemstvos, and the same mailmen were responsible for the mail. One important difference between the two systems was that stamps were specifically issued for this rural service.²⁸

²⁸ Ivo Steyn, "The Rural Mobile Post in Action?" *Rossica Journal* 122 (1994): 22–23.

3. The February Revolution and Provisional Government

Unquestionably, World War I did affect the imperial postal service. Mail destined for western Europe was delayed because both the rail link to Berlin and the Baltic and Black Sea shipping lanes were inaccessible and consequently, letters from the empire had to travel via Finland, Sweden, and Norway before being transported to England and France. The mail from western businessmen in China, who depended on the Trans-Siberian railroad to maintain their communications, was similarly disrupted.²⁹ Whereas before the war, it took from two to three weeks for a letter posted in an imperial Russian post office in China to reach western Europe, by the summer of 1917 the same letter required four to five weeks. The main difficulty was moving the mail from Petrograd to the west.

The Provisional Government itself was confronted by labor unrest. For example, the postal authorities encountered difficulties in expediting shipments of stamps from Petrograd to local post offices because the workers at the EZGB were on strike during most of April, May, and June 1917, and were engaged in brief walk-outs from August until November. The shortages were complicated by two additional, endemic problems. First, by tradition, the EZGB maintained large stocks of lower-value kopeck stamps and shipped these automatically to local post offices; in contrast, the larger ruble values were printed and then shipped only after the receipt of a specific order. Consequently, there were no stocks of high-value stamps at the central printing works, and in the post-revolutionary period, local post offices had only those specific ruble values that they had earlier requested. This situation was compounded by the second problem, a rise in postal rates, which primarily affected the ruble values. Therefore, those

²⁹ Shneidman, "Russian Postal Administration," 8. See also Henri Tristant, "The Trans-Siberian Postal Route," *Rossica Journal* 74 (1968): 6–15 and 75 (1968): 14–16.

areas of Russia not in direct communication with Petrograd were soon confronted with large stocks of smaller values but insufficient quantities of the higher denominations.

Because, as Ronald Jennrich has pointed out, postage stamps in use during turbulent periods of history often reflect the transitions of governments,³⁰ this chapter uses as its primary source the contemporary postage stamps that were issued by the central Russian government and considers several other issues prepared by local postmasters. Between November 1917 and May 1923, the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic issued or reissued less than two hundred different stamps, which were prepared from no more than ninety-four plate designs.³¹

Four categories of stamps chronicle the chaotic months of February through October 1917: imperial stamps already in circulation; currency tokens that were issued because of hoarding; privately issued overprints; and stamps that were proposed, but not officially issued, by the Provisional Government.

a. Imperial Issues

The two main tsarist series that were in general circulation during 1917 reflected the last increases in postal rates to be implemented in the Russian Empire. The first of these included stamps of the 1913 issue that commemorated the tercentenary of the founding of the Romanov dynasty. This series featured portraits of past monarchs as well as depictions of the Kremlin, Winter Palace, and Romanov Castle (figure 5). When the stamps were first released on 2 January 1913, the public raised an outcry. They cited the traditional argument of disrespect for

³⁰ Ronald J. Jennrich, "Turmoil of Revolution Reflected in Stamps: Issues Varied Under Russia's Provisional Government," *The American Philatelist* 105, no. 2 (February 1991): 144.

³¹ J. Lee Shneidman, "An Aspect of Russian Postal Administration," *Rossica Journal* 78 (1970): 7. There are several reasons for the difference between the number of plates and the number of stamps. Primarily, one plate could be used to produce a vignette, but the stamp could appear with or without perforations, or with or without watermarks on the paper; a plate for overprinting could also be used on different stamps.

the tsar by placing his portrait on a stamp, as evidenced by canceling, soiling, and even erasing the portrait when attempts at re-using the stamps were made. An angry archimandrite aired his comments in one newspaper:

Even if it's for a whole year, don't write a single letter. . . . Call out the guard at *Russkiiia znameni!* Is there really NOTHING that can be done? If only they'd withdraw the 7-kopeck stamps from use. . . . For Christ's sake, either shout, or think of something. This can't be suffered for an entire year! Quickly! Quickly! There from Odessa they're already sending letters with the new stamps, and the portraits of the tsars are being disfigured by the cancels. Oo-oy! It hurts! It's not a Black Hunderer they're hitting in the face!!! Woe is us; we are simple at heart and strong of mind, but the enemy is crafty and evil!³²

As a result of such opinions, sales were halted between 15 and 28 February 1913.³³ But once Nicholas expressed his desire to continue using the stamps, especially during the jubilee year, along with the recognition of the stamps for their artistic merit and the increase in patriotism they inspired at the onset of World War I, EZGB resumed printing the series.

Unlike stamps later issued by the Provisional Government and the subsequent Soviet rulers, the jubilee series reveals adequate planning and attention to the prevailing postage rates: the 1-kopeck stamp, featuring Peter I, corresponded to the cost of locally mailing printed matter such as newspapers weighing up to 1 lot (12.8 grams) and postcards; 2 kopecks, Alexander II, paid the printed-matter rate on postcards (both domestic and international correspondence) as well as newspaper wrappers, business papers, goods samples, invitations, and visiting cards; 3 kopecks, Alexander III, covered the cost for domestic postcards or an in-town letter; 4 kopecks, Peter I, the foreign postcard rate; 7 kopecks, Nicholas II, single-weight letters within the empire and registration fees; 10 kopecks, Nicholas II, the cost of a letter sent to a foreign address as well

³² *Russkiiia Vedomosti*, 14 January 1913; cited in David Skipton, "So You Want to Be A Postman," *Rossica Journal* 106/107 (1985): 34.

³³ Michael Ercolini, "An Introduction to the Stamps of the 1913 Romanov Issue," *Rossica Journal* 122 (1994): 11.



a. Peter I



b. Alexander II



c. Alexander III



d. Peter I



e. Nicholas II



f. Nicholas II



g. Catherine II



h. Nicholas I



i. Alexander I



j. Aleksei Michailovich



k. Paul I



l. Elizabeth



m. Michael Fedorovich

Figure 5: Romanov Jubilee Series, 1913
Michel Catalog, 79-91

as the registration fee;³⁴ 14 kopecks, Catherine II, domestic single-weight registered letters; 15 kopecks, Nicholas I, the rate of postal money orders valued between 1 and 25 kopecks; 20 kopecks, Alexander I, the cost of a double-weight foreign letter, a single-weight registered cover sent to a foreign destination, or with one additional ruble, the cost to send a telegraph; 25 kopecks, Aleksei Mikhailovich, paid the postal money-order rate for amounts between 25 and 100 rubles.³⁵

It is not altogether surprising to find that at least three values of this jubilee issue borrowed portraits from banknotes in circulation at the time.³⁶ Indeed, it was standard practice in imperial Russia for approved motifs to be reused for a variety of purposes, as Mikhail Anikst has demonstrated with a collection of contemporary designs.³⁷ Thus, the 25-ruble note, printed in 1909, featured Alexander III in an oval surmounted by the imperial crown; the 3-kopeck stamp has the same portrait except for a small modification in the uniform, namely a leather strap crossing the tsar's chest. Nicholas I was shown on the 50-ruble note of 1899; the same basic design was used for the 15-kopeck stamp with Nicholas in a different uniform and with less hair. An identical depiction of Peter I appeared on the 500-ruble note of 1909 and the 1-kopeck stamp. Ironically, however, the portrait of Catherine II on the 100-ruble note bore no resemblance to her profile on the 14-kopeck stamp.

Eventually, in its desire to save paper and money, the imperial government decided to cease printing these large-sized stamps in favor of re-issuing the smaller definitive arms set of

³⁴ Placing Nicholas II's portrait on both the 7-kopeck and 10-kopeck stamps assured that his picture would receive the widest dissemination. Ercolini, "Stamps of the 1913 Romanov Issue," 13.

³⁵ The higher denominations were used in conjunction with other stamps of the series to make up whatever franking was required: 35 kopecks, Paul I; 50 kopecks, Elizabeth Petrovna; 70 kopecks, Mikhail Feodorovich; 1 ruble, the Kremlin; 2 rubles, the Winter Palace; 3 rubles, the Romanov Castle; and 5 rubles, Nicholas II.

³⁶ Leonard Tann, "Russian Currency Stamps 1917," *British Journal of Russian Philately* 42 (1968): 34.

³⁷ Mikhail Anikst, *Russische Graphik 1880–1917* (Munich: Bangert Verlag, 1991), 91, 92.

1909/1912. This second series consisted of seven different designs ranging in value from 1 to 10 kopecks, but all utilizing as the central motif the Romanov coat of arms.³⁸

By late 1916, the economic position of the Russian Empire was weak and the ruble had slipped noticeably in value. However, the seeming stability of the throne and the unlikelihood of violent revolution prevented the onslaught of the type of galloping inflation that would later confront the economy in 1919 and 1920. To supplement war loans and foreign borrowing, on 10 September 1916 the imperial authorities raised domestic postal rates from 7 kopecks to 10 kopecks and the registration fee from 14 kopecks to 20 kopecks.³⁹

Apparently because this decision was immediately carried out, no additional stocks of the 10- and 20-kopeck values had been printed or distributed to post offices in anticipation of the increased demand.⁴⁰ Therefore, rather than destroying existing inventories, over the next two months EZGB overprinted sixty-four million 7-kopeck stamps from the jubilee series, which carried Nicholas II's portrait, with the 10-kopeck value, and eight million 14-kopeck stamps, bearing the image of Catherine II, with a 20-kopeck denomination. The remaining supplies of 7-kopeck stamps and twenty-four million 14-kopeck stamps from the 1909 arms series were similarly overprinted in December 1916 and January/February 1917 to reflect the new postal rates.⁴¹

In general, overprinting of stamps is avoided by most postal administrations because the process carries with it the potential for forgery and fabrication. However, in the case of the

³⁸ Jennrich, "Turmoil of Revolution Reflected in Stamps," 146.

³⁹ Leonard Tann, "The 1916 Surcharge," *British Journal of Russian Philately* 51 (1975): 11. For a listing of postal rates in the Russian Empire, see S. V. Prigara, *The Russian Post in the Empire, Turkey, China, and the Post in the Kingdom of Poland* (N.p.: Rossica Society, 1981), 8–39.

⁴⁰ Tann, "The 1916 Surcharge," 11.

⁴¹ Howard Weinert, "The 1916 Provisional 10 and 20 Kop. Surcharges on Arms Types and Romanovs," *British Journal of Russian Philately* 55 (1978): 19.

Russian Empire, the decision was a practical one because the 7- and 14-kopeck stamps had been made useless by the increase in postal rates except as supplementary postage. The numerical surcharge was simply designed to obliterate as effectively as possible the old value and to indicate clearly the new value. Postal stationery was also overprinted, therefore eliminating the need to affix additional stamps onto the available stock of postcards and envelopes.

In all probability, the second issue of Russia's war charities stamps also was in use during the early months of 1917.⁴² Issued privately by the Imperial Women's Patriotic Society of St. Petersburg on 26 November 1914 (i.e., shortly after the outbreak of World War I) and re-issued in 1915, this series of four semi-postal stamps sold for one kopeck over face value. The extra amount was set aside "for the benefit of soldiers and their families." According to the notification of the Main Administration of the Post and Telegraph, "the acquisition of the patriotic stamps and the payment for mail with them was not obligatory and left to the discretion of the buyer."⁴³

The artist Richard Zarins, who had overseen the 1913 jubilee project, designed these stamps in accordance with contemporary imperial art and iconography. They were large vertical rectangles with ornamental frames and various inscriptions. The four values featured traditional images: 1 kopeck, the legendary hero of Rus' Ilia Muromets; 3 kopecks, a Don cossack on

⁴² By decree of the Minister of the Post and Telegraph No. 62338, the sale of the patriotic stamps was ordered to cease on 19 March 1917. The decree was reprinted in *Filateliia SSSR* 1 (1972): 37. Both decrees are cited in V. V. Lobachevski, "Imperial Postage Stamps of Russia Issued 1905–1923," *Rossica Journal* 98/99 (1980): 70.

In 1905, the Imperial Women's Patriotic Society had similarly issued four semi-postal stamps, each with a three-kopeck surcharge that was donated to a fund for the orphans and widows of soldiers killed in the Russo-Japanese War. Each stamp was designed as a vertical rectangle containing a representation of a historical monument surrounded by traditional ornamentation: on the 3-kopeck stamp was the Admiral Kornilov monument in Sevastopol; 5 kopecks, the Minin and Pozharski Monument in Moscow; 7 kopecks, the statue of Peter I in St. Petersburg; and 10 kopecks, the Alexander II memorial and Kremlin in Moscow. Prigara, *The Russian Post in the Empire*, 28.

⁴³ Lobachevski, "Imperial Postage Stamps of Russia Issued 1905–1923," 69.

horseback bidding farewell to a young peasant girl; 7 kopecks, the symbolic figure of charity in the form of a woman in traditional costume; and 10 kopecks, St. George slaying the dragon.⁴⁴

Although the levels of circulation of the war charities stamps in 1917 cannot be determined, their existence at this time may have been intended as a means of popularizing the monarchy and, on the eve of his abdication, of commemorating Nicholas II's concern for this people.⁴⁵

b. Currency Tokens

The second category of stamps that was used during 1917 are known as currency tokens. In 1915, after some fourteen months of war, there was an acute shortage of currency in the empire that had been brought about by the inevitable hoarding of precious metals. The situation resulted from an interesting set of circumstances. In January 1914, there circulated in Russia 493.2 million gold rubles, 122.7 million in silver, and 1,664.7 in paper.⁴⁶ The paper currency was convertible to specie because the government held 1,527.8 million in domestic reserve, plus an additional 167.4 million in foreign banks. Unfortunately, the government was unable to recall all the bullion before the war started and, in July 1914, a panic ensued when individuals began to convert paper into specie.

As a result, gold and silver coins virtually disappeared, hoarded by both speculators and private individuals as a security against inflation or the collapse of the imperial economy. The public rightly suspected that paper money would be worthless if inflation, or a revolution, occurred. By the summer of 1915, the international value of the ruble had fallen from its prewar

⁴⁴ Prigara, *The Russian Post in the Empire*, 35–36.

⁴⁵ Jennrich, "Turmoil of Revolution Reflected in Stamps," 145.

⁴⁶ Arthur J. Arnold, *Banks, Credit, and Money in Soviet Russia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1937), 16.

value of 51.28 cents to 35 cents, and the shortage of silver coinage was acute.⁴⁷ Thus, the Ministry of Finance was forced to replace the coins and in such a way as to prevent further hoarding.

Influenced by several precedents, primarily the United States' currency-stamp issue of 1861–1865, the imperial authorities decreed the preparation of currency tokens. Because their need was urgent, the government used the designs from the 1913 jubilee postage stamps. The 10-, 15-, and 20-kopeck values were reissued on thin card stock bearing on the backside, instead of gum, the inscription "having circulation on par with silver subsidiary coins" along with an imprint of the imperial arms.⁴⁸ The cardboard thickness prevented the paper money units from sticking to each other and also made the tokens difficult to use postally.⁴⁹ Early in November 1915, these currency tokens were distributed to commercial banks for entry into public circulation.

Although the government had preferred to wait before proceeding with other values, the shortage of coinage continued. Like silver currency earlier, within a few months copper coins were being hoarded. Thus, in June 1916, the Ministry of Finance issued 1-, 2-, and 3-kopeck currency tokens, again using the designs of the 1913 jubilee stamps, but modifying the inscription to "having circulation equal to copper money." Beginning in early July 1916, all existing stocks of currency tokens and further printings of the 1- and 2-kopeck values were overprinted on the face with the numerals 1 and 2; the imperial eagle was retained on the back.

⁴⁷ Arnold, *Banks, Credit, and Money*, 50.

⁴⁸ Jennrich, "Turmoil of Revolution Reflected in Stamps," 148.

⁴⁹ Salisbury, "Romanov Currency Stamps," 21.

This decision had been prompted by various counterfeiting attempts to make the 1- and 2-kopeck values represent the earlier 10- and 20-kopeck currency tokens.⁵⁰

Because of the continuing economic decline, in March 1917, the Provisional Government authorized another printing of copper-valued currency tokens. This final issue was the same as the 1-, 2-, and 3-kopeck issues of the previous year, but with one important distinction. In deference to republican sentiments, the imperial eagle, for centuries the symbol of the Romanov monarchy, was replaced on all subsequent printings of the three low-value tokens by the word "КОPEK." (figure 6).⁵¹

Although the currency tokens did bear the legend "ПОЧТА" on their face, they were not intended for postal use. The reason was simple. The empire's population was quite familiar with the custom of cleaning up lightly canceled stamps and re-using them. However, to engage in this practice during the war would not have helped the critical economic conditions. Moreover, when the tokens were first authorized there were ample supplies of paper and stamps, especially the jubilee issues, in addition to a well-staffed and skilled printing establishment.⁵² So additional postage stamps were not required.

To a greater extent than with standard postal issues, there were repeated and varied attempts at forging these tokens. In their efforts to deceive postal officials, some individuals printed crude representations of the inscriptions on the backs of ordinary jubilee stamps, but over the gum, while others glued mint jubilee stamps onto cardboard. Other fake tokens

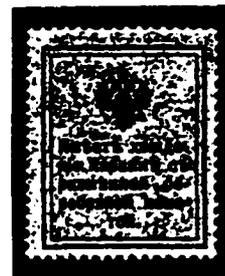
⁵⁰ Tann, "Russian Currency Stamps 1917," 35.

⁵¹ Leonard Tann, "Russian Currency Stamps," *British Journal of Russian Philately* 40 (1967): 17; Tann, "Russian Currency Stamps 1917," 35.

⁵² Salisbury, "Romanov Currency Stamps," 21.



a.



b.



c.



d.

Figure 6: Imperial Russian Currency Tokens, 1916–1917

featured a genuine portrait of the tsar, but, for example, with an upturned mustache or deformity of the eye. Many forgeries were detected because of spelling errors.⁵³

More significant, perhaps, were the forgeries the Germans produced during World War I.⁵⁴ Their issues of 15- and 20-kopeck currency stamps were spread throughout Russia in an effort to undermine the value of the empire's money and thus destroy public confidence in the imperial government. Instead of the standard inscriptions, the German-produced issues had the following phrases on the reverse: 15 kopecks, "has circulation in the same way as a thieving deceitful government"; 20 kopecks, "has circulation in the same way as bankrupt silver coins."⁵⁵

c. Private Overprints

A more subtle indication of the monarchy's destruction appeared somewhat spontaneously: once the Romanovs fell into disgrace in early 1917, postage stamps bearing their portraits were defaced. Within a very short time after the February Revolution, reproductions of the title page from the newspaper *Izvestiia petrogradskogo soveta rabochikh i soldatskikh deputatov* with the text of the tsar's abdication speech were overprinted on blocks of stamps. The front page of the Petrograd newspaper *Pravda* carrying the renunciation of the tsarist throne by Grand Duke Michael appeared as another overprint. Although the headline is easy to read, the text is so small and distorted by the perforations that even with a strong magnifying glass the words are virtually illegible. A further revolutionary overprint featured a Phrygian bonnet, the universally

⁵³ These efforts are described in Tann, "Russian Currency Stamps," 16, and Gregory B. Salisbury, "Romanov Currency Stamps of 1916-1917," *Rossica Journal* 60 (1961): 5, and Salisbury, "Romanov Currency Stamps," 24.

⁵⁴ The retreat of the Russian armies meant that post offices with full stocks of stamps fell into German and Austrian hands. These may have been used for the forged currency stamps or at least were a way of obtaining the designs.

⁵⁵ Salisbury, "Romanov Currency Stamps," 24.

recognized symbol for freedom, with crossed swords and the words "BRATSTVO, RAVENSTVO, SVOBODA" (fraternity, equality, liberty).⁵⁶

It is doubtful that these issues were officially sanctioned by the Petrograd Soviet, but rather were more likely private speculative issues or the products of zealous post office workers. In any case, mail franked with these proclamations circulated undoubtedly with the full support of the revolutionary leaders.⁵⁷ Moreover, examples of these overprinted stamps appeared on covers and postcards with postmarks from Ekaterinodar and Odessa, suggesting that while the events of the revolution were initially confined in the capital, signs of revolt quickly spread through the empire.

d. The Proposed Stamp of the Provisional Government

Sometime between 24 July 1917, when Alexander Kerensky was named prime minister of the second coalition Provisional Government, and 1 September, when Russia was proclaimed a republic, the Provisional Government authorized the issuance of a stamp symbolizing the end of autocratic monarchical rule. What is ironic about this decision is that, in general, the Provisional Government made no attempt at altering the prevailing iconography; indeed they retained the double-headed eagle in most of its former displays. Moreover, until an acceptable design could be completed, the new government continued to reprint imperial Russian arms stamps.

Kerensky approved a design by Zarins that illustrated a hand holding a double-edged sword and cutting through a heavy chain (figure 7). The government's intent was to issue this stamp in denominations from one through seventy kopecks, which would have accorded with

⁵⁶ These overprinted designs are described in Prigara, *The Russian Post in the Empire*, 35; Tann, "Russian Currency Stamps 1917," 35. See also V. V. Lobachevski, "Imperial Postage Stamps of Russia Placed into Postal Circulation After the Revolution," *Rossica Journal* 100/101 (1981): 59–60; translated from *Sovetskii kollektioner* 17 (1979) by George V. Shalimoff.

⁵⁷ Leonard Tann, "The Romanov Jubilee Issue," *British Journal of Russian Philately* 53 (1976): 30.



a. 35 kopecks

Katalog pochtovykh marok SSSR, tom 1, 1.



b. 70 kopecks

Katalog pochtovykh marok SSSR, tom 1, 2.

Figure 7: "Chain-Cutter" Stamps, November 1918

the new postal rates that the Provisional Government introduced on 15 August 1917.⁵⁸ However, because by mid-September Kerensky's authority was crumbling, attention was diverted from postal issues and the proposed stamp was not put into circulation. The Bolsheviks eventually released the design as the first issue of the new Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic.

4. Civil War

Within months of the October Revolution, forces of the political right began to mobilize as a reflection of the ongoing conflicts in the former empire. By the end of May 1918, civil war had broken out in earnest between the "Whites," as the anti-government armies were known, and the Bolshevik "Red" forces; those in outright opposition to the Bolsheviks, but not necessarily affiliated with the Whites, launched various "black" (anarchist) and "green" (peasant) revolutionary withdrawals. The political situation was such that in 1919, the mystic Petr Demianovich Uspenskii (1878–1947) wrote that "to travel from Mineral'nye Vody to Rostov, and thence to Novorossisk, you pass through four states, each with different laws, different prices, different sorts of police."⁵⁹

Similar to stamps chronicling the fall of the Romanov monarchy, contemporary stamp designs also reflected the civil war and post-revolutionary political anarchy as these examples show. As early as October 1917, republican stamps began to replace imperial Russian stamps in Finland, while in parts of western Russia, German and Polish stamps were used. The Ukrainian

⁵⁸ The most important provisions raised the ordinary postcard rate from 4 to 5 kopecks and doubled the registration fee from 10 to 20 kopecks. The rates included a special clause fixing the tariff for greeting and visiting cards the same as ordinary intercity and local letters, i.e., 15 kopecks and 10 kopecks respectively. See A. Epstein, "Some Puzzles in the Inland Postal Rates of Russia 1917–1922," *Pochta* 17 (January 1995): 12.

⁵⁹ P. D. Ouspensky, *Letters from Russia, 1919* (London: Routledge, 1978), 4. Among the recent histories of the events and participants of Russia's civil war is Geoffrey Swain, *The Origins of the Russian Civil War* (New York: Longman Group Limited, 1996).

National Republic declared that after August 1918 on its territories, tsarist stamps would have to be either overprinted or handstamped with the trident emblem in order to be valid for postage.⁶⁰ However, in 1919, the Bolsheviks ordered all postal agencies to stop using stamps that carried the Ukrainian overprints as well as the stamp series that had been issued by the independent Ukrainian republic.⁶¹

The philatelic situation was similarly complicated in Armenia. In November 1918, the National Democratic Republic declared that only those imperial Russian stamps that had been overprinted with a stylized "H. P." (Hayastan Post/Armenian Post) in Armenian letters would be valid for postage. Then, with the establishment of the Armenian Soviet Republic on 2 December 1920, large quantities of obsolete 7- and 14-kopec imperial stamps were shipped to Yerevan for overprinting with Armenian national symbols.⁶²

5. The Free-Post Period

During the first three months of 1918, the Bolshevik government was forced to print six billion rubles in paper and money stamps and, as a result, the value of the ruble fell to the equivalent of eleven cents.⁶³ Thus, while the internal postal rates introduced by the Provisional Government in August 1917 remained in effect until January 1918, new tariffs were required as

⁶⁰ These stamps will be given more consideration in chapter four.

⁶¹ This decision is mentioned by John Bulat, "Unknown Ukrainian Provisional," *Ukrainian Philatelist* 35, no. 53/54 (1988): 76.

⁶² Shneidman, "Russian Postal Administration," 11.

In total, ten anti-Bolshevik groups or governments produced philatelic material in the 1919–1921 period. In addition to those mentioned here, the following authorities prepared stamps: the Northern Army of General Miller, which operated around Archangel'sk, prepared but never issued a set of seven stamps; the Western Army in Latvia; the White Russian Corps, which in 1920 produced but did not issue eight stamps; the Don Cossack government, which had its seat at Rostov-on-Don; General Kolchak produced an issue of stamps in Siberia; and the Transbaikal Province led by Atman Semenov. For the numerous civil war and revolutionary issues from these and other scattered territories see R. J. Sutton, *The Stamp Collector's Encyclopedia* (London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., 1957).

⁶³ Arnold, *Banks, Credit, and Money*, 76, 87.

a response to the inflation. With the subsequent creation on 26 January 1918 of the People's Commissariat of Post and Telegraph (Narodnyi komissariat pocht i telegrafov/Narkompochtél), the first postal rates for all territories of the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic (R.S.F.S.R.) were enacted as follows: postcards, 20 kopecks; local letters, 30 kopecks for the first six lots (three ounces) and an extra 5 kopecks for each additional lot; intercity letters, 35 kopecks; and the fee for registration was set at 70 kopecks.

Based on these new rates, the chain-cutter design previously prepared for the Provisional Government was now released as the first stamp issue of the R.S.F.S.R. (figure 7). However, because of a variety of circumstances, only the 35- and 70-kopeck values were printed: inflation and the contemporary postal rates had made the 7- and 14-kopeck stamps unnecessary; currency tokens with the denominations of 1, 2, and 3 kopecks remained in circulation until approximately 1918/1919 and these values could therefore not be duplicated on postage stamps; and counterfeit 10-kopeck stamps had become a significant problem for the post office and so the government halted their production.⁶⁴ Although the specific production records for these two stamps have not survived, a greater number of 35-kopeck stamps was printed because this value was designated for the more widely used class of mail.⁶⁵

On 15 September 1918, during a period of rapid inflation, Narkompochtél took the unusual step of lowering postal rates: postcards, from 20 to 10 kopecks; local letters, from 30 to 15 kopecks; intercity letters, from 35 to 25 kopecks; and the registration fee from 70 to 25 kopecks.⁶⁶ According to one modern postal historian, the decision may have been partly

⁶⁴ Jennrich, "Turmoil of Revolution Reflected in Stamps," 148; White, *Annotated List*, 5.

⁶⁵ Karlinskii, "Soviet Postal Rates," 63.

⁶⁶ For additional details see Michael J. Carson, "The Soviet Free-Frank Period, 1919–1921," *Rossica Journal* 126 (April 1996): 4–21.

inspired by complex circumstances surrounding competition from private postal services. Because of disruptions caused by the civil war, entrepreneurs had developed private postal networks that were able to provide more efficient delivery at lower rates. Some of these private posts even issued their own stamps or labels, thus circumventing the state's monopoly on postal revenues. Beginning in mid-1918, one such stamp carried the inscription "In accordance with an agreement between the addressee and the receiver a fee of 10 kopecks is to be paid to the postman delivering this letter."⁶⁷ The lower postal rates, then, were an attempt to drive the private postal services out of business, an act that was reinforced by a Narkompochtel regulation that banned the private transport of mail.⁶⁸

A subsequent act began a unique period in international postal history. Although many countries, including the Russian Empire, have extended free-franking privileges to royalty, government officials, military servicemen, religious and charitable organizations, and residents of disaster-stricken areas, in no other instance have free-franking privileges been extended to the general populace of a country.⁶⁹ On 24 December 1918, the Council of People's Commissars (Sovet narodnykh komissarov/Sovnarkom) issued a special decree that was published in the newspaper *Izvestia Vserossiiskogo tsentral'nogo ispolitel'nogo komiteta*:

The Council of People's Commissars considers that more regular and widespread exchange of correspondence between working people in the cities and poor peasants would serve to strengthen the already great bond of unity between

⁶⁷ The stamp is discussed in Emil Marcovitch, "Phantasies," *Rossica Journal* 55 (1958): 43.

⁶⁸ *Pochtovo-telegrafnyi zhurnal* 40–42 (1918): 550, and 57 (1918): 42; cited in Karlinskii, "Soviet Postal Rates," 64.

⁶⁹ For details on free-frank mail (*l'gotnoe pochtovoe otpravlenie*) in the Russian Empire, see *Postanovleniia po pochtovoi chasti* (St. Petersburg: Glavnoe upravlenie pocht i telegrafov, 1909), especially chapter 9 on free-frank postal sendings mailed within the empire. An article by George G. Werbizky, "Free-Frank Mail in Imperial Russia," (*Rossica Journal* 122 [1994]: 76–84), also cites specific issues of the *Pochtovo-telegrafnyi zhurnal (chast' offitsial'naia)*: No. 15, 22 (July 1888), on free-franking privileges for volost' administrators; No. 8, 17 (April 1889), on documentation procedures for free-franked judicial and military mail; and No. 23, 30 (November 1890), on the acceptance of reports from meteorological observatories by the post office for free dispatch.

them; therefore, it deems it necessary to simplify and facilitate the handling of postal correspondence.⁷⁰

To this end, several related orders were drafted by Lenin and the People's Commissar of Posts and Telegraphs, Vadim Nikolaevich Podbel'skii (1887–1920).⁷¹ The first directed the free dispatch of postcards and ordinary letters weighing no more than 15 grams (1/2 ounce) within the R.S.F.S.R. beginning on 1 January 1919. At the same time, the government demonetized the indicia — a marking printed in place of a postage stamp — on all previously issued postal stationery. The second decree stated that letters weighing more than 15 grams and registered mail were to be paid for on the usual basis of the total weight of the letter in addition to the fee for registration; printed matter and postal money orders were also still subject to prepayment. Because the free dispatch of letters visibly lowered the consumption of postage stamps, the question of issuing new stamps was deferred until August 1921, when the payment for postal services was reintroduced.

Both ideological and practical reasons led to the establishment of free postage. In their early ideological fervor, the Bolsheviks were committed to the elimination of money as a means of exchange. A resolution of the second all-Russian congress of the Council of National Economy (Sovet narodnogo khoziaistva/SNKh) “expressed the desire to see the final

⁷⁰ The decree is translated in Carson, “The Soviet Free-Frank Period,” 4. *Izvestia* was the official daily gazette of the Soviet government. It was started on 28 February 1917 as the organ of the Council of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies in Petrograd and gained its official status only after the October Revolution.

⁷¹ Podbel'skii is an interesting figure in the history of the Russian/Soviet post office. Born in Siberia into the family of a banished revolutionary, after the February Revolution Podbel'skii served on the Moscow Party Committee and participated in the Moscow City Duma as a representative of the Bolshevik Party. At the time of the Bolshevik seizure of power in Moscow, Podbel'skii was a member of the “group of five” that directed the uprising and he oversaw the capture of the building that housed the Moscow Post Office. He then served as Commissar of Posts and Telegraphs for Moscow, later the Commissar for Communications; in May 1918, he became the Commissar of Posts and Telegraphs of the R.S.F.S.R. It was under his direction that the first postage stamps and postal stationery of the R.S.F.S.R. were issued. Podbel'skii died from blood poisoning that resulted from a scratch he suffered while directing voluntary Saturday work brigades and was buried in Red Square in Moscow. A stamp was issued in 1962 on the seventy-fifth anniversary of his birth.

elimination of any influence of money upon the relation of economic units.”⁷² The members envisioned the establishment of an economy in kind and the gradual abolition of the monetary charges levied by state institutions for public services. This policy was gradually brought into effect during 1919, leading to what was called the “naturalization” (demonetization) of economic relations and the period of war communism. By 1919–1920, municipal services including access to the post, consumer goods, public transportation, housing, gas, electricity, foodstuffs, and other amenities were made available free of charge.

The cancellation of postal fees for unregistered postcards and letters greatly reduced the need for stamps. In many earlier instances when no postage stamps were available, postal clerks had been forced to stamp covers “paid” (*oplachen*) and handwrite an amount to indicate that the required postal fees had been paid. Thus, with paper in extremely short supply, the introduction of free franking was a major practical consideration.⁷³

The decree also highlights the essential role played by the post in rallying the population behind the economic goals of the new state. As the economists Paul Gregory and Robert Stuart explain, given the hyperinflation of the period, peasants, manufacturers, and artisans were generally reluctant to exchange their products for depreciating money. Therefore, the central government was essentially powerless to obtain through the market the goods it needed to fighting the ongoing civil war.⁷⁴ The introduction of forced requisitioning (*prodrazverstka*) of agricultural surpluses meant that party activists were sent into the countryside to collect food products from the farm population. Undoubtedly, the tension of this situation may have been

⁷² A. Venediktov, *Organizatsiia gosudarstvennoi promyshlennosti v SSSR* (Leningrad, 1957), 445, quoting the congress report; translated and cited in Alec Nove, *An Economic History of the U.S.S.R.* (London: Penguin Books, 1986), 64.

⁷³ L. Szamuely, *First Models of the Socialist Economic Systems* (Budapest: Akademiai Kiado, 1974), 17–18.

⁷⁴ Paul R. Gregory and Robert C. Stuart, *Soviet Economic Structure and Performance*, 3d ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1986), 53.

somewhat eased had there been prior communications between the workers and peasants.

Further, the existence of a black market that supplied a significant portion of total consumption goods and which was “unofficially tolerated by the authorities”⁷⁵ may have also depended in part on the maintenance of communications between the urban and rural populations.

Concurrent with the abolition of postal fees for standard domestic mail, the government extended the free dispatch of postcards and letters to include international mail.⁷⁶ In conjunction with this decision, the People’s Commissariat of Foreign Affairs (Narodnyi komissariat inostrannykh del/Narkomindel) was directed to notify the working people of all foreign states of their right to send to Russia postcards and letters without the usual prepayment.

Understandably, in 1919 and early 1920 free postage on foreign mail was a somewhat meaningless concept. Due to the isolation of Bolshevik territory from the rest of the world, imposed primarily by the civil war, there was virtually no outlet for mail to leave the country except via Vladivostok in the east. Sweden refused to accept responsibility for shipments of mail going to the R.S.F.S.R., and the United States had placed an embargo on all mail destined for Russia. Further, during the most difficult period of the civil war, when the Bolsheviks controlled very little territory and were surrounded by various anti-government and interventionist forces, conditions for the general populace were difficult. The people would undoubtedly have been more concerned with staying alive than with maintaining any form of correspondence, foreign or domestic. Finally, it is unlikely that any country would have voluntarily foregone postal revenues to oblige the Russian government.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Gregory and Stuart, *Soviet Economic Structure and Performance*, 54.

⁷⁶ A. Epstein, “Postal Rates of R.S.F.S.R. For Mail Abroad (1917–1923),” *Pochta* 14 (July 1993): 11.

⁷⁷ A. Rosselevitch, “Russia 1909–19 Issue with Chalk Line Network,” *Rossica Journal* 56 (1959): 20. Several examples of postal materials dating from the civil war period confirm the difficulties of mail transport within the R.S.F.S.R. at this time. For details, see A. Epstein, “Some Puzzles in the Inland Postal Rates of Russia 1917–1922,” *Pochta* 17 (January 1995): 17–20.

By mid-1920, postal relations with other countries slowly were established as the R.S.F.S.R. signed various peace treaties. Circular No. 353, dated 7 June 1920, reported that “forwarding international ordinary and registered letters to foreign countries (except China and Japan) is resumed.” The first of two articles stated that the rates for weight and insurance were to be fifty times as much as those quoted in the 1917 Postal Administration Statutes. The second ordered that ordinary letters weighing less than fifteen grams and standard postcards were still to be sent postage free. The Norwegian port of Vardo was mentioned as the key point of mail exchange.⁷⁸

Among the limited postal history material that exists from the second half of 1920 until August 1921, mail to Estonia (treaty signed on 2 February 1920) and Latvia is the most prevalent; mail to Germany also exists, but to few other countries.⁷⁹ At the time, standard mail was still sent unfranked from the R.S.F.S.R., but postal authorities in the receiving countries assessed postage due on the incoming mail. For example, the postage due in Estonia was equal to the local domestic rate for an equivalent piece of mail, and a special handstamp with the inscription “From Russia” (in Estonian) and the amount due was struck on the envelopes.⁸⁰ Almost a year later, Circular No. 344, dated 1 April 1921, demanded the obligatory franking of letters, postcards, and printed matter from abroad.⁸¹ Thus, foreign mail would neither be delivered nor allowed into the R.S.F.S.R. without the proper postage having been prepaid.

Although the free dispatch of standard letters is often discussed in the philatelic press, a lesser-known debate in 1920–1921 concerned plans for the free transport of all classes of mail in

⁷⁸ The regulation is cited and translated in Epstein, “Postal Rates of R.S.F.S.R. For Mail Abroad,” 9–10.

⁷⁹ The Baltic states served as a mail transport conduit to Germany and other countries.

⁸⁰ Epstein, “Postal Rates of R.S.F.S.R. For Mail Abroad,” 8–9.

⁸¹ The regulation is cited in Epstein, “Postal Rates of R.S.F.S.R. For Mail Abroad,” 10. This decision was apparently a follow-up to Circular No. 677, dated 30 September 1920, which re-introduced payment for standard foreign mail.

the Soviet Union, an act that would have resulted in the total abolition of postage stamps. In April 1921, *Izvestia* reported that “a special commission has been formed at the People’s Commissariat of Posts and Telegraphs to study the overhaul and simplification of postal work.”⁸² Four key measures were considered: the total abolition of payment for all classes of correspondence in order to permit the concentration of attention and effort on the technical processing of the mails; changes in the classes of postal sendings to simplify their dispatch along with the “removal of all unnecessary formalities that have complicated the utilization of the mails by the broad masses of workers and peasants”⁸³; the removal of differences in handling between standard mail and registered correspondence; and, in light of the ongoing paper shortage, the abolition of exact weighing of correspondence. However, after deliberations during which many postal districts of the country participated, this plan was not accepted.⁸⁴

6. The Reintroduction of Stamps in the R.S.F.S.R.

a. Standard Issues

After witnessing the precipitous decline and collapse of the economy as well as the waste and inefficiencies of many state-operated factories, Lenin realized that there was indeed a role for money to play in the economy and that economic relations in the country should be “normalized.” Against considerable opposition, Lenin introduced his New Economic Policy (Novaia Ekonomicheskaiia Politika/NEP) in 1921, which was aimed at eliminating the excesses

⁸² *Izvestia*, 2 April 1921; cited and translated in Karlinskii, “Soviet Postal Rates,” 66.

⁸³ Cited and translated in Karlinskii, “Soviet Postal Rates,” 66.

⁸⁴ Further revisions of the free-post legislation occurred in November 1919. The most interesting feature was the abandonment of the division of correspondence into local and intercity categories, which simplified the processing of letters and newspaper wrappers.

of war communism, fostering the alliance (*smychka*) between the workers and peasants, and creating conditions that would favor greater production. The program thus allowed a certain amount of private enterprise and returned money to its place in the economy. Wages were again paid in cash, while charges for public services recommenced in July–August 1921. A return to sound fiscal policy also demanded an income from the postal service. Consequently, charges for all postal services were reintroduced. Beginning 15 August 1921, postcards and local letters were charged 100 rubles; intercity letters, 250 rubles; foreign letters, 1000 rubles; registration doubled these rates.

Because stamps with the new values were not ready when these rates were introduced, the postal service found itself in a difficult position. Several remedies were temporarily employed to provide proof of postage while the first R.S.F.S.R. issues were printed. First, some supplies of old imperial stamps were utilized with a great variety of overprints. Because the new postal rates required the higher denominations, the older ruble values were reprinted as they were needed.⁸⁵ Alternatively, a notation was stamped on envelopes and the rate for dispatching the letter was filled in by hand: “For want of stamps, the rate of ___ rub. ___ kop. has been collected in cash” (“Za neimeniem marok / oplacheno nalichn. den’ / gami ___ rub. ___ kop”).⁸⁶

As its third remedy, Narkompochtel arranged to sell various revenue stamps — primarily control stamps (*kontrol’nye marki*) and savings bank stamps (*sberegatel’nye marki*) — to pay postage either at or proportional to their face value. Until this time, the postal use of revenue stamps had been hindered by the fact that their usage fell under the jurisdiction of another government agency, namely the imperial Ministry of Finance and later the Supreme Council of the National

⁸⁵ Rosselevitch, “Russia 1909–19 Issue with Chalk Line Network,” 20; White, *Annotated List*, 6.

⁸⁶ Internally cited in Karlinskii, “Soviet Postal Rates,” 66.

Economy (Vysshii sovet narodnogo khoziaistva/VSNKh). The control stamps particularly had served as payment of a special tax known as stamp duty, which was levied against various documents and deeds of a civil nature.⁸⁷ The tax stamps served their newly assigned purpose well. For example, in February 1919, eight hundred rubles' worth of revenue stamps were used at Kiev's Post and Telegraph Office No. 16 to supplement one thousand rubles' worth of postage stamps.⁸⁸

Somewhat similar circumstances surrounded the application of savings stamps. A ruling by the imperial Ministry of Finance, dated 2 December 1915, had abolished the use of savings stamps for small deposits in savings offices and introduced the affixing of ordinary postage stamps on savings cards. As a result, nearly forty million savings stamps remained unused. Therefore, a circular from Narkompochtel informed all postal establishments that due to a shortage of paper for postage stamps and the high cost to produce them, the savings stamps could again be used for their original purpose and, along with the control stamps, could be used in place of postage stamps for domestic correspondence.⁸⁹ Sometimes the stamps were surcharged with the new

⁸⁷ Four classes of documents were subject to stamp duty: all documents presented to state departments; all deeds and documents drawn up and executed within the Russian Empire; all securities issued by public institutions or corporations and by limited liability or joint-stock companies; and all deeds and documents drawn up outside of Russia but produced for execution within the empire. For further details on the stamp duty, see Alexander M. Michelson, Paul N. Apostol and Michael W. Bernatzky, *Russian Public Finance During the War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1928), 28–29, 48–53, 68–69, 93, and 148–151. According to Michelson et al. (*Russian Public Finance*, 28), the tax had proven to be quite profitable for the treasury. In 1913, for example, the receipts in this category rose from 44.5 rubles in 1903 to 103 million rubles.

⁸⁸ Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Gorodnogo Kiev (State Archives of the City of Kiev/GAGK), fond r-889, opis 1, delo 99, l. 83; cited in V. Mogil'nyi, "Revenue Stamps in Place of Postage Stamps," *Rossica Journal* 115 (199): 55. Mogil'nyi's article is translated from *Filateliiia SSSR* 2 (1988). The stamp tax was canceled in 1920 but reinstated in 1922. Collection did resume again in 1924.

⁸⁹ Both the Ministry of Finance and Narkompochtel decrees are cited in Lobachevski, "Imperial Postage Stamps of Russia," 77–78. Some confusion about this decree is evidenced by the fact that on some documents that required revenue stamps, actual postage stamps were used. Especially in the Caucasus, imperial stamps of the 1909–1917 issue were overprinted for this purpose with "G. M.," an abbreviation for "revenue stamp" (*gerbovaia marka*). It is possible, however, that no revenue stamps were available in this region and that the local postmasters were merely improvising with the available stock. For more details, see Mazur, "USSR Postage Stamps Used as Revenue Stamps," 23–25.

values, but more often not; on other occasions, stamps were cut in half to indicate a postal rate of half the original face value.⁹⁰

Although the decree specified that the revenue stamps were not to be used for international mail, information contained in Circular No. 128, dated 21 October 1921, from the Kiev Provincial Postal Department (*gubotdel*) indicates that this order was not obeyed:

According to a report from international postal administrations, correspondence is being received from the RSFSR that has been paid for with revenue stamps, control stamps, and postal savings stamps. In confirmation of this year's circular telegram No. 7/396 of 3 September about the payment for international postal correspondence exclusively with newly issued postage stamps, I propose notifying the public about this by putting up announcements in conspicuous places in post offices, [stating] that international correspondence which had been paid for with different, [non-postal] stamps will not be sent abroad.⁹¹

Having made the decision to charge a reasonable fee for postal services, the government began to accept proposals for the new stamps. Three simple designs submitted by V. Kupriianov were accepted for use on ten of the eleven stamps in the new series.⁹² Wording was kept to a minimum: only the word "POCHTA" (postage), an abbreviation for rubles as the denomination, and the acronym R.S.F.S.R. — the first time the name of a soviet-type government appeared on a stamp — were present. Symbols representing three main areas of activity were depicted (figure 8).⁹³

⁹⁰ In August–December 1921, the 1-, 5-, and 10-kopeck revenues sold at 50, 250, and 500 rubles respectively. White, *Annotated List*, 7. Although not verifiable, postman's tax stamps may also have been authorized for postal use during this period. These stamps were originally created to provide a bonus of 15 kopecks to postmen for the delivery of registered letters containing judicial papers. The designs featured a crown as the central emblem, with "Gerbovaia Marka" written in the surrounding band. Beneath are the imperial coat of arms, the notation of value, and the phrase "for the benefit of the postman" (*ν pol'zy pochaliuna*). White, *Annotated List*, 7; Lobachevski, "Imperial Postage Stamps of Russia," 88.

⁹¹ Cited in Mogil'nyi, "Revenue Stamps in Place of Postage Stamps," 55.

⁹² R. Sklarevski, "The Stamps of the Russian Socialist Soviet Republic," *Rossica Journal* 66 (1964): 40–44. See also K. Bergard, "1921 R.S.F.S.R. Definitives," *Rossica Journal* 100/101 (1981): 36–46; a translation from *Filateliia SSSR* 8 and 9 (1981).

⁹³ Two of Natan Altman's proposed stamp designs are reproduced in Mikhail Guerman, comp., *Art of the October Revolution* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1979), plates 265 and 266, and in Leah Dickerman, ed., *Building the Collective: Soviet Graphic Design 1917–1937* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), 64. Compared to Kupriianov's designs, Altman's featured similar images, albeit less stylistically composed.



a. symbols of industry
Katalog pochtovykh marok SSSR,
tom 1, 13.



b. symbols of agriculture
Katalog pochtovykh marok SSSR,
tom 1, 11.



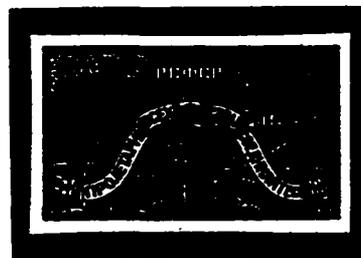
c. symbols of science and arts
Katalog pochtovykh marok SSSR,
tom 1, 10.



d. "New Russia Triumphant"
Katalog pochtovykh marok SSSR,
tom 1, 7.



e. Soviet symbols
Katalog pochtovykh marok SSSR,
tom 1, 39.



f. "Workers of the World Unite"
Katalog pochtovykh marok SSSR,
tom 1, 38.

Figure 8: R.S.F.S.R. Issues of 1921 and 1922

Taken in its entirety, the 1921 stamp series was in accord with the spirit of NEP in that while some attention was given to cultural questions, the emphasis was placed on the recovery of agriculture and industry within the R.S.F.S.R. The 1, 2, 100,⁹⁴ 200, and 300-ruble stamps carried the theme of agricultural labor: sheaves of corn and farming implements. As symbols of industrial labor, an anvil, hammer, and tongs appeared on the 5, 500, and 1000-ruble stamps. Emblems representing both agriculture and industry were on the 20-ruble stamp: a crossed hammer and sickle on a shield surrounded by garlands and wheat.⁹⁵ The 250-ruble stamp was devoted to science and art: a lyre, book, chemical retort, palette, and set square were incorporated in the design.

The image on the 40-ruble stamp was uncharacteristic of the series. The vignette featured a worker kneeling on the carcass of a monster. The image was meant as a metaphor of letting in the light of a new era with a worker slaying the capitalist dragon. Some contemporary western speculation felt that this scene was executed in retaliation for a 1919 Latvian stamp that was issued following the defeat of Colonel Pavel Bermond-Avalov and the subsequent liberation of Kurzeme (Kurland).⁹⁶ The stamp featured a personified "Latvia" slaying a Russian dragon. What is interesting about the Latvian stamp is that it was drawn by the head of the Art Division of the EZGB, Richard Zarins (1869–1939). Zarins, an ethnic Latvian, had earlier

⁹⁴ A different plan for the 100-ruble stamp, similar to the 40-ruble, never materialized. This design depicted an exultant young female riding upon a white horse and surrounded by a crowd of people. For details, see White, *Annotated List*, 8–9.

⁹⁵ This combination was reused on the 7500-ruble stamp of 1922.

⁹⁶ In July 1919, the German General von der Goltz organized an anti-communist West Russian Army that was reinforced by units of German monarchist volunteers and headed by an obscure adventurer, Pavel Bermond-Avalov. Von der Goltz's hope was to establish a German base from which to attack the R.S.F.S.R., the Allies, and the new social democratic government of Germany, by building an anti-communist combined German-Russian force that was faithful to imperial Germany and Russia. On 8 October, Bermond-Avalov's troops attacked the Latvian Army and occupied the suburbs of Riga. By 11 November, the Latvians gained the support of an Anglo-French naval squadron as well as Lithuanian troops and were able to defeat Bermond-Avalov. The liberation stamp was released on 16 December 1919.

designed the 1913 jubilee series and the first issue of imperial Russian charity stamps. He was also recognized by the Soviets as an eminent stamp designer.⁹⁷

The first five values (1, 2, 5, 20, and 40 rubles) of this series appeared on 10 August 1921. Then, after only five days, the government announced an increase in postal rates, which necessitated the issuance of the other six values. To some extent, the circulation (*tirage*) levels for each of the eleven values reflected the increases in postal rates. Because three charges, namely 100, 250, and 1000 rubles, were to form the base values in subsequent issues of postage stamps, the quantities printed were large: 100 rubles (postcard rate), approximately forty-five million copies; 250 rubles (letter rate), seventy-nine million copies; and 1000 rubles (registration fee), fifty-four million copies.⁹⁸ In contrast, because the demand for values for international mailings and other postal needs was not as great, the issues were relatively small: 200 rubles, four million copies; 300 rubles, three million copies; and 500 rubles, one million copies.⁹⁹

In general, though, the values paid little attention to the prevailing postal rates. For example, the first two stamps (1 and 2 rubles) were not singularly valid for postage but were needed to make up other postal rates. The absence of either 8- or 10-ruble stamps forced citizens to use two or three stamps to pay postage on foreign postcards and domestic registered letters. Thus, a recurrent problem that was to plague postal authorities until a reform in 1924 began with this first issue: namely, the stamp denominations issued did not meet specific postal

⁹⁷ Zarins directed the Art Division from 1899 to 1919. As head of the State Printing Works of Independent Latvia, Zarins designed several other stamps. For example, in November 1919, Zarins prepared an allegorical design celebrating one year of Latvian independence, which was printed on the backs of unfinished five-ruble banknotes of the Workers and Soldiers Council of Riga. Then in March 1920, Zarins designed the Latgale relief issue, to commemorate the defeat and withdrawal of the Red Army from the region. Zarins continued to design Latvian stamps at least until 1932, including the April 1928 memorial stamp for the first president of Latvia, Janis Čakste (1859–1927). Zarins also created the 1920 Asobny Atrod Issue of the Belorussian National Republic, five values depicting a couple in traditional costume a garden setting, that was produced at the Latvian State Printing Office.

⁹⁸ Concerning the postal rates, see Raymond J. Pietruszka, "Use of the Second Definitive Issue of the RSFSR," *Rossica Journal* 127 (1996): 74. For the number of stamps printed, see White, *Annotated List*, 10.

⁹⁹ Karlinskii, "Soviet Postal Rates," 67, 68; White, *Annotated List*, 10–11.

needs.¹⁰⁰ This fact is reinforced by noting the number of stamps from this first issue that were actually sold: 1 ruble, 399,400 stamps of 1,593,900 printed; 2 rubles, 398,450 copies of 1,582,300; 5 rubles, 543,300 copies of 1,708,330; 20 rubles, 289,760 copies of 1,390,160; and 40 rubles, 174,980 copies of 3,344,930.¹⁰¹

Although these stamps were valid for postage throughout the R.S.F.S.R., they were offered for sale only at post offices in Moscow, Petrograd, and Khar'kov and were never dispatched to local centers. In the cities, few copies were actually used during the first week of their availability. Because the stamps were oversized, even in Moscow, the postmasters preferred using the smaller imperial arms series. Additionally, since the central government declared that any tsarist postal savings stamp, banking stamp, control stamp, or tax stamp was valid for 250 rubles, no matter what its face value, it was simply more convenient to use revenue stamps, which were in abundant supply, than to use the new stamps, which had been issued imperforate and therefore had to be cut apart.

Another set of stamps similarly attests to a lack of coordination within the postal commissariat. In November 1921, a commemorative issue was prepared to mark the fourth anniversary of the October Revolution. The modest design for the three basic postal rates (100, 250, and 1000 rubles) combined the star with the initials R.S.F.S.R.; three million stamps of each value were printed. A fourth value, 200 rubles, was also printed, but since it did not serve any purpose, the stamps were stored at the printing plant and then destroyed in 1927.

¹⁰⁰ Shneidman, "Russian Postal Administration," 21.

¹⁰¹ Some unused stamps from this series were overprinted beginning in 1922: twenty million 250-ruble stamps were overprinted 7,500 rubles; nineteen million 250-ruble stamps were overprinted 100,000; a quarter of a million 250-ruble stamps were used in May 1923 for a charity overprint; an undisclosed number of 250-ruble stamps were overprinted in Ukraine and Smolensk, and overprinted for tax purposes by the Soviet government in 1928. See White, *Annotated List*, 10–11.

The design of a less important issue from this period further reflects the rapidly developing iconography of the new Soviet state. Undoubtedly, the lack of a single stamp for registered letters — one that combined the regular postal rate with the registration fee — resulted in some inconvenience at post offices. Therefore, beginning in March 1922, the government regularly issued special “registration” stamps. At the center of the 1922 design was a hand claspng a hammer against a background that showed a stock exchange in ruins and a prison — symbols of the tsarist regime — along with smoking factory chimneys, which represented “labor at work.” A banner with the inscription “Workers of the World Unite!” runs across the stamp.¹⁰²

By a directive of the Sovnarkom, the seventh schedule of Soviet postal rates was introduced on 31 January 1922. In contrast to all preceding tariffs, the new rates were specified on the basis of the gold ruble.¹⁰³ During the last five months of the previous schedule, another fifteen trillion rubles in paper had been printed and the value of the ruble had fallen to 300,000 to the dollar.¹⁰⁴ Thus in November 1921, the government, realizing the impossibility of dealing with such inflated numbers, decided that budgetary figures should be drawn in terms of the prewar gold ruble and that each month, the People’s Commissariat of Finance (Narodnyi Kommissariat Finansov/Narkomfin) should publish the rate of exchange between the prewar and the current ruble; on 1 February 1922, the rate was set at 1 to 150,000. The new postal rates took this standard into consideration: postcards, 2 gold kopecks or 3000 rubles paper money; local letters, 3 gold kopecks or 4500 rubles paper money; intercity letters, 5 gold kopecks or

¹⁰² This same design was used on other values issued at the same time. Along with a 7500-ruble value, which reused the emblems of agriculture and labor from the 1921 series, these two stamps formed the second definitive stamp series.

¹⁰³ Karlinskii, “Soviet Postal Rates,” 69.

¹⁰⁴ Arnold, *Banks, Credit, and Money*, 128–129.

7500 rubles paper money; and the registration fee was set at 10 gold kopecks or 15,000 rubles paper money. Consequently, certain denominations from the first definitive stamp series were surcharged so that they could be used to pay the contemporary postal rates. The 1, 2, 5, and 20-ruble stamps were overprinted with a 5000-ruble value; the 250-ruble stamps received a 7500-ruble overprint; and a 10,000-ruble overprint was applied to the 40-ruble stamp.

In general, the postal authorities were unable to plan ahead to extricate themselves from a pattern of producing useless stamps. They continued to issue stamps for postal rates that were out of date, thus forcing the population to use many stamps on envelopes, which ultimately contributed to the paper shortage. On 1 March 1922, Narkomfin announced that the ratio between the prewar ruble and the current ruble was 1 to 200,000, which meant that the 5-gold kopeck rate would increase from 7500 rubles to 10,000 rubles.¹⁰⁵ The printing office decided to overprint twenty million 250-ruble stamps as 7500 rubles and to issue more than eight million new 7500-ruble stamps along with three million 22,500-ruble stamps, which were intended for payment of registered letters. But by the time these stamps were sent to the post office, their values were no longer current.

One month later, the rate schedule was again revised as a result of the uncontrollable inflation. Between 1 February and 1 April 1922, the government had printed another 50.6 trillion rubles. Put into perspective, this meant that each month the government was printing more rubles than the sum total of rubles in circulation the month before.¹⁰⁶ The economic decline had progressed so uncontrollably that by the end of March 1922, the government abandoned its rate of exchange index and began basing currency values on the purchasing price of gold. In the opinion of one Western economist, it could not have been much clearer to the

¹⁰⁵ Arnold, *Banks, Credit, and Money*, 137.

¹⁰⁶ Arnold, *Banks, Credit, and Money*, 128–129.

Soviet leaders that in order to solidify the new Russia, the currency had to be stabilized.¹⁰⁷

The new postal rates, introduced on 1 April and again raised on 30 April 1922, reflect the continuing economic crisis in the R.S.F.S.R. The domestic rates were: postcards, 4000 rubles, then increased to 20,000; local letters, from 6000 to 30,000 rubles; intercity rates, from 10,000 to 50,000 rubles for each 50 grams; the registration fee, from 20,000 to 100,000 rubles. The international rates: postcards, initially 18,000 rubles increased to 120,000; letters, from 30,000 to 200,000 rubles; and the registration fee from 30,000 to 200,000 rubles.¹⁰⁸

A new phase in postal communications came about on 4 June 1922, when standard and registered correspondence from the public was accepted as airmail. Until this time, aircraft had only conveyed official administrative mail. The first Soviet airmail rates were published in *Izvestia* on 31 May 1922. In addition to the normal postal rates, an additional charge of 20 rubles per 20 grams was levied for airmail letters.¹⁰⁹ Until the release of a specific airmail stamp, letters were franked with regular postal issues.

Chaotic monetary conditions prevailed throughout 1922. After much discussion, the government adopted a theoretical gold standard in July 1922 and announced that the currency of the R.S.F.S.R. would be the chervonets, a paper bill equal to ten imperial gold rubles or 119.4792 grains of gold. Although subsequent postal rates were to be posted according to the gold currency standard, a peculiar compromise was reached. Because gold currency did not exist in reality, the new rates were neither in old rubles nor chervontsy, but rather in *Denznak* (*denezhnii znak*) rubles, which were the equivalent of 10,000 old rubles. Since most Russians still held either the token money of 1921 or the 1921 R.S.F.S.R. obligation notes, the posting of

¹⁰⁷ Arnold, *Banks, Credit, and Money*, 145.

¹⁰⁸ Karlinskii, "Soviet Postal Rates," 69–71.

¹⁰⁹ The newspaper report is cited in Karlinskii, "Soviet Postal Rates," 71–72.

rates in Denznak rubles (DR) only confused the situation: there were no stamps in Denznak rubles. The only convenient stamps available were the remaining copies from the imperial arms series. Therefore, one purchased a 1-kopecck arms stamp for 10,000 rubles and used it to pay 1 ruble in postage. One postal historian has commented that as the situation deteriorated even further, people simply stuck whatever stamps they could find onto their envelopes without caring whether there was twenty or thirty thousand times too much or too little postage.¹¹⁰

After again raising postal rates both on 1 October and 1 November, which each time necessitated the overprinting of older stamps, the Soviets prepared three new issues with face values in terms of the Denznak ruble. The first release was a semi-postal set of famine relief stamps. Although unusual, these stamps were practical in that they had no face value printed on them, but were sold for 25 DR: 20 DR for postage and 5 DR for the famine tax. Each carried the inscription "For the Hungry" (Golodaiushchim). The four stamps were designed by Zarins and depicted modes of transportation: a steamer (four million copies); train (ten million); car (five million), and airplane (one million). Their use was rather limited since they were valid only for franking inland correspondence.¹¹¹

The second set of stamps commemorated the fifth anniversary of the October Revolution. This was the first design to be prepared by Ivan Ivanovich Dubassov (1897–1976+), an employee of the State Bank Note Factory (Fabrika Gosudarstvennykh Znakov/Goznak),¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Shneidman, "Russian Postal Administration," 29.

¹¹¹ White, *Annotated List*, 18.

¹¹² The history of Goznak dates to the early eighteenth century. The organization of the St. Petersburg mint in 1724, under Peter I, brought about the centralization of the coinage of money in Russia and the beginning of the production of commemorative badges and award medals. The next major administrative development occurred in 1818, when the Department for the Preparation of State Papers (EZGB) was organized under the auspices of the minister of finance. After 1919, the mint was reorganized into the Office for the Issuance of State Currency Notes and its operations were transferred to Moscow. Then in 1941, the mint became part of Goznak, which was retitled as the Main Administrative Department for the Production of Stamps, Coins and Orders (Glavnoe upravlenie proizvodstvom gosudarstvennykh znakov, monet i ordenov).

All of the Soviet Union's stamps were prepared at the Moscow Printing Factory of Goznak (Moskovskaia

who became one of the foremost Soviet stamp designers.¹¹³ The stamp showcased a young mason chiseling “RSFSR, 1917–1922.” Although the stamps did have a higher face value than previous issues, most of the stamps were prepared in terms of the October 1922 postal rates. The face values were: 5 DR (five million copies), 10 DR (fifteen million copies), 25 DR (three million copies), 27 DR (500,000 copies), and 45 DR (1 million copies). Thus, while the 25 DR stamps did help relieve some shortages at the post office, the other values were either useless — the 27 DR stamp related to the August 1922 postcard rate and the 45 DR stamp to the letter rate — or too difficult to use.

The third stamp issue released at this time was a single value airmail stamp (100,000 copies). Its design consisted of a line drawing of an airplane overprinted on the 45 DR fifth-anniversary issue. However, the applicability of this stamp was rather limited since the current airmail rate was 150 DR.

Because the government printed another 38.3 billion DR (383.7 trillion old rubles) in November, inflationary conditions continued and new postal rates were again introduced on 1 December 1922. For domestic mail: 20 DR for a postcard, 20 DR for a local letter of 20 grams; 40 DR for an intercity letter; and 40 DR for registration; for international mail: 150 DR for a postcard, 250 DR for a letter, and 250 DR for registration. Based on these new rates, the first values of a new stamp series were prepared. Using the printing plates from the higher values of the imperial arms series, which had otherwise not been overprinted, stamps were produced and

pechatnaia fabrika Goznaka/MPFG), with the exception of two series that were produced at the Moscow Printing House of Goznak (Moskovskaia tipografiia Goznaka/MTG): the first, in 1969, featured five book illustrations by the artist Ivan Ia. Bilibin; a second series, from 1975, reproduced five paintings from the Palekh State Art Museum. All of the Soviet Union's postal cards and postal stationery was prepared at either MPFG, MTG, or the Perm Printing Works of Goznak (Permskaia pechatnaia fabrika Goznaka/PPFG). *Bol'shoi filatelisticheskii slovar'*, 65.

¹¹³ Dubassov was employed by Goznak from 1922 to 1971, and was its head artist beginning in 1932. The design, therefore, was the first project he completed. In addition to the numerous stamps he later designed, Dubassov was also assigned to prepare numerous military orders and medals for the Soviet government. His works were displayed at the Paris International Exhibition of 1925 and he received the Lenin Prize in 1945.

then overprinted with a five-point star surrounding a hammer and sickle, with each point of the star containing a letter of R.S.F.S.R. The two initial values were 20 DR on 70 kopecks and 30 DR on 50 kopecks (both values approximately 9,600,000 copies). It is not clear why the government did not just print the higher value with the new designs, instead of first printing the old designs and then overprinting with the new. Similar to earlier issues, these stamps prepaid the previous month's rates. The 30-DR stamp was almost useless because it not only did not pay a specific rate but it was also difficult to use as supplementary postage.¹¹⁴

During December, another 51.5 billion DR (515.2 trillion old rubles) were printed. Consequently, the government introduced the 1923 ruble (MR), which was worth one million old rubles or one hundred Denznak rubles. New postal rates were established in January 1923 based on this new ruble: a postcard and local letter were to cost 50 kopecks (500,000 rubles or 50 DR); an intercity letter was 1 MR; and registration was an additional 1 MR. New international rates were also introduced: a postcard cost 2.10 MR; a regular letter 3.50 MR; and registration an additional 3.50 MR. Both rates schedules remained in effect until 9 March 1923.

Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, postal officials were not prepared for either the MR or the higher postal rates. In December 1922, the post office had begun to introduce a new series of stamps with face values of 10 DR (twenty-two million copies), 50 DR (thirty million copies), 70 DR (ten million copies), and 100 DR (sixty-two million copies). The stamps, accordingly, were released to the public and sold in terms of the new ruble, for 10, 50, and 70 kopecks, and 1 MR. Depending on what type of money they had, the people paid either 100 DRs or 1,000,000 old rubles for the 1 MR stamps; few people had the new MRs while many others still carried the imperial Russian and Provisional Government currencies.

¹¹⁴ On 5 December 1922, the government released a 40-DR on 15-kopeck stamp (twenty-five million copies), which did help to relieve some of the problems.

This third set of definitive stamps honored the three social elements within Soviet society in their corresponding fields of endeavor, portraying the worker (industry), soldier (defense), and peasant (agriculture). Stylistically, Jonathan Grant has observed that “these representations resembled classical busts and were similar to the style used by other countries to portray monarchs on their stamps.”¹¹⁵ However, images of the common people were substituted for the usual head-of-state figure, and more applicably to this case, for portraits of the tsars that had appeared on imperial Russian stamps. This was not by chance: the Soviets “specifically . . . decided to create images which would symbolize the idea of worker-peasant power.”¹¹⁶

The renowned sculptor Ivan Dmitrievich Shadr (1887–1941) prepared the designs for these stamps. The two stamps featuring the worker and the Red Army soldier were released in December 1922, while the stamp bearing the bust of the peasant was issued five months later, in May 1923.¹¹⁷ Among the nine stamps of the new series, the worker and soldier appeared four times each, while the peasant was depicted on only one stamp. Grant argues that this ranking “would certainly have been in keeping with Lenin’s conception of the state as a dictatorship of the proletariat, that is, the proletariat relying on armed force and guiding the peasantry towards socialism.”¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Grant, “The Socialist Construction of Philately,” 484.

¹¹⁶ Bukharov, *Marki-svideteli istorii*, 12; cited in Grant, “The Socialist Construction of Philately,” 485.

¹¹⁷ The plaster casts that Shadr prepared in 1922 of *The Red Army Soldier*, *The Worker*, *The Sower*, and *The Peasant* were displayed at the Museum of the Revolution of the USSR; in 1951, the same portraits were recast in bronze and subsequently displayed at the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow. The true-to-life images were intended for reproduction on stamps, banknotes, and bonds. They follow his tendency toward symbolic generalization in portraiture, which is also displayed in works such as *The Mother* (1922, Tretyakov Gallery).

¹¹⁸ Grant, “The Socialist Construction of Philately,” 485. In his article (pages 485–486), Grant further argues that the three groups were not equal partners in the new state. Thus, the designs for the stamp featuring the worker was produced first.

Although he is not recognized among the preeminent Soviet stamp designers, it is not surprising that Shadr participated in preparing postal designs for the R.S.F.S.R. While working for the Political Education Committee (Politiko-Prosветitelnyi Komitet/Politprosvet) of the Fifth Red Army, he helped carry out Lenin's plan of monumental propaganda, creating statues of Karl Marx, Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht, and other figures important to the international socialist movement. Another work, *The Cobblestone-Weapon of the Proletariat*, has become symbolic of the rising revolutionary force of the popular masses: the sculpture portrays a young worker ripping a cobblestone from the pavement.¹¹⁹

Sparing the details, the remaining months of 1922 and 1923 were characterized by successive printings of additional rubles by the government and subsequent increases in postal rates and overprintings of stamps. Yet despite the constant changes in postal rates, postal operations should have become relatively simple. First, by this time the arms series had all but disappeared and therefore the postal clerks had only new issues to sell. Second, most of the 1921 issues had either been exhausted or were of such a low value that they were rendered useless. Third, for the first time since 1917, the post office had, or should have had, a stock of stamps with a wide variety of face values. In theory, then, after May 1922 it should have been possible to use only one or two stamps to pay any postal rate.

However, a number of factors continued to complicate postal communications. One major difficulty was supplying outlying provincial post offices with sufficient quantities of stamps. A related problem was that local postal officials still did not receive news of postal increases in a timely manner. The period of civil war had made it difficult to introduce new postal regulations

¹¹⁹ Shadr gained in reputation after completing important patriotic works that included the granite bas-relief of the emblem of the U.S.S.R. that was situated inside the Lenin Mausoleum and the first monument to Lenin, which was located at the Zemo-Avchaly Hydroelectric Power Plant in the Georgian S.S.R. and is considered to be one of the best Soviet monuments. In the 1920s, Shadr worked for Goznak. One of the first designs for monetary notes in the Soviet Union was based on his drawings. His works were included in the major exhibition, held in Moscow in 1927, that marked the tenth anniversary of the October Revolution. He was posthumously awarded the Stalin Prize in 1952.

simultaneously throughout the R.S.F.S.R. The central postal administration took this circumstance into consideration. For example, the circular introducing the postal rates of 1 November 1919 specified that this date referred only to Moscow and Petrograd, while in the provinces the new rates were to be introduced on 5 November. For the next postal rates (March 1920), the time span between the introduction of rates in the cities and regional centers was increased to ten days. For the more isolated post offices, the date for the introduction of the new rates was to be determined by the provincial postal administrations.¹²⁰ As a result of these factors, correspondence from more remote areas of the R.S.F.S.R. generally carried the wrong postage throughout the period.

A third problem was that continuing inflation constantly required adjustments in postal rates. Domestic rates were increased on 20 May, 10 June, 5 July, and 20 August 1923; international rates, however, remained constant during these months, but increased four times between 20 August and 15 October 1923.

Several final stamp issues were prepared for the R.S.F.S.R. The authorities prepared a set of stamps with values of 1 MR, 2 MR, 5 MR, and 7 MR, to commemorate the First All-Russian Agricultural Fair in Moscow (*Pervaia vserossiiskaia sel'skokhoziaistvennaia i kystarnopromyshlennaia vystavka*), which opened on 19 August 1923. However, even though this set did have a needed 7 MR value, it was of such limited issue that it was relatively useless. Most of the stamps were used by philatelists in the large urban communities. Similarly, on 15 August Narkompochtel released a 20-MR stamp to complete the set issued in May 1923. Although the higher value relieved some of the need for many stamps on an envelope, within two weeks of issuance even its face value was too low to meet normal needs. Finally, during the summer of 1923, the government announced its intention to release a set of four airmail stamps.

¹²⁰ The regulations are cited by Epstein, "Some Puzzles in the Inland Postal Rates of Russia," 17.

Unfortunately, the series (1, 3, 5, and 10 MR) did not reach postal outlets until December, when regular airmail service had been suspended. Therefore, the stamps were placed on sale through the Philatelic Agency (Filatelisticheskoe agentstvo) for collectors. When airmail service resumed, these stamps were of such low face value that they were not released but rather returned to the printing office.

The rapid collapse of the MR forced the postal authorities to make an important decision. In December 1923, all previously issued stamps were invalidated so that postmasters could easily determine what was legal and current as postage and what was not. Although some confusion did continue regarding currency, the problems at Narkompochtel ended and were not repeated during the existence of the Soviet Union. After seven years of confusion and mismanagement, caused in part by a failure to understand the dynamics of inflation, the postal authorities reestablished firm control over their department. And the lessons were well learned. Despite the effects of war between 1941 and 1945, the government's control over the economy was so strong that there was no rise in postal rates in the nine years between 6 February 1939 and 15 September 1948.

b. Charity Issues

Recognizing both the hardships that the population had suffered in the years following the revolution — indeed, some as a result of the revolution— as well as the revenue potential of stamps, several interesting charity issues were created to raise money for famine relief, child welfare, and similar causes between 1922 and 1930.¹²¹ As with the standard definitives, the designs used on these stamps reflected the new Soviet iconography. They are also important

¹²¹ After the 1929–30 issue, charity stamps were not produced again until 1976, in preparation for the Moscow Olympics.

because they highlight the initiatives taken by private individuals in terms of stamp production while also documenting an additional purpose for postage stamps.

The first charity set appeared in December 1921. Two designs were created with a value of 250 rubles, with an additional 2000 rubles given to the Volga famine relief program.¹²² One stamp design, printed in blue (66,000 copies), showed a field orderly tending to a young peasant; the second design, printed in either green (190,000 copies), brown (154,000 copies), or red (437,000 copies), depicted the Volga River with refugees and relief ships along its banks. Initially, this issue was not ordered by the government but was conceptualized and produced by Goznak workers. After some discussion, the authorities decided to legalize the issue, which would continue to be printed in the employees' spare time.

In February 1922, the government initiated a second Volga famine relief issue. The design overprinted 70-kopeck chain-cutter stamps with the slogan "R.S.F.S.R. / For the Hungry" (R.S.F.S.R. / Golodaiushchim) and the surcharge 100 ruble + 100 ruble in black (250,000 copies), red (250,000 copies), and blue (1,500,000 copies); the 35-kopeck stamps of the same issue were overprinted with the same slogan and a 250 ruble + 250 ruble value in orange (250,000 copies), red (250,000 copies), and black (7,298,900 copies). The almost eight million 250-ruble stamps would have been particularly useful had they been released in December 1921 or January 1922. However, by February they were impractical: a minimum of twelve stamps was then needed to pay the postage on an standard postal card.

Another interesting famine-relief issue appeared in April 1922. Four stamps were designed by A. L. Manevich, a philatelist living in Rostov-on-Don, and released by the office of the Commissar of Finance, Southeast Region. The stamps, mandated for postage, were

¹²² In order to save paper, these stamps were printed in the margins of sheets of the 1921 definitive series, on top of unused stamps, and on cigarette paper. Bergard, "1921 R.S.F.S.R. Definitives," 46.

distributed to post offices in Rostov, Novocherkask, Nakhichvan, and a few other locations.¹²³

The allegorical designs featured images of a starving peasant family; a peasant sowing his fields; a worker and a peasant shaking hands under sheaves of wheat and a star; and the meeting of a peasant and worker across a hammer and sickle. However, when news of these stamps reached the Committee for Famine Relief (*Komitet pomoshch golodaiushchem/POMGOL*), the officials canceled their sales. On 2 May, 520 of the total 740 sheets of stamps were confiscated and sent to Moscow. Later, the government decided to allow the stamps to be sold as labels. People who purchased the issue would still have to pay full postage on their letters, but they would not have to wait in line at the post offices.¹²⁴

Then, on 19 August 1922, the first Day of Philately (*Den' Filatelii*) was launched at the Moscow Post Office. Imperial arms stamps were issued for one day with the overprint "R.S.F.S.R. / PHILATELY / FOR THE CHILDREN / 19 - 8 - 22" (*R.S.F.S.R. / Filateliia / Detiam*). The overprints were placed on the 1-kopeck (10,000 copies), 2-kopeck (9,100 copies), 3-kopeck (25,000 copies), 5-kopeck (23,000 copies), and 10-kopeck (20,000 copies) denominations, which was curious given the contemporary rate schedule: 1 kopeck, overprinted "1 ruble + 4 ruble," did not correspond to any rate; 2 kopecks, "2 ruble + 8 ruble," the postcard rate; 3 kopecks, "3 ruble + 12 ruble," the local letter rate; 5 kopecks, "5 ruble + 20 ruble," the intercity letter rate; and 10 kopecks, "10 ruble + 40 ruble," the registration fee. Although normally the number of stamps printed for intercity mail exceeded the number for the local letter rate, for this occasion it was argued that most of the people buying the stamps would be Muscovites who would send the letters with the special stamps to their own addresses in the

¹²³ Shneidman, "Russian Postal Administration," 28.

¹²⁴ Because these stamps paid no postage, they were not listed in the official Soviet stamp catalogue. Of the four values printed: 5,673 of the 1000-ruble design were sold from a total printing of 19,980; 2000-ruble stamps, 5,400 of 39,360; 4000-ruble stamps, 2,376 of 17,760; and 6000-ruble stamps, 3,744 of 20,720 total. Shneidman, "Russian Postal Administration," 45, n. 162.

city. The event itself was judged a great success with the proceeds from the tax, which amounted to 344,535 rubles, donated to a fund for homeless orphans.¹²⁵

In total, stamp sales between April and December 1922 generated 2.97 million rubles for famine relief.¹²⁶ Because approximately 97 percent of the stamps were sold abroad,¹²⁷ the importance of the official monopoly in exporting stamps is highlighted.

In another appeal to stamp collectors, the 1923 charity issue was placed on sale only at the Main Moscow Post Office and was valid for postage only on May Day 1923. Although inscribed "PHILATELY / FOR LABOR" (Filateliia / Trudiashchimsia), the extra value imposed on the stamps was to benefit a fund designated for "liquidating the consequences of famine." The number of stamps prepared was small: "1 r + 1 r" on 10 rubles, 25,000 copies; "2 r + 2 r" on 250 rubles, 25,000 copies; and "4 r + 4 r" on 5000 rubles, 25,000 copies.¹²⁸

Then, following a flood in Leningrad in November 1924, stamps from the first Volga relief series were overprinted either "S.S.S.R. / FOR THE SUFFERERS BY THE INUNDATION AT LENINGRAD" (C.C.C.P. / Postradavshemu / ot navodneniia / Leningrady) or "S.S.S.R. / FOR THE LENINGRAD PROLETARIAT / 23. IX. 1924" (C.C.C.P. / Leningradskomy / Proletariaty). For each of the four values (100 rubles, with the overprint "3 kop. + 10 kop."; 200 rubles, with "7 kop. + 20 kop."; 300 rubles, with "14 kop. + 30 kop."; and 1000 rubles, with "20 kop. + 50 kop."), one million stamps were prepared; 750,000 copies of the 500-ruble design, with "12

¹²⁵ F. Chuchin, "Otchet o' dne filatelii," *Sovetskii filatelist* 2 (1922), 14; cited in Grant, "The Socialist Construction of Philately," 480. See also White, *Annotated List*, 18–19.

¹²⁶ Grant, "The Socialist Construction of Philately," 480.

¹²⁷ The Central Committee reported that 310,287 of the 320,432 stamps were sold through the Soviet postal outlet in Mannheim, Germany. See F. Chuchin, "Balans oborotov," *Sovetskii filatelist*, 3–4 (1922), 23; cited in Grant, "The Socialist Construction of Philately," 480.

¹²⁸ Hilary Norwood, "Charity Issue—1923: 'Philately for the Workers' SG 315–9," *British Journal of Russian Philately* 60 (October 1983): 52; White, *Annotated List*, 19–20.

kop. + 40 kop.," were also printed. For both the 1923 issue mentioned above and this set, it is not known how many of these stamps were sold.

Three additional R.S.F.S.F. charity issues were released in 1926, 1927, and 1929–30. In 1926 and 1927, two kopecks from the sale of every 10- and 20-kopeck stamp — images of orphans (2 million copies) and Lenin as a child (7 million copies) — were donated to organizations for the care of poverty-stricken children. Similarly, 2 kopecks from the sale of 10-kopeck (700,000 copies) and 20-kopeck (400,000 copies) stamps in 1929–1930 — scenes of industrial and agricultural training respectively — were also given to child welfare.

c. Advertising Stamps

One of the results of NEP was that by 1923, 6,220 private companies were registered, accounting for 83 percent of retail sales. However, the theory behind NEP was that the private sector would eventually be defeated in economic competition with the state. Therefore, the government responded by launching a statewide campaign through the post office to advertise the goods and services provided by companies in the state sector of the economy. On 15 October 1923, Narkompohtel instructed its commercial agency Sviaz to begin printing advertising labels for state-owned companies.¹²⁹ To accommodate outlying factories, labels were also printed by Sviaz offices in Leningrad, Khar'kov, Kiev, Odessa, Samara, Simferopol, and Rostov-on-Don.

¹²⁹ This section is based on Michael Tereshko, "The Soviet Union's postal advertising labels," *Linn's Stamp News* (3 March 1997), 20. Ironically, a similar program was recently proposed for the U.S. Postal Service. In a 1995 article discussing privatization of the post office, Robert Posch commented: "It is elitism in the extreme to argue that the American Republic is better served with Dorothy and Toto on a stamp or Gary Cooper in *Beau Geste* (these were 1989 stamps) or Elvis Presley than Sears or American Express. . . . For a premium, every business/group in the United States should also be able to place its logo on the front of stamps." Robert Posch, "Perestroika at the Post Office?" *Direct Marketing* 57, no. 12 (1 April 1995): 54.

These labels did not replace postage stamps but were meant to be used in conjunction with regular postal issues; they were included in the price of the required postage stamp. The design of the labels included an appropriate illustration and text for each particular company. A blank space was reserved for a postage stamp, which was affixed to the label by a clerk in the post office. The gummed label with its affixed stamp was then attached to an envelope and mailed. (These advertising labels are not to be confused with the labels mentioned in chapter two that carried various public service and political announcements.)

Only fifty-four labels were issued by Sviiaz. Although small, this number is not surprising. Each company that wanted to be featured on an advertising label had to create its own design and then send the proofs along with payment to Sviiaz's central directorate in Moscow. The company would also indicate the quantity to be printed and designate which post offices were to receive its labels. The smallest quantity printed was 50,000, while the *Leningradskii Tabachnii Trest* (a Leningrad tobacco factory) ordered the largest issue, 800,000 copies. Among the printing variations were one label for the State Import-Export Trade Office (*Gosudarstvennaia Importno-Eksportnaia Torgovaia Kontora/Gostorg*) that was printed in French and two labels for *Elektrobank* (created in 1922 to finance electrification) that had their slogans in French and German.

The advertising stamp period ended on 28 July 1926 when *Narkompocht* ordered Sviiaz to cease printing labels with a space for postage stamps. Sviiaz retained the right to continue printing non-postal advertising labels (i.e., without the space for a stamp) if it received orders for such items.¹³⁰ In any case, the postal administration had ended its participation in the national advertising campaign, citing as its main reason the strengthened position of the state

¹³⁰ As late as 1938, an advertisement for the UFAR bluing factory in Lviv, featuring its "Litak" (airplane) brand of bluing, appeared on a stamp. The label is described in Alexander Malucky, "A Hitherto Unreported Ukrainian 1938 L'viv Cinderella Stamp," *Trident-Visnyk* (May-June 1993): 72.

sector of the economy. However, a more likely reason was that the postal advertising labels were interfering with the work of postal clerks.

* * *

Although it is not easy to connect the stamps of the R.S.F.S.R. to strategies of nation-building, they can be considered as artifacts of the period. As such, they reveal aspects of the state's economic development while also reflecting improvements in the communications network, such as the introduction of airmail services.

The postage stamps document the initial steps taken to include the symbols of the emerging Soviet Union in postal designs. The portraits of the workers, soldiers, and peasants that originally appeared at this time were repeatedly adopted on Soviet issues, especially prior to World War II. Bold political statements, similar to the "Workers of the World Unite" banner that was featured on the 1922 definitive, would also become key elements in several later commemorative series.

The charity and advertising designs also show that the government was willing to experiment with the subjects depicted on stamps, moving beyond the images traditionally represented. The government produced these types of stamps to fulfill purposes beyond the payment for postal services. While this practice may have been simply a modification of the concepts behind imperial charity and revenue stamps, the examples from the R.S.F.S.R. are more sophisticated. In the case of the charity stamps, the slogans blatantly declared the government's intent of providing for its citizens, in contrast to the imperial issues that were produced by private organizations and that usually depicted monuments of the empire. With the advertising stamps, the postal administration moved beyond simple declarations of a revenue

stamp's purpose (such as the savings bank and control stamps) by connecting the stamps to a specific economic program of the government.

7. The Symbolism of Soviet Stamps

The Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics came into being in December 1922 based on the unification of four so-called union republics: Russia (the largest), Ukraine (treaty signed on 28 December 1920), Belorussia (16 January 1920), and the Transcaucasian republic, comprising Azerbaijan (30 September 1920 and 24 March 1922), Armenia (20 December 1920 and 20 September 1921), and Georgia (7 May 1920 and 21 May 1921). Although officially described as voluntary, the consolidation of these regions under the centralized government of the Soviet Union was actually a result Red Army victories over the various independence movements that had flourished between 1918 and 1921. For example, Ukraine had been subject to ten different regimes prior to the creation of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. Given this background, it was especially important that the Soviet rulers gain the support of the diverse populations and overcome the potential for a re-emergence of regional dissension.

The images that were featured on the six thousand stamp designs of the Soviet Union are usually referred to as ephemera, but, according to James Leith, this "underrates their importance."¹³¹ Because they were produced in tens, frequently hundreds, of thousands of copies, these images reached many people who might not have been reached by other printed media. After all, because the postal network would be expanded even further by the rulers of

¹³¹ James Leith, "Ephemera: Civic Education Through Images," in *Revolution in Print: The Press in France, 1775–1800*, edited by Robert Darnton and Daniel Roche (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 270. Leith is making his point related to the French Revolution. I have modified his argument to fit the case of the Soviet Union.

The listing in Scott Catalogue numbers 6,055 stamps, including all variations. The Michel Catalogue lists 6,256 Soviet stamps. As of yet, there is no comprehensive Soviet catalogue for the 1922–1991 period. In the available Soviet compendium, the final issue that is listed (December 1980) is assigned number 5,145; the same stamp in Scott is number 4,895 and number 5,026 in Michel.

the Soviet Union, every citizen would theoretically be eligible to send and receive mail. (Whether or not they chose to use the system is another issue.) Because of economic considerations and the state's expansiveness, it would be more practical to use the mail than to attempt more personal means of communications. Thus, the widespread circulation of the stamps was virtually guaranteed.

Again, it is important to note that other contemporary governments similarly linked their political, economic, and social goals to themes on their postage stamps. Perhaps the best comparative examples are Germany and Italy. Germany's nationalist-socialist government produced stamps to support its leadership's policies, commemorate party rallies, advertise industrial achievements, and celebrate Adolf Hitler's birthday. The Italian issues emphasized the glorious achievements of the fascist regime such as reclaimed marshes, an improved navy, and the annexation of Fiume. Moreover, the practice of commemorating national achievements on postage stamps continues until today around the world.

Following the anarchy that ruled the post office in the post-revolutionary years in terms of stamp denomination, the designs that were issued beginning in the mid-1920s were intended to serve a postal function and therefore their face values matched specific postal rates.¹³² Admittedly, the Soviet Union's stamp output increased dramatically beginning in the 1930s:¹³³ between November 1918 and August 1921, 102 issues were prepared; from August 1921 to 1930, 364 issues; 1931 to 1940, 399 issues; 1941 to 1950, 823 issues; 1951 to 1960, 917 issues; 1961 to 1970, 1,455 issues; 1971 to 1980, 1,179 issues; and from 1981 until the end of 1991,

¹³² Ivo Steyn, "Every Stamp In Its Place," *Rossica Journal* 123 (1994): 14.

¹³³ According to the calculations of one philatelist, the Soviet Union issued 336 commemorative and 44 definitive stamps between 1929 and 1941. Over the same period, the United States produced 130 commemoratives and 64 definitives. Although the number of Soviet emissions does not necessarily seem inflated when compared to most countries today, the output was massive for the time. The pattern and levels of issuance only increased in scope over the next fifty years and was dutifully imitated by other socialist states. See Hans Heilbronner, "Stamps To Shape and To Hide History," *American Philatelist* (April 1997): 346.

1,158 issues.¹³⁴ Yet, the face values of the stamps could usually be equated with a category of mail. Many of the sets produced during the 1950s and 1960s either consisted solely of stamps of 40 kopecks (later 4 kopecks) and 1 ruble to cover respectively the domestic registration and letter rates or these two values were printed in the largest quantities.

At the same time, attention was given to which design would appear on which stamp, in order to achieve the widest possible circulation. For example, the 7-kopeck stamp in the 1925 series, which served as franking for an standard domestic letter, featured a picture of the Lenin Mausoleum. Stamps serving as postage on international mail usually carried scenes of industrial achievement, the international socialist movement including the Warsaw Pact and other foreign allies, or such themes as international peace. In the early 1930s, the scenes on the stamps intended for international mail included the Lenin stamps from the set honoring the fifteenth anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution, a portrait of Maxim Gorky, the monument to the twenty-six Baku commissars,¹³⁵ and, on the twentieth anniversary of the outbreak of World War I, an “anti-war” set showing the fraternization of soldiers at the front.

With an eye toward profits and stamp collectors, attention was also given to postmarks. More specifically, because many of the stamps issued in the 1920s and 1930s were prepared to commemorate a special event, a special postal cancel was also generated.¹³⁶ This process began

¹³⁴ These calculations are based on my own examination of the stamps listed in the *Katalog pochtovykh marok SSSR 1918–1980*, and for the period after 1980, *Scott's Standard Postage Stamp Catalog*.

¹³⁵ On 20 September 1918, twenty-six revolutionaries of Transcaucasia, many of whom were leading members in local Bolshevik organizations, were executed at the 207th *verst* of the Transcaspian Railroad.

¹³⁶ Steyn, “Every Stamp In Its Place,” 15–16. In its latter decades, the policy adopted in the Soviet Union was very much like that of other countries: private collectors could submit designs for special cancellations or cachets for possible consideration. For details, see Russell E. Ott, *Postal History of Soviet Antarctic Activities 1955–1977*. American Society of Polar Philatelists Handbook (El Paso, TX: American Society of Polar Philatelists, 1980), 9.

at the Sixth International Esperanto Congress, which was held in Leningrad in 1926.¹³⁷ The trend increased so that in the years following World War II, it is difficult to find a postal cover that does not have a special cancellation. However, many of these covers never went through the actual postal system but were instead canceled to order — postal cancellations were printed on full sheets of stamps or covers as they were being produced — for the sake of collectors. Thus, many stamps that were offered to collectors as “used” carried different postmarks than those used at any post office in the Soviet Union.¹³⁸

Two other important trends in the production of postage stamps in the Soviet Union need to be noted. The first relates to the nationalities question. Although the most important political messages were positively formulated — i.e., for peace, for the working class, for socialism, for the Soviet Union — large groups of the population interpreted the concepts in a negative way. Indeed, as the “political loudspeaker ” grew stronger, ethnic minorities increasingly objected to the restrictions against national independence, the organization of non-party associations, and the freedoms of speech and movement. According to one scholar, this reaction ensued because the messages were interpreted not directly according to the wording and symbolic content but rather because of what had happened in society in the name of the slogans and symbols. The propaganda was colored by the train of events, and consequently the events were in turn affected by the propaganda. Indeed, “everything was interconnected in a way

¹³⁷ In conjunction with the congress, a trilingual Russian–Esperanto–telegraphic Morse code design was used for a series of 7-kopeck and 14-kopeck stamps; 750,000 sets of stamps featuring the Liberty Monument in Moscow were produced. Another bilingual Russian–Esperanto stamp was also released in 1927, honoring Dr. Ludwig L. Zamenhof (1859–1917) on the fortieth anniversary of the creation of Esperanto.

¹³⁸ Richard McP. Cabeen, *Standard Handbook of Stamp Collecting*, rev. ed. (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, Publishers, 1979), 29. The collecting of postmarks is another field of philately.

which is only possible in a society where the political power claims to represent *all* the interests of the citizens.”¹³⁹

Several concessions were made to the national minorities of the Soviet Union. First, attempts were made to make the postal system more accessible to the native populations in both the autonomous and the union republics. For example, all announcements concerning rates and regulations at post and telegraph offices throughout the Soviet Union were printed both in Russian and the language of the given oblast’ or republic. As an additional measure, post and telegraph offices accepted applications and complaints in the regional languages and, when necessary, the district postal administration was required to answer in the same language as the original document. Finally, preference in filling job openings was given to candidates from the regional population who had sufficient training and who were fluent both in the language of the republic and Russian.¹⁴⁰

The second result of the nationalities question was the appearance of bilingual postal markings, particularly during the interwar period. During the imperial period, bilingual postmarks were used in Finland and the Baltic provinces; Russian, however, did prevail in the empire. Then, when the civil war allowed peripheral areas to become independent, the use of languages and alphabets other than Russian and Cyrillic increased.

The most well-known non-Russian postmarks are those that combined Cyrillic and the Georgian alphabets. A similar process occurred in the Ukrainian S.S.R., where bilingual Russian-Ukrainian cancels were introduced. In practice, the name of the location from which a piece of mail was sent was printed in both Russian and its Ukrainian equivalent (for example,

¹³⁹ Aman, “Symbols and Rituals in the People’s Democracies,” 57; emphasis in the original.

¹⁴⁰ These three policies were reported in *Zhizn’ i tekhnika sviazi* 6 (June 1924): 163; translated by David Skipton, “Notes from ‘Khronika’ in ‘Zhizn’ i tekhnika sviazi,’” *Rossica Journal* 108/109 (1986): 107.

Khar'kov and Kharkiv, L'vov and Lviv). A third variation of this policy occurred in the Autonomous Karelian S.S.R. Here, bilingual Russian–Finnish postmarks were used but with an important concession to the local population: the town names were not merely transcribed from Russian but were actually the Finnish names.¹⁴¹

Put into the larger perspective, these bilingual postmarks were a meaningful step toward gaining support for the centralized Soviet government. Throughout the existence of the Soviet Union, numerous examples exist of nationalist uprisings being suppressed. However, the recognition of these other languages and their appearance on mail circulating in the Soviet Union proves a level of tolerance by the central government. Yet, in the final analysis, it was easy for the authorities to be generous in the matter of postmarks as long as more important concessions — including independence for the non-Russian republics — could be firmly withheld.

The second trend among Soviet postage stamps relates to the interpretation and presentation of the state's history. More specifically, just as certain episodes and personalities from history were emphasized or rejected by the different leaders, so too was this selection process reflected on postage stamps. One example involves a painting by Vladimir Aleksandrovich Serov (1910–1968) that was completed in 1947. The scene, titled “V. I. Lenin Proclaiming Soviet Power,” presents Lenin's address to workers at the second meeting of the soviets in October 1917. The faces of Stalin and the politicians Yakov Mikhailovich Sverdlov (1885–1919) and Feliks Edmundovich Dzerzhinsky (1877–1926) can be discerned behind Lenin. After Serov was

¹⁴¹ Ivo Steyn “The Nationalities Question and How it Manifests Itself in Postmarks,” *Rossica Journal* 113/114 (1990): 84–87.

In a related development, telegram forms printed in the languages of the non-Russian republics were gradually introduced in the last years of the Soviet Union. Among the earliest of the non-Russian forms were the 75 million copies that were printed for the Ministry of Communications of the Ukrainian S.S.R. by the Municipal Printing House in 1987 (i.e., four years before the proclamation of Ukrainian independence). The forms retained the seal of the Soviet Union; the only difference in design was the use of the Ukrainian language. For details, see Andriy Avramenko and Alexander Malychy, “Ukrainskomovni blanki dlia telegram,” *Ukrainian Philatelist* 41, no. 1/2 (65/66) (1993): 76–80.

awarded the Stalin Prize for the work in 1948, stamp artists simply reproduced the original picture for one stamp in a 1954 series that commemorated the thirtieth anniversary of Lenin's death.

However, following the denunciation of Stalin in 1956, Serov painted a variant of the scene in 1962. When it next appeared on a stamp, to mark the seventieth anniversary of the October Revolution, the reconfiguration of the scene had removed Stalin, Sverdlov, and Dzerzhinsky from the picture. Among the other more minor differences are: in the original painting Lenin's left hand is forward, clutching some papers while in the later work it is extended back, without the documents; the flag bearer on the right of the scene is visible in the original, but hidden behind an upraised arm in the later version; and in the 1948 painting a sailor is prominent in the center foreground, but in the 1962 work, no figures are wearing military uniforms (figure 9).¹⁴²

This type of censoring or "retouching" of Soviet history is also reflected in the stamp catalogs that were produced by the Soviet Philatelic Association (*Sovetskaia Filatelisticheskaia Assotsiatsiia/SFA*). For example, in comparison to western catalogs, the 1955 Soviet catalog listed only nineteen of the twenty-one stamps that comprised the 1933 ethnographic series. By 1958, the 7-kopeck stamp that featured the Chechens was being listed. The 3-kopeck stamp, with Crimean Tatars, continued to be excluded until the publication of the 1970 listing, and even then the notation is simply "Tatars."¹⁴³ The 1955 catalog also did not include two stamps from 1943 that marked the Teheran Conference. The most probable reason for this deletion was that the stamps depicted the American and British flags alongside the Soviet flag. Similarly, the 1955 catalog omitted two 1944 stamps that commemorated the Day of the United Nations

¹⁴² Robert F. Minkus, "Retouching History," *Rossica Journal* 113/114 (1990): 83.

¹⁴³ For further information on the Crimean stamp, see Steyn, "The Crimea in Philately," 35.



- a. Lenin addressing the Second Congress of Soviets
Katalog pochtovykh marok SSSR, tom 1, 3551.



- b. Lenin proclaims the power of the Soviets
Michel Catalog, 5752.

Figure 9: "Retouching" Soviet History

against Germany, again, most likely because the British, American, and Soviet flags appeared together.¹⁴⁴

An analysis of specific Soviet symbols and scenes on postage stamps also gives insights into the dynamics of the relationship between the Soviet Union and the international community. Especially in Eastern Europe, the Soviet symbolic system was aggressively imported and then actively used as a means of forging a bond among the people's democracies.¹⁴⁵ Thus, not only was the Soviet Union trying to unite its own population behind specific political, economic, and social programs but this goal was also extended to include members of the Warsaw Pact. Except in Poland and Czechoslovakia, new coats of arms were introduced following the example of the Soviet Union. All featured, in some way, ears of grain formed into a wreath with a ribbon in the national colors and various symbols for technology and industrialization: a hammer, a pair of compasses, a drilling tower, or a cogwheel.¹⁴⁶ For Romania (1948), a rising sun was added to the state emblem, as was the five-pointed star for Hungary (1949) and Bulgaria (1946). Indeed, it is only the German Democratic Republic's coat of arms that did not include a symbol of the bright future.

In more general terms, international cooperation with various countries around the world were reflected on a great variety of Soviet stamps. From designs marking joint space flights to those honoring international labor figures, it is possible to follow the diplomatic endeavors of the Soviet leaders. The Soviet postal administration paid honor to many individuals from the international community by featuring them on stamps. Yet, while members of various

¹⁴⁴ Another interesting variation in the 1970 catalog concerns the 1960 stamp that honors Lenin's ninetieth birthday. In the catalog, the stamp is titled "V. I. Lenin among Children around the New Year's Tree." However, during Lenin's time there were "Christmas trees" and it was not until Stalin's regime that "New Year's trees" appeared. R. Polchaninov, "The Rehabilitation of Stamps in the USSR," *Rossica Journal* 115 (1990): 65-66.

¹⁴⁵ Blomqvist, introduction, page 17.

¹⁴⁶ Aman, "Symbols and Rituals in the People's Democracies," 45.

communist parties and respected politicians — for example, Sweden's Olaf Palme and India's Indira Gandhi — appeared most often, cultural figures, scientists, and other personalities from a variety of backgrounds, including the young American student, Samantha Smith, were also featured.

Some final comments concern the stamp artists. With a few notable exceptions, all of the Soviet Union's stamps were created by employees of the State Bank Note Factory (Goznak). Even though thousands of designs were released, there were relatively few graphic artists involved with ongoing production. In examining the available literature, only a handful of names repeatedly surface, while a great number of stamps were produced simply by the "Goznak artists' collective"; the work of many other artists — photographers, painters, sculptures — were adapted for single stamp designs.

One interesting exception to this standard involves the 1927 series commemorating the tenth anniversary of the October Revolution. In January 1926, the Narkompochtel announced a contest for stamp designs to commemorate this event. Contestants were to submit between three and twenty-one designs that did not duplicate themselves, showing the artist's impressions of the meaning of the significance of the celebration. Other than a few basic guidelines — the designs had to incorporate the word "POCHTA" and a numeral for the stamp's value — any conceptualization would be tolerated. The first prize was set at one thousand rubles, with lesser amounts for the other prizes.¹⁴⁷

The 101 participants in the contest produced 450 designs. However, the jury, which consisted of representatives of the postal administration, philatelic organizations, and various art groups felt that the submissions poorly represented the idea of the revolution and that the

¹⁴⁷ *Sovetskii filatelist* 1 (1926); cited in George V. Shalimoff, " 'The Best of the Worst': The 1927 Issue Commemorating the 10th Anniversary of the October Revolution," *Rossica Journal* 108/109 (1986): 18.

designs would be difficult to adopt to mass reproduction. But given that the contest rules had publicly indicated that prizes would be awarded, the jury was left to choose the winning concepts based on the principle of “the best of the worst.”¹⁴⁸

Ten prizes, for fifteen stamp designs, were awarded to nine participants. Although only two of the winning entries were ultimately used on commemorative stamps, it is interesting to review the designs. The majority incorporated the symbols and symbolic themes that the Bolsheviks introduced following the 1917 revolution. To some extent, these were necessary elements for the stamps, yet their prominence also testifies that the population was aware of the new symbolic program and had recognized the role it would play in Soviet society.

The designs for the winning entries were:

First Prize: 1. a map of Europe and Asia with “C.C.C.P.” in bright red letters; this design was used for the 14-kopeck stamp (international letter rate, *Katalog pochtovykh marok*, 300) of the

series. 2. the outstretched arms of workers against a red background and a steamship at sea.

Second Prize: 1. a Red Army soldier with a rifle against the background of the Kremlin towers;

2. profiles of a worker, soldier, and peasant along with youths holding a banner with the dates “1917–1927.”

Third Prize: 1. an arch with the dates “1917–1927” against a background of factories and

industrial installations; 2. a lighthouse with the letters “C.C.C.P.” and the word “POCHTA” in six different languages.

Fourth Prize: 1. a scene combining a forest, factory, and radio station; 2. a peasant and a worker holding bricks, with the sun in the background.

Fifth Prize: 1. a lighthouse with rays of light that form the letters “C.C.C.P.”; 2. a wall with the letters “C.C.C.P.” and a crane holding a beam with the words “ten years.”

¹⁴⁸ *Sovetskii filatelist* 11 (1926); cited in Shalimoff, “The Best of the Worst,” 18.

Six Prize: 1. a metaphor of the earth breaking its chains, with the broken emblem of the double-headed eagle.

Seventh Prize: 1. a worker pointing to the anniversary dates at the bottom of an obelisk of freedom, which is decorated with a wreath of grain and a hammer and sickle.

Eighth Prize: 1. three faces with Asiatic features against the background of the Moscow Kremlin; this entry was chosen for the 28-kopeck value (international registered letter rate, *Katalog pochtovykh marok*, 302) of the series.

Ninth Prize: 1. a worker breaking a chain that fetters him to the soil, with a banner that proclaims "all power to the soviets."

Tenth Prize: 1. a sheaf of grain with an anvil, and a hammer and sickle.

Because Narkompochtel was dissatisfied with the results of the contest, the Association of Artists of Revolutionary Russia (*Assotsiatsiia khudozhnikov revoliutsionnoi rossii/AKhRR*) sponsored a second contest. In the hopes of acquiring designs that would easily be adopted to postage stamps, the contest was limited to experienced graphic artists and members of the artists' association. If the submissions were deemed better than those of the first contest, prizes totaling three thousand rubles would be awarded. The jury for this second competition consisted of two representatives from the post office and two from the artists' association, with Fedor Grigor'evich Chuchin of the Organization of the Authorized Representative for Philately and Voucher Collecting (*Organizatsiia upolnomochennogo po filatelii i bonam/OUFB*) serving as the committee chair.

Nineteen participants submitted fifty-five new designs, which the jury found to be satisfactory. Three prizes were awarded and, as in the first competition, the entries reflected the iconography of the Soviet state:

First Prize: 1. three allegorical impressions of the 1917 revolution in the form of a cargo truck loaded with revolutionaries; one of the scenes was modified and used for the 5-kopeck (local letter, *Katalog pochtovykh marok*, 297) stamp.

Second Prize: 1. a sailor and a worker who is loading a rifle; 2. peasant representatives of five nationalities carrying a banner that features the letters "C.C.C.P."; these two designs were used for the 8-kopeck (domestic letter, *Katalog pochtovykh marok*, 299) and 18-kopeck (domestic registered letter, *Katalog pochtovykh marok*, 301) values.

Third Prize: 1. a public meeting with Lenin and a row of tractors.

To complete the proposed stamp series (domestic and international postcard rates), the jury recommended that AKhRR prepare two additional designs. The first showed a scene of the revolution on a background of the five-pointed star (*Katalog pochtovykh marok*, 296). The second design depicted a worker with a banner containing the anniversary dates and Lenin's mausoleum (*Katalog pochtovykh marok*, 298).¹⁴⁹

Although a detailed analysis of the topics portrayed on the Soviet Union's postage stamps follows in appendix vii, a few general observations may be made. To help place the following comments into perspective, consider, for example, the definitive set of 1961.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ In 1926, a comprehensive statistical analysis was made of the principal themes of designs submitted for both contests. The purpose was to determine what specific things represented the 1917 revolution in the minds of the artists. The results of the first contest showed nearly 75 percent of the themes involved images of the revolution; 25 were inanimate symbols of the revolution; 22 percent represented workers; 10 percent showed representations of Lenin; and less than 10 percent each showed workers and peasants, agriculture, the international world, and the five-pointed star. Essentially the same percentages emerged from the submissions for the second contest. *Sovetskii filatelist* 11 (1926); cited in Shalimoff, "The Best of the Worst," 22.

¹⁵⁰ Based on information in the January 1969, May 1969, October 1970, and February 1971 issues of *Filateliia SSSR*; cited in George V. Shalimoff, "The 1961-66 Soviet Definitives," *Rossica Journal* 92 (1977): 9. In January 1961, a revaluation of the Soviet Union's currency and the consequent change in postal rates prompted the need for a new standard issue of postage stamps. These stamps were used until October 1966.

Twelve stamps were designed by Vasilii Vasil'evich Zavialov (1906–1972)¹⁵¹ to depict developments in industry, agriculture, achievements in science and technology, and the history and culture of the Soviet state. For each of the values, the central design was framed by the orbit of the first Soviet satellite. The words “ПОЧТА СССР” run across the top of the stamps, with the value and year indicated in a banner at the bottom. The designs are: 1 kopeck, a worker at a wheel holding a banner with the text “peace will defeat war”; 2 kopecks, a combine in a field; 3 kopecks, a spaceship and the text “glory to labor and science”; 4 kopecks, the emblem and flag of the U.S.S.R.; 6 kopecks, the Kremlin; 10 kopecks, the male worker and female farm worker monument; 12 kopecks, the monument to Minin and Pozharski in Moscow's Red Square; 16 kopecks, a hydroelectric dam and transmission lines; 20 kopecks, Lenin in Moscow, 2–5 March 1919; 30 kopecks, Lenin in 1918, from a 1948 drawing; 50 kopecks, Lenin in 1920, from a 1957 drawing; and 1 ruble: the Congress Palace and Spasskii Tower with six lines of text in the upper left corner reading “peace, labor, freedom, equality, brotherhood, happiness” (*Pochtovie marki SSSR*, 2195–2206).

These subjects clearly show the preference for images derived from the doctrines of social realism. This characterization can be more widely applied to the definitive stamps that were produced between 1921 and the early 1980s. The ninety-nine stamps of these twelve series — these are described in appendix viii — were circulated in massive quantities, and their designs were also preprinted on pieces of contemporary Soviet postal stationery. We can easily relate the images on these stamps to the basic Soviet symbols that were discussed in the introduction to this chapter: 1) the power of the working class, seventeen (thirteen males and four females);

¹⁵¹ Zavialov was a prominent member of the Association of Artists of Revolutionary Russia from 1926 to 1932. He was also a major pioneer and exponent of the design of Soviet stamps, producing more than seven hundred stamps. His designs were represented at the First Russian Art Exhibition in Berlin in 1932, while examples of the stamps he produced were displayed at all major international philatelic exhibitions beginning in 1926.

peasants, ten (four males and six females); plus two stamps featuring the monument to workers and collective farm worker; 2) arms of the Soviet Union, eleven; to these I have added eight scenes of the Kremlin, three scenes of ministries in Moscow, three orders of the Soviet Union, and eleven stamps showing only symbols of either agriculture or industry; 3) Lenin, eight portraits (including one with Karl Marx), plus three with some concept named for Lenin and two stamps with the slogan "Workers of the World Unite!"; 4) the military: five portraits of soldiers (one with a red star) plus three aviators, one marine, one military order, one devoted to the Soviet Air Force, three showing space exploration, and four with various types of airplanes; and 5) peace, three.

A few topical categories of stamps produced in the Soviet Union should also be considered.

a. Soviet State Symbols

As was discussed in the previous chapter, the establishment of the Soviet state was accompanied by the creation of a completely new iconography. The basic symbols of the hammer and sickle as well as the red star appeared regularly on definitive stamps. They were also commonly featured on stamps commemorating in some way the 1917 revolution and on the New Year's stamps that were produced especially in the 1980s. Without question, the Soviet coat of arms was frequently applied to designs, on the majority of stamps related to political events and, in variations, on stamps related to the union republics and various Soviet organizations.

Itself a symbol of Soviet political power, the Kremlin and its towers, especially the Spasski Tower, were featured on eighty-seven stamps. As with the more standard state symbols,

the structure appeared most frequently on definitive stamps and on New Year's stamps, along with a usually prominent red star and sometimes with a broader view of Red Square.

b. Generic Portraits

Beginning with the first series of post-revolutionary stamps that was used in the R.S.F.S.R., portraits of the Romanov tsars that had appeared on imperial Russian stamps were replaced by those elements of society that were working to build the new order. In contrast, then, to Western Europe, many Soviet stamps, especially earlier ones, carried another form of national hero, namely generic portraits of miners, farmers, and industrial workers.

These images, however, did not remain those of the static peasant-soldier-worker that were originally used on stamps. The most dramatic changes involved the peasant. Between 1923 and 1926, the bust of a peasant was placed on ten stamps, compared to thirteen each for the worker and soldier. However, while appearing almost as frequently, the peasant stamps were smaller in size than stamps portraying the worker and soldier. Then, in August 1929, the Soviet Union produced a new definitive series that reflected their policies of collectivization and industrialization. Thereafter, the peasant was replaced by a collective farm worker, the new equal partner to the worker. At the same time, the female factory and collective-farm workers appeared next to their male counterparts in this series, marking the first appearance of women on Soviet stamps. According to Stalin, collective farms would bring about equality between rural women and rural men. Thus, as Grant has pointed out, the release of these stamps "visually proclaimed Stalin's message."¹⁵²

Stamps related to agricultural work also began to show a diversity of products in addition to the standard grain crops. Such designs were generally issued to honor various events

¹⁵² Grant, "The Socialist Construction of Philately," 485.

surrounding the non-Russian union republics. For example, horse breeders were depicted on a stamp in 1941 to commemorate the fifteenth anniversary of the Kirghiz S.S.R. A 1939 series produced for the Soviet Agricultural Fair featured Turkmen picking cotton and collective farm workers with sugar beets. Then, to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the formation of the Armenian S.S.R. (1950), one stamp showed farm workers gathering grapes. During the next year, to mark the same anniversary for the Georgian S.S.R., two similar issues showed a citrus harvest and workers picking tea leaves. In relation to the Russian S.F.S.R., farming scenes did offer some variety both in their product: from sheep, cattle (1949), and chickens (1956) to flax, vegetables (1954), and corn (1956), and in the stage of production: from plowing and planting to harvesting and cutting silage.

As the Soviet economic programs progressed, the portrait of the worker was similarly altered. The worker was portrayed on a definitive issue in March 1939 as a steel foundryman, then five months later, on another stamp as a coal miner. In the last regular series begun under Stalin's administration (May 1948 to July 1957), a scientist joined the ranks of the laborers, and was later followed by an engineer in 1958. Other stamps carried portraits of firemen (1984), letter carriers (1959), railway linemen (1961), a generic astronaut (1963), a printer (1964), nurses (1938), a blood donor (1965), and a governess (1950). Students appeared several times, but a voter, in 1950 to publicize elections to the Supreme Soviet (Verkhovnyi Sovet), and an intellectual, on the forty-first anniversary of the 1917 revolution, were each featured only one time.

As the third member of the alliance, it was the soldier's image that was, perhaps, the most prominent. Especially in the years surrounding World War II, the generic portrait was replaced by several that revealed the expansion of the Soviet armed forces. Indeed, various stamps carried first the figure of a cavalryman (1927), who was then replaced by an aviator (1927), a marine and a tankman (1948), a sailor (1948), infantrymen (1944), and even snipers

(1943). Eventually, just as the peasant-worker-soldier combination had been used on earlier Soviet stamps, the aviator-soldier-sailor grouping was seen on stamps related to military issues.

c. Women

According to Elizabeth Waters, “the Bolsheviks came to power in 1917 with the emancipation of women on their agenda.”¹⁵³ As Marxists, they believed that changes in the ownership of the means of production would transform Soviet society. Aleksandra Kollantai (1872–1952), a prominent Bolshevik and a longtime advocate of women’s rights, predicted a new relationship between men and women based on the equality of the sexes in economic and public life. Lenin himself condemned the drudgery of housework and looked to its future abolition. The Women’s Department (Zhenskii otdel/Zhenotdel) was set up in 1919 to further the cause of female emancipation; it was committed to improving women’s positions in labor and politics and to encouraging the establishment of canteens and crèches as eventual substitutes for individual households. Although these ambitions were abandoned with the introduction of the NEP, the Soviet government remained committed to the principle of equality for women.

While male images were exclusively used on coins, the female form made its first philatelic appearance in 1929 with an issue of four stamps. Both the 2- and 30-kopeck stamps bore the portrait of a *proletarka*, identifiable by her kerchief. The 30-kopeck stamp placed her against the background of factory chimneys. The other two designs, for the 4- and 50-kopeck stamps, featured a collective farm worker with her scarf tied urban style at the nape of her neck.

That of the more than three hundred stamps issued by 1929, none had included a woman in their design had begun to draw public comment. For example, the satirical magazine

¹⁵³ Elizabeth Waters, “The Female Form in Soviet Political Iconography, 1917–32,” in *Russia’s Women: Accommodation, Resistance, Transformation*, eds. Barbara Evans Clements, Barbara Alpern Engel, and Christine D. Worobec (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 231.

*Chudak*¹⁵⁴ published a humorous story of a young man who managed to jump to the head of the line of women queuing for stamps by arguing that their exclusively male images gave him such a right.¹⁵⁵

It was not until 1938 that the first stamp on the theme of motherhood was issued. As was mentioned in section 6b of this chapter, three charity stamps with children, one of them the young Lenin, were issued in aid of the state's homeless (*besprizornye*) youth in 1926 and 1927. In 1929, the first All-Union Pioneer meeting in Moscow was commemorated, and the following year a series of stamps portrayed homeless youths at work in industry and agriculture.

d. Scenes of an Industrial Society

Although rural scenes did appear on Soviet stamps with some regularity, the new industrial landscapes began to receive greater prominence to coincide with the state's industrial growth. These stamps carried images of the new industrial society as well as the spirit of progress and diligence for the new socialist world. Typically, these designs featured a densely built-up industrial complex consisting of chimneys, various factory buildings and cooling towers, railway lines, with, on several occasions, a crumbling church tower in the background. Numerous stamps were also devoted to the expansion of the underground subway system.

A related theme was that of exploration of new lands, both the arctic and antarctic regions. An announcement from Germany in 1931 that an airship dirigible would make an arctic trip was echoed in the Soviet Union. The government requested that the population donate

¹⁵⁴ The journal *Chudak* was published in Moscow beginning in 1928. In 1930, its operations were absorbed into *Krokodil*.

¹⁵⁵ D. B. Valeron, *Grafika i tematika sovetskikh pochtovykh marok* (Moscow, 1929), 3; cited in Waters, "The Female Form in Soviet Political Iconography," 239. Further, Valeron questioned why the first country in the world to give women equal rights with men should ignore women so completely on its stamps. Although pleased that this injustice had been finally redressed, he did not have any compliments on the artistic design of the stamps: the working woman was too static and the peasant woman too theatrical; cited in Waters, 239–240.

funds to finance construction of two dirigibles that would explore distant unknown regions. As pictorial reminders, a series of five stamps was commissioned. For instance, the 50-kopeck stamp illustrated an airship above a map of northernmost Russia, with lines traced to suggest polar journeys by the two proposed crafts.¹⁵⁶

A similar situation involved balloons. Following the ascents by the Swiss physicist August Piccard into the stratosphere in 1931 and 1932, the Soviet Union sent up a similar airship on 30 September 1933 and succeeded in breaking Piccard's record. The Soviet balloon reached the height of 19,000 meters (62,320 feet) and a stamp was released to commemorate the event.

Space themes appeared more frequently. Stamps carrying the images of individual astronauts along with the growing variety of spacecraft and distant landing sites appeared on an almost annual basis. Indeed, in a state where a "Day of the Cosmos" was celebrated, a stamp was released annually to glorify the country's achievements in space. In 1974, a dramatic stamp was issued to celebrate the communications satellites Mars 4 to Mars 7, a series of space stations operating on a relay system. Showing that international cooperation was also an important consideration, four stamps were issued in 1975 simultaneously by the Soviet Union and the United States to celebrate their first combined space effort, the Apollo-Soyuz link-up. Other designs marked joint space flights with a number of countries including Austria and Syria.

Finally, general developments in the communications and transportation fields were also noted on commemorative stamps. These issues ranged from those displaying the latest in modes of transportation (cars, trucks, airplanes, trains, boats) to the development of radio and television broadcasting and the growth and history of the postal system.

¹⁵⁶ Two interesting studies devoted to Soviet Antarctic exploration as depicted on the country's postage stamps are Zoltan Moré, *Sibir: cel mai tinar spargator de gheata atomic al U.R.S.S.* Biografia Navalor, Fascicola Nr. 9 (September 1982); and Russell E. Ott, *Postal History of Soviet Antarctic Activities*.

e. The Communist Party

The ruling Communist Party was represented on Soviet stamps in two ways. First, prominent members, both living and deceased, appeared on stamps. Foremost among the individuals so portrayed, of course, was Lenin himself. Approximately 11 percent of all Soviet issues after 1923 carried Lenin's image.¹⁵⁷ From his first appearance on a series of portrait mourning stamps produced in 1924, various representations of the first Bolshevik leader were ubiquitous throughout the history of the Soviet Union. Although it is almost impossible to categorize the ways in which Lenin was shown on stamps, some of the variations on the simple portrait and his roles include: as a child and youth; as the organizer of the Communist Party; as the founder of the first socialist state; as the organizer of the party press; and as a civic spirit sanctioning organizations and activities. One stamp even has Lenin sitting next to a Christmas tree.

By comparison, Stalin appeared on twenty-four stamps. The first depiction was in 1934 while the last two stamps featuring Stalin were produced in 1954, one to mark the first anniversary of his death and the other to commemorate the thirty-seventh anniversary of the October Revolution. With the exception of a full-face portrait that was used on a 1954 stamp, all the issues were associated with a larger theme, featuring Stalin merely in cameo. Eight carried the portraits of both Lenin and Stalin; nine were of military medals associated with Stalin's name; one showing a parade in Red Square and proclaiming "Glory to Stalin" was issued in 1947 to mark Labor Day; Stalin's image was included in a design of a 1950 stamp appealing to peace; and a souvenir sheet was issued in 1949 to honor Stalin's birthdate as were two stamps

¹⁵⁷ Grant, "The Socialist Construction of Philately," 486.

earlier in 1954. The 100th anniversary of Stalin's birth, in 1979, was philatelically recognized only in China and Albania.¹⁵⁸

Leonid Il'ich Brezhnev (1906–1982) made his philatelic debut in East Germany. He was shown with Erich Honecker on a stamp in 1972. He was featured in some way on ten Soviet stamps: five marked his visits to Washington, Paris, and Bonn in 1973; three marked visits to India and one to a visit to Cuba; the final stamp commemorated the adoption of a new constitution in 1977. Beginning in 1973 and throughout his tenure as general secretary, Soviet souvenir sheets also periodically carried quotations by Brezhnev. None of the other general secretaries appeared on Soviet stamps.¹⁵⁹

Party members who appeared on stamps during their own lifetimes were usually linked to the theme of state power. This reflected a worldwide trend in which “in-power elites [were] portrayed on postage stamps in various ways, but always in a way that makes them appear symbolic of the state.”¹⁶⁰ The set of stamps commemorating, in 1935, the sixtieth birthday of the communist statesman Mikhail Ivanovich Kalinin (1875–1946) serves as an example of this practice in the Soviet context. The different stamps depicted Kalinin, chairman of the All-Russian Executive Committee of the Soviets, as a worker at a forge, a farmer holding a sickle, and an orator in a western business suit. In other words, Kalinin illustrated the foundations of the Soviet state: the worker, the peasant, and the party.

¹⁵⁸ A historic photograph that included Stalin was reproduced on a 1970 East German issue to commemorate the 1945 Potsdam Conference. This was the only other stamp from Eastern Europe that featured his portrait.

¹⁵⁹ A quotation by Khrushchev was used on one Soviet souvenir sheet and he did appear on two 1964 East German stamps.

¹⁶⁰ Harlan J. Strauss, “Politics, Psychology, and the Postage Stamp,” in *The Congress Book 1975: Forty-First American Philatelic Congress, November 8–9, 1975* (Federalburg: J. W. Stowell Printing Co., 1975), 176; cited in Grant, “The Socialist Construction of Philately,” 486.

The party also appeared on Soviet stamps through slogans and resolutions, although the manner in which party goals were presented on stamps changed over time. As mentioned earlier, themes on stamps in the 1920s were in line with the spirit of NEP, but implicitly so. However, beginning in 1929, stamps explicitly proclaimed specific economic policies. When Stalin's industrialization drive was launched, the government issued a set of stamps urging on the effort. One stamp demanded "More Metal, More Machines!" while another showed a blast furnace and a chart for iron-ore production and the slogan "Iron, 8 Million Tons." Similarly, a stamp showing a line of tractors declared "Let us increase the harvest by 35%." Faced with the task of reconstruction after World War II, the Soviet government again used stamps as a medium to call for economic mobilization. In 1946 a set of stamps exhorted "Give the Country Annually 127 Tonnes of Grain," "60 Million Tonnes of Oil," "60 Million Tonnes of Steel," "500 Million Tonnes of Coal," and "50 Million Tonnes of Cast Iron" (*Katalog pochtovykh marok*, 1082–1086).

In the post-Stalin years, party platforms continued to occupy a prominent place on Soviet stamps but they were presented in a different manner. Lengthy excerpts from various party congresses replaced the brief heroic slogans of the Stalin era that had urged economic development. For example, in 1962 one stamp from the series of "Great Decisions of the XXII Communist Party Congress" stated that "by 1980 livestock, cattle, and chickens will be significantly increased. The production of meat will grow almost 4 times, milk almost 3 times" (*Katalog pochtovykh marok*, 2779). Nine years later, in the series for the XXIV Congress, another stamp announced that "the main problem is to provide a significant increase in the material and cultural level of life of the people on the basis of high rates of development of socialist production, an increase in the effectiveness of scientific-technical progress, and an acceleration in the growth of the productiveness of labor" (*Katalog pochtovykh marok*, 4049). The promises and explanations of such messages are in dramatic contrast to the short imperative Stalinist commands.

These examples are typical of stamps for the period until Mikhail Gorbachev assumed power. During the final years of the Soviet Union's existence, the representation of the party on stamps was drastically reduced and usually limited to simple designs for issues marking party congresses: the Congress palace, Lenin's image, and a banner proclaiming the event were the usual design. Concerning Gorbachev's reforms, only one stamp, released in 1988, carried a declaration to speed up democratization and glasnost'. In 1991, the three victims of the failed August coup were honored on stamps, while a souvenir sheet showing citizens protecting the Russian "White House" was also prepared. One of the last Soviet stamps commemorated the election of Boris Yeltsin as the first president of the Russian Federation.

f. Charity Stamps

Following the charity issues that were produced in the early 1920s, it was not until 1976 that this type of stamp reappeared in the Soviet Union. In preparation for the 1980 Olympic Games that were held in Moscow, no less than twelve series of charity stamps — over one hundred designs — were produced. The profits that were made from the sale of these issues were used for the various construction projects and programs that were needed to host the event. However, as a result of the excessive number of issues that were released for this event, the Soviet Union was severely criticized by the international philatelic community.¹⁶¹ Because sports and specifically Olympic issues form the basis of a very popular category among topical stamp collectors, the general opinion was that the Soviet Union was attempting to exploit the popularity of such stamps as a means of gaining funds.

During the 1980s, three other series of stamps were produced to aid both the Soviet Culture Fund and zoo relief projects. Other groups that benefitted by these issues were Lenin's

¹⁶¹ See, for example, James Mackay, *Stamp Collecting* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company Inc., 1983), 17.

Children's Fund, the Charity and Health Fund, victims of the Armenian earthquake (1988), and, interestingly enough, the Soviet Union of Philatelists.

* * *

Admittedly, not all of the designs produced were exclusively derived from the policies of the Soviet government. Instead, a good number of stamps were merely aimed at promoting the Soviet state. Here we can include, for example, those stamps devoted to flora and fauna, tourism, sports, and perhaps even the many aspects of culture that were featured on postal designs. And in any country's postal program, these are accepted as standard topics.

Further, there are issues of interpretation: should a stamp that carries a scene from the subway system in Moscow, which was named for Lenin, be considered as social realism? While the subject relates both to a prominent Bolshevik and to the goals of economic development in the Soviet Union, the image can also be more innocently categorized as one promoting the country without any political implication. These same issues can be argued for stamps showing, for example, ice-breakers in the Antarctic: although part of the Soviet military and therefore related to the importance placed by the Soviet leadership on military superiority as well as the issue of global expansion of the communist ideology, other countries have also shown various means of transportation on their stamps without any relationship to domestic policies. Would we necessarily make a connection between a picture of a Volkswagen on a stamp from Germany with the spread of national socialism as a political platform?

Instead, it is more useful to relate the themes on Soviet postage stamps to contemporary politics. Under Lenin and Stalin, there was an obvious need to promote the new government and state as well as an emphasis on industrial development. Therefore, postage stamps and postal stationery also reflected these goals and were drawn within the tenets of social realism. During the period when Khrushchev was in power, the Soviet space program reached new heights, and

indeed, contemporary stamps reflected these achievements. But as tensions between the Soviet Union and the democratic international community lessened in the 1970s and 1980s, this political détente allowed for greater numbers of stamps that promoted art, culture, and in general designs that did not feature the hammer, sickle, and red star. Lenin's portrait was replaced by Mishka, the mascot of the 1980 Olympics.

A final comment relates to the depiction of the non-Russian republics and populations on stamps. Individual cultural traditions were periodically recognized on commemorative stamp series, and in these cases, designations referred, for example, specifically to "Ukrainian" or "Latvian" elements. Among the topics presented were national instruments, handicrafts, and traditional holidays. For one series from 1961 that featured traditional costumes, the inscriptions were written in both Russian and the language of the republic being depicted, again providing a recognition of the multi-ethnic composition of the Soviet state.

Yet, in each of these series, the republic was always presented in the context of the larger Soviet whole and on an equal basis as the other nationalities.¹⁶² This meant that each set was "complete": unless it could not contribute wild flowers or health spas — these were typical series — each republic was represented by a relevant image.

The postal administration also acknowledged the national republics that comprised the Soviet state in several stamp sets. Here the various anniversary dates related to when the republic joined the greater Soviet state were commemorated. These issues are perhaps the strongest metaphorical statements related to state-building within the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

¹⁶² This situation would have changed had the Soviet Union not collapsed. Following a meeting of a special commission on the stamp-issuing program of the Soviet Union in the fall of 1991 (between Boris P. Butenko, director general of the post, and representatives of the fifteen constituent republics) an official protocol was signed to give the republics a more active role in choosing the subjects and designs of Soviet postage stamps. Beginning with the 1992 stamp program, four stamps were to have been devoted to each of the fifteen republics, with the subjects determined according to the suggestions and recommendations of each of the republics (for a total of sixty stamps). Each stamp would have carried its inscriptions in Russian as well as the language of the respective republic. Some twenty additional stamps were also to have been issued with the subjects determined at the national level by the Ministry of Communications. The decisions of the meeting were translated in the *American Philatelist* (September 1991): 840.

CHAPTER FOUR: UKRAINIAN POSTAGE STAMP PROGRAMS:

STATE AND NATION

The outbreak of World War I in August 1914 ushered in a period that had a profound impact on the territory that, in various formations, came to be considered as Ukrainian lands. In the course of only five years, these regions witnessed the military conflicts of World War I, the breakup of two longstanding empires, and attempts to establish Ukrainian statehood, both as an independent non-Soviet state and a republic in close alliance with the new Soviet Russia. Moreover, all of these developments took place in an extremely complex environment that was marked by struggles between competing Ukrainian governments, peasant uprisings, foreign invasions, and civil war. If in 1914 Ukrainian lands were divided between the Russian and Austrian empires, by the early 1920s most Ukrainians found themselves within the borders of four new states: the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Romania.

Therefore, just as the government in the Soviet Union used the postal network to spread its messages on postage stamps and postal stationery to the population, so, too, was the concept of a distinct Ukrainian nation spread via the symbols on the postage stamps created for the several autonomous Ukrainian states. While Soviet stamps from this period reflect a comprehensive program that was clearly directed by the central authorities as part of larger political goals that included the consolidation of the multi-ethnic Soviet state, Ukrainian stamps never achieved this degree of sophistication. As this chapter shows, the iconography on the Ukrainian stamps primarily combined the trident with elements of folk ornamentation and several notable figures from history to support specific characterizations of the Ukrainian nation. Perhaps most obvious are the images derived from the cossack Hetmanate, which as an example of self-government, became a key component of Ukrainian national history and the nation-building myth.

After the outbreak of the February Revolution in 1917, a report, dated 4 February 1914, was uncovered in which the Russian governor of Poltava made several suggestions to the Ministry of Internal Affairs in St. Petersburg:

Only teachers of Russian nationality should be employed in all the grammar schools throughout Ukraine. . . . All teachers having "Ukrainian inclinations" should be dismissed. The history of Russia should be taught in all schools, and the term of "the one, undivided Russia" should be constantly inculcated into the heads of the Ukrainian children; the term "Ukraine" should be defined as synonymous with "okraine" which means borderland and refers to the lines of one Empire since ancient times. . . . Keep a careful watch over the rural clergy regarding their political aspirations, and never allow a Ukrainian to be appointed to the office of bishop. . . . Subsidize those papers and magazines in Ukraine which combat Ukrainianism. Forbid the use of the term "Ukraine" and substitute for general usage the term "Little Russia." . . . Do not award any position of civic responsibility to anyone who at any time in the past has been connected in any manner with Ukrainianism, because that movement is deadly to Russia.¹

This document clarifies the imperial Russian attitude toward their so-called "Little Russian" brethren. Following the collapse of the Hetmanate in 1775 and throughout the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Russian Empire repeatedly asserted claims to be the successor of the Kievan State as well as to the historical name "Rus." According to one historian of Ukraine, the empire's most forceful weapon was an ability to spread, primarily abroad, the propaganda that described Ukrainians as a people without their own past, an ethnographic mass incapable of mastering its own affairs.²

To some extent, this message carried an undeniable truth. As a result of the partitioning of Poland in the eighteenth century, territories that were later claimed by the Ukrainian national movement as their own were divided between the Russian and Austrian empires. Although

¹ The report is translated and cited in Volodymyr Vinnichenko, *Rebirth of the Nation* (Kiev-Vienna, 1920), 1: 38; cited in Isidore Nahayewsky, *History of the Modern Ukrainian State, 1917-1923* (Munich: Ukrainian Free University and Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1966), 32-33. Vinnichenko's three-volume work is based on first-hand historical material.

² Nahayewsky, *History of the Modern Ukrainian State*, 8.

some degree of provincial autonomy was tolerated in the latter, all moves toward nation-building within the Russian Empire were curtailed. Thus, the “Ukrainian” people could neither establish their own cultural base nor even identify themselves as something other than Russian.³

However, this is not to say that there was no idea or hope for Ukrainian sovereignty. When news of the events in Petrograd reached Kiev in the early months of 1917, local leaders confronted their paramount task of organizing a Ukrainian revolutionary government. This objective was not easy given the continued existence of the tsarist administration as well as its large military garrisons in nearly every major city in the region. Yet within a year, the Ukrainian Central Rada (Tsentralna Rada) issued its “Fourth Universal,” unconditionally declaring the independence of the Ukrainian National Republic (Ukrainska Narodnia Respublika/UNR). Kiev, the new capital, was acknowledged as being the ancient capital of Rus. This claim of lineage to a powerful medieval state was an effective means of enhancing national pride.

It would be incorrect to imply either that the history of the Ukrainian lands in the twentieth century was not tumultuous or that the government administrations themselves were united and stable organizations. Two factors relating to the political transformations are crucial for this study. The first is that throughout each phase of modern Ukrainian statehood, specific symbols and emblems repeatedly emerged as banners around which to rally the nation. Most prominent of these symbols was the trident, which, like Kiev itself, linked the Ukrainian states of the twentieth century with an ancient state. To help establish the foundations of Ukraine,

³ During the nineteenth century, however, many foreign social leaders recognized the Ukrainian struggle for national rights. For example, in 1830 the well-known Czech historian F. Palacky wrote: “The Ruthenian people have been different in their language from the Russians and the Poles for many centuries . . . In the south the Ruthenian people extend to Hungary; the whole of Eastern Galicia is Ruthenian, where the Ruthenians extend to Podolia, Volhynia, Ukraine, far behind the Dnieper to Poltava, and also to south Rus, to the Kuban River . . . The Kozaks all are Ruthenians, and not Russians . . . I am obliged to state that the Ruthenians are in no way ‘an invented’ people, but are indeed a truly separate (independent) people.” Cited in Volodymyr Sichynsky, *Ukraine in Foreign Comments and Descriptions from the Sixth to the Twentieth Century* (New York: Ukrainian Congress Committee of America, Inc., 1953), 204–205.

these symbols were employed as a means of promoting the notion of an independent Ukrainian state as well as the identity of a distinct Ukrainian nation.

The second factor concerns the creation of a distinctly Ukrainian postal system. It simply did not happen. Rather, the various twentieth-century Ukrainian states inherited from both the Russian and Austrian empires well organized postal administrations that were maintained intact with only changes in the directing personnel. But given the instability of their regimes, the Ukrainian governments could neither derive a substantial income from the post nor claim that great improvements had been made to the services it offered, which are two basic fundamentals behind postal operations.

Yet, while the expansive network was employed to spread historical and cultural messages, the postal administration itself became a weapon in the ongoing domestic and international political struggles. The most obvious example is the case of the All-Ukrainian Postal-Telegraph Union (*Vseukrainska Poshtovo-Telehrafna Spilka*). Initially founded to coordinate postal services in the new Ukrainian state, the group became a politicized force following a meeting that was held in Kiev on 2–4 September 1917. The congress declared its support to the then-ruling Central Rada and in May 1918 joined with several other workers' unions to actively participate in the uprising against the new government of Pavlo Skoropadsky (1873–1945). A second example relates to the personnel chosen to direct the post office in Ukraine. Although Hryhorii Sydorenko (1874–1924) was named the minister of postal and telegraph services in the spring of 1918, he is remembered by historians of Ukraine as a member of the delegation that negotiated with the Entente powers and as the leader of the delegation from the Ukrainian National Republic that was sent to the Paris Peace Conference. In fact, the available sources of Ukrainian history from the early twentieth century cannot even provide

complete biographical information on the seven known postal directors of the independent Ukrainian states.

1. The Iconography and Postage Stamps of the Ukrainian States

Approximating the output of the Soviet Union, the pre-1991 Ukrainian states (Ukrainian National Republic, Western Ukrainian National Republic, and Carpatho-Ukraine) along with various diaspora organizations issued more than four thousand postage stamps chronicling Ukraine's turbulent history. In addition to political reasons, the production of these stamps was to some extent motivated by financial considerations. According to one philatelic scholar, there was a fear that enemies of the Ukrainian states would destabilize the nascent Ukrainian economy through an unchecked and quick influx of Russian stamps.⁴ In any case, similar to any other independent country seeking to legitimize itself, the stamps carried a variety of messages in order to promote a distinct Ukrainian culture, key historical figures, and other unique traits.

Moreover, as during the early years of the Russian S.F.S.R., the stamps highlight the lack of coordinated planning for the new Ukrainian postal systems. One result was that because of the time required for printing, stamps were repeatedly released for governments that no longer existed or for postal rates that were no longer current. The designs of the stamps themselves further reflected the confusion within the postal administrations. Although the trident was adopted as the Ukrainian state emblem in 1918, some post offices, without formal approval from higher postal authorities, Ukrainianized the existing imperial Russian and Austrian stamps with a number of inscriptions, initials, designs, and stylized national emblems. Some postal

⁴ Peter Bylen, *Independent Ukraine 1918–1920: A Catalog-Checklist of National Postage Stamp Issues as well as Regional Trident Overprints and Occupational Issues* (Westchester, IL: Ukrainian Philatelic Resources, 1996), 9.

agents, particularly in small provincial post offices that lacked the necessary technical means, Ukrainianized the stamps with indelible pencils in some interesting ways, including adding local coats of arms to older designs. In regions of western Ukraine, while some post offices applied the emblem of Lviv, others placed a modified trident on their stamps to promulgate the notion of a united Ukrainian state.

Admittedly, the postal services that were established at each particular opportunity were usually set up under onerous conditions. Most often, Ukraine was struggling to preserve its fleeting independence in the face of aggression by stronger foreign powers. For this reason, unless the postal services were connected with military operations, the new administrations usually chose to wait for a more opportune time once the newly formed states had been somewhat consolidated.⁵ In each case, the Ukrainian governments, although strongly nationalistic, were forced to leave in circulation the stamps of the former ruling powers and initially many of these bore no form of Ukrainianization. Although practical, it is interesting that new currency and postal cards *were* readily printed in the UNR, but this same attention could not be given to postage stamps. This inability to establish even the most basic of state tools — in western Ukraine overprints were never abandoned for creating distinct postal issues — is characteristic of the difficulties Ukrainians had in creating their own modern state.

a. The Ukrainian National Republic (UNR)

The origins of the iconography of the new Ukrainian states is found in the late winter and spring of 1917. During these months, revolutionary celebrations and meetings took place during which participants reiterated the demand for complete Ukrainian autonomy in federation

⁵ Given the wartime conditions, the demands of the population on the postal system had undoubtedly decreased. Also, because sufficient supplies of imperial Russian stamps were still available, there was no urgent practical need to produce new designs.

with all the other nations of former imperial Russia. On 16 March, the streets of Kiev were filled with standards of azure blue and yellow — the so-called national colors — as well as red flags as crowds celebrated “the holiday of liberty.” The strongest national demonstration followed on 19 March.⁶ Participants paraded through the city carrying blue and yellow flags along with banners inscribed “Let a Free Ukraine Live!” At this same time, “Shche ne vmerla Ukraïna” (Ukraine has not yet perished) was officially recognized as the Ukrainian national anthem.⁷

The significance of these banners cannot be overlooked. The public adoption of the blue and yellow colors was connected with the Revolution of 1848: in October 1848, the Supreme Ruthenian Council (Holova Ruska Rada) in Lviv adopted the coat of arms of the Romanovych princely dynasty — a golden lion on an azure background — as the emblem of the Ruthenian (later Ukrainian) people. However, no territorial flags were tolerated within the Russian Empire. During the 1905 Revolution, the colors were again, briefly, carried by rebellious masses in eastern Ukraine. Thus, only after the February Revolution did this flag achieved its true significance as a symbol of Ukraine’s national revival.⁸

⁶ At another demonstration in April 1917, Hrushevsky led a crowd of demonstrators to swear before a portrait of Taras Shevchenko — the national bard — and other national emblems that they would not rest until self-government was secured.

⁷ Before its official adoption, the tune was widely sung throughout Ukraine along with several other songs. In the second half of the nineteenth and into the twentieth century, Taras Shevchenko’s “Zapovit” (Testament) was treated as a national anthem in central and eastern Ukraine. In Galicia, Iu. Dobrylovsky’s “Dai Bozhe, v dobryi chas” (Grant Us, God, Good Fortune) had the status of a national anthem until 1848. It was replaced by I. Hushalevych’s “Myr vam, brattia, vsim prynosym” (We Bring All of You Peace, Brothers) when this song was recognized by the Supreme Ruthenian Council in Lviv as the anthem of the Galician Ukrainians. Later, Ivan Franko’s “Ne pora” (This is Not the Time) achieved a similar status. In Transcarpathia, O. Dukhnovych’s “Ia rusyn byl” (I Was a Ruthenian) and “Podkarpats’kii rusyny” (Subcarpathian Ruthenians) were sung as anthems, the latter officially recognized as the provincial anthem between 1920 and 1938. For further details see *Ukrainian Encyclopedia*, s.v. “anthem,” volume 1: 76.

Because the current independent Ukraine considers itself a follower of the 1918 state, the government adopted the former national anthem “Shche ne vmerla Ukraïna” (and the trident emblem). Although there was a discussion aimed at making the lyrics more positive and upbeat, no changes have been made.

⁸ Volodymyr Zhmyr, “Kleinods of Ukraine,” *Ukraine* 1/2 (1995): 4.

With the overthrow of the monarchy and the collapse of the imperial system, leaders in Dnieper Ukraine formed a council (*rada*, the equivalent of the Russian word *soviet*) under the leadership of Mikhaïlo Hrushevsky (1866–1934), who returned from exile to assume the presidency. Democratic and strongly socialist in its ideology, the Central Rada was the creation of the leftist intellectual groups that had predominated in the Ukrainian national movement before the war. In November 1917 and January 1918, it proclaimed, respectively, the existence of an autonomous and then independent Ukrainian National Republic. Its territory was to comprise nine “Ukrainian” provinces from the former Russian Empire: Volhynia, Podolia, Chernigov (Chernihiv), Poltava, Khar’kov, Ekaterinoslav (Katerynoslav), Kherson, and Taurida (excluding the Crimea). Together with Kholm (Chelm) and southern Grodno, these provinces were recognized as part of the Ukrainian National Republic according to the provisions of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, which was concluded in February 1918 with the Central Powers (Germany and Austria-Hungary); its provisions were subsequently accepted by Soviet Russia.

Ukraine’s newly emerging symbolic order was further advanced on 1 March 1918, when at Hrushevsky’s recommendation, the Central Rada adopted the trident (*tryzub*), which had been the emblem of Kievan Grand Prince Volodymyr, as the coat of arms of the UNR. This was yet another act in which the UNR leaders linked the modern Ukrainian state with the medieval state of Rus. The Ukrainian Commission on Heraldry⁹ added a cross to the central staff of the trident to designate the Ukrainian state as Christian, in contrast to the atheistic Soviet regime. Among its other appearances, this combination of trident and cross was confirmed in July 1918 as the emblem of the Black Sea Fleet, a force essential to the defense of the new state.

⁹ The commission served all three Ukrainian governments. The graphic designer Heorhiy Narbut, a key member, helped design the currency and state seals during Hrushevsky’s presidency as well as the flags and various insignia later requested by Skoropadsky.

The trident was then transferred to other objects. On 18 and 28 July, respective laws were passed for the various state flags and for those of the Ukrainian foreign diplomatic corps. All UNR ministry flags were based on the blue and yellow stripes that formed the state flag; to symbolize blue skies over endless fields of wheat, the stripes were arranged blue above yellow. Appropriate symbols for specific administrative offices were then added for the government departments. Interestingly enough, these symbols were also based on historical precedents. For example, chargé d'affaires were assigned an azure-yellow national flag on which were crossed an anchor and a gold ceremonial mace (*bulava*), which had been the symbol of authority during the Hetmanate.¹⁰ To the president's flag was added a golden trident that was enclosed within a golden braid, while later under Skoropadsky's regime, the image of a cossack with a rifle and sword were added to the state seal.

Yet while these symbolic measures were necessary as part of establishing Ukraine as an independent state, the concurrently larger political scene required more significant policies. By examining several administrative decisions related to the post office, it becomes clear that the political leadership could not move fast enough to confront the contemporary political realities and that it did not achieve complete control over its citizens.

One of the problems the new Ukrainian state faced was the same hoarding of coins — and the resultant artificial shortage of silver and copper for the minting of coins — that plagued Bolshevik Russia. Therefore, a five-value set of currency stamps was printed in early April 1918 from the plates of a soon-to-be-released series of postage stamps. The total amount authorized for release was twelve billion shahiv, which were the old currency units of the medieval state of Rus. In contrast to the contemporary postal administration in the Russian S.F.S.R., which was able to rely on printing and engraving facilities that had existed since the eighteenth century, the

¹⁰ Petro Matiaszek, "Ukrainian Diplomatic Corps Flags of 1918–1924," *The Flag Bulletin* 142 (1991): 138.

Ukrainian post office had to establish these connections. Thus, the initial printing of state-issued currency stamps was carried out at the New State Printing Works in Kiev, formerly the private printing plant of Vasyl Kulzhenko (1865–1934).¹¹ A graduate of the Leipzig Polygraphic Academy who then took over his father's printing company, Kulzhenko printed all of the currency, official documents, and postage stamps issued by the UNR and Hetman governments between 1917 and 1919.

The designs for the five values were: 10 shahiv, a trident against the stylized background of the sun shining on the earth; 20 shahiv, a farm worker with a scythe; 30 shahiv, the head of a young girl who presumably symbolized the new Ukrainian state¹²; 40 shahiv, the trident; and 50 shahiv, the numeral and posthorns against an ornamental background. As with their Russian counterparts, the currency stamps were inscribed on the reverse with a Ukrainian phrase meaning "circulates in lieu of coins" as well as the trident. On the face, the stamps carried the inscription "Ukrainska Narodnia Respublika" (Ukrainian National Republic).

However, this inscription was anachronistic: by the time the currency stamps were released into public circulation, Ukraine had been renamed "Ukrainska Derzhava" (Ukrainian State). Beginning in April 1918, the Central Rada's major ally from the west, Germany, gave its support to a new government known as the Hetmanate. This quasi-monarchial, pro-German Ukrainian government was led by Pavlo Skoropadsky, a member of the landowning aristocracy and a descendant of a Zaporozhian cossack hetman. Skoropadsky remained in power until the end of 1918 and claimed all Ukrainian territory recognized by the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk as

¹¹ In 1903, Kulzhenko established and began lecturing at the Kiev Graphic Arts and Printing School, and from 1908 to 1914 he published the journal *Iskusstvo i pechatnoe delo*. Later issues of currency stamps especially may have been prepared in Odessa.

¹² In traditional iconography, freedom is generally represented as a young maiden in classical dress.

well as southern Minsk, southern Kersk, the southern Voronezh provinces, and parts of the Don Cossack Lands.

Later, in July 1918, the same five designs and values applied to the currency tokens were used for Ukraine's first set of definitive stamps (figure 10), which reflected the work of two prominent graphic artists. The 30, 40, and 50-shahiv stamps were prepared by Heorhiy Narbut (1886–1920). Fascinated by the decorative motifs of Ukrainian folk art as well as the calligraphy and illumination of ancient manuscripts, Narbut developed both a unique style and manner of book decoration. One later example was his cover design for the magazine *Mistetstvo*, published in Kiev beginning in 1920. Here, surrounded by stylized leaves and flowers, Narbut placed a young girl in her national costume, as the symbol of Ukrainian poetry, on a haystack; she holds a flower, the symbol of love.¹³ His vivid images and similar allegorical compositions became well known throughout the Soviet Union and had a lasting influence on the style of Ukrainian arts in the 1920s. Antin Sereda (1890–1961) received the commission for the 10 and 20-shahiv stamps. In his own work, Sereda adapted Narbut's style of ornamentation and lettering, but used a simpler line and a stronger contrast of black and white.¹⁴

Ukrainian and Russian currency stamps share two other characteristics. First, although the Ukrainian currency stamps were neither intended nor authorized for postal purposes, they were occasionally used for postage. Secondly, forgeries of the stamps did circulate; most of these were accomplished by gluing a stamp of similar design to a piece of thin cardboard. One important difference is that in Ukraine, several local stamp currencies were also prepared,

¹³ The frontispiece is in *Art in the Soviet Union: Painting, Sculpture, Graphic Arts* (Leningrad: Aurora Art Publishers, 1978), plate 13. Narbut's designs were tolerated by the Soviet leaders as part of their recognition of the Soviet Union's multinational character, which allowed for a revival of folk motifs.

¹⁴ Sereda taught at the Kiev Architectural Institute (1920–1924), the Kiev State Art Institute (1924–1929, 1934–1941, and 1944–1950), and at the Ukrainian Printing Institute in Kharkov (1929–1934). He is was also a prominent designer of commercial logos.



a. inscription



b. trident



c. farm worker



d. "Ukraine" personified



e. trident



f. posthorns

Figure 10: Ukrainian National Republic Currency Stamps, 1918
Michel Catalog, 1-5

attesting to the inability of the central administration to gain complete political authority on Ukrainian territory. The Kremenchug local government, in the former Pale of Settlement, prepared currency tokens in the amounts of 1, 3, 5, and 10 rubles; the Kremenchug Credit Association prepared 1, 2, 3, 5, and 10-ruble stamps; and the Jewish community in Ukraine circulated its own currency stamps in 50-kopeck, 1, and 3-ruble denominations.¹⁵ That these local authorities did not use the new Ukrainian denominations may further indicate that not even the concept of a Ukrainian state was accepted.

There were similar developments surrounding the currency of the Ukrainian State. Paper notes with the state emblems were circulated between 1917 and 1920. In recognition of the national minorities that shared the territories claimed by Ukraine, the first state credit note of 100 karbovantsi carried its inscriptions in Ukrainian (on the face) as well as Russian, Polish, and Yiddish (on the reverse). However, a variety of city notes, with names such as bonds, checks, exchange notes, and exchange tokens, also appeared. Cities of Volhynia in particular had their own currencies: Kremianets had exchange notes worth 1, 3, and 5 karbovantsi; Dubno, checks worth 10 karbovantsi; Lutsk, exchange tokens worth 20 hryvni; and Zhitomir, exchange notes worth 1, 3, and 5 karbovantsi. In Galicia, Brody had tokens worth 1, 2, 5, 10, and 20 hryvni; Zolochiv had coins worth 5 and 10 hryvni; Ternopol (Ternopil) had bonds worth 2, 10, 20, and 50 hryvni; Zbarazh had bonds worth 1, 5, and 10 hryvni; and Sokal had bonds worth 1 hryvnia.

Despite these attempts at promoting itself as a sovereign state, imperial Russian stamps were still valid for postage almost one year after Ukraine's declaration of autonomy. However, in order to minimize the prevailing Russian influence, provide postage stamps in more denominations, and protect the Ukrainian treasury from an influx of Russian stamps, the Ukrainian minister of postal and telegraph services, V. Kuliabko-Koretsky, issued on order on 20

¹⁵ Paul B. Spiwak, "Ukrainian Currency Stamps of 1918," *Ukrainian Philatelist* 27, no. 43 (1980): 10.

August 1918 “to overprint with the national emblem of the Ukrainian State all postage stamps of Russian origin, which are at the present time used for postage in the territory of Ukraine.”¹⁶ This meant that the trident emblem was to be printed over top the Romanov coat of arms. At the same time as being a practical means of providing postage, these stamps would also assert the independence of the new state based on the obvious presence of the trident (figure 11).

However, the original intention to carry out the overprinting in Kiev was declared impossible because of ongoing military conflicts. Therefore, the authorization to prepare one or more overprinting devices was granted to the five major postal hubs (Kiev, Poltava, Ekaterinoslav, Khar’kov, Odessa) and one railway hub (Zhmerinka) on Ukraine’s territory.¹⁷ Although the initial deadline was set as 1 September, it was eventually extended so that only after 1 October were all Russian stamps without the overprinted trident declared invalid.¹⁸

Realizing the need for a wider range of postal values, Kuliabko-Koretsky also began preparing a second definitive issue of five stamps. Made up of values greater than 50 shahiv, the series — reputed to consist of 1, 3, 5, 10, and 20-hryven stamps — was to replace the trident overprinted provisionals and supplement the first five shahiv values. The stamps of the second issue were printed in Kiev during the fall of 1918. When the supply of high-value trident overprints was exhausted in Volhynia and Podilia, the Ukrainian Ministry of Postal and Telegraph Services released the 20-hryven stamp to ease the shortage.¹⁹ Designed by the

¹⁶ The order is translated in Val Zabijaka, “The Trident Overprints of 1918,” *Introductory Handbook of Ukrainian Philately/Ukrainian Philatelist* 40, no. 1/2 (63/64) (1993): 14.

¹⁷ Kiev, Poltava-Ekaterinoslav, Khar’kov, and Odessa had previously formed four imperial postal districts. Because of the division of postal territory, the trident provisionals vary in size, color, and form. Hand-drawn tridents were also applied in a few small localities.

¹⁸ There are many examples of imperial Russian stamps without the overprints being used after this date, however.

¹⁹ The stamps were used primarily in the Podolia region, to where the Ukrainian government was later forced to retreat. Valentine Zabijaka, “Further Notes on the 20 Hryven Stamp Issue,” *Ukrainian Philatelist* 31, no. 47 (1984): 1.

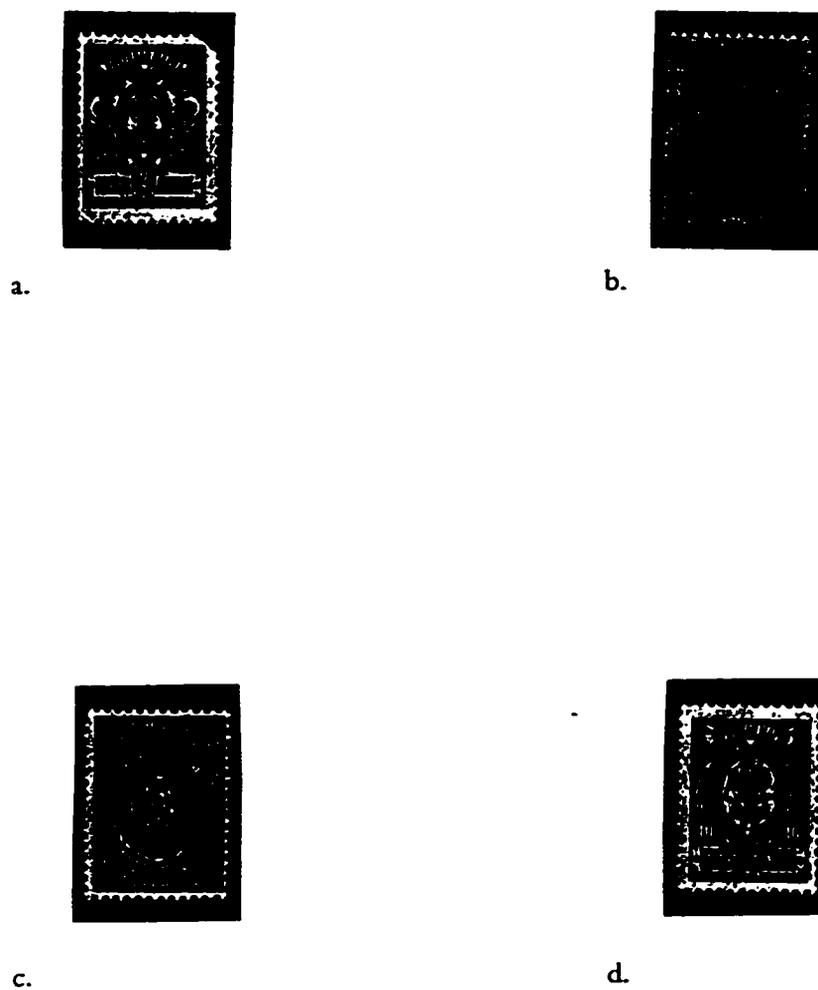


Figure 11: Ukrainian Trident Overprints on Imperial Russian Stamps

graphic artist Oboznenko, this new series again placed the trident within a stylized background; the stamps were also clearly identified as emanating from the “Ukrainian State” (Ukrainska Derzhava).

There are several theories concerning why no other values of the second definitive series were placed into postal circulation. Some philatelic researchers believe that the 20-hryven issue was originally intended as a fiscal stamp but, due to the shortage of 10-ruble stamps in Podolia, it was released as a postal stamp. Second, Skoropadsky’s government had been replaced by the time the stamps became available in January 1919. Finally, according to unverifiable philatelic sources, all plans to release the other values were effectively ruined when the plane carrying the stamps from Kiev for distribution to the other districts was shot down and burned.

At approximately the same time and as a reflection of similar events occurring in the Russian S.F.S.R., the Ukrainian Hetmanate produced several issues of revenue stamps as a means of collecting funds for its treasury.²⁰ In June 1918, Heorhiy Narbut completed two designs for six values of documentary revenue stamps, one design for the 40 and 50 shahiv stamps and another for the 1, 2, 5, and 10 karbovantsi stamps. In each case, the trident was surrounded by a decorative border.²¹ Narbut also designed ten different theater revenue stamps. These stamps were used to obtain revenue from various performances and theatrical events, as authorized by a 14 June 1918 decree, and came in two parts: the right side was attached to the event ticket and the left was attached, for the record, to the remnant stub from which the tickets were removed.

In designing the revenue stamps, Narbut worked with Vasyl Krychevsky (1873–1952), another prominent Ukrainian graphic artist. During the revolutionary period, Krychevsky was a founder and the first president of the Ukrainian State Academy of Arts. He had first received

²⁰ Valentin Zabijaka, “Ukrainian Revenue Stamps,” *Rossica Journal* 92 (1977): 48–51.

²¹ All of these revenue stamps were printed at the New State Printing Works in Kiev.

public recognition in 1903 when he won the architectural competition to design the Poltava zemstvo building.²² In addition to producing some postal designs, at Hrushevsky's request he helped design the state emblems and seals of the UNR.

Prompted by the political situation that existed in Ukraine, Skoropadsky's postal administration established the first regular international airmail service in the world. By the terms of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, Germany and Austria were allowed to occupy a large portion of Ukrainian territory in order to clear out the remaining Bolshevik troops and to re-establish order in the newly recognized state. Therefore, there was a need for rapid and regular communication between Vienna and Kiev, where the military forces were headquartered. On 20 March 1918, a plane carrying military and government mail made a trial flight from Vienna to Kiev, with stopovers in Cracow and Lviv, both of which were at that time part of the Austrian province of Galicia. Beginning on 31 March, private mail to Cracow and Lviv was permitted with certain restrictions.²³ By the end of June, private mail was accepted for the entire distance to Kiev.²⁴ The Vienna-Cracow-Lviv-Kiev airmail service functioned uninterruptedly until November 1918.²⁵

²² Krychevsky's design for the Poltava Zemstvo Building inaugurated a new style of construction based on the traditions of Ukrainian folk architecture. In addition to completing many monuments and museums, his designs were included in numerous public exhibitions, including those of Kiev painters between 1910 and 1913. Krychevsky was also the main founder of modern Ukrainian book design. Here he relied on traditional folk ornamentation and motifs while also reviving the older techniques of wood engraving, etching, and lithography.

²³ The Austrian government issued Post and Telegraph Order No. 15 on 27 March 1918, which contained specific instructions pertaining to the establishment of air communications between Vienna and Lviv. The order was reprinted as "Post and Telegraph Order – List Nr. 15," *Ukrainian Philatelist* 31, no. 47 (1981): 21–22. Special postal fees for the airmail service were also set at this time.

²⁴ A second route was next organized between Budapest and Vienna, operating from 4 July to 23 July 1918. Although no international borders were crossed, some of the mail that was carried on this Budapest-Vienna route was then taken on the Vienna-Kiev segment, and thus this route can be considered as a second international service.

²⁵ Plans for an additional southern air link between Vienna, Budapest, Arad, Bucharest, and Odessa did not materialize. See Ingerit Kuzych, "More About the First International Airmail Service in the World," *Ukrainian Philatelist* 35, no. 1/2 (53/54) (1988): 32.

If we discount the hundreds of trident overprints and fiscal stamps that were prepared by the independent Ukrainian state, six new designs were prepared between November 1917, when autonomy was declared, and the summer of 1920, when the last UNR government on Ukrainian soil was formed by Viacheslav Prokopovych (1881–1942). By comparison, and again discounting fiscal stamps, during this same interval Russia had produced only one new design, the chain-cutter stamps commissioned by Kerensky's Provisional Government. Granted, the Bolsheviks were confronted by civil war and internal political conflicts, yet Ukraine also faced these difficulties. Moreover, the Russians had a well-established printing industry and many more individuals schooled in graphic arts. In the final analysis, then, it is interesting that Ukraine's leaders succeeded before the Bolsheviks in asserting their new, independent identity on postage stamps. For the Ukrainians, it may only have been a token step, given subsequent political events, yet the importance the leaders placed on the stamps and the precedents they set — for other independent Ukrainian states and later the émigré community — cannot be overlooked.

b. The Western Ukrainian National Republic (ZUNR)

Western Ukrainian lands were directly affected by the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the imminent end to World War I. Within these circumstances, Galician and Bukovinian leaders proclaimed in Lviv on 1 November 1918 the existence of a Western Ukrainian National Republic (Zakhidno-Ukrainska Narodnia Respublika/ZUNR). This state, headed by Ievhen Petrushevych (1863–1940), claimed as its territory all of Galicia east of the San River, including the Lemkian region farther to the west and the Ukrainian-inhabited areas of Transcarpathia and northern Bukovina. Although the western Ukrainians sustained their independent state for only eight months, they did demonstrate an ability to govern themselves.

This factor unquestionably grew from their experiences under the liberal Habsburg monarchy, which tolerated private, local initiatives.

As president of the new republic, Petrushevych initiated a full Ukrainianization of government and administrative institutions, including the post offices. Administratively, the organization of postal service in the ZUNR remained virtually the same as it was under Austrian imperial rule. Initially, an independent ministry of the posts functioned; in December 1918, it was reorganized into a directorate of the posts and telegraph, under the supervision of the ministry of railroad, post, and telegraph. The postal directorate maintained the right to decide all matters relating to postal services. However, in cases of general state significance it was obliged to have the approval of the ministry. Aleksander Pisetsky was appointed the first ZUNR postal director.²⁶ Because all postal workers at the Vavlova Street post office in Lviv — the new capital city — ethnically identified themselves as Ukrainian, this became the center of postal communications in the state.²⁷ Indeed, this outlet was the only one to have used Ukrainian-language postmarks under the Austrian monarchy.²⁸

The ZUNR retained the last schedule of imperial Austrian postage rates, which were based on the imperial patent of 5 November 1837: domestic letters up to 20 grams, 20 hellers; postcards, 10 hellers; international letters and postcards, 70 and 38 hellers respectively; the registration fee was 25 hellers; the express charge was 60 hellers; printed matter, 3 hellers or 5

²⁶ In January 1919, Pisetsky was replaced by Ivan Myron, a railway engineer who had been named as the secretary of transport in the ZUNR State Secretariat. John Bulat, *Illustrated Postage Stamp History of Western Ukrainian Republic 1918–1919* (Yonkers, NY: Philatelic Publications, 1973), 11.

²⁷ At the time, the operations of the Lviv post office extended throughout the city itself as well as to the east and southeast along the Lviv-Pidhaytsi railway line.

²⁸ D. P. Belesky, "Lviv: Postmarks Through the Centuries," *Ukrainian Philatelist* 41, no. 1/2 (65/66) (1993): 21.

hellers for express delivery; and the newspaper delivery fee, 2 hellers per copy. Airmail rates were 1 krone for each 20-gram item plus 1.50 for each flight zone.²⁹

In order to secure a supply of Ukrainian postage stamps, Volodymyr Holovatsky (1875–1963), the deputy director of the post office, ordered four denominations of the now obsolete 1916–1918 Austrian definitive issue (which featured the Austrian coat of arms against an ornamental background) to be overprinted with the Galician coat of arms — a heraldic lion facing left — and the inscription “Zakhidno Ukr[ainska] Narodna Republika” (Western Ukrainian National Republic). A relatively large supply of these new Ukrainian stamps were prepared: 3 hellers, 2,200 stamps; 5 hellers, 3,400 stamps; 10 hellers, 6,700 stamps; and 20 hellers, 8,000 stamps.³⁰

However, their usefulness was shortlived. The Poles in Galicia mounted an armed opposition to the new government and the resultant Ukrainian–Polish War began on 1 November 1918. Because of heavy fighting between the two armies for control of Lviv, the stamps were in circulation for only two days: they were handed over to the post office on 20 November, but on 22 November the Ukrainian military and government abandoned the capital for Tarnopol. When the postal workers evacuated the city, they took with them the entire reserve of unsold postage stamps for use from other post offices in the new republic, especially those in Khodoriv, Stanislavov (Stanyslaviv), and Kolomea (Kolomyia).

After the Polish seizure of Lviv, all Ukrainian local government offices temporarily lost contact with the central authorities, and power in the outlying regions was taken over by the local district military commands. Provisional authority extended to all spheres of public life, leaving its mark also on postal operations.

²⁹ Bulat, *Illustrated Postage Stamp History*, 44.

³⁰ Bulat, *Illustrated Postage Stamp History*, 14.

The predicament in the town of Kolomea graphically illustrates the situation. Given the conditions, when the military front periodically shifted and the central government was forced to flee from town to town, the post office in Kolomea very soon became isolated from the postal directorate. When the small reserve of postal stamps at the local post office was nearly used, the postmaster requested permission to prepare a Ukrainian overprint for the remaining stock of Austrian stamps:

To avoid the lack of the most necessary stamps, which will be inevitable because of the interruption of communications with the post office administration in Lviv, I ask permission to overprint, or to change the values of the following stamps. . . . I will add that newspaper stamps are definitely necessary, for there are now three newspapers in Koloymia, and as a result of the lack of stamps these are being sent unstamped and this forces the subscribers to pay double the sum.³¹

At a conference on the subject in December 1918, the district commissioner, in consultation with the postmaster and another individual who has a well-known lawyer and stamp collector, decided to Ukrainianize the entire remaining stock of 3, 6, and 12-heller stamps from the 1916–1917 imperial issue along with a portion of the 15-heller stamps.³² Again, a relatively large number of stamps were surcharged with the new values: 10 sotyky on 3 heller, 10,100 stamps; 10 sotyky on 6 heller, 452 stamps; 10 sotyky on 12 heller, 404 stamps; and 5 sotyky on 15 heller, 11,300 stamps. Simultaneously, the inscription “UKR. H. P.” (Ukr[ainian] N[ational] R[epublic]) was overprinted on the upper part of the stamps.³³ All stamps from the Kolomea

³¹ Official Letter No. 342 to the Kolomea District Starosta Dr. Stryisky; cited in Bulat, *Illustrated Postage Stamp History*, 19.

³² Official Letter No. 1456 to the District Military Command in Kolomea; the document is reproduced in Bulat, *Illustrated Postage Stamp History*, 21–22.

³³ Within a week, these new stamps were handed over for postal use on the territories of the ZUNR. At the same time, it was decided to issue 5,000 copies of a newly designed registered-mail stamp and new postal rates were introduced: for each copy of a newspaper, rates were raised from 2 to 5 sotyky; and for registered mail, from 25 to 30 sotyky. By comparison, not all of the registration stamps made it into circulation. In return for an appropriate donation to the Ukrainian Red Cross, a large percentage of the registration stamps was sold to a private collector. Bulat, *Illustrated Postage Stamp History*, 23.

issue remained in circulation for some five months, until 24 May 1919 when the Ukrainian forces abandoned the town.

In January 1919, the ZUNR declared its unity with the UNR, which had been restored in Kiev after the fall of the Hetmanate government in December 1918. The restored regime, known as the Directory of the Ukrainian National Republic (Dyrektonia UNR), was led by Volodymyr Vynnychenko (1880–1951) and Symon Petliura (1879–1926). Through his military command, Petliura acquired such fame that among the less-educated elements of the population his name became synonymous with the struggle for Ukrainian national independence.³⁴ The Directory reaffirmed its boundaries as those of the earlier UNR.

Following the agreement, the ZUNR was officially called the Western Province of the UNR, and its government relocated to Stanyslaviv on 2 January 1919. Services such as the postal administrations from the UNR and ZUNR merged, while the political structure and ruling bodies were not changed because of the exigencies of the wars with Ukraine's enemies. A ten-member government executive, headed by Sydir Holubovych (1875–1938), was appointed for the Western Province on 4 January.

Although Stanyslaviv became the seat of the new State Secretariat of Roads, Post and Telegraph beginning in January 1919, there was a great delay in the Ukrainianization of postal items and operations there. This was caused by a shortage of qualified Ukrainian postal personnel, a shortage of technical equipment, and an acute shortage of stamps and telegraphic forms. The acquisition of postage stamps and forms was entrusted to the government trade mission that was soon to depart to Prague and Vienna.³⁵ Thus, in addition establishing trade

³⁴ John A. Armstrong, *Ukrainian Nationalism*, 3d ed. (Engelwood, CO: Ukrainian Academic Press, 1990), 6–7.

³⁵ Pisetsky, the current state secretary of the post and telegraph, was a member of this committee.

relations and communications agreements with the Czecho-Slovak and Austrian governments, a central task of the mission was also the fulfillment of the government's order for the preparation of postal materials at the State Printing Office in Vienna.³⁶

A new economic department was created at his time and placed under the direction of Stefan Poburenyy. One goal of the Ekonomat (Tsentral'nyi Ekonomat i Ekspeditsiia vartichikh paperiv YHRady) was to provide the post offices on the territory of the Western Province with adequate supplies of postage stamps and forms. Because of unsettled conditions, four series of existing stamps were overprinted in Stanislavov.

The existing stamps were usually overprinted with simple inscriptions to show the existence of a new Ukrainian state. For example, the first Stanyslaviv issue appeared on 18 March 1919. The series consisted of twenty different Austrian stamps from 1916–1918 that had been overprinted "Poshta Ukr. N. Rep." (Post of the Ukrainian National Republic).

The values remained numerically the same, with only a change from the Austrian hellers and kronen to the Ukrainian shahy or hryvni (i.e., 3 hellers became 3 shahy).³⁷ Similarly, the second Stanyslaviv issue, prepared on 5 May 1919, consisted of forty-eight different stamps with overprinted text similar to the first issue: "Post/Ukrainian National Republic." Interestingly, in addition to Austro-Hungarian field-post stamps from 1917–1918,³⁸ some of the overprints were applied to special Austrian stamps that had been prepared in 1904 for Bosnia and Herzegovina. A military officer returning from the Serbian front brought a large quantity of these postage

³⁶ In connection with Pisetsky's departure in May 1919, a new postal director was appointed. Until this time, Stanyslav Siyak had been manager of the post office at Buchach. He recruited several qualified postal workers to round out the department's staff of eleven members. Bulat, *Illustrated Postage Stamp History*, 46.

³⁷ Bulat, *Illustrated Postage Stamp History*, 50.

³⁸ Galicia had been a military front and therefore there were many of these stamps around.

stamps with him and turned them over to the Quartermaster General's Office of the Ukrainian Galician Army in Stanyslaviv, which in turn handed them over to postal authorities.³⁹

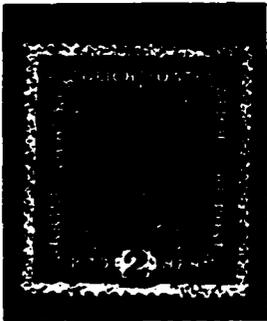
Other stamps were overprinted with a more elaborate design. The third Stanyslaviv issue, ordered by Pisetsky and printed at the State Printing Office in Vienna, was released in May 1919. Nineteen values of stamps from 1916–1918 were overprinted with a white trident in a black shield, the emblem of United Ukraine, and the letters "Z.U.N.R."; the face values of the stamps were left unobliterated (figure 12). That the state name ZUNR was used at this time is interesting given that the unification of the Ukrainian states had already taken place. Most likely, Pisetsky had already placed the order prior to the agreement.⁴⁰ The reason why no indication of Ukrainian currency values were overprinted is also unknown, although viewed in historical perspective it was a practical decision.⁴¹

At the same time as these Ukrainianized stamps were being completed, the ultimate fate of the Western Province was becoming all too clear. On 26 May, Kolomea and the entire Pokutia region was taken over by Romanian military units. Strict regulations, including a curfew, were enforced concerning daily conduct: a curfew was enforced and civic offices remained open only if their duties related to the requirements of the occupational authorities. All public mail services were suspended, strict censorship was imposed, and the post office was allowed to operate only for the Military Postal and Telegraphic Office of the Eighth Division

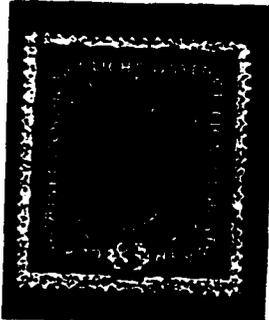
³⁹ Bulat, *Illustrated Postage Stamp History*, 57, 60, 65, 66; documents of the Ekonomat are reproduced in Bulat, *Illustrated Postage Stamp History*, 68 and 69.

⁴⁰ Bulat, *Illustrated Postage Stamp History*, 73–75.

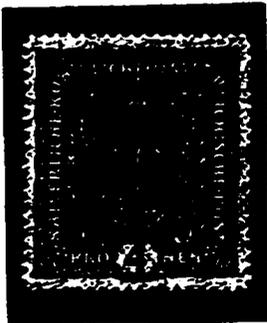
⁴¹ The final Stanyslaviv issue, consisting of nine values in two stamp series, was printed between 9 May and 12 May 1919, and carried the overprint "Poshta Ukr. N. Rep." as well as the Ukrainian monetary denominations "hryvni" and "hryven." Bulat, *Illustrated Postage Stamp History*, 81, 85.



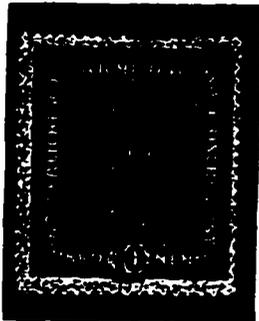
a.



b.



c.



d.

Figure 12: Examples from Western Ukraine, Third Stanyslaviv Issue
Michel Catalog, 64–82 (complete series)

(Ofic. Tel. Postal Militar Divizia VIII), i.e., the occupying authorities.⁴² International mail was permitted only to countries that had been allies of Romania during World War I as well as two neutral countries, Spain and Switzerland. This situation lasted until 12 June 1919 when a representative of the Romanian postal authorities arrived in Kolomea and officially opened the postal system to private correspondence.⁴³

Although a small number of Romanian postage stamps were distributed to the Kolomea post office as a sign of occupation, the Romanian Post Office Direction was not in favor of introducing Romanian stamps since the occupation was to be a temporary affair only.⁴⁴ The remaining supplies of imperial Austrian stamps were collected from all post offices in Pokutia as well as from Chernovtsy (Chernivtsi), the capital of northern Bukovina. These stamps were then overprinted with the letters C.M.T. (Comandamentul Militar Teritorial/Territorial Military Command). The overprint design was done in such a manner so as not to be a direct designation of Romanian sovereignty and the stamps retained their original Austrian values. If any post office in the region ran out of stamps, they could re-apply to the main post office in Kolomea for more overprinted stamps, or in their place, use Romanian issues.⁴⁵

⁴² For details, see Ivan Chernyavskij, "Notes on the C.M.T. Stamps Issued During the Romanian Occupation of Pokuttia," *Ukrainian Philatelist* 38, no.1 (59) (1991): 12–13.

⁴³ Chernyavskij, "Notes," 8; Stanley Kronenberg, "Stamps for the Romanian Occupation of Pokutia," *Ukrainian Philatelist* 30, no. 46 (1983): 1–4.

⁴⁴ The following excerpt is from a proclamation dated 23 May 1919: "The Royal Romanian Army finds it necessary to unite with Romanian soldiers from Maramosh in Hungary. This union cannot be accomplished without the occupation of the railway route Sniatyn-Kolomyia-Deliatyn-Kereshmeze. . . . The Romanian army is not entering Halychyna to wage war against the Ukrainian army or its population." The document is reproduced in Ingert Kuzych, "Two Statements Relating to the Romanian Occupation of Pokuttia," *Ukrainian Philatelist* 43, no. 1/2 (71/72) (1995): 101.

⁴⁵ The Romanian occupation lasted until 20 August 1919. Following the evacuation of the Romanian troops, Kolomea and Pokutia were invaded by the Polish army. Pokutia became part of Poland until the beginning of World War II; at the end of the war, it became part of the Ukrainian S.S.R.

By June 1919, the tide in the Ukrainian–Polish War had turned against the Western Province and the Ukrainian army. Holubovych’s government resigned and Petrushevych was empowered to head a Dictatorship of the Western Province of the UNR. Despite the temporary successes of the Chortkov (Chortkiv) offensive, the army and government retreated in July into UNR territory to the east of the River Zbruch. In addition to securing their own safety, they hoped to help their compatriots in fighting both the Bolshevik forces that were occupying Kiev and the army of General Anton Ivanovich Denikin (1872–1947), which was advancing from the south.

Two additional stamp sets were printed for western Ukraine at the Vienna State Printing Office in Vienna but became available after the Polish occupation of Galicia and, therefore, never were circulated. Ironically, these were the only stamps specifically issued for the region and thus they carried the correct designation “Ukrainian National Republic Western Province.” The first set, printed in two colors, united into one design the coats of arms of: United Ukraine, the trident; Kiev, the Archangel Michael with a sword and shield; and Lviv (and Galicia), the lion (figure 13). The second set had the same coats of arms but with changes in the stylization; each emblem was printed separately on four stamps of the set. If we discount the overprinted stamps that appeared in western Ukraine, these two series were the only new issues produced by the western Ukrainian governments.⁴⁶ Their symbolism again shows the importance placed on traditional motifs and emblems.

While in Kamenets–Podol’sk, Petrushevych and Petliura failed to reach an agreement. After the army was decimated by typhus and a third (Soviet-led) invasion of Ukraine began,

⁴⁶ Two other registration stamps were also produced. In terms of design, however, both of these stamps were simple: a rectangle with a decorative border, the value, and the inscription “Ukr. N. R.” Because they had no iconography, they have not been considered in depth here.



a.



b.



c.



d.



e.

Figure 13: Ukrainian National Republic Western Province

Petrushevych left for Vienna in November 1919, from where he and his government launched a diplomatic campaign against Poland that lasted until March 1923. Then, following the occupation of eastern Ukraine by the Soviet military, in March 1923 the Conference of Ambassadors sanctioned the 1921 Treaty of Riga and the official annexation of Galicia and western Volhynia by Poland.

A few words about the fate of western Ukraine under Poland are in order. As a territory nationally distinct, the Ukrainian regions were to be granted national autonomy within the framework of the new Poland. However, questions related to the status of the minorities remained unresolved throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Indeed, as a newly reconstructed state with expanded borders and numerous political factions, the Polish government was faced with a variety of difficulties. One of these was the economic crisis that swept through Europe after World War I. The hyperinflation that was centered in Germany soon overtook Poland and deflated the currency to one-tenth of its original value.⁴⁷ This situation was reflected by rapidly changing postal rates: for example, internal letters were posted for 100 Polish marks in December 1922 but by December 1923, 25,000 marks were required.

The composition of the new Polish society was a second major problem. The consolidation of a Polish national identity appeared to be foremost in the minds of the country's leaders, who attempted to balance the rise of national socialism in Germany to the west with caution and mistrust of their neighbors to the east. Consequently, national minorities within the boundaries of the new Poland had little opportunity to forge their own national identity, as had been the case under Austro-Hungarian rule. Soon after the formation of the independent state of

⁴⁷ As in Soviet Russia, rampant inflation was fueled by the printing of more currency. The Polish mark plummeted from 50,000 marks to the dollar in the spring of 1923 to about 5 million marks to the dollar in December 1923. In 1924, the government revalued the monetary system and introduced a new currency, the Polish zloty, which was linked to the French franc.

Poland, multilingual postal cards and postmarks were replaced by unilingual Polish counterparts.⁴⁸ Similarly, as early as December 1918, when Polish forces had taken Przemyśl (Peremyshl), the available Austrian and Bosnian postage stamps were overprinted with the phrase “Poczta Polska” and a crowned eagle, the Polish national emblem.

Moreover, the Polish government adopted the same methods that were being used at this time by the Soviet authorities. In Lviv alone, for example, more than fifty pictorial or slogan postmarks were created in the interwar period. Some of these quite innocently recognized the role of Poland in eastern Europe as an independent state, commemorated trade or regional fairs, wished the population a “Merry Christmas,” and encouraged consumers to purchase Polish products. Others served as advertising and explained such things as the different rates for domestic and international telephone calls. A third category urged the citizens of Poland to further their education with the simple slogan “budumy szkoly” and reminded them of their duty to participate in the defense of the new Polish state. A final group of cancels blatantly displayed the political declarations and nationalistic statements of the new leaders including Marshal Jozef Pilsudski.⁴⁹

c. Soviet Ukraine

At the time when the government of the UNR left Ukrainian territory and went into exile in Poland, Lenin and the Bolshevik Party were involved in a period of self-criticism, recognizing that they had antagonized Ukrainian peasants as a result of their grain requisitions. Further, having badly underestimated the strength of Ukrainian nationalism, Lenin stated that:

⁴⁸ Belesky, “Lviv,” 24.

⁴⁹ For descriptions of the cancels, see Belesky, “Lviv,” 24, 26–27.

[T]o ignore the importance of the national question in Ukraine, of which the Great Russians are very frequently guilty . . . means committing a profound and dangerous error . . . we must struggle especially energetically against remnants (sometimes subconscious ones) of Great Russian imperialism and chauvinism among the Russian Communists.⁵⁰

Lenin's course of action, however, was to not give in to Ukrainian demands for independence, neither the independent statehood that the nationalist wanted nor the organizational independence that many Ukrainian Bolsheviks desired. Rather the Bolshevik leader decided to add more Ukrainian "color" to Soviet rule in the region.⁵¹ To this end, the formation of the third Ukrainian Soviet government, on 21 December 1919, was accompanied by patriotic rhetoric such as "the free and independent Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic again arises from the dead"; another manifesto announced that one of the main goals of the Communist Party of Ukraine was to "defend the independence and integrity of the Socialist Soviet Republic of Ukraine."⁵² The party's few Ukrainians were given prominent, but not key, positions in the government while instructions were given to party functionaries to use the Ukrainian language whenever possible and to show respect for Ukrainian culture.

Prior to the full reorganization of the region into the Ukrainian S.S.R. in 1923, several interim postal issues were used.⁵³ The first of the attempts to Russianize Ukrainian stamps occurred in Mariupol. Here the Bolshevik authorities, prior to the arrival of Denikin's army in July 1919, surcharged 35- and 70-kopeck values over the trident on the UNR's 10- and 50-

⁵⁰ V. I. Lenin, *Sochinieniia*, 4th ed. (Moscow: 1941–1950), 30: 246–247; quoted in Jurij Borys, *The Sovietization of Soviet Ukraine 1917–1923*, rev. ed. (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1980), 254.

⁵¹ Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, 376.

⁵² Cited in Borys, *The Sovietization of Soviet Ukraine*, 256, 257.

⁵³ These issues are described in Peter Bylen, "The Interim Issues of Soviet Ukraine, 1919–1923," *Ukrainian Philatelist* 39, no. 1 (61) (1992): 3.

shahiv stamps.⁵⁴ Denikin's army then introduced into circulation its own stamp issue, "United Russia" (*edinaia rossia*), which featured St. George on horseback. In accordance with Denikin's orders, all previously overprinted Ukrainian and Russian stamps were confiscated and removed from postal circulation.⁵⁵

Other issues were produced during the inflationary period and resulted primarily in surcharges to change values and to alter the Ukrainian currency back to Russian rubles. For example, in Tulchyn, the Cyrillic letter "P" ("R" for ruble) was overprinted in red ink onto Poltava trident stamps, which were originally Russian arms stamps that had already been overprinted with the Ukrainian emblem. The rival government of the Soviet Ukrainian Republic, which was proclaimed in December 1917 and based in Khar'kov, similarly overprinted "RUB" onto trident overprints from Khar'kov, Ekaterinoslav, and Kiev, as well as onto various imperial issues remaining in the 236 post offices on Ukrainian territory and in the neighboring Russian Kursk province.

With the exception of the following two limited issues, the Ukrainian S.S.R. used the stamps of the Soviet Union from 1923 until it regained its independence in 1991. The first set appeared in March 1922 and consisted of the black overprint "Y.C.C.P." onto certain values of the 1921 R.S.F.S.R. definitive issue.⁵⁶ The intent behind these stamps may have been to obviously place the republic within the larger political context of the Soviet Union.

Then, in 1923, the government of the Ukrainian S.S.R. issued one million sets of semi-postal stamps to aid victims of famine. As discussed in chapter three, under their policy of war

⁵⁴ John Bulat, "Russian Overprints on Shaly Stamps," *Ukrainian Philatelist* 32, no. 48 (1985): 6–11.

⁵⁵ Bulat, "Russian Overprints on Shaly Stamps," 6. After Denikin's counterrevolutionary volunteer army was reorganized, the new commander, Peter Nikolaievich Wrangel (1878–1928), overprinted the slogan "Southern Russia" (*iug' rossii*) on existing stocks of imperial Russian arms stamps from 1909–1918.

⁵⁶ Godfrey M. White, *An Annotated List of The Postage Stamps of the Soviet Republics 1917–1925* (London: Harris Publications Limited, 1925), 29.

communism, the Bolsheviks had introduced severe measures that were aimed at establishing a socialist economic order while simultaneously providing food for the Red Army and urban centers. Perhaps the most devastating act, the expropriation of grain from the peasants, was compounded by a drought that affected large regions of southern Russia and the Ukrainian S.S.R. The resultant famine of 1921–1922 claimed hundreds of thousands of lives in Ukraine and the Volga region.⁵⁷

The four stamps were printed at the State Printing Works in Berlin, with distinctively Ukrainian themes: “Ukraina v borotbi z holodom” (Ukraine battles the famine), 10 kopecks + 10 kopecks; “Selianyn obezbroiuiie smert’ ” (a peasant disarms death), 90 kopecks + 30 kopecks; “Portret T. Shevchenka” (portrait of Taras Shevchenko), 20 kopecks + 20 kopecks; and “Dopomoha holoduiuchym” (aid to the starving), 150 kopecks + 50 kopecks (figure 14). The surcharged values of these relief stamps were obviously earmarked to aid famine victims. This set circulated briefly from the post offices of the main cities in the Ukrainian S.S.R. (Khar’kov, Kiev, Odessa, Ekaterinoslav, Poltava, and Vinnitsa) as well as from Moscow and Petersburg from 25 June to 15 July 1923. The stamps were the only regular postal issue ever released by the government of the Ukrainian S.S.R. and the only Soviet issue that used the denomination “karbovanets,” the Ukrainian equivalent of Russian rubles.⁵⁸

An earlier set of famine relief stamps that were privately issued in Odessa had caused the Soviet government international embarrassment.⁵⁹ Although the stamps of this so-called “Odessa Hunger Relief Issue” (figure 15) carried neither the name of the country from which

⁵⁷ Roman Serbyn argues that although the 1921 famine in Russia was caused by natural calamities, in Ukraine it was caused primarily by Soviet economic and political policies. See his “The Famine in 1921–1923: A Model for 1932–1933?” in Roman Serbyn and Bohdan Krawchenko, eds., *Famine in Ukraine, 1932–1933* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1986), 147–178.

⁵⁸ One karbovanets equaled one ruble of the 1922 currency.

⁵⁹ F. G. Chuchin, “Spekuliatsiia na golode RSFSR,” *Sovetskii filatelist* 2 (October 1922): 18–19.



a. "Ukraine" battles famine



b. peasant disarms death



c. Taras Shevchenko



d. aid to the starving

Figure 14: Ukrainian S.S.R. Famine Relief, 1923
Michel Catalog, 67-70

they emanated nor an indication of the charity they were to help, they were inscribed with “pochta” and values expressed in rubles. In addition to these omissions, the designs were:

[U]nusual and clever, in a pictorial way, but very far from the sort of thing that we expect in postage stamps. Doubtless, each of them is intended to signify something but their meaning is not obvious. It would have helped had they been given name plates, as is done with pictures in a gallery. They are reminiscent of Dore’s illustrations for Dante’s “Inferno,” with their flames, distorted bodies, and the suggestion of sweeping winds and waves.⁶⁰

Some speculation about these two Ukrainian famine issues is possible. In fact, a parallel situation may have occurred about two years earlier in the R.S.F.S.R. when a privately issued set of stamps prompted an official charity issue for victims of the Volga flood.⁶¹ In this light, it is possible that the Odessa charity stamps similarly sparked the official Ukrainian famine issue. But more significantly, it is important to note that unlike what would happen a decade later, the Soviet government did acknowledge the famine of 1921–1922, organizing a massive domestic and international relief effort to aid the hungry.⁶²

Throughout the rest of the interwar years, the post offices in the Ukrainian S.S.R. circulated only the stamps of the Soviet Union. Although the definitive series and several individual designs were discussed in chapter three, a few other observations can be made. Because this was a period during which the central government placed its priorities on

⁶⁰ *Scott’s Monthly Journal* 3, no. 7 (Sept. 1922): 147. *The American Philatelist* 36, no. 2 (Nov. 1922): 59, provided a rather amusing interpretation of the stamps:

Mr. Phillips in *Gibbons Monthly Circular* ventures the title of “A sea of flames lit by torches” for the first value but we suppose the idea of the artist was deeper than that, it is too obvious and we imagine he was picturing “Bolshevik thoughts on Capital”; the second value . . . is of course our old friend September morn drying out after the plunge[,] but the third . . . is a puzzler, Mr. Phillips guesses “The Passionate Strong Woman or Throwing [F]ather to the Twins[,]” which being hot stuff is probably near the correct solution. The 1000 rouble looks like Norma the film star, don’t you think? The 2500 R. we would caption “He loves me, he loves me not” or “It’s a Daisy!” while the dignified and somber pair on the 5000 R. clearly pictures the great Soviet problem “Shall we go to work or not?”

⁶¹ These sets were discussed in chapter three.

⁶² The week of 21–28 October 1921 was declared “Hunger Assistance Week.”



a.



b.



c.



d.



e.



f.



g.

Figure 15: Private Ukrainian Famine Relief Issues, 1922

industrializing and consolidating the new Soviet state, many of the stamps had industrial themes, including several devoted to the completion of the Moscow subway and one for the completion of the Dnieper Hydroelectric Power Station.⁶³ Another prominent theme was the Young Communist League, through which the youth of the Soviet Union learned, among other things, a proper code of behavior. There was also a noticeable emphasis placed on military themes, both marking the horrors of World War I and noting a build-up of the new Soviet armed forces. Finally, other stamps marked the first decade of Soviet life without Lenin, honored Friedrich Engels and other prominent individuals of the socialist movement, and commemorated events of the 1905 and 1917 revolutions.

From the Ukrainian perspective, several stamps are noteworthy. A Ukrainian peasant was included on an October 1927 stamp that featured representatives of the various Soviet republics. In 1933, a series on the peoples of the Soviet Union was released; the Ukrainian design showed collective farm workers. Then in 1937, to commemorate the adoption of the Soviet Constitution, a series was produced with the coats of arms of the union republics, including one 20-kopeck stamp devoted to the Ukrainian S.S.R. Finally, in March 1939, three designs were released to mark the 125th anniversary of the birth of the Ukrainian national hero Taras Shevchenko (1814–1861).

d. World War II

As a consequence of the agreement between Soviet foreign minister Viacheslav Mikhailovich Molotov and the German representative Joachim von Ribbentrop, Ukrainian territories in Poland were partitioned by a demarcation line that ran roughly along the San and

⁶³ The dam was one included in the general electrification plan prepared in December 1920 by the State Commission for the Electrification of Russia (Gosudarstvennaia komissiiia po elektrifikatsii rossii/GOELRO), which was the first Soviet effort at national economic planning.

Buh rivers. After Germany's invasion of Poland on 1 September 1939, precipitating World War II, Soviet forces moved in from the east. On 1 November 1939, the former Polish-held Ukrainian-inhabited lands of western Volhynia and eastern Galicia were accepted into the Ukrainian S.S.R., while western Polissia was joined to the Belorussian S.S.R. Those Ukrainian-inhabited lands west of the German-Soviet demarcation line became part of a German-ruled colony that was known as the General Gouvernement.

Several obvious changes related to the postal service were enacted on territories occupied by the Soviets.⁶⁴ For example, there was a gradual elimination of Polish stamps and canceling devices. Initially, mixed frankings of Polish and Soviet stamps was tolerated because the two country's rates were virtually identical at this time.⁶⁵ Mixtures of Polish and Ukrainian postal indicia were also briefly retained. In Stanyslaviv, unilingual Ukrainian cancels were introduced following the Soviet takeover; however, these were replaced by July 1940 with unilingual Russian ones.⁶⁶

However, with the initial German successes of Operation Barbarossa, the western regions of the Soviet Union were quickly overrun and incorporated into the General Gouvernement. Within five months, most of the Ukrainian S.S.R. as far as Khar'kov and the

⁶⁴ The Polish Red Cross maintained the flow of mail within Galicia at this time. All correspondence was subject to censorship by both the Soviet NKVD and German Wehrmacht.

⁶⁵ Peter A. Michalove, "The Soviet Occupation of Western Ukraine, 1939-41," *Ukrainian Philatelist* 39, no. 2 (62) (1992): 61. However, envelopes with only Polish stamps were not allowed to pass in the mails. Such letters were returned with the marking "Returned - to be paid for in Soviet stamps." M. Shmueli, "Soviet Posts in the Western Ukraine 1939-1941," *Rossica Journal* 106/107 (1985): 85. In other cases, Soviet stamps were simply glued on top of the Polish stamps. See also Peter A. Michalove, "The Soviet Occupation of the Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia 1939-1941," *Rossica Journal* 113/114 (1990): 75-81.

⁶⁶ This situation was not unlike that in the Baltic. When the Baltic states became constituent republics of the U.S.S.R. in 1940-1941, Soviet currency, postage stamps, and postal rates immediately became valid. However, banknotes and stamps from the previously independent republics remained valid for several months into the Soviet period. In addition, bilingual Soviet cancels, giving the place name in Russian and in the language of the republic, were gradually adopted in all three Baltic republics. See Peter A. Michalove, "The Soviet Occupation of the Baltic States 1940-41," *The American Philatelist* 107, no. 9 (1 September 1993): 850-853.

Donets' River came under German control, while Germany's ally, Romania, was allowed to re-annex Bukovina and Bessarabia and additionally to acquire a region called Transnistria that was situated between the lower Dniester and Boh rivers (including Odessa). The farthest eastward advance of the German armies was attained in the summer of 1942, along a front following the course of the Don River and reaching Stalingrad on the Volga, and then southward beyond the Kuban region, thereby encompassing the entire Ukrainian S.S.R. and most Ukrainian ethnolinguistic territory.

Behind the military zone along the eastern front, the Germans established three distinct administrative entities on Ukrainian lands. Eastern Galicia (that is, Galician lands east of the shortlived German-Soviet demarcation line) was made the fifth province (Distrikt Galizien) of the General Gouvernement. Much of the rest of Ukrainian territory was reorganized into the so-called Reichskommissariat Ukraine, a German colony with a German civil administrator resident in Rivne. The Crimea was ruled as a separate German colony.

Lviv (renamed "Lemberg") became the center of one of five postal districts in the occupied territory. All mail to the outlying regions was channeled through the district hubs. *Insights into the events occurring within the General Gouvernement can be gleaned from studying a variety of postal items and the markings appearing on them.*

On 15 November 1939, the use of scripts other than Roman or Gothic was proscribed in the General Gouvernement. This essentially meant that the Yiddish/Hebrew and Cyrillic alphabets were outlawed, and materials printed using these typefaces were to be confiscated and destroyed.⁶⁷ Therefore, postmarks were again changed in the region: bilingual Russian-Ukrainian cancellations were replaced by unilingual German ones.

⁶⁷ Belesky, "Lviv," 33.

The German forces took advantage of the potential publicity created by postal cancels on numerous occasions. The first cancel issued under occupation in Lviv appeared on 1 August 1941 to commemorate the incorporation of Galicia into the General Gouvernement; a special one-year anniversary cancel was also used in Lviv in August 1942. Then, special cancels were created for each of the district capitals — Warsaw, Cracow, Lublin, Radom, Lviv — for use on 25 and 26 October 1941 to mark the second year of German occupation. However, not all the markings were of a strictly political nature. One cancel, used on 10 and 11 December 1942, recognized the opening of the Behring spotted fever clinic in Lviv.⁶⁸

Between 1943 and 1945, the only officially sanctioned Ukrainian political organization in the General Gouvernement was the Ukrainian Central Committee (Ukrainskyi Tsentralnyi Komitet/UCC). This social-welfare organization, headed by Volodymyr Kubijovych (1900–1985), was centered in Cracow. The main functions of the UCC were to organize cultural-educational activities, manage economic affairs, and provide Ukrainians with representation before the German authorities; the UCC did not have any political prerogatives. In February 1942, the German authorities ordered the UCC to expand its activities into Galicia, transferring the cultural and youth departments to Lviv.

As a means of financing its activities, especially the scholarships of the Ukrainian Students' Aid Commission (Komisiia Dopomohy Ukrainskomu Studentstvo/KODUS) that were established in 1940, the UCC produced a small number of donation coupons that were used in

⁶⁸ Winston Gruszczyk, "Postal History and Cancellations of General Government in Poland," *The American Philatelist* (May 1980): 418–421. In all, thirty-four basic varieties of cancels were used in the General Gouvernement, with some used on the same day in different district capitals. Twenty-two cancels appeared in Cracow; four in Warsaw; six in Lublin; six in Radom; four in Lviv; and six in Zakopane. Among the non-political topics that were commemorated were a chess championship, a horse breeders' race, an autumn trade fair, the Tatra Mountain Sport Festival, Mozart Day, and the four hundredth anniversary of the death of Copernicus.

A few slogan cancels were also created for post offices in occupied Poland. These range from the "Day of the Nazi Party in the General Gouvernement" (used 15–17 August 1941) and those encouraging "Health Through Corn Bread" and to others giving instructions to "Pack Fieldpost Parcels Well and Secure" and "Do Not Forget to Write Street and House Number" on letters and packages.

Lviv.⁶⁹ While most of the coupons were simply designed, featuring text related to the amount of the donation and a general statement on the scholarship funds — contributors were given the coupons as receipts for their donations — others carried more representative Ukrainian designs. For example, in 1943 the UCC produced a coupon that showed a young boy and girl holding an oversized Easter egg and the Ukrainian text “Pysanky Ukrainiskyi Ditvoryi”; on the reverse was an explanatory text as well as the Ukrainian Easter greeting “Christos Voskres” (Christ is Risen).⁷⁰ Similarly, in 1943 and 1944, the UCC issued 1-zloty coupons that carried the phrase “Christos Rodivsia” (Christ is Born) for “Kolyada” Christmas donations. These coupons highlight the fact that the UCC did have hidden agenda. According to the historian Orest Subtelny, the UCC’s activities were additionally aimed at countering the strong Polonizing influences on this isolated Ukrainian community and the raising of the national consciousness among the refugees.⁷¹

A final comment relates to contemporary postage stamps. Initially, the German military units paid little attention to the internal affairs of the Ukrainian self-governing administrations. Therefore, some attempts were made by local Ukrainian authorities under German occupation to issue their own postage stamps. These efforts were primarily required because during its retreat, the Soviet military destroyed many post offices and entire stocks of postage stamps. Local

⁶⁹ Although there are no existing records from the UCC that describe the coupon program, philatelic researchers have discovered seven different designs. They are described in Borys Zayachivsky, “Donation Coupons of the Ukrainian Central Committee, 1942–44,” *Ukrainian Philatelist* 42, no. 1 (67) (1994): 54–56. The earliest coupon of the UCC that has so far been identified was issued in Lviv in September 1942.

⁷⁰ Zayachivsky, “Donation Coupons of the Ukrainian Central Committee,” 54. In 1943, the donation coupons help fund 730 scholarships, worth 1,350,000 zlotys. The money raised for the educational programs also financed a student cafeteria.

⁷¹ Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, 457. Subtelny (pages 457–458) further states that the Nazis were aware of these objectives and, to a limited extent, encouraged their attainment in the hopes that the growth of Ukrainian national consciousness would act as a counterweight to the more numerous Poles. To this end, the Germans often favored the appointment of Ukrainians to low-level administrative posts or to the police force in ethnically mixed communities. The Germans also tolerated the UCC because of its propagandistic potential: the 20,000–30,000 political refugees in Cracow had largely fled Soviet persecution in the Ukrainian S.S.R.

stamps appeared in Sarny, Horokhiv, Kamenets-Podol'sk, and possibly other towns.⁷²

However, on 19 October 1941, the German government liquidated all local self-governing institutions, and the local postal issues were thereafter banned.

In addition to the various General Gouvernement and Deutsches Reich stamps that were designed at this time, the occupying postal authorities made use of the available stamp stocks by adding an appropriate overprint. For example, in the Alexanderstadt district, Soviet definitives from 1939 were overprinted with a swastika, the date, and a new value.⁷³ Then, in 1941, Germany overprinted stamps from its current definitive set, which featured a portrait of Hitler, with the word "UKRAINE" for use in the occupied territory of Ukraine (figure 16). These overprinted stamps remained in circulation until late 1944 when most Ukrainian territory was recaptured by Soviet troops.

e. Carpatho-Ukraine

In contrast to the forced annexation of other western Ukrainian lands, the Carpatho-Ukrainian association with Czechoslovakia was a voluntary one. As a result of an agreement concluded in November 1918 with Czech leaders, emigrants from Transcarpathia accepted the incorporation of their homeland into the new Czech state on the condition of Transcarpathian autonomy.⁷⁴ Then, following the Munich Pact of September 1938, Czechoslovakia was transformed into a federal republic that granted its easternmost province a special autonomous

⁷² See, for example, M. Hadziackyj, "Control Stamps of Sarny, 1941," *Philatelist* 3, no. 3 (July–September 1953): 37–38.

⁷³ New local postage rates were introduced in September 1943 by the Reichskommissariat of Ukraine: letters up to 20 grams, 80 kopecks; between 20 and 250 grams, 1.60 karbovanets; between 250 and 1000 grams, 3 karbovanets; ordinary postcards, 50 kopecks; and postcards with a reply card, 1 karbovanets. Alexander Malychy, "Postal Tariff for Local Mail in Eastern German-Occupied Ukrainian During World War II," *Ukrainian Philatelist* 42, no. 1 (67) (1994): 57.

⁷⁴ The agreement was signed in Scranton, Pennsylvania. For details, see Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, 448.

status. In 15 March 1939, a national assembly meeting in Khust proclaimed Carpatho-Ukraine an independent state. The provincial azure-yellow flag of Subcarpathian Ruthenia (Pidkarpatska Rus') was recognized as the national flag. The Diet also adopted the trident with a cross as the official coat of arms; the national emblem, taken from a symbol carried in a fourteenth-century liberation struggle under Petro Petrovych, featured a bear.

To mark the opening of the First National Assembly, a single stamp was released. It consisted of the inscription "Karpatska Ukraina" (in Cyrillic letters) on the 3-koruny Czechoslovak stamp that depicted a wooden church in the town of Yasinia. This same vignette had first been used in 1928 to commemorate the tenth anniversary of Czechoslovakian independence. However, the inscription on the design was changed from "Cheskoslovensko" to "Cesko-Slovensko," and the value from 60 haleru to 3 koruny. The total printing for this stamp was 900,000 copies, two-thirds of which were put on sale at the Philatelic Section in Prague.⁷⁵ The stamps were invalidated after two days as a result of the arrival of Hungarian forces.

According to Subtelny, many Ukrainians viewed Carpatho-Ukraine as the first step in the imminent creation of an independent, united Ukraine.⁷⁶ Thus, eager to protect this new Ukrainian state, many young integral, idealistic nationalists from Galicia illegally crossed the border and joined the Carpathian military units. However, because of divisions within the leadership, the young state was easily overtaken and its government forced to flee from the capital of Uzhgorod to Khust. By late-March 1939, the Hungarian occupation of Carpatho-

⁷⁵ Viktor Indra, "The 1939 Stamp of Carpatho-Ukraine," *Ukrainian Philatelist* 41, no. 1/2 (65/66) (1993): 53–54. The rest of the stamps were put on sale in Khust. Several commemorative cancels were prepared for the release of this stamp, including one that featured the coat of arms of Carpatho-Ukraine. Another card carried the trident and the slogan "Slava Ukrainy" (Glory to Ukraine). Among the variety of local issues from Yasinia were several trident overprints on Czech stamps, which were created to demonstrate Ukrainian suzerainty in the area. These stamps and cancels are described in Michael Shulwesky, "Carpatho-Ukraine: The Private Yasinia (Jasina) Local Issue of 1939," *Ukrainian Philatelist* 43, no. 1/2 (71/72) (1995): 77.

⁷⁶ Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, 451.



a.

Figure 16: World War II, German Occupation

Ukraine was complete. The territory was administered by Hungary until September 1944, during which time Hungarian stamps, postal stationery, and postmarks were used; in some areas, postal forms carried inscriptions in both Hungarian and Rusyn.

In October 1944, Carpatho-Ukraine was occupied by Soviet troops. Early the following month, the Czechoslovakian administration returned from exile in London to Khust and to the eastern provinces of Carpatho-Ukraine.⁷⁷ To demonstrate Czech suzerainty, on 4 December 1944, the government-in-exile delegate Frantisek Nemecek ordered all available Hungarian stamps and postal stationery to be overprinted with "ČSP" (Ceskoslovenské pošty) and the date "1944" for use on the liberated territory of Carpatho-Ukraine.⁷⁸ The stamps were then delivered to post offices in the liberated districts beyond Khust, namely Volove, Rakhiv (Rachovo), Sevlus, Tiachiv (Tacovo), Teresva and to some smaller postal outlets.⁷⁹

As a result of a congress of Ukrainians that occurred on 26 November 1944, a network of local political organizations in the western regions, including the capital city of Uzhgorod and Mukachevo, evolved into the National Council of Carpatho-Ukraine (Narodna Rada Zakarpatskoyi Ukraïny/NRZU). This council ruled the country *de facto* from the end of 1944 on, although the region was still part of Czechoslovakia. Headed by the Communist Party functionary Ivan Turianytsia (1901–1955), the main purpose of the NRZU was to organize and

⁷⁷ During the Hungarian and German occupation of the former Czecho-Slovakia, a government-in-exile was formed with its headquarters in London. During the retreat of these occupation armies, the government-in-exile sent its delegation from London, via Moscow, to Khust, its new base of operations. In January 1945, the government again went into exile, this time to Kosice in Slovakia.

⁷⁸ The postal and telecommunications agent Frantisek Krudsky was authorized to recover Hungarian postage stamps and postcards from all postal stations and send them to the main post office in Khust. The overprints were made under the supervision of the Ukrainian chief of posts, Mihály Fedeles (Mykhailo Fedelsh). John Bulat, "Postage Stamps, Postcards and Cancellation Stamps of the 1944 Czecho-Slovak Republic," *Ukrainian Philatelist* 24, no. 40 (June 1977): 4; Miroslav Blaha, "The Development of the Postal Services in the Transcarpathian Province of the Soviet Union," *Rossica Journal* 73 (1967): 37–43.

⁷⁹ The issuance of ČSP-overprinted stamps and the use of Czech cancellations were ineffective demonstrations of Czechoslovak suzerainty because the post was not really functioning at this time. No mail going through the system is known from this period; the existing "used" pieces show only cancellations "to order."

administer civil matters, including the post office. In one of his first orders to postal employees (dated 3 January 1945), Turianytsia reinstated continuous (i.e., twenty-four hour) telephone and telegraph service, and attempted to organize postal deliveries into the districts. Regional directors were asked to submit a list of postal employees who had worked for the post office under the Hungarian administration but who could be trusted by the new government.⁸⁰

Seeking to further enhance its jurisdiction in Carpatho-Ukraine and as a reflection of its decision to sever ties with Prague, the NRZU issued five series of stamps. The first two of these series, from February and March 1945, consisted of the overprint "Poshta Zakarpats'ka Ukraina" on existing Hungarian stamps including those that had previously been overprinted ČSP.⁸¹ Then, beginning in May 1945, three separate, locally produced, definitive series were produced to replace the overprinted ČSP issues. The meaning behind the stamp designs — the implied recognition of the Soviet-backed takeover of Carpatho-Ukraine — was quite clear. The first of these series consisted of three values (60, 100, and 200 fillér) with images featuring a Red Army soldier and two versions of a broken chain.⁸² The last two series used the same design: a hammer and sickle within a star, against the rays of a sun; the only difference was that the second series added the date 1945 at the bottom of the design (figure 17).⁸³

⁸⁰ Turianytsia also declared that new cancellation stamps had to be prepared immediately. For those containing both Hungarian and Rusyn texts, the Hungarian inscriptions were to be cut out, thus leaving only the Rusyn. Rusyn language courses were also to be organized for all postal employees. For more details on postal matters, see the reproduction of a bulletin from the National Council of Carpatho-Ukraine in *Ukrainian Philatelist* 27, no. 43 (1980): 1–4. See also Béla Simády, "Answers to Questions on the Postal History of Karpato-Ukraine" *The American Philatelist* (November 1984): 1099, and Béla Simády, "Overprinted Issues of Carpatho-Ukraine, 1945" *The American Philatelist* (December 1989): 1156–1164.

⁸¹ These first overprints were made at a smaller private Hungarian printing house, named Földessi, not at the State Printing Office in Ungvár.

⁸² These stamps were designed by T. Moshkovitz (Moskovic).

⁸³ All of the stamps from these last two series were designed by A. A. Kocka and carried the inscriptions "Zakarpats'ka Ukraina" and "Poshta." The stamps, as well as the chain-breaker issues, were printed by Lam Lithographers in Uzhgorod.

Carpatho-Ukraine's brief period of postal autonomy came to an end on 1 November 1945 when the territory was officially annexed into the Ukrainian S.S.R. While some historians claim that this was the result of a vote by the NRZU, other sources maintain that a secret war-time treaty between the Czech government-in-exile and Soviet Union had provided for the territory's cession. In any case, the distinct Carpatho-Ukrainian stamps remained valid only until the end of November when they were replaced by Soviet stamps.⁸⁴ Some post offices briefly retained the right to issue Russian-Ukrainian cancels, while others reverted to Russian-only cancels.⁸⁵

3. Issues Produced in Exile

During the years between 1923, when the Ukrainian S.S.R. issued its last stamps, and 1991, when Ukraine again became an independent state, postage stamps and postcards were issued by various Ukrainian exile organizations in countries where they took up residence. Most of these items are considered to be semi-official, local issues: local for the country in which they were released and local for the Ukrainian community. Although theoretically cinderellas, from the point of view of the Ukrainian diaspora and especially its government-in-exile, these stamps are considered to be legitimate postal products, produced by a government body for a needed postal service.⁸⁶ In all instances, the Ukrainian diaspora communities followed much the same

⁸⁴ An expert committee entered the remaining 7,129 stamps on a stock list that was given to the Postal Commissariat of the Ukrainian S.S.R. in December 1945. The stamps were officially withdrawn from circulation by order No. 6035/1945.

⁸⁵ Blaha, "The Development of the Postal Services." 39. In the 1960s, two important pieces of Soviet postal stationery marked these events. One envelope commemorated the twentieth anniversary of the treaty signed between the U.S.S.R. and Czechoslovakia, while the second marked the twentieth anniversary of the "separation agreement."

⁸⁶ Borys Fessak, "Ukrainian Diaspora Philately," *Introductory Handbook of Ukrainian Philately/Ukrainian Philatelist* 40, no. 1/2 (63/64) (1993): 32. In philatelic terms, the stamps are actually referred to as "labels" or "cinderellas" because they were not produced by an independent Ukrainian state. They can be compared to, among others, the Rattlesnake Island labels that are currently being issued in Michigan and Lundy Island labels from England.



a. "Karpatska Ukraina," 1939
Michel Catalog, 1.



b. "Zakarpatska Ukraina"
Michel Catalog, 85.



c. "Zakarpatska Ukraina"
Michel Catalog, 79.



d. "Zakarpatska Ukraina"
Michel Catalog, 80.

Figure 17. Carpatho-Ukraine

type of postal programs as those adopted by internationally recognized states. With understandably lower quantities, funds were collected from the sale of stamps that honored the Ukrainian heads of state while other stamps promoted the national culture. These features are demonstrated by an examination of the exile postal issues from four semi-official postal services that were organized within the Ukrainian diaspora.

a. Council of the Republic

As Bolshevik troops occupied independent Ukraine, the first departments of the UNR government were evacuated at the end of 1919, with the transfer out of Ukrainian territory completed by early 1920. Most of the institutions were relocated in Tarnów, Poland, and a few in Czestochowa.⁸⁷ As the government-in-exile, a Council of the Republic (Rada Respubliky) was formed as a legislative body, consisting of representatives of Ukrainian political parties, professional associations, and cultural organizations. The most intensive activity was conducted by the ministry of external affairs. Until the early 1920s, diplomatic representatives were maintained in a number of countries, including Romania, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Switzerland, Turkey, and France. Through contacts with the League of Nations, the head of the mission in France protested against the Bolshevik occupation of Ukraine, Soviet diplomatic initiatives, and later the Stalinist terror and man-made famine in the Ukrainian S.S.R. The government-in-exile also conducted some of its activities in foreign affairs through the Ukrainian

⁸⁷ The government-in-exile functioned in Tarnów from February to August 1921, when it relocated to Warsaw, and later Paris and Prague. The "Law on the Temporary Supreme Authority and the Legislative System of the Ukrainian National Republic," which passed on 12 November 1920, gave constitutional sanction to the one-man Directory headed by Petliura. After Petliura's assassination on 25 May 1926, supreme power was assumed by the head of the Council of Ministers-in-exile, Andriy Livtysky.

Association for the League of Nations, and prior to 1939, through its permanent secretariat in Geneva.⁸⁸

In addition to its diplomatic activities, special attention was also initially devoted to military organs, which were responsible for training military personnel, organizing soldiers from the former Ukraine into divisions, and maintaining clandestine contacts with supporters in the Ukrainian S.S.R. Some concerns in civic and cultural spheres were also addressed. In terms of its postal activities, the UNR Council of the Republic was the first government to issue stamps while in exile, an act that was later copied by several other governments-in-exile, both Ukrainian and non-Ukrainian.

On 26 August 1920, the government-in-exile called for the preparation of a courier field-post issue (*kuriersko-polova poshta*) to serve the tens of thousands of Ukrainian military personnel who were quartered in several camps near Tarnów and to improve postal communications from the seat of government to the army headquarters in the field during the allied Polish-Ukrainian campaign to reclaim Ukraine.⁸⁹ To this end, the Ukrainian Ministry for Posts and Telegraphs issued its Orders 22 and 23 through the Ukrainian Diplomatic Mission in London. The two documents authorized the preparation of a series of stamps, created by overprinting the five shahiv stamps of Ukraine's first definitive series with the three denominations of 10, 20, and 40 hryven and the phrase "kuriersko-polova poshta."⁹⁰ Reinforcing the notion that the series was designed only for internal correspondence, these three

⁸⁸ *Ukrainian Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Government-in-exile of the Ukrainian National Republic," volume 2: 71–72.

⁸⁹ According to some philatelic experts, these stamps represent the final postal issue of the Ukrainian National Republic to be used as actual postage. The subsequent Vienna Issue was released five months later, by which time the government no longer controlled Ukrainian territory. Also, the 1923 field post issue, ordered by the Ukrainian government-in-exile in Vienna, was primarily philatelic with the purpose of raising funds. See Val Zabijaka, "The Ukrainian Field Post Issue of 1920," *Ukrainian Philatelist* 42, no. 1 (67) (1994): 4.

⁹⁰ Order 22 also authorized the creation of two field-post canceling devices. Authenticated translations of both documents are printed in Zabijaka, "The Ukrainian Field Post Issue of 1920," 4–8.

values corresponded with contemporary postal rates: 10 hryven, official or state mail, 5,600 copies; 20 hryven, regular mail, 6,400 stamps; and 40 hryven, registered mail, 1,000 stamps. When letters were sent to foreign countries, Polish stamps would have to be added.⁹¹

Unquestionably, these stamps were intended for temporary use only. Because it seemed possible that the government-in-exile would soon return to Ukrainian territory, the overprinted field-post stamps would only be needed until the government could reorganize itself. At the same time, the preparation of a new definitive series (discussed below) was also undertaken. Yet, once the military campaign failed and the Ukrainian army was subsequently interned, there was no need to continue with the production of these stamps. Therefore, the field post ceased operations late in 1920; the latest known covers are canceled on 15 October.

To some extent, the preparation of these stamps was also motivated by a need to increase funds for the UNR government. The minister for the posts and telegraphs, Ivan Palyvoda (1885–1985), admittedly sold supplies of stamps brought from Ukraine, while another member of the government reported that twenty-seven boxes of stamps were sold for ten million Polish marks.⁹² In both cases, the funds supported operations of the government-in-exile.

On the day after authorizing the field-post issues (27 August 1920), the government-in-exile resolved to replace all existing postage stamps then in use on Ukrainian territories with a new definitive series that would consist of values from one to two hundred hryven. This fourteen-stamp set became known as the Vienna Issue because the stamps were printed by the Austrian Military Geographic Institute in Vienna.⁹³ According to one philatelic expert, “The

⁹¹ Zabijaka, “The Ukrainian Field Post Issue of 1920,” 5, 9.

⁹² Zabijaka, “The Ukrainian Field Post Issue of 1920,” 5.

⁹³ After the decision was reached, it was conveyed to the Ukrainian Trade Mission in Austria, thus establishing the connection to Vienna. The completed stamps were delivered to the government-in-exile in late December 1920, and the printing plates destroyed on 31 May 1921.

series remains the best representation of the Ukrainian national character ever produced. In its scenes are expressed the symbols of the newly independent nation: the trident emblem, the azure-yellow flag, the national musical instrument the bandura, and the Parliament building."⁹⁴ In addition, each stamp carried a border composed of either a traditional Ukrainian embroidery or tapestry pattern, while also including a trident.

Designs for eight values (1, 2, 3, 5, 30, 50, 80, and 200 hryven) were executed by the prominent Ukrainian artist Mykola Ivasiuk (1865–1930?), whose most important works dealt with historical themes.⁹⁵ The designs for the remaining values (10, 15, 20, 40, 60, and 100 hryven) were based on photographs of historic places and portraits of prominent historical figures (figure 18). Without question, these stamps are characteristic of the images on other Ukrainian diaspora issues:

- 1 hryvnia: a trident, the emblem of Ukraine (2 million copies);
- 2 hryvni: a young girl in traditional costume, an allegorical figure of Ukraine, holding a flag (4 million copies);
- 3 hryvni: a peasant cottage and garden (4 million copies);
- 5 hryven: a "chumak" trader with a yoke of oxen, a familiar sight in the countryside during the seventeenth to mid-nineteenth century (4 million copies);
- 10 hryven: portrait of Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky (1595–1657; 20 million copies);
- 15 hryven: portrait of Hetman Ivan Mazepa (1639–1702; 4 million copies);
- 20 hryven: portrait of Taras Shevchenko (1814–1861; 20 million copies);

⁹⁴ Ingerit Kuzych, "Ukraine's Pictorial Set of 1920: The Vienna Issue," *Ukrainian Philatelist* 36, no. 2 (58) (1990): 54.

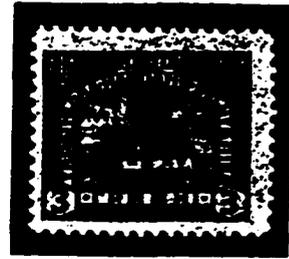
⁹⁵ Ivasiuk agreed to undertake the project without pay in return for a percentage of the finished stamps. Kuzych, "Ukraine's Pictorial Set of 1920," 54. Ivasiuk disappeared after being arrested by the Soviet secret police in Kiev in 1930.



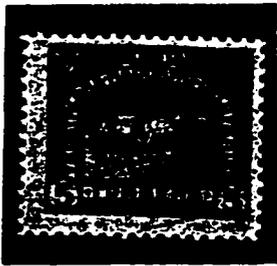
a. trident



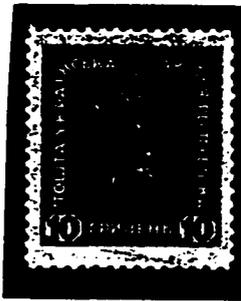
b. "Ukraine"



c. peasant cottage



d. "chumak" trader



e. Bohdan Khmelnytsky



f. Ivan Mazepa



g. Taras Shevchenko



h. Pavlo Polubotok



i. Symon Petliura

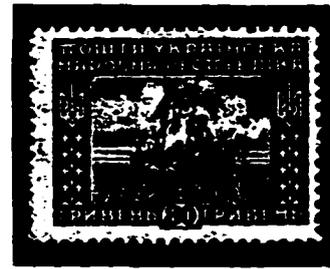
Figure 18: First Vienna Issue, 1920
Michel Catalog, i-xiv



j. cossack playing the bandura



k. Central Rada



l. cossacks on the Black Sea



m. monument to Volodymyr



e. windmill

Figure 18: First Vienna Issue, 1920, continued

- 30 hryven: portrait of Hetman Pavlo Polubotok (c. 1660–1724) imprisoned in the Peter and Paul Fortress (4 million copies);
- 40 hryven: Symon Petliura (1879–1926; 20 million copies);
- 50 hryven: a cossack playing the bandura (5 million copies);
- 60 hryven: the parliament building of the Central Rada in Kiev (3 million copies);
- 80 hryven: cossacks in boats on the Black Sea (3 million copies);
- 100 hryven: the monument to Grand Prince Volodymyr (r. 980–1015) in Kiev (six million copies); and
- 200 hryven: a rural scene with grain fields and a windmill (1 million copies).

Because the government-in-exile was never re-established on Ukrainian territory, the Vienna Issue stamps were never released publicly. However, despite the failure of the Polish-Ukrainian offensive, several groups within the Ukrainian army continued raids across the Soviet border. To serve their postal needs, some values from the Vienna definitives were overprinted with the phrase “FREE UKRAINE / 1921” (*vil'na Ukraïna*) (figure 19). Then again in 1923, and again in anticipation of a military advance into the Ukrainian S.S.R., the government-in-exile ordered 300,000 sets from the Vienna Issue to be overprinted with the letters “UPP” (Ukrain'ska Polova Poshta/Ukrainian Field Post). However, the expected mission was never carried out and thus the stamps were not postally used.

The government-in-exile issued four other stamps for use on intra-Ukrainian correspondence during its stay in Poland. These stamps were also affixed to regular postal items as a means of spreading ideas concerning Ukrainian culture and nationhood.⁹⁶ The first design,

⁹⁶ Borys Fessak, *Ukrainian DP Camp, POW Camp, Government in Exile, and National Council Issues* (Washington, DC: Ukrainian Philatelic and Numismatic Society, 1992), 1. Fessak identifies these stamps as “propaganda labels.”

The stamps for the government-in-exile were primarily prepared by Petro Kholodny, Jr. (1902–1982+).

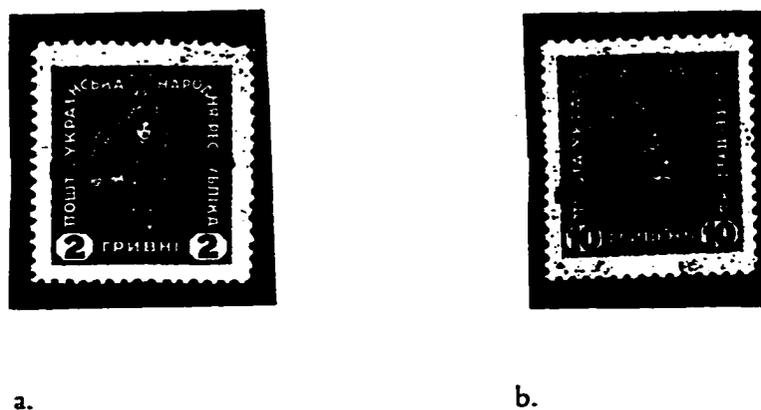


Figure 19: “Free Ukraine” Overprint on Stamps of the First Vienna Issue

Kholodny was the son of the prominent graphic artist Petro Kholodny (1876–1930), who worked in the Central Rada’s Secretariat of Public Education and the Ministry of Education; under the Directory, he was the deputy minister of education. Kholodny Sr. left Ukrainian territory with the UNR government in 1920, was interned by the Poles in Tarnów, and in 1921 went to Lviv where his artistic career became most productive. After the occupation of the city by the Soviet Red Army, many of his works were destroyed for their allegedly “nationalist” spirit.

Having also moved to Tarnów in 1920, Kholodny Jr. formally studied art at the Ukrainian Studio of Plastic Arts in Prague (1926–1927) and the Warsaw Academy of Arts (1928–1934); he also became a leading member of the Association of Independent Ukrainian Artists in Lviv. Both father and son devoted a great deal of their work to church art (icons, stained glass, mosaics); Kholodny Jr. is also well-known for his graphic arts, namely illustrations for childrens’ books, logos, and monograms.

released in January 1935 on three values, marked the tenth anniversary of the assassination of Petliura. Petliura, viewed by the Ukrainian nation as its twentieth-century martyr, was featured repeatedly on diaspora issues; often, Petliura's portrait was accompanied by his quotations, including perhaps the most famous: "The gaining of Ukrainian statehood is a matter of the Ukrainian nation and not of class or party." In the same year, two other designs were prepared to commemorate the 950th anniversary of Christianity in Ukraine: one featured a portrait of Grand Prince Volodymyr and the dates 988–1938, while the other reproduced the tile pattern from the St. Sophia Cathedral in Kiev. Four years later, a stamp honored Andriy Livytsky (1879–1954), then president of the UNR government-in-exile, on his sixtieth birthday.

b. Prisoner of War Postal Services

In 1943, a Ukrainian volunteer infantry division was formed in German-occupied western Ukraine and incorporated into the German military to help fight against Soviet forces on the Eastern Front. Ideally, this unit was to have formed the nucleus of a future Ukrainian army in the service of an independent Ukrainian state. But given the course of the war, the Ukrainian troops surrendered to British authorities in Austria at the end of World War II. Some 12,000 soldiers were interned as prisoners of war in Rimini, Italy, and subsequently transferred to POW camps in England and Scotland.

To serve the postal needs of the internees, the camp council at Rimini authorized the establishment of a postal service as well as the production of camp postage stamps.⁹⁷ This decision was not unique but rather was based on such historical precedents as the camp postal services and stamps created in 1919 by Belgian prisoners of war in the Dutch camp Nymwegen, by English prisoners in the German camp Ruhleben, and German prisoners in the Japanese

⁹⁷ Fessak, *Ukrainian DP Camp*, 6.

camp of Bando. In the Ukrainian case, the stamps were intended for in-camp postal needs but they could also be affixed alongside Italian stamps for out-of-camp correspondence. Four cancellations were simultaneously produced, three for use within the camp and one for international correspondence that would be transferred through the Ukrainian Relief Committee in Rome.⁹⁸

Although the Rimini camp post operated for only five months, twenty-seven stamps and four different postal cards were issued. These items were printed either at the former headquarters of the German Army in Italy or on printing presses of German periodicals. The designs of all of the stamps included the phrase "Ukraïn'ska taborova poshta" (Ukrainian camp post) as a sign of the authorizing agency. Only the values of the first sets of stamps were expressed in shahivs or hryvens, while later ones were issued with Italian denominations. In addition to the expected military themes, the stamps also featured portraits of Ukrainian heads of state from both the medieval and modern periods. Interestingly, the trident appeared on only eleven of the stamps; on nine of these, the trident was connected with the image of a soldier. The iconography therefore forms an interesting parallel to contemporary Soviet stamps, where military personnel were often depicted together with a red star. The implication of both combinations was the recognition of the military as the defense and strength of the state.

On 17 March 1946, a design competition for the camp's first set of commemorative stamps was announced in the camp newspaper.⁹⁹ Four designs were chosen from the submissions: a camp trumpeter (10 shahiv, 6,000 copies); a pensive camp inmate's vision of

⁹⁸ In times of war, all notions of a unified world community for the purposes of the mail transport understandably break down. Belligerent powers generally refuse to accept mail from one another except through special intermediaries, such as the Red Cross, which operates under the conventions of the "laws of war." Thus, the displaced Ukrainians accepted the Ukrainian Relief Committee as their neutral representative.

⁹⁹ Rudolf Martyniuk, "Postage Stamps of the Ukrainian Prisoner-of-War Camp in Rimini (Italy)," *Ukrainian Philatelist* 35, no. 1/2 (53/54) (1988): 74. Shortly thereafter, on 1 May 1946, a Ukrainian Philatelic Club was founded at the Rimini camp.

Ukraine (20 shahiv, 8,000 copies); symbols of labor and education against the background of the camp theater (50 shahiv, 8,000 copies); and a trident with two crossed rifles (1 hryvna, 6,000 copies). Each souvenir sheet (2,000 copies) of these stamps also included a lion, the emblem of the interned military unit.¹⁰⁰

Over the next several months, seven additional postal series were produced. On 1 November 1946, two stamps were released. One was a 3-lire value to commemorate the Lviv uprising of 1918. It consisted of an azure-yellow flag with a trident flying over a skyline of Lviv and the date 1918. The second stamp, a 5-lire value, carried a portrait of Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky (1865–1944) on the second anniversary of his death. It is not surprising that Sheptytsky was honored with a stamp. Stemming from his courageous behavior, Sheptytsky's popularity had grown throughout World War II. As metropolitan of the Greek Catholic Church, Sheptytsky had refused to flee from the Russians during World War I as they attempted to convert the Ukrainian peasantry in western Ukraine to Orthodoxy; for his defiance, Sheptytsky was arrested and exiled to Suzdal, north of Moscow. Then, when the Soviet Army occupied western Ukraine in 1944, Sheptytsky was placed under house arrest. Moreover, Sheptytsky was universally respected by western Ukrainians for his conviction that the Greek Catholic Church was a distinctly Ukrainian institution that should preserve its eastern ecclesiastical traditions and support the national aspirations of its people.

The next series of stamps was issued on 15 November 1946. Consisting of denominations from 1 to 20 lire, the stamps featured the portraits of various — all deceased — Ukrainian rulers: from the medieval period Sviatoslav the Conqueror (d. 972), Grand Prince Volodymyr, Yaroslav the Wise (980–1054), King Danylo of Halych (1202–1264), Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky, Hetman Ivan Vyhovsky (d. 1664), Hetman Petro Doroshenko (d. 1698),

¹⁰⁰ The selected designs were displayed at a philatelic exposition in Rome in late August 1946.

Hetman Ivan Mazepa, and from the modern period, UNR President Mykhailo Hrushevsky, Hetman Pavlo Skoropadsky, President Symon Petliura, and Colonel Evhan Konovalets (1891–1938). Although he was never the ruler of a Ukrainian state, the choice of Konovalets was appropriate: he was commander of the Sich Riflemen during the Directory's insurrection against Skoropadsky and later the leader of the Ukrainian Military Organization (*Ukrainska Viiskova Orhanizatsiia/UVO*), an underground organization that sought to continue the armed struggle against the Polish occupation of western Ukraine.¹⁰¹

January 1947 was the last month in which stamps were produced at the Rimini camp. On 1 January, two sets were issued. The first, a series of six values titled "Ukrainian Armed Forces," pictured various units in the Ukrainian military (the infantry, communications brigade, cavalry, and artillery) as well as a scene of attack in which the azure-yellow flag is flown above a line of troops and a scene of farewell between a soldier and a young girl who wears a traditional Ukrainian costume. On all of these stamps, the trident was prominently visible in either the top left or right corner of the design.

The next stamp, "Brotherhood in Arms," commemorated the liberation of Kiev by Ukrainian armies on 31 August 1919. Its design consisted of the heads of two soldiers, their rifles, the trident, and a cluster of oak leaves. Ten days later, on 10 January, the last two POW stamps were introduced. One value metaphorically depicted Ukraine in World War II as a woman's head against a trident, while the other stamp marked the 29th anniversary of the

¹⁰¹ Subtelny acknowledges Konovalets as the "undisputed leader of the integral [Ukrainian] nationalists during the interwar period"; Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, 443.

proclamation of the Fourth Universal. The design combined the coat of arms of Kiev (the Archangel Michael with a sword and shield) with a wreath and the date 1919.¹⁰²

c. Displaced Persons Camp Issues

At the end of World War II, a large number of Ukrainians found themselves in the western part of Germany, which was then occupied by the American, British, and French armies. Originally deported to Germany as a source of cheap labor or simply as refugees from the Soviet Union, they became known as Displaced Persons (DPs). Most of these people refused to return to their Soviet-occupied homeland after the war and therefore they were relocated to a system of camps, which had been formed by an initiative of the United Nations. The camps were initially under the supervision of the United Nation's Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) and later under the International Refugee Organization (IRO). Segregated according to their nationality, the Ukrainians were placed in five camps.

Displaced Persons did not fall under the jurisdiction of the German authorities but rather under a special legal system that granted them almost extraterritorial rights to set up, conduct, and administer their own internal affairs, security, and matters of everyday life. To serve their postal needs and with the approval of the American military authorities, some camps organized their own postal services that were responsible for: the acceptance of incoming mail delivered by the German post office and its distribution within the camp; the collection of all pieces of mail within the camp and its delivery to other German post offices; and the transmittal of all intra-camp correspondence.

¹⁰² Approximately 2,500 copies of each stamp were prepared. After the Ukrainian prisoners were transferred to Great Britain, a series of stamps was also commissioned to honor the 350th anniversary of the Union of Brest (1946). However, these stamps were not required postally because the internees could write letters in the British camps without having to pay postage. Four camp postcards were also prepared in Rimini, illustrated with three views of the camp and the trident.

To obtain funds for administering these postal systems, postal rates were established and postage stamps were issued. For internal correspondence, only camp stamps were needed. For mail sent coming into the camp, it was necessary to affix camp stamps for postal services provided by the local camp post, much the same as with the earlier imperial Russian zemstvo posts. For mail destined beyond the camps, German stamps were required alongside the camp stamps. Each camp also prepared its own cancellation for mail passing through its system.¹⁰³

i. Regensburg, Camp Ganghofersiedlung¹⁰⁴

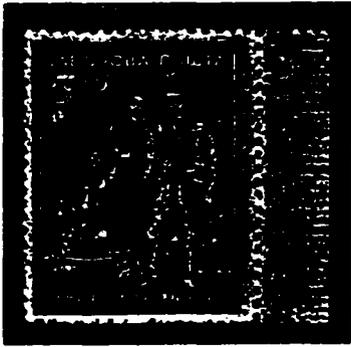
With a population of some six thousand people, eighty percent of whom were Ukrainians, Camp Ganghofersiedlung was the first Ukrainian DP camp to issue its own stamps.¹⁰⁵ Among the camps, it was also the most prolific stamp-issuer: thirty-six stamps were produced over an eighteen-month period. All of the designs can be easily tied to the Ukrainian national identity.

The first issue of June 1947 consisted of eight values, showing views of Regensburg and the camp, the well-known Ukrainian figures Taras Shevchenko and Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky, and the trident emblem. On 16 October 1947, a charity set was released with the surtax devoted to welfare causes within the camp. The ten values portrayed various Ukrainian folk costumes from Bukovina, Polissia, Podolia (Podillia), Poltava, and the Kuban regions as well as of the Lemko, Boyko, and Hutsul groups (figure 20).

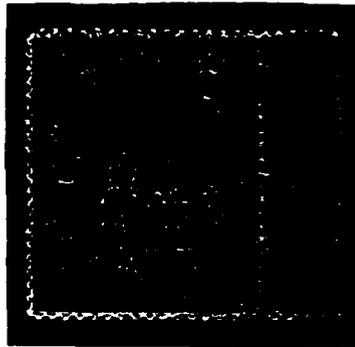
¹⁰³ Fessak, *Ukrainian DP Camp*, 23.

¹⁰⁴ When Camp Ganghofersiedlung was closed, its population of about 1,200 people was moved to other locations in Bavaria and Württemberg. The majority of the internees from Regensburg, including the camp administration, were relocated to the Ulm-Donau Sedankaserne on 22 November 1949. The postal system was re-established on 1 May 1950 and four values of the Regensburg regional costume series were overprinted to reflect the new issuing authority.

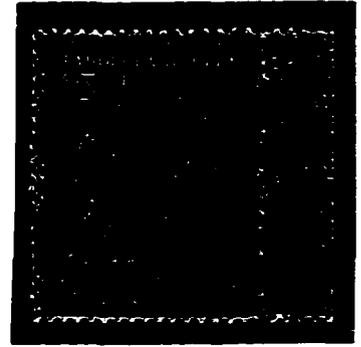
¹⁰⁵ The settlement was originally built before World War II to house workers of the Messerschmidt Factory. The camp postal service was organized on 11 December 1946.



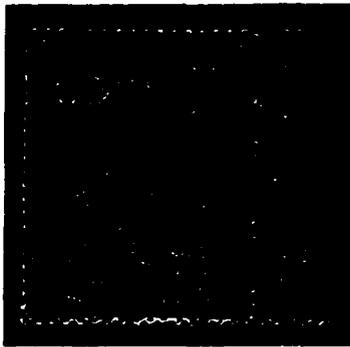
a. Bukovina



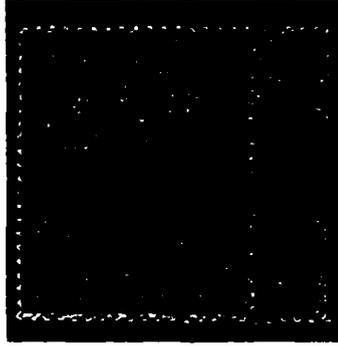
b. Boyko



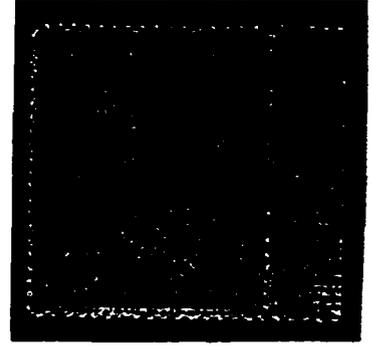
c. Lemko



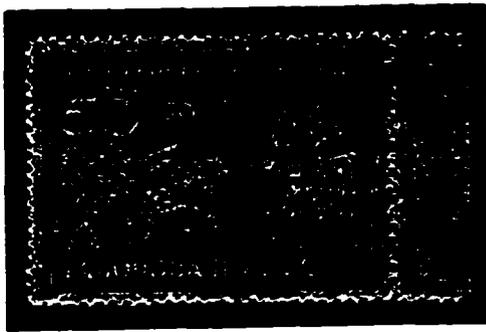
d. Polissia



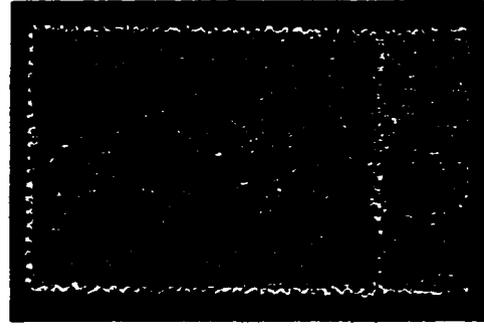
e. Podillia



f. Poltava



g. Hutsul



h. Kuban

Figure 20: Regensburg, Camp Ganghofersiedlung, 1947:
Traditional Ukrainian Costumes

During the next few months, a set of five stamps was also prepared. Each stamp featured the trident as well as a set of dates from Ukrainian history: 30-VI-1941, the declaration of Ukraine's independence by the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (Orhanizatsiia Ukrainskykh Natsionalistiv/OUN); 1-XI-1918, the formation of the Western Ukrainian National Republic; 22-I-1918, the declaration of the Fourth Universal, which established the Ukrainian National Republic; 22-I-1919, the unification of the Western Ukrainian National Republic with the Ukrainian National Republic; and 15-III-1939, the proclamation of Carpatho-Ukraine's independence (figure 21).

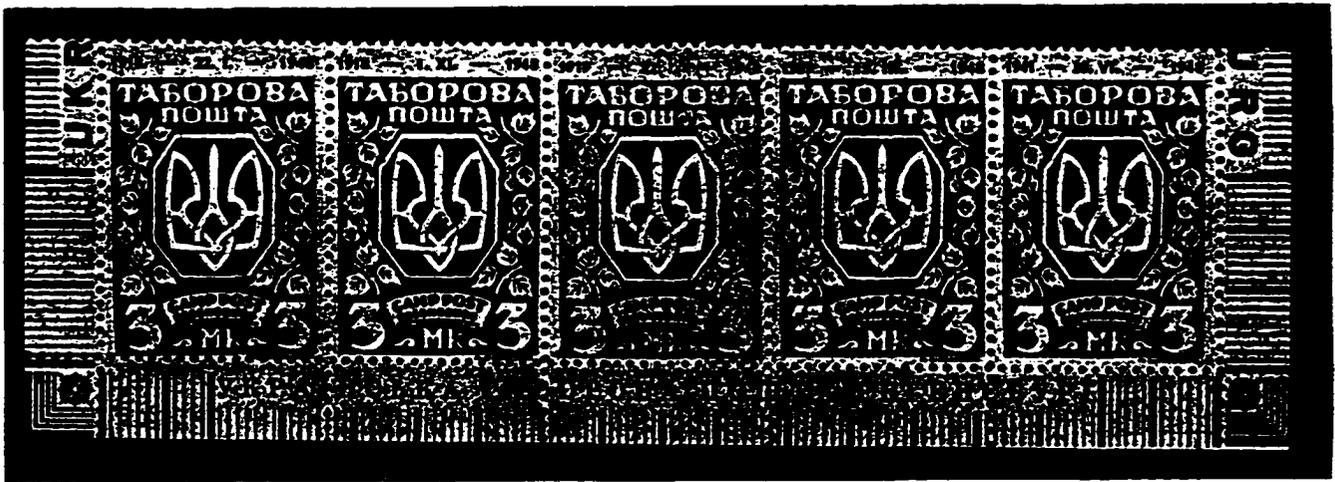
Finally, the hundredth anniversary of the "spring of nations" in western Ukraine was commemorated on 10 June 1948 with a series of stamps. The year 1848 was important in Ukrainian history because it resulted in the establishment of the first Ruthenian newspaper *Zoria Halyska* (The Galician Star), the organization of a para-military national guard, the abolition of serfdom, and the gathering of the Supreme Ruthenian Council in Lviv. Based on these accomplishments, the four stamps featured scenes of a torch and a newspaper, a guardsman, a peasant plowing his fields, and a portrait of Bishop Hryhorii Yakhymovych (1792–1863).¹⁰⁶

ii. Bayreuth, Camp Leopoldkaserne¹⁰⁷

Some 3,200 Ukrainians were moved here following the camp's establishment on 7 June 1945. Although the postal system was organized the following year, it was not until the end of

¹⁰⁶ Yakhymovych was the auxiliary bishop of the Greek Catholic community in Lviv in 1848. It was under his leadership that the Supreme Ruthenian Council was established.

¹⁰⁷ On orders from the IRO headquarters, Camp Bayreuth was closed and its residents relocated to the Neu-Ulm Ludendorfkaserne on 6 September 1949. Combined with the Ukrainians that had earlier been moved from Camp Hanau, the new camp housed 1,200 people. All the stamps produced for the camp were overprinted stamps from former Bayreuth camp series. The overprinting took place between 7 September and 1 November 1949.



a.

Figure 21: Regensburg, Camp Ganghofersiedlung, 1947:
Trident and Dates

1948 that stamps were issued. Thus, by comparison to the other camps, postal activities here were brief, lasting only for five months from 12 December 1948 to 28 May 1949.¹⁰⁸

The Bayreuth Camp Postal Authority printed only one set of definitive stamps, on 12 December 1948, with denominations based on the size and weight of letters and packages. The seven different values featured images derived from the histories of both Ukraine and the camp: wheat sheaves intertwined with a trident, the Khmelnytsky monument in Kiev, Franz Liszt (his 1854 symphonic poem *Mazepa* was about a Ukrainian hero and he died in Bayreuth in 1886), Hetman Pylyp Orlyk (1672–1742), an allegorical scene of the American liberation of Bayreuth,¹⁰⁹ a map of the UNR territories, and the IRO symbol. The only other issue of the camp was a souvenir sheet issued on 28 May 1949 to honor UNRRA-IRO for their relief work.¹¹⁰

iii. Related Camp Issues

In support of those Ukrainian scouts attending the 1947 peace jamboree in France, the DP camp postal services also produced several commemorative issues. The first stamp, released in Munich, featured a scout holding the azure-yellow Ukrainian flag with the trident emblem, with camp tents in the background. Several stamps were also released in Mittenwald, showing the emblem of the Ukrainian scouting movement *Plast (Orhanizatsiia Ukrainskoi Molodi)* along with the trident, and hiking and camping scenes. Similar stamps also were produced in

¹⁰⁸ One of the first projects of the camp was the compilation of an English-Ukrainian dictionary. A philatelic club was also organized. Aksel S. Pedersen, "Taborowa poszta, Ukrainian Camp Post," *Ukrainian Philatelist* 42, no. 3/4 (69/70) (1994): 222; originally published in *The American Philatelist* (January 1979): 27–30.

¹⁰⁹ This stamp was also issued overprinted with the date "14.4.1945" (the liberation of Bayreuth by American forces).

¹¹⁰ Although no stamps were issued by the Ukrainian camp at Ellwangen-Jagst (more than two thousand residents), a three-line English cancellation was created, recognizing the "Ukrainian / DP Camp Post / Ellwangen, Jagst."

Aschaffenburg for a 1948 scouting congress, and in Hannover, where a 1949 issue marked "boyscout week" in the Ukrainian camp.¹¹¹

Two interesting charity issues were also produced in Germany. The first series appeared on 1 November 1949 in support of the underground resistance fighters in the Ukrainian S.S.R. The four stamps carried designs of an allegorical Ukraine holding a sword and shield; the blowing up of a train; a generic portrait of a resistance fighter; and the trident. Another series appeared one month later, as a charity issue for imprisoned fighters. Because these stamps were meant to simultaneously commemorate the Universal Postal Union, the designs somewhat downplayed the emphasis on Ukrainian independence: a pigeon carrying a letter into a prison, and a pigeon with a liberated female soldier.¹¹²

Several souvenir sheets were released with the aim of raising funds for camp schools. For example, a March 1947 sheet was prepared in connection with a Shevchenko festival, with the profits gained from its sale earmarked for the Ukrainian grade school at the Regensburg camp. Subsequently, a sheet was prepared in May 1947 for the support of the Ukrainian Technical-Commercial Institute at the Ganghofersiedlung camp. The sheet contained six stamps that depicted: the two founders of the school; the Regensburg Cathedral (shown twice); the George castle in Podebrady; Czechoslovakia, which was the former seat of the institute; and the Mohyla Academy in Kiev. As one final example, four charity stamps were produced in November 1948 for the benefit of Ukrainian schools in the camp of Dillingen; they appropriately featured the

¹¹¹ Camp scouting stamps apparently were produced until 1952.

¹¹² Ukrainian refugee-assistance stamps were also issued from various diasporan locations and committees, including those in Rome and Buenos Aires (1946), and Munich (1950).

portraits of the prominent Ukrainian cultural figures Markian Shashkevych, Lesia Ukrainka, Ivan Franko, and Taras Shevchenko.¹¹³

d. Ukrainian National Council

Following World War II, most Ukrainian political organizations in Europe consolidated into one representative body.¹¹⁴ The Ukrainian National Council (Ukrainska Natsionalna Rada/UNC) was convened in 1947 to continue the ideological and legal tradition of the UNR government; branches of the UNC were also established in North and South America. Among the principal goals of this new organization were the consolidation of all independent parties and organizations working for the renewal of an independent Ukrainian state, restructuring to bring about a more democratic order, and broadening the political base for the State Center of the UNR. An executive organ functioning as a protoparliament or constituent assembly — to look after the council's affairs between sittings — and a state auditing body were established to elect a president of the UNR-in-exile.¹¹⁵

As a means of raising funds for its activities — Resolution No. 1 of the UNC, dated 8 August 1948, established the Ukrainian National Fund — as well as maintaining its international postal presence, the UNC set postage for intra-Ukrainian correspondence to be used in addition

¹¹³ Another interesting charity set was released in 1949 from Munich, to honor the Holy Year. The stamps featured the portraits of Metropolitan Stephanich, Cardinal Josef Slipyi, Metropolitan Sheptytsky, and Cardinal Mindzenty. Finally, a June 1948 souvenir sheet promoted an inter-camp volleyball tournament in Mittenwald.

¹¹⁴ The government-in-exile had suspended its activities during World War II. However, as head of the Directory, Andriy Livytsky, who headed the Council of Ministers-in-exile at the time, signed various petitions to the German government. It was the UNC then that represented most Ukrainians in the camp system.

¹¹⁵ Ten sessions of the Ukrainian National Council were held: July 1948 in Augsburg; June 1949 in Leipzig; March 1954 in Munich; March 1957 in Munich; November 1961 in Munich; March 1967 in Munich; December 1972 in London; June 1979 in Munich; July 1984 in Toronto; and June 1989 in South Bound Brook, New Jersey. At the third session (1954), S. Vytvytsky was elected to replace the recently deceased Andriy Livytsky as president; at the sixth session (1967), Mykola Livytsky was elected president after Vytvytsky's death; after the death of M. Livytsky in December 1989, the vice-president, Mykola Plaviuk, assumed the presidency.

to the regular postal rates of the host countries. According to Directive No. 3 of the Executive Branch of the Ukrainian National Council, dated 2 December 1948, the following postal tariffs were instituted: postal cards, 5 shahiv; letters, 10 shahiv; printed matter up to 50 grams, 5 shahiv; packages up to 5 kilograms, 10 shahiv; an additional 5 shahivs for every kilogram above 5 kilograms; and delivery, 10 shahiv.¹¹⁶

The government-in-exile simultaneously began to issue postage stamps — to be used in the almost twenty countries in which it had offices — to pay these fees.¹¹⁷ The Ukrainian postal stamps (cinderellas in practice) were to be affixed on the address side of the envelopes or package, to the left of the address. In countries where the practice of affixing stamps to the address side other than those of the country's own was forbidden, the Ukrainian labels were to be affixed on the reverse side of the card, envelope, or package. In those cases where this was also forbidden, the stamps were then to be applied to the first page of the letter, or with postal cards, on the separate receipts of a Ukrainian postal station, which indicated the address and contents.¹¹⁸

All issues from April 1949 to May 1950 carried the word “Poshta” and “Ukrainian Post” in English. The first set of six definitive stamps depicted famous buildings in Ukraine. The series was issued on 1 December 1948 to commemorate the opening of the first session of the Ukrainian National Council. Churches in Lviv (St. George's Cathedral) and Kiev (Monastery of the Caves) were chosen as the designs for the 5- and 10-shahiv values, thus emphasizing the leading role these two cities assumed in the history of Ukraine as well as the bond between the

¹¹⁶ *Visti: Poshchtovoho viddily resorty finansiv vo ukrains'koi natsional'noi rady* (Munich), no. 2/3 (1954).

¹¹⁷ The stamps were used in Argentina, Belgium, Canada, England, Germany, the United States, and other countries where Ukrainians resided. In each of these countries, specific post offices in certain cities carried the stamps and also had available the UNC postal cancels. All of the stamps were prepared and issued from Munich, Germany.

¹¹⁸ *Visti Resortu finansiv*, no. 2/3 (1954).

Ukrainian nation and its faiths. The next three stamps carried images of historical buildings (the Central Rada and Workers' Congress buildings in Kiev and the seat of the Carpatho-Ukrainian government in Khust), bearing witness to the development of a Ukrainian Parliament and the Ukrainian people's goal of freedom. Their continued striving toward the formation of an independent state was represented on the final value, which depicted the proclamation of the Ukrainian National Council on 16 July 1948.¹¹⁹

The next stamp released by the UNC, on 20 April 1949, marked the 300th anniversary of Khmelnytsky's uprising. Other early designs commemorated: the 30th anniversary of the November 1918 uprising in Lviv, the 30th anniversary of the unification of Ukraine (both issued on 20 April 1949), and the 10th anniversary of the declaration of independence in Carpatho-Ukraine (1 July 1949). The final issues with these original markings composed a Red Cross charity series, which was released on 1 May 1950. The surcharge was to be used for the benefit of Ukrainian war invalids. Appropriately, the four designs were: a nurse with an invalid, 5 + 5 shahiv; representatives of the three branches of the Ukrainian army, 10 + 10 shahiv; insurgents in action, 15 + 15 shahiv; and St. George slaying the dragon, 20 + 20 shahiv.

Four-and-a-half years later, in October–November 1953, two overprints were applied to some existing stamps to commemorate the 700th anniversary of Lviv. At the same time, another overprint was produced to honor the 700th anniversary of the coronation of King Danylo of Halych.

A 1953 issue honoring members of the UNC was the last one with the English words "Ukrainian Post." All subsequent issues had the Ukrainian inscription "Ukrainska Natsionalna

¹¹⁹ The stamps of the Ukrainian National Council are best described in Wolodemer Klisch, *Ukrainian National Post 1948–1993: Philadelphia Exhibition October 23–October 30, 1993* (Philadelphia, 1993).

Rada Poshta” (Ukrainian National Council Post.¹²⁰ In addition to the mourning stamp for Andriy Livytsky (25 February 1954), other events commemorated at this time were: the Marian Year (15 May 1954); the 900th anniversary of the death of Yaroslav the Wise (31 December 1954); the 90th birthday of Mykhailo Hrushevsky (15 December 1955); the 30th anniversary of Petliura’s death (15 January 1956); and the 40th anniversary of the Ukrainian Central Council in Kiev (1957). In 1972, a block of four revenue stamps was overprinted for the 7th session of the UNC.¹²¹ In 1976, a final souvenir sheet was issued to commemorate the “Petliura Year.”¹²²

4. Private Issues

Between 1900, the year in which the first private stamps were published in Lviv, and the end of World War II, ninety-five issues (313 stamps) were prepared by private Ukrainian organizations, ranging from the Plast scouts to the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, the Sich Riflemen, and the Ukrainian Bandurist Choir. Because these stamps were never used for postage or sanctioned for payment of any type of postal rates, they are not classed as postage stamps but rather as private labels. Their role, however, in spreading nationalistic Ukrainian messages cannot be underestimated. According to one philatelist:

These types of stamps possess a weightier value than such issues would normally have for collectors of other nationalities. . . . For Ukrainians, releasing private stamps was not only a partial remedy [to Ukraine’s subjugation to the rule of foreign occupiers], but also a means to publicize, propagate, and to collect funds for their various aims and/or organizations. These private issues also expressed

¹²⁰ From 1954 on, the inscription on all stamps were YHP and POSHTa in Ukrainian only.

¹²¹ Several revenue stamps were produced beginning in May 1949. Among these were two, issued in London, with no nominal value. It was expected that Ukrainians would donate to the UNC National Fund the payment of one day’s wages.

¹²² From 1954 to 1976 three different stamped envelopes were issued with some of the above-mentioned stamp designs appearing in the lower left corner. Seven postal cards were also issued during this span of twenty-two years. Following Ukraine’s independence, the Ukrainian National Council transferred its mandate to the Ukrainian government in 1992.

the yearnings Ukrainians felt for the freedom denied them in their native land.¹²³

Prior to the complete absorption of Ukraine into the Soviet Union after World War II, fifty-six of these issues (147 stamps) were actually printed on Ukrainian territory. Most — forty issues (106 stamps) — were printed in Galicia, and within this region, Lviv accounted for thirty-one issues (85 stamps). This trend toward private initiatives within the postal service most likely developed from the years of relative freedom under the Habsburg monarchs.

However, due to the repressive conditions under the Soviet rulers and the resultant large communities of exiles outside of the Ukrainian S.S.R.'s borders, a great number of private issues were also prepared by diaspora groups from around the world: in the European countries of Austria, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, France, Germany, Poland; in China; and in North and South America from Argentina, Canada, and the United States.¹²⁴

The entire forty-five year period can be characterized by a plethora of publishers and topics. These ranged from “poster-type” stamps that simply announced events to those carrying more militantly nationalist messages. The latter type were especially popular after World War II and were undoubtedly connected with the high levels of Ukrainian emigration from the Soviet Union. In addition, there was a simultaneous movement away from regional themes toward a unified national Ukrainian ideal, which was reflected in a decrease of local heraldic coats of arms and the concomitant increase in representations of the trident.

Several points must be noted. First, privately issued Ukrainian cinderella stamps should not be confused with those stamps that were produced with Ukrainian themes by countries that

¹²³ Alexander Malucky, “Ukrainian Non-Postal (Private or Cinderella) Stamps, 1900–1945,” *Introductory Handbook of Ukrainian Philately/Ukrainian Philatelist* 40, no. 1/2 (63/64) (1993): 57.

¹²⁴ The most issues were produced by Czechoslovakia, eight; Poland, seven; the United States, six; and Canada, five. As far as total stamps printed, Austria led with eighty-one followed by Czechoslovakia, twenty-six; Poland, seventeen; the United States, ten; and Canada, seven.

host large émigré Ukrainian communities. The Canadian government, for example, has issued stamps to commemorate the millennium of Christianity in Ukraine (Byzantine icons, 1988), the centenary of Ukrainian immigration to Canada (paintings by W. Kureluk, 1991), and the 125th anniversary of the establishment of the province of Manitoba, which featured a Ukrainian dancer. At least forty-six countries, not including the Soviet Union, have issued stamps with Ukrainian themes.

Secondly, privately issued stamps are a worldwide phenomenon. For example, North Americans are familiar with applying Christmas Seals onto letters along with the required postage. The trend was also practiced in the Soviet Union, albeit much less frequently. However, in the Soviet case, labels were often applied *instead* of the postage stamp. For instance, one letter sent from Moscow to a Polish journal in September 1964 carried a label with a lengthy inscription: “World forum of the solidarity of youth and students in the struggle for national independence and liberation and for peace.”¹²⁵ So-called “tobacco stamps” were also circulated widely in the Soviet Union. Especially during the 1920s and 1930s, these labels, carrying a variety of pro-government messages and publicity statements, were inserted into every pack of cigarettes.¹²⁶

As the second example implies, many of the labels produced in the Soviet Union were actually sanctioned by the central government. Such was the case of Soviet air fleet stamps. By early 1923, a fledgling civil airline service was established in the western U.S.S.R. To stimulate public interest in flying, encourage Soviet youth in the various aspects of aviation and air defense, and to further public support for air-related activities, Trotsky initiated the formation of

¹²⁵ George Shaw, “Russian Christmas Seals?” *Rossica Journal* 113/114 (1990): 89.

¹²⁶ These labels were briefly discussed in chapter three. This type of program was also conducted in the United States at approximately the same time.

aviation clubs. One of the major activities of these societies was to help generate funds for aviation programs. Therefore, the clubs were authorized to design, issue, and sell special labels to generate public funding. As with other labels, these were not valid for postage, but could be applied to cards and envelopes.¹²⁷

These Soviet labels are comparable to the privately issued Ukrainian labels in three main aspects. First, the Soviet air fleet labels were sold to the public along the city streets as well as from windows in the local post offices. Purchase was not compulsory, and, to reinforce this point, some early issues had printed on the back "compulsory sale prohibited." In the Ukrainian case, the various labels were sold through private individuals in countries that hosted large Ukrainian populations or through businesses associated with the Ukrainian National Council. Secondly, the aviation stamp program was publicized in Soviet newspapers, where a daily listings of funds generated from their sale was provided during the first year of issue. Similarly, the Ukrainian labels were advertised in the bulletins of the UNC as well as in the Ukrainian-language press. And finally, the Soviet labels were produced under government supervision and control; the money generated by the sale of these stamps was turned over to the government. This was also the case with the majority of privately issued Ukrainian stamps, although some funds were kept within the accounts of the actual issuing organizations. The key difference is that while the Soviet Union was an independent state, Ukraine was not. With its stamps, then, the Ukrainian community approximated the functions of a sovereign state.

In examining the various private diaspora issues, four time periods will be considered: the years before World War I; World War I; the interwar period; and World War II.¹²⁸ These

¹²⁷ G. Adolph Ackerman, "The Soviet Air Fleet Semi-Official Stamps: Their Role in Postal History and the Development of Soviet Aviation," *Rossica Journal* 113/114 (1990): 8-23.

¹²⁸ This examination draws extensively on Malychy, "Ukrainian Non-Postal (Private or Cinderella) Stamps," 57-62, and the various catalogs prepared by Julian Maksymchuk.

years are the main focus of this discussion because this was the period during which the Ukrainian state fought for and briefly maintained its independence. Some concluding observations will also be made concerning the post-World War II years, when the Ukrainian labels assumed a somewhat different character.

a. Pre-World War I, 1900–1914

Prior to World War I, private stamps were published both within and outside of Ukraine. The majority of stamps were prepared in Galicia, then under the rule of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The very first set of private Ukrainian stamps was published in Lviv in 1900, for the benefit of the National Fund of the Ukrainian National Democratic Party. Nine other series were later prepared in Lviv, one each in 1905, 1907, and 1911, and two each in 1919, 1912, and 1913. Within Galicia, stamps were also issued from the four provincial towns of Kalush, Kolomea, Nyzhankovychi, and Stanyslaviv. By comparison, other areas of Ukraine were either poorly or totally unrepresented. Although similarly under the jurisdiction of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, in only one town in Bukovina (Chernivtsi) did private stamps appear. Under the rule of the Russian Empire, only in Kiev were some private issues released.

Of these labels, five issues were prepared by educational establishments such as local Prosvita societies; five were in support of socio-cultural organizations; political parties sponsored four issues; one series of seven stamps supported a sports association; and another series, of four stamps, was issued in support of a charitable institution.

Outside of Ukraine, only two issues appeared. A set of two stamps was produced in Jersey City, New Jersey, by a socio-cultural organization. The other issue consisted of twenty stamps that were designed by the Ukrainian Art Publishers in Vienna, Austria, in 1912/13. Both of these issues were the first ones for their respective countries.

In terms of design, private stamps from this time frequently — five issues, including the American stamps — depicted the lion, which was the main heraldic motif from Galicia's coat of arms. On the other hand, the trident, Ukraine's emblem, had not yet taken on its significance as a state emblem and so it did not appear. Symbols of the issuing organizations were depicted on four issues, as were noted Ukrainian personalities: from literature, Taras Shevchenko, Ivan Franko, and Markian Shashkevych; from history, Ivan Gonta; and politics, Mikhailo Drahomanov and Mikhailo Pavlyk. Other stamp topics included allegorical or symbolic designs (on three issues); various scenes with human figures depicting activities of the issuing organizations (sports, charitable work, historical ties); or other scenes such as the graves of Shevchenko and Shashkevych. Ironically, some of the earliest issues carried their texts in Russian because they were sponsored by pro-Russian Ukrainian organizations, which felt that Ukrainians should espouse Russian as their literary language. One example of this was a 1902 label from Kalush in support of the Russian Cultural Society.

b. World War I

Wartime conditions generally prevented the production of private stamps within Ukrainian territory. The most important issues came from Vienna. For example, in 1915 the *Administration of the Ukrainian Sich Rifleman* published a series of sixty stamps depicting members of the unit on the front line. One stamp featured Olena Stepaniv, one of the few female soldiers in the legion; this was the first stamp to feature the portrait of an identifiable Ukrainian woman.

c. Interwar Years, 1919–1939

Having lost its bid for independence, Ukraine's territory was divided under the rule of

Soviet Russia, Poland, Romania, and Czechoslovakia. In total, this period of twenty-one years accounted for fifty-eight issues published on Ukrainian territory and in nine other countries. This level was more than three times as many issues as the pre-World War I period, amounting to almost three new designs every year. Ukrainian territories within Poland produced the largest number of privately issued stamps; twenty-two series were released during this period. In addition to eighteen issues from Lviv, stamps were produced in Rohatyn, Przemyśl, a city ceded to Poland by the Soviets in 1945, Pidhaytsi, and Yaroslav. Although a moderate increase can be noted, other areas lagged behind Galicia: Kremenets (Volhynia) and Uzhgorod (Czechoslovak-administered Transcarpathia) released their first issues. In Bukovina, at the time under Romanian occupation, stamps were again produced in Chernivtsi. And in the Ukrainian S.S.R., some private stamps were published in both Khar'kov and Kiev.

There was also a significant increase of countries in which private stamps appeared: Czechoslovakia (Prague and Pödebrady); Poland (Warsaw); France (Paris); Austria (Vienna); Belgium (Liuk/Liege); China (Harbin) for the Ukrainian Youth Organization; in the United States (New York and Chicago); Canada (Winnipeg, Saskatoon, and Vancouver); and in Argentina (Buenos Aires).

Educational institutions and socio-cultural organizations each accounted for the release of twelve issues apiece. Other designs were produced by: youth organizations and politically oriented institutions (each seven issues); military organizations (six issues); professional organizations (four issues); charitable institutions (three issues); sports and religious organizations (each two issues).

Galicia's coat of arms was again a common design element, while two issues featured the bear of Transcarpathia's coat of arms. The trident first appeared in 1926 on a stamp prepared in Poland. This Ukrainian emblem remained the dominant symbol, appearing on thirteen issues

either alone or with modifications, usually intertwined with the lily on Plast issues or with a sword on nationalist issues. Allegorical and symbolic designs were also very popular, featured on twenty-one issues. Scenes with persons and/or landscapes appeared on twenty issues. Emblems of the issuing institutions were also numerous, on eight issues. Prominent Ukrainians were depicted repeatedly: from literature, Ivan Franko and Mikhaïlo Kotsyubynsky; from medieval history, Grand Prince Volodymyr; and from recent history/politics, Symon Petliura, Olha Basarab, and Andriy Livytsky. Two other issues carried the Ukrainian flag and a map of Ukrainian territories.

d. World War II, 1940–1945

In the course of World War II, Ukrainian territory fell under the jurisdiction of the U.S.S.R., Germany, Romania, Hungary, and Slovakia. Private stamps appeared only under German occupation, some of them legally, others clandestinely. Socio-cultural-charitable institutions were responsible for nine issues; political organizations for three; one issue was prepared by an educational institution; and one by a military formation.

In comparing the production of private stamps from this period with earlier years, several differences may be noted. Most obvious is the fact that Lviv, although still represented (three issues), was replaced as the center of production by Kholm (ceded by the Soviets to Poland in 1945), which produced five issues. The only other issue from Galicia came from Yaroslav. Other private issues (twenty-eight stamps) were produced outside of Ukrainian territory: in Prague (three issues), Berlin (two issues), and Cracow (two issues), all under German occupation. And beyond German-occupied Europe, only Canada published a Ukrainian-related issue during this period.

Coats of arms were prominent on the issues of this period, especially the trident (eight issues), the heraldic lion of Galicia (two issues), the coat of arms of Kholm province (one issue), and of the town of Kholm (one issue). Outstanding figures from Ukrainian history again appeared: princes Volodymyr, Ihor, and Roman from the medieval period; hetmen Bohdan Khmelnytsky and Ivan Mazepa from the seventeenth century; and from the early twentieth century, Symon Petliura, Evhan Konovalts, and Andriy Melnyk. A 1941 issue from Kholm commemorated the seventy-fifth anniversary of the first zemstvo administration to appear on Ukrainian territory. One of the issues from Lviv marked the declaration of the renewal of Ukrainian statehood (30 June 1941); another featured a symbolic design in memory of the victims of Soviet military advances (1939–1941) in western Ukraine.

e. Post World War II

By examining the private issues that were first released in the 1950s and 1960s, several trends become apparent. Most obvious are the increase in the number of private issues produced annually and the widespread origins of the labels. Coupled with more releases from such areas as Australia were issues from new and diverse organizations. These groups ranged from the Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain and France to the North American-based Organization for the Rebirth of Ukraine. With their platforms that similarly promoted the idea of an independent Ukrainian state, these new associations complemented the earlier work of the more usual stamp-issuing entities including the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (Ukrainska Povstanka Armiia/UPA).

It is also possible to clearly discern three categories of stamps.¹²⁹ The first function of the labels was national publicity and education. As has already been indicated, many of the privately issued stamps carried the portraits of historical Ukrainian personalities. This trend continued in the post-World War II years but with a greater diversification of topics. Various series were prepared with the portraits of religious figures and lesser-known cultural figures. Additionally, other stamps simply featured buildings and landmarks from Ukraine, especially from Kiev and Lviv, as well as images of the Black Sea and its naval fleet. Special events such as the 700th anniversary of the founding of Lviv (1952), the millennium of Christianity in Ukraine (1955) and the 25th anniversary of the independence of Carpatho-Ukraine (1964) were also marked. The Ukrainian Museum in Cleveland prepared many stamps with ethnographic designs. Finally, many individual stamps showed maps of the Ukrainian state, the national flag, or the initial phrases of the Ukrainian national anthem, while almost every issue had the trident on it.

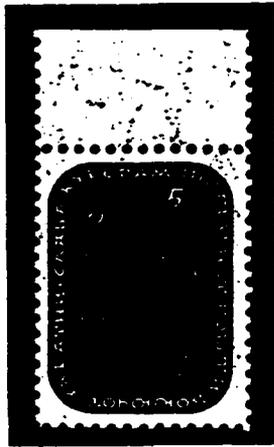
A desire for revenue prompted a second category. For example, beginning with the 1952 Olympic games in Oslo, special commemorative series were released for every Olympiad until 1972. Other issues undoubtedly capitalized on the revenue potentials from occasions such as World Congresses of Free Ukrainians and Ukrainian Youths, Captive Nations' Week, or the World Refugee Year. Some charity-type labels also appeared, including one example from 1950 that declared "Help the Stateless Former Political Prisoners" or the numerous issues in support of the Fund for Ukrainian Culture. Unlike many of the other issues that came from various locations around the world, such as several from Paris in support of Ukrainian students, charity labels generally were issued by the exile government that was based in Munich.

¹²⁹ These categories are derived from those for local overprints in the Soviet successor states. George Shaw, "Recent Local Overprints: A Suggested Classification," *Rossia Journal* 123 (October 1994): 73-76.

The last category of private issues relates to political propaganda. Indeed, many of the later issues carried blatant political statements and images (figure 22). A prominent variation on the theme of Ukrainian independence related to the Treaty of Pereiaslav. For instance, in 1954 the Society of Ukrainian Philatelists produced a series of stamps titled "300 Year Struggle to Liberate Ukraine from Russia" that depicted a sword cutting through the treaty document. Another standard topic was the 1932–1933 famine in Ukraine; anniversary labels were issued with such messages as "30th anniversary in memory of 7,000,000 victims of intentional famine arranged by the Kremlin" or "The SHAME of the 20th century – 1933 Mass Murder of Ukrainians." Most stamps carried simple anti-Soviet messages: "Fight for Liberty or Communism Will Give You Death"; "Lenin, Father of the Murderess of Nations, USSR"; or "The Russian Colonial Imperium Must be Divided into National States." Some paid special attention to Soviet iconography. One label, which carried the slogan "Beware of Communism – 50 Million Victims of Communist Terror During the 50 Year Existence of the USSR," featured a skull with a red star and the hammer and sickle motif.

In these last examples especially, it is obvious that the icons and symbols promoted in the Soviet Union took on reverse connotations in the diaspora. An icon such as Lenin, whose image was universally honored in the communist world, became the image of a hated figure, in this case one associated with collectivization and the subsequent famine. Similarly, symbols such as the hammer and sickle, which were prominently displayed as the Soviet state emblem, became indirect representations of abstract ideas such as Russian power (to the exclusion of Ukrainian independence), inequality, and repression.¹³⁰

¹³⁰ Richard Stites, "Iconoclastic Currents in the Russian Revolution: Destroying and Preserving the Past," in *Bolshevik Culture*, eds., Abbott Gleason, Peter Kenez, and Richard Stites (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 6.



a.



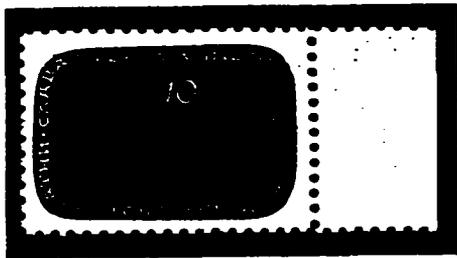
b.



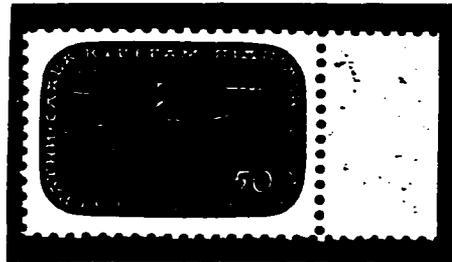
c.



d.



e.



f.

g.



Figure 22: Stamps of the Ukrainian Diaspora

Another interesting series, produced in the United States, consisted of powerful cachets: "Write your Senator and Congressman to demand the independence for UKRAINE enslaved by Russia"; "In UKRAINE, the Russians russify the schools, burn libraries, jail innocent priests and intellectuals"; "Russia, the last colonial empire, enslaves 45 million UKRAINIANS, and the United Nations look on tacitly"; "120 million non-Russians are enslaved by Russia in her 'Soviet Union' and over 100 millions in her satellites"; "UKRAINE, a founding member of the United Nations, is held by Russia in colonial slavery and oppression"; "Six million died in UKRAINE of famine artificially created by red Moscow 1932-33"; and "To honor Lenin by U.N. is an insult to mankind & a mockery of Ukraine & other nations enslaved by him."

Clearly, the cinderella stamps produced and released from the Ukrainian government-in-exile and the diaspora communities in numerous countries around the world promoted specifically Ukrainian themes and personalities. Although this program in itself is meaningful, especially given the numbers of issues prepared, there is a greater significance. As the above discussion has implied, the Ukrainian nation followed a similar postal course as most any other stamp-issuing country. However, given that the Ukrainian state formed a republic within the Soviet Union for almost seventy years, the diaspora community functioned as a type of surrogate administration.

Through its postage stamps, the Ukrainian émigré community promoted itself as an independent-state-in-waiting; it educated the world, or at least those individuals who paid attention to postage stamps, about Ukrainian geography, history, and culture. While the majority of people who were exposed to the diaspora stamps may themselves have been ethnically

Ukrainian, this does not lessen the impact of the postal designs. Instead, the stamps maintained a cultural awareness among members of the displaced nation, preparing them for eventual statehood.¹³¹

Admittedly, very few, if any, other diaspora nations have established postal programs or used the potential opportunity of postage stamps to advance their ethnicity. There are several reasons that can account for the Ukrainian system. First, the size and diversity of the Ukrainian nation-in-exile allowed for the development of such an administration. Unquestionably, in addition to the intelligentsia that found itself outside of Ukraine's borders following the formation of the Soviet Union, key leaders were available to organize the production of readily produced pieces of ephemera that could be spread relatively easily. Second, given that Ukraine did experience several periods of independence, however brief, there was some understanding of the obligation of new governments to release postage stamps. In the Ukrainian case, there was also a precedence for releasing stamps for one state that had already been overtaken by another, or, in stateless situations, such as from the post-war refugee camps. Finally, it does seem that philately itself was historically important in the Ukrainian community, which accounts for the clubs that arose in the post-World War II period as well as the growth of collecting circles both in the Soviet Union, when tolerated, and in the diaspora.

Moreover, to counter themes that were advanced on Soviet stamps, the Ukrainian community produced stamps with contrary messages as a means of publicly addressing topics that would otherwise have been ignored or presented solely from the Soviet viewpoint. A few examples can be considered. Most obviously, none of the Soviet stamps that featured a Ukrainian theme presented the trident. Instead, in terms of national symbols, certain issues

¹³¹ Because there was no significant economic gain from the sale of the private labels, it does not seem plausible that their production was used as a front for other activities.

carried the Soviet Ukrainian flag — a red flag with the hammer-sickle-red star motif and a distinctive horizontal blue strip — or the coat of arms of the Ukrainian S.S.R., which was a simple variation of the Soviet state emblem. It is therefore understandable that just as often as the Soviets placed the hammer and sickle on their postal issues, so, too, did the postal emissions from the Ukrainian diaspora display the trident.

The Soviet postal system also promulgated Russification in the individuals it honored and in their depiction. All scientists and technologists who died before 1917 were identified on stamps as “Russian”; those who lived for even a short period under the Soviet regime were labeled as “Soviet” or “Russian Soviet.” Therefore, there are no examples of any scientist being designated as “Ukrainian” on a Soviet stamp. And, needless to say, no Ukrainian political leaders were ever honored on Soviet postage stamps.¹³² Interestingly, the “Ukrainian” designation was tolerated on stamps associated with writers or other prominent artistic figures.

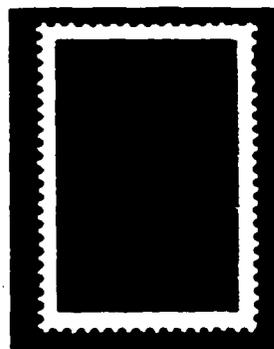
Certain episodes from Ukrainian history were depicted on Soviet postal designs, but from the Soviet point of view. Thus, several issues commemorated the liberation of Ukraine by the Red Army from Nazi Germany as well as anniversary dates of Ukraine as a union republic. But no stamps marked anniversaries associated with the Ukrainian National Republic, the Western Ukrainian National Republic, or Carpatho-Ukraine. The closest to these occasions was the single stamp released in 1991 in recognition of the 1990 Ukrainian declaration of sovereignty. Designs prepared in 1967 and 1977, however, featured the building where the First All-Ukrainian Communist Congress was held in Khar’kov (1917) and the monument to the proclamation of Soviet government in Ukraine, while several other stamps marked other specifically Ukrainian communist congresses or the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian S.S.R.

¹³² See Andrij Solczanyk, “Ukrainian Topics on Soviet Stamps, 1927–1989,” *Ukrainian Philatelist*, supplement to volume 37 (1990): 3–54.

Along this line, perhaps the most controversial series appeared in 1954 on the 300th anniversary of the Treaty of Pereiaslavl, a document used repeatedly by the Russians to legitimize their hegemony over Ukraine (figure 23).



a. 50th anniversary of the Ukr. S.S.R.,
Monument of the Arsenal
Katalog pochtovykh marok SSSR, tom 1, 3571.



b. 50th anniversary of the Ukrainian
Communist Party
Katalog pochtovykh marok SSSR, tom 1, 3638.



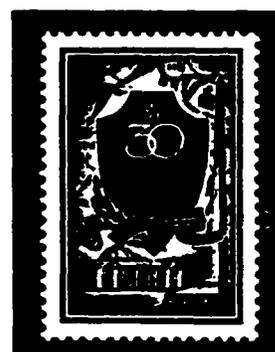
c. 50th anniversary of the Ukr. S.S.R.,
scenes of industry and agriculture
Katalog pochtovykh marok SSSR, tom 1, 3572.



d. 25th anniversary of Ukrainian liberation
Katalog pochtovykh marok SSSR, tom 1, 3805.



e. 50th anniversary of the Ukr. S.S.R.,
traditional offering of bread and salt
Katalog pochtovykh marok SSSR, tom 1, 3573.



f. 30th anniversary of Ukrainian liberation
Katalog pochtovykh marok SSSR, tom 2, 4365.

Figure 23: Ukrainian History on Soviet Stamps



g. 24th Congress of the Ukrainian Communist Party
Katalog pochtovykh marok SSSR, tom 2, 3975.



h. 25th Congress of the Ukrainian Communist Party
Katalog pochtovykh marok SSSR, tom 2, 4545.



i. 26th Congress of the Ukrainian Communist Party
Michel Catalog, 5035.



j. 60th anniversary of Soviet power in Ukraine
Katalog pochtovykh marok SSSR, tom 2, 4780.



k. 325th anniversary of the reunion of Ukraine and Russia
Katalog pochtovykh marok SSSR, tom 2, 4934.



l. 40th anniversary of Ukrainian liberation
Michel Catalog, 5443.

Figure 23: Ukrainian History on Soviet Stamps, continued

CONCLUSION

This presentation of the parallel postal systems — focusing particularly on postage stamps — operated by the Soviet Union, the post-World War I Ukrainian National Republic, and the subsequent Ukrainian underground post was undertaken as a means of addressing the theoretical debate concerning whether Ukraine does or does not have a history. As initiator, Mark von Hagen reflected one school of thought that states that since many nations in eastern and central Europe, including Ukraine, are incapable of sustaining stable democracies and prosperous economic development, they are not deserving of genuine national sovereignty. The Ukrainian situation becomes even more complex given the legacies of Russian and Soviet imperialism: Ukraine is generally marked as being the product of “bad” ethnic nationalism, in contrast to “good” civic nationalism.¹

Ukraine’s declarations of sovereignty on 16 July 1990 and full independence from the former Soviet empire on 24 August 1991 elicited real excitement in the diaspora. For generations, the community had steadfastly espoused the cause of Ukrainian independence. Indeed, much of its organizational infrastructure was geared toward working for this goal. Therefore, for many emigrants, especially those who belonged to the strongly politicized post-World War II generation, the emergence of a genuinely independent Ukrainian state represented the culmination of their personal and communal aspirations.

Paradoxically, according to the scholar Alexander Motyl, the most visible presence in Ukraine is the absence of all traces of its communist past.² Naturally, the residue of communism remained in the people’s minds, their work habits, and the government structure, but

¹ Mark von Hagen, “Does Ukraine Have a History?” *Slavic Review* 54, no. 3 (fall 1995): 660, 662.

² Alexander J. Motyl, *Dilemmas of Independence: Ukrainian After Totalitarianism* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1993), 76.

communism as an all-embracing and vital way of life was gone. What did this mean for the old Soviet elite that in large part retained its political positions? In outlook, these individuals were not anti-Russian and they had considerable experience in dealing with Moscow. But for several reasons, they had no possibility of preserving the continuity of Soviet identity or of constructing a non-conflictual strategy toward Russia. First, the very fact of independence, made possible through the support of the Russian political elite in the Ukrainian S.S.R. was an implementation of the national democratic movement's "liberation" program, according to which the Soviet empire was a continuation of the anti-Ukrainian tsarist empire, and August 1991 a fulfillment of the work of many generations of Ukrainians. Second, by trying to treat Moscow within the realm of normal inter-state relations, Kiev did not take into account the psychological unreadiness of the Russian elites to treat Ukraine as a foreign country. This led to moves by Russia that were aggressive and imperialist from the Ukrainian point of view, and which could not but evoke a confrontationalist reaction.

Third, the Russian elite itself needed a nationalist foundation in order to isolate itself from the revolutionary changes in Moscow and at last to become not a provincial but a state power. Thus while keeping the real prerogatives of power for itself, it directed the national democrats to engage in their own form of state-building. Therefore, instead of adapting the Soviet political tradition to the conditions of independence, primary attention was given to the reconstruction of an older historical legacy, namely the "Ukrainian idea" and the achievements of the earlier attempt at state-building in 1917–1920.

The initial stance of the new Ukrainian president, Leonid Kravchuk, signaled a revival of national confidence and pride. Kravchuk set out his views on Ukrainian statehood prior to the 1991 presidential election at a meeting of the Ukrainian parliament that marked the 125th anniversary of Hrushevsky's birth. Until the collapse of the Soviet Union, Hrushevsky's works

had been proscribed in Ukraine. Yet, hailing Hrushevsky as “the first president of Ukraine,” Kravchuk affirmed “the thousand-year-old tradition of Ukrainian statehood” beginning from Kievan Rus. Without so much as mentioning the Soviet Ukrainian state, Kravchuk stressed that the leaders of the newly independent Ukraine saw themselves as continuing the work of Hrushevsky and his generation.³

Kravchuk’s strongly nationalist stance fit well with the diaspora narrative of history, which posited Ukraine as the innocent victim of Russia and the Soviet Union. Its earlier tragic struggles for national autonomy were legitimized by the collapse of the Soviet empire and the recent attainment of independence.

In the period immediately preceding Ukrainian independence, this platform gained great popularity. Attempts to deal with the “blank spots” in Ukrainian history led to dramatic revelations concerning the famine of 1932–1933, the mass executions of Ukrainians by the NKVD during the 1930s and 1940s, and other shocking exposures. Ultimately, a growing thirst for non-Soviet, nationally oriented interpretations of the past culminated in such events as a massive celebration during the summer of 1990 for the 500th anniversary of the founding of the Zaporozhian Host. The disappearance of communism provided Ukraine’s elite with the unprecedented opportunity to ground Ukrainian identity in those myths, symbols, and values that they alone chose to highlight, to combine, and to redefine. To the great indignation of the authorities, the long-banned azure-yellow flag of the Ukrainian national movement appeared in the spring of 1989; Ukrainians learned the words of the proscribed national anthem; and the

³ *Demokratychna Ukraina* (26 November 1991); cited in Bohdan Nahaylo, “The Birth of an Independent Ukraine,” *Radio Liberty, Report on the USSR* (13 December 1991): 3.

nationalist trident was sported on jacket lapels. While indicating support for national aspirations, these symbols further displayed disdain for the Soviet system.⁴

Yet while the Soviet legacy was therefore rejected from gaining a positive role in the building of the new Ukrainian nation, there was still the question of how to incorporate the sizable ethnically Russian and Russianized-Ukrainian elements. Ethnic Russians form more than one-fifth of Ukraine's population, more than half the population speaks Russian, and tied of mixed marriages, as well as psychological ones linking Ukraine to Russia, had been created over three centuries, especially during the seventy years under the Soviet system. Because of these conditions, an ideological anti-Russianness, in whatever sense, and an exclusivist "Ukrainian" national idea were inadmissible.⁵

This line was confirmed by Mykola Plaviuk, the last president of the Ukrainian Nation Republic's government-in-exile. When asked, Plaviuk commented that any new version of Ukraine's history would have to be objective, taking into account both the diasporan and Soviet experiences as well as the centuries of existence before 1918. The consolidation of a political nation (and hence successful state-building and the security of Ukraine) depended on the attractiveness of it to all segments of society in Ukraine. Thus, modern Ukraine would have to forge its own direction built on its entire past.⁶

Based on the recognition of the ethnic, linguistic, and religious heterogeneity of the population, the diversity of historical experience in different regions of the Ukrainian state, and

⁴ Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press in association with the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1994), 575.

⁵ Volodymyr Kulyk, "The Search for Post-Soviet Identity in Ukraine and Russia and Its Influence on the Relations between the Two States," in *Peoples, Nations, Identities: The Russian-Ukrainian Encounter. Selected Papers from the Fourth Workshop, September 21-23, 1995, Columbia University in the City of New York. The Harriman Review* 9, nos. 1-2 (spring 1996): 21.

⁶ Telephone conversation with Mykola Plaviuk, 5 August 1997.

to a lesser degree international expectations of the new state, Ukraine's political leaders realized that all of the state's ethnic groups had to be integrated into the redefined Ukrainian nation if the Ukrainians themselves were to survive. Thus the process of nation-building was de-ethnicized to the highest degree possible. The greatest emphasis was placed on civic and territorial loyalty, on the community not so much of the past as of the future. The population of Ukraine supported this in the referendum of December 1991, which the government, especially at first, proposed to its citizens as a deed of the common creation of a new nation. The multilingual and multiethnic residents of Ukraine had a shared common Soviet past, the psychological influence of which facilitated their coexistence in a period when the way of life and system of values changed irreversibly, and this also gave them the sense of a common fate.

But the elites could not build a new identity based only on loyalty to Ukraine as a territory and state, on the principle of its political, economic, and territorial unity, while renouncing even an inclusive Ukrainian nationalism, which would be open to all citizens but based on the ethnic Ukrainians' aspirations for statehood. Not only was independence a realization of the nationalist "liberation idea" but the preservation of that independence required roots deeper than the closeness of Ukrainian citizens as former Soviet people and participants in a ritual of separation, performed during the referendum, from the very same kind of Soviet people. As the economic hopes connected with independence failed to materialize, whether because of the unrealistic nature of those hopes or government inactivity and its avoidance of reform, the influence of the ritual separation grew weaker. Public opinion polls revealed the growth of nostalgia for the Soviet Union and hopes for its restoration and integration. Therefore, it proved necessary to remind people of their historical aspirations and the historical injustices, to emphasize the continuity between the anti-Ukrainian policies of tsarism and

Bolshevism, and to expose the integrationalist initiatives of contemporary Russia as a threat to Ukrainian independence along with the attempt to draw it back into the “imperial orbit.”

Thus, the Ukrainian political elites drew on several mythic elements from Ukraine’s past in order to fashion a new Ukrainian nation. In general, they propagated the image of Ukrainians as the European descendants of good peasant stock, of multiethnic pioneers, and of an ancient multiethnic state. The images reinforced Ukraine’s aspirations to democracy and freedom, underlined its multiethnic character, and suggested that Ukraine was distinct from its neighbor to the north, Russia. It is unimportant whether or not such notions are historically accurate. All nations are, in the final analysis, mythic constructs with more or less imagined histories that purport to underline their emergence, development, and glory.

Some evidence of this policy was reflected on Ukraine’s first postal issues. Ukraine resumed issuing stamps on 1 March 1992 with the release of a pair of 15-kopiok stamps. The first commemorated the five hundredth anniversary of the Ukrainian cossack state (1490–1990). It featured three cossacks standing in front of the emblem of the Zaporozhian Host, with the central figure based on a traditional portrait of hetman Dmytro Vyhnevetsky. The second stamp honored the centennial of Ukrainian emigration to Canada (1891–1991). It presented a young couple wearing traditional Galician clothing at the base of the Carpathian foothills; in the upper left corner is a red maple leaf, the emblem of Canada. These two stamps carried great significance: they were the first regular stamps released by a Kiev-based, Ukrainian government since the 20-hryven issue of 1919; they were the first Ukrainian stamps of any type since the 1923 semi-postal famine issue; and they were Ukraine’s first-ever commemorative stamps.⁷

⁷ Ingerit Kuzych, “The First Postage Stamps of a Reestablished Ukraine,” *Ukrainian Philatelist* 39, no. 2 (62, 1992): 57. The designs were chosen after a public competition; an artist’s council was later established to prepare the postal issues. Ukraine’s first semi-postal stamp in seventy-one years was later released in 1994, with proceeds going to the Charity and Health Fund.

According to the Vasyl Boyarchuk, Deputy Chairman of the Ukrainian State Committee on Communications, "the issuance of our own stamps is yet another affirmation of Ukraine's statehood."⁸ Even before the release of these first official stamps of Ukraine, the trident emblem had once again been used as an overprint and placed on the stamps of the former Soviet Union (figure 24).

By the end of 1992, sixteen Ukrainian commemoratives (including two souvenir sheets) and eight definitives had been prepared. The subjects selected were what was to be expected from the newly independent Ukrainian state. Among them were the national flag, trident, and a traditional embroidery pattern; Mikhailo Lysenko (1842–1912), who is regarded as the founder of Ukrainian classical music; Mykola Kostomarov (1817–1885), a writer who gained prominence as an exiled member of the Brotherhood of Sts. Cyril and Methodius; and the façade of the Kiev-Mohyla Academy. The definitive series featured a young woman as the allegorical representation of Ukraine, a design based on the 30-shahiv definitive issue design of 1918 by Heorhiy Narbut.

Yet despite the initial impression that a nationalistic administration would emerge in Ukraine, within two years the Ukrainian community in the west was voicing criticisms about the new stamps:

A pertinent question has been raised as to whether or not these first seven issues of 1993 should even be recognized as genuine postal releases. They more closely resemble the "Mickey Mouse" stamps produced by some Caribbean or African countries, which are issued solely to raise revenue from topical collectors and are

⁸ Cited in Kuzych, "The First Postage Stamps," 57. Another individual commented that: "Millions of letters with Ukrainian stamps, as they travel throughout the world, carry a much wider message about our country than the hundreds of ardent speeches in the Verkhovna Rada." Cited in "The Stamp Will Tell About the Country," *Trident-Visnyk* (October–November 1995): 120.



a.



b.

Figure 24: Modern Trident Overprints on Soviet Stamps

“postal” in name only. Concerns were voiced in Kyiv that Ukraine might be blacklisted as have some third world countries that produce an overabundance of unnecessary “postal” issues.⁹

More important, the Ukrainian diaspora community was concerned about the appearance of Soviet-looking stamps:

The one Ukrainian release of 1993 that harks back to the era of Soviet stamps is the issue marking the 50th Anniversary of the Liberation of Kyiv from Nazi occupation. The word “liberation,” of course, has to be used loosely, since one occupier was simply exchanged for another. The stamp design is very reminiscent of the “Hero City” stamps issued periodically in the old Soviet Union.¹⁰

Similar remarks were aired in 1994. Among the comments directed at Ukraine’s postal authorities were statements: questioning some of the topics depicted on the stamps, including a congress of Ukrainian lawyers and the 45th anniversary of the UN declaration of human rights; pointing out the failure to depict some very worthy topics such as the literary figures Taras Shevchenko, Ivan Franko, and Lesia Ukrainka; noting that stamps honoring important historical personalities such as Bohdan Khmelnytsky and Ivan Mazepa had been printed but were not released to the public; criticizing the inability of the post office to space out stamp releases over the course of the entire year; commenting that many commemoratives were released, in small quantities, and without first-day cancels, covers, or ceremonies; and stating that denominations were printed that did not correspond to the prevailing postal rates.¹¹

⁹ Ingerit Kuzych, “A Review of Ukraine’s 1993 Postage Stamp Issues,” *Ukrainian Philatelist* 42, no. 2 (68) (1994): 113.

¹⁰ Kuzych, “A Review,” 114. Another editorial stated: “Somebody is consciously trying to sabotage the new Ukrainian state. . . . almost five years after independence Ukraine is still producing [typical] Soviet-type stamps, like the ‘Victory in the Great Patriotic War’, or the ‘Liberation of Kyiv’ stamps. What trash!” “Why Drive Away Foreign Money?” *Trident-Visnyk* (October–December 1995): 115.

¹¹ Ingerit Kuzych, “A Review of Ukraine’s 1995 Postage Stamp Issues,” *Ukrainian Philatelist* 44, no. 1A (75A) (1996): 38. Another criticism related to provisional overprints. During 1992 and 1993 (and in some instances early 1994) various locales in Ukraine found themselves short of postage stamps or stuck with unusable old Soviet stamps or stationery. These local post offices were forced to prepare provisional stamp issues as well as provisional surcharges on postal stationery.

Other comments originated in Ukraine itself:

We are struggling for the strengthening of our sovereignty and our nationhood. In this struggle we can not reject any attribute of government. And a postage stamp is one of such attributes — next to the flag, the [coat] of arms, the bank notes[,] etc. Can you imagine what image our country has acquired abroad, based on our postage? Instead of giving a positive image of our country (yes, a stamp serves as a means of propaganda for most countries), our letters show a miserable-looking “provisional,” or — in the best case, a little, poor definitive stamp, or the ethnographic series, where a bare-footed Neolithic potter is turning a pre-historic pottery wheel.¹²

To many people, the postal system of the Ukraine was simply a continuation of its Soviet predecessor. In general, Soviet postal regulations, including those prohibiting the free trade of philatelic materials, persisted in Ukraine until at least 1996. According to another observation: “There must still be unreconstructed old-timers in the postal ministry of Ukraine, who are longing for the ‘good old USSR’ and are trying to bankrupt Ukraine both economically and politically.”¹³

Over the last few years, Ukraine’s stamp production has indicated that the nationalist school of Ukrainian history has begun to make greater inroads concerning which subjects are depicted. While some topics are still clearly derived from the Soviet experience, such as the seventieth anniversary of the “ARTEK” International Children’s Center in Crimea, the diasporan practice of preparing stamps to honor prominent Ukrainian historical and cultural figures has been maintained. Among the more popular series have been those honoring the Ukrainian hetman, the coats of arms of various regional capitals, and the most recent releases that portray the Kievan princesses Olha — the first reigning monarch of Ukraine who was baptized in the

¹² “To Be or Not to Be For Ukrainian Postage Stamps? No Logic, No Convenience,” *Trident-Visnyk* (July–September 1995): 76.

¹³ “Why Drive Away Foreign Money?,” 115. That the Ukrainian post office was criticized for its initial program is not surprising. As this dissertation has shown, both the Soviet and earlier Ukrainian postal administrations suffered from inexperience and poor planning. In all cases, it was natural to continue using the established procedures until attention could be given to the postal requirements of the new countries. Moreover, the personnel of the modern Ukrainian post office were in general the same officials who had served under the Soviet system, thus ensuring a continuity of policy and outlook.

Christian Church — and Roksolana, the wife of Suleiman the Magnificent. Similarly, although there have been no anniversary issues to mark the earlier experiences of statehood, the Ukrainian flag was portrayed on a 1992 commemorative stamp and Hrushevsky was featured on a 1995 stamp (figure 25).

Perhaps the most telling indication that Ukraine is now firmly gaining ground as a modern independent state is that it is no longer seen as necessary to put the national emblem on every postage stamp as a claim to statehood. Instead, Ukraine is now falling into the pattern characteristic of most countries around the world. Instead of using postage stamps as a means of broadcasting blatantly nationalistic messages, the Ukrainian postal administration has now moved toward more innocent themes and to actively appealing to collectors. The trident has been removed — but not forgotten — in favor of flora and fauna, trains and planes.¹⁴

1. The Ukrainian Diaspora

To understand the relationship between the activities of the Ukrainian government in exile and the diaspora community on the one hand, and the post-World War I and current Ukrainian states on the other, several factors must be considered. The first concerns the experience of exile. In contrast to “traditional” exile experiences, such as those of Lenin and Hrushevsky, that resulted from political issues, the more continuous migrations, such as that which produced the large Ukrainian diaspora, were a consequence of Soviet Russia’s forced

¹⁴ A similar trend has been apparent in the stamps of the Russian Republic. After independence, a number of series were devoted to cultural issues such as cathedrals (both Russian and international), the ballet, paintings, and porcelains. Other international themes, such as AIDS, ecology, and endangered species, were also featured on stamps. Compared to Soviet stamps, there has been a decrease in the emphasis on historical topics. The few stamps produced in this area have been devoted to the early Russian dukes, the three hundredth anniversary of the Russian fleet, the end of World War II, and the Russian voyages of exploration.



a. national emblems



b. Kiev coat of arms



c. Lviv coat of arms



d. Princess Olha



e. Roksolana

Figure 25: Stamps of Modern Ukraine

transformation from an agrarian autocracy into an industrial world power and, by consequence, the consolidation and centralization of state power.¹⁵

In fleeing the persecution and upheaval at home, then, Ukrainians sought not only personal refuge and religious freedom, but also a period of political recovery. Admittedly, the Ukrainian government-in-exile was not a government because its officials could not function as a constitutional authority.¹⁶ Instead, it served as the voice of Ukraine in the West, as a government of national protest.¹⁷ Through its various programs and dissemination of information, the government-in-exile actively protested the conditions of the captive homeland. Moreover, in maintaining the drive for national independence, the organization sought to offset man's tendency to forget. The group survived almost fifty years after the end of World War II and served as a mechanism to unite those Ukrainians throughout the world who desired to see political, economic, and social freedoms in a future Ukrainian state.¹⁸

In the greater picture, the Ukrainian exile community was a problem on the fringes of historical relevance. The diaspora, although sizable, was relatively small compared with the masses in the homeland. Additionally, many Ukrainians abroad, quite contentedly, assimilated into their new societies. And perhaps most significantly, the exile government was rather incapable of exerting any real influence on domestic Soviet politics, at least until the collapse of

¹⁵ Robert C. Williams, *Culture in Exile: Russian Émigrés in Germany, 1881–1941* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), viii.

¹⁶ George Kacewicz, *Great Britain, the Soviet Union and the Polish Government in Exile* (Boston: Martinus Nijhoff, 1979), 31–32. From a legal sidepoint, there is no logical reason why a state must cease to exist when its government leaves during wartime, especially if it can function more effectively on foreign soil.

¹⁷ Kacewicz, *The Polish Government in Exile*, vii.

¹⁸ Arguably, the Ukrainian government-in-exile initially functioned as a working group but then moved on to more symbolic acts, which included the issuance of postal stamps that featured national heroes.

communism.¹⁹ Indeed, what form — other than nationalistic but unaggressive policies — could opposition to Stalin and the other Soviet dictators realistically be expected to take given that any open acts of opposition by captive Ukrainians would have led to torture, incarceration, or death?

In this light, however, the stamps of the Ukrainian diaspora are an important reminder of the so-called Cold War. That the western governments, especially those in Canada and the United States, concluded agreements with members of the exile Ukrainian community and thus granted them the rights to produce and circulate stamps with blatantly anti-Soviet messages demonstrates a coalescence of attitudes. Moreover, the slogans and images that the Ukrainians put on their diasporan stamps were probably an accurate reflection of the opinions of many civil leaders, who were otherwise proscribed from making such declarations. Simply put, the stamps of the Ukrainian diaspora publicly stated what many western leaders could not.

The Ukrainian diaspora was able to achieve two fundamental tasks during its period of exile.²⁰ The first was the preservation of a distinctive identity that received its legitimation through popular support. In this light, exile was a story of cultural as well as political conflict. Although “Westernized” by their association with the European society, the vast majority of the Ukrainian diaspora remained firmly tied to their origins by family, language, and memory.²¹ Cultural traditions were preserved while strong prejudices against the Russian state were reinforced. By virtue of its position as spokesman of at least this culturally and historically aware Ukrainian community, the government-in-exile did possess a future.

¹⁹ Anthony Glees, *Exile Politics during the Second World War: The German Social Democrats in Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 3.

²⁰ These two tasks were first introduced by Glees, *Exile Politics during the Second World War*, 11.

²¹ Williams, *Culture in Exile*, viii–ix.

Another accomplishment in this vein was the bleak but realistic assessment of the likely needs of the future Ukrainian state. To this end, the experience of exile acted as a common bond, according to some scholars.²² The shared inner feeling of exile was the force that would help to create the modern, independent state while also granting the ability to sustain the community during a perilous existence. More specifically, successful attempts at dealing with exile generally fostered adaptive processes, which acted as counter-balances to the feelings of helplessness. This political isolation led to an expansion of knowledge and an importance placed on education, a dependence on religious faith, and the growth of social institutions that were eventually to contribute to a betterment of conditions in the resident country.²³

The urge for freedom maintained the Ukrainian diaspora; its goal of an independent state with a native language, social, and cultural ideas was seen as something that could be attained. This idea was reinforced by the concept that the diaspora experience was not permanent. A personal and political bravery characterized the diaspora leaders, accompanied by their tenacity as leaders and their single-minded desire to re-establish true political representation in an independent Ukraine. In this light, the partnership between the diaspora and the captive nation was crucial, especially for maintaining the language, and traditional social and education organizations.²⁴

The second achievement of the Ukrainian diaspora relates to national symbols. As attributes of power, state emblems symbolize personal dignity and the will of a particular community. Historically, heraldic devices reflected the idea of a ruler's superiority over his

²² Étan Levine, ed., *Diaspora: Exile and the Jewish Condition* (New York: Jason Aronson, 1983), 63.

²³ In contrast, unsuccessful exile experiences would result in insecurity and a total loss of identity. Levine, *Diaspora*, 65.

²⁴ Golda Meir, "What We Want of the Diaspora," in Levine, *Diaspora*, 221-223.

vassals. However, such dynastic emblems later were replaced by territorial and dynastic insignia that were imbued with the ideas of integrity and the independence of an ethnic community. The appearance of national symbols was then furthered by the social changes that took place beginning in the mid-seventeenth century, when a wave of revolutions and wars of liberation gave birth to other new symbols. Heraldic symbols of monarchical powers were replaced by the flags of national communities, while specific color combinations began to take on decisive roles. The process reached its peak after 1917 when there was a shift from national to international symbols: the red flag became the symbol of communist governments. Finally, after World War II and as a result of growing national consciousness, newly liberated states returned elements of particular national significance to their emblems. And throughout these developments, those individuals who designed and swore allegiance to such emblems sought to find counterparts in history especially when it came to the consecration of new symbols, which were used to demonstrate by historical tradition the notion of a people's unity.²⁵ The creation of such symbols directly reflect the theories of Eric Hobsbawm and his notions of creating an identity.

Yet as the above discussion implies, the use of symbols is not without controversy. For example, the following episode was recorded by envoys to the Ukrainian hetmanate in the seventeenth century. The Muscovite administration became concerned in 1654 — after the Treaty of Pereiaslavl — that Bohdan Khmelnytsky was still using an old seal as the symbol of his office in his official documents and correspondence; he had been provided with a new one to reflect his allegiance to Muscovy. According to one historian of Ukraine, such a gesture on Khmelnytsky's part clearly showed that he did easily accept his new subjugation to the Russian state. Although Khmelnytsky's official response was that the new seal was difficult to use, the reality of the situation was quite different: by remaking the new seals themselves, according to

²⁵ Volodymyr Zhmyr, "Kleinods of Ukraine," *Ukraine* 1/2 (1995): 4.

specifications under their direct control, the hetmanate leaders may have been attempting to maintain certain aspects of authority independent of Moscow.²⁶

Symbols are not merely static products of ethnic cultures then, but, as this study has shown, they are solutions to problematic situations in everyday life. Thus, when faced with the hammer, sickle, and red star of Soviet communism, Ukrainians undertook a process of ethnic regeneration. As explained by Stephen Stern and John A. Cicala, when faced with declining resources, a natural reaction is for a nation to turn to its ethnic traditions as a means of bolstering pride in the community.²⁷ Perhaps more importantly in the Ukrainian case, the Soviet influence served to unite the disparate Ukrainian factions: regional identifications were abandoned behind the common notion of "Ukrainianness." Throughout the diaspora and along with elements of the ethnic tradition ranging from folk dances and music to embroidery patterns, the trident and azure-yellow flag were prominently displayed and promoted as attributes of the Ukrainian nation, as symbols of an once-independent state that would eventually re-emerge. And indeed, after the restoration of independence in 1991, Ukraine's Supreme Council accepted on 19 February 1992 the trident as the chief element in the state coat of arms.

2. Ukrainian Independence and the Diaspora

The diaspora in the West had mobilized its resources to help the homeland even before

²⁶ David A. Frick, "The Circulation of Information about Ivan Vyhovs'kyj," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 17, no. 3/4 (December 1993): 262-263.

²⁷ Stephen Stern and John Allan Cicala, eds., *Creative Ethnicity: Symbols and Strategies of Contemporary Ethnic Life* (Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 1991), xviii.

This process is not unrelated to the rise of the public relations field in the West. During World War I, the U.S. Committee on Public Information dedicated itself to maintaining domestic morale by promoting the country's corporate identity. Because the business elite attempted to use techniques of persuasion to distort and mould public opinion toward a positive outlook, one scholar equates these types of public relations efforts with propaganda. Stuart Ewan, *PR! The Social History of Spin* (New York: Basic, 1996).

the proclamation of independence. The initial catalyst in this effort was the Chernobyl disaster. Despite the fact that in 1986 the communists still firmly controlled Ukraine, communities abroad, most notably in the United States and Canada, dispatched shipments of medicine, clothing, and food to the victims, especially the children. As the Kiev government acknowledged these efforts, the image of the diaspora held by Ukrainians in the homeland began to change. Previously, Ukrainians abroad, except for the tiny pro-communist cohort, had been largely ignored by the Soviet media. If they were mentioned at all, it was invariably as treacherous lackeys of capitalism and imperialism. After the Chernobyl relief effort, however, the diaspora increasingly came to be viewed as consisting of long-lost brethren who were ready and willing to offer assistance in a time of need.²⁸

Aid from the diaspora soon expanded to include those individuals and movements in Ukrainian who called for independence and the rejuvenation of national culture. Thus, when the primary organization of the contemporary Ukrainian national movement Rukh was formed, Ukrainian Canadians established a well-organized support group, the Canadian Friends of Rukh, which provided valuable financial and technical assistance to the reformist forces. Meanwhile, contacts between the long-separated diaspora and homeland expanded rapidly. Generally, they took the form of family reunions, visits by business people to their homeland to explore investment opportunities, tours by leading reformers from Ukraine of the communities abroad, and reciprocal visits by musical ensembles. Especially fruitful were the contacts and exchanges established between Ukrainian scholars and students in the West and those in Ukraine. One of the by-products was the establishment of the International Association of Ukrainians, who, in turn, organized the first International Congress of Ukrainian Studies, in Kiev in August 1990.

²⁸ Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, 593.

After the proclamation of independence, the diaspora continued to provide significant aid to the new state. Ukrainians in the United States and Canada vigorously lobbied their governments to grant recognition to Ukraine. Because Russia took over the former Soviet embassies and Ukraine lacked the foreign currency to purchase new ones, the diaspora helped by providing offices for Ukrainian diplomats in the United Kingdom and Australia and collected funds for the Ukrainian embassy in Washington. In Canada, the Huculak family of Toronto funded the purchase of Ukraine's embassy in Ottawa. Many Ukrainians trained in the West also placed their expertise at the disposal of the new state and some served in advisory positions in the government, most notably in the Ukrainian ministries of the environment, finance, foreign economic relations, and health as well as in various government and parliamentary commissions and institutes. In March 1992, the first volunteers of *Korpus Myru*, modeled on the U.S. Peace Corps, were sent to Ukraine. Finally, in an effort to mobilize Ukrainians abroad to even greater exertion in behalf of the homeland, on 24 August 1992, the first anniversary of Ukrainian independence, the new government organized the World Forum of Ukrainians in Kiev.²⁹

Many in the diaspora had always believed that their primary obligation vis-à-vis Ukraine was to preserve those institutions and values that had been repressed by Soviet rule. With the attainment of independence, many concluded that the moment had arrived to return much of what they had preserved to its place of origin. Among the more obvious examples were the return to Ukraine of ecclesiastical leaders such as Cardinal Lubachivsky of the Ukrainian Catholic Church and Patriarch Mstyslav of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church.

The significance of these religious cases should not be underestimated. Until the end of Soviet rule, for example, Ukrainians were the largest Orthodox community not to enjoy

²⁹ Ann Lencyk Pawliczko, ed., *Ukraine and Ukrainians Throughout the World* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 355.

autocephaly or even autonomy. Absorbed by the Russian Orthodox Church in 1686, the Kiev Metropolitanate was fully incorporated into the Russian Orthodox Church by the end of the eighteenth century. During the struggle for Ukrainian independence in 1917–1921, a movement for an independent Ukrainian Orthodox Church was successfully launched. Although physically destroyed under Stalin, its spirit remained alive and the institution was restored during World War II in the territories that were relinquished by Soviet authorities. Then, like the Ukrainian Greek Catholic (Uniate) Church, the Orthodox Church was again suppressed after the war when the Russian Orthodox Church was given complete control over Ukraine's Orthodox and Eastern-rite Catholic believers. But with the return of Patriarch Mstyslav, the situation was transformed: the authority of the émigré hierarch bolstered the claims of the Autocephalous Church to be the legitimate voice of Orthodox Ukrainians. Further, Mstyslav's visit provided a direct link with the periods of 1918–1930 and 1942–1944 when, under very difficult conditions, the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church provided a haven for many Ukrainians. Thus, his return was initially credited as being a key element in the resurgence of religious life in Ukraine.³⁰

In the political sphere, Mykola Plaviuk dissolved the Ukrainian National Council and presented his mandate to President Kravchuk in recognition of the fact that the diaspora accepted the legitimacy of the Kiev government. In return, the Kiev government honored the activities of the Central Rada and government-in-exile by unveiling a plaque commemorating their efforts and that, in contrast to the Soviet view of history, actually acknowledged the existence of the Ukrainian National Republic. Having been granted dual Canadian-Ukrainian

³⁰ David Marples and Ostap Skrypnyk, "Patriarch Mstyslav and the Revival of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church," *Radio Liberty, Report on the USSR* (11 January 1991): 11.

The struggle over religious autonomy and controversies over religious properties were not the only aspects of a series of maneuverings among the hierarchy of Ukraine's churches. Since 1991 and continuing into the present, the religious situation in Ukraine has deteriorated. For information see Stephen K. Batalden and Sandra L. Batalden, *The Newly Independent States of Eurasia: Handbook of Former Soviet Republics*, 2d edition (Phoenix, AZ: The Oryx Press, 1997), 86–87.

citizenship, Plaviuk is now actively establishing a presence for the Ukrainian Insurgent Army and the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists in Ukraine.³¹ Meanwhile, the Bandera faction of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, led by Slava Stetsko, attempted to expand its diaspora-based organizational network to Ukraine. Organizations such as the scouting movement Plast and the Union of Ukrainian Women (*Souiz Ukrainok*) also proceeded to reestablish branches in the homeland.

A final example involves the return to Ukraine of archival documents from the West. Since independence, there has been a growing trend for both private and institutional records to be sent back to Ukraine. In some cases, blanket letters from Ukrainian state agencies were sent to various western archives in order to identify which materials might be solicited for return. In other cases, private individuals voluntarily offered to send back their papers to local museums. Under other scenarios, certain contractual obligations required that if Ukraine became independent, certain nationally held archival collections would be sent back to Ukraine.³²

But it was not long before some in the diaspora concluded that their efforts were unappreciated, ineffective, or subject to exploitation. Many others worried that the limited resources of the diaspora had reached the point of exhaustion. In Ukraine, many were disillusioned when promises of aid from abroad were not fulfilled or when help fell below expectations. The new situation also raised conceptual issues. During much of the twentieth century, community activists in the West had viewed themselves as the sole and genuine spokespersons for Ukrainian national interests and concerns. But when the Kiev government took over this role in act as well as in theory, confusion spread among the community leaders as

³¹ Telephone conversation with Mykola Plaviuk, 5 August 1997.

³² Telephone conversations with Zenon Hluszak, 4 June 1997, and Myron Momryk, 25 June 1997.

to what their new role should be. Indeed, questions about the future of the diaspora and the need to maintain its traditional “preservative” function were raised with increasing frequency.

3. “Creating” Ukrainian History and the Post Office

Prior to the commencement of the British postal strike in 1971, when it was realized that the lack of postal services would cause possible hardships and a disorganization of business and industry, the government announced the suspension of its monopoly on the post office. It licensed a number of firms and individuals to carry out varying types of postal services. In theoretical terms, by this act the British government recognized the connection between a modern state and a functioning postal service.

In the case of modern Ukraine, a postal system was inherited from the former Soviet Union. The first characteristic of this legacy was an integrated network that embraced virtually every city, town, and village in Ukraine, and that facilitated the regular transmission of a wide variety of letters, parcels, and newspapers. In following its historical development, the service has grown from the medieval routes of messengers to an organized, integrated system crossing the boundaries through time and over space.

Another feature that can be described is in penetrating through to the distant regions, the Soviet postal system linked the minds of the vast population. It created an imagined community in which the policies of the central government were carried — to a large extent by newspapers — to the far-flung citizenry, encouraging them to participate directly in the political processes through an ongoing discussion of the leading events of the day. Moreover, the government plans were also proclaimed on the postage stamps and postal stationery that were disseminated in overwhelming quantities throughout the Soviet state. Thus the growth of

communications in the state generally worked to strengthen the bonds of union and to create a "Soviet" population.

Yet, while the services and to a large extent the administration of the Soviet postal system were fully integrated into the new Ukrainian bureaucracy, there was a noticeable deterioration of the infrastructure, especially that related to the production of postage stamps. Until mid-1994, all of Ukraine's stamps were prepared abroad because there were no printing facilities in Ukraine. The Canadian Bank Note Company prepared ten issues between March 1992 and October 1994; another eight stamps were prepared in Austria between November 1992 and June 1993; still other issues were printed in Russia and Hungary. One of the results of this situation was the anomalies on certain stamps. In addition to printing errors, some early Ukrainian stamps were printed with German and Russian inscriptions. Other mistakes related to Ukrainian history can be found on examples of postal stationery. For example, one prestamped envelope commemorates what it describes as the "proclamation by the Central Rada's Fourth Universal of the UNR." But the UNR was in fact proclaimed by the Central Rada's Third Universal of November 1917. Another problem has emerged more recently. Since 1995, most of Ukraine's stamps have been printed at the Kyiv Polygraphic Concern, also known as "Derzhznak." But because of economic difficulties, the Ukrainian government has not had the money to buy the stamps from the printing shop, and so several issues have been warehoused.³³

What, then, is the final analysis of the Ukrainian post office. The current post office combines the administrative structure and variety of services of the former Soviet postal system with Ukrainian national symbols. These have been bequeathed by history and carried back to Ukraine largely through the diaspora. Through the adoption of these "traditional" symbols, the

³³ Roman Byshkevych, editorial, *Halilivisnyk* 4, no. 16 (December 1997).

leaders of Ukraine have reaffirmed the connection, which has been promoted by the diasporan view of history, between the modern state and the experiences with independence from earlier in the century. Postage stamps bearing images from Ukrainian history and promoting other facets of the state are usually available to signify the prepayment of delivery for mail. And the mail does generally reach its destination.

But what is lacking is an effective Ukrainian postal bureaucracy, one that can make its own policies independently while also directing and controlling operations. Interestingly, there is a functioning Ukrainian postal system, although it is not necessarily sustained by its own administration. The opinions of the former diasporan leaders still weigh heavily in policy making, and the current leaders have not yet clearly established which elements of which version of Ukrainian history they will adopt. Given these circumstances, the post office in modern Ukraine has become a symbol of the state, which has yet to establish its own stable foundations. It is an ironic contrast to history, when the Ukrainian governments-in-exile existed and dictated their own policies, but could not create useful postal issues or activate truly independent postal services. However, it is quite possible that the inherited postal system — Soviet or not — will preserve Ukraine until its own unique political, economic, and social base can be solidified.

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APPENDIX I

IMPERIAL RUSSIAN AND SOVIET POSTAL ADMINISTRATIONS

- 1567, *Iamskoi prikaz* (relay department) organized¹
- c. 1711, *Iamskaia kantseliaria* (the former *Iamskoi prikaz*) placed under the College of Foreign Affairs (*Kollegiia inostrannykh del*)
- 1782, postal administration shifted from the Public Office (*publichnaia ekspeditsiia*) of the College of Foreign Affairs to the independent Main Postal Affairs Board (*Glavnoe pochtovykh del pravelenie*)
- 1802, post office becomes a main office (*glavnoe upravlenie*) under the Ministry of Internal Affairs (*Ministerstvo vnutrennykh del*)
- 1810, main postal administration downgraded to an office (*pochtovoe upravlenie*) within the Ministry of Internal Affairs
- 1830 postal reform, Main Post Office (*Glavnoe upravlenie pocht*) organized equal in rank to a ministry
- 1865, post united with the Telegraph Office (*Telegrafnoe upravlenie*), which was transferred from the Ministry of the Ways of Communications (*Ministerstvo putei soobshcheniia*), to form a separate Ministry of the Post and Telegraph (*Ministerstvo pocht i telegrafov*)
- 1868–1880, subordinated to the Ministry of Internal Affairs as the Postal Department (*Pochtovyi departament*)
- 1880, post office upgraded to an independent ministry (*Ministerstvo dukhovnykh del inostrannykh ispovedanii i pocht i telegrafov*)
- 1881, Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs dissolved and placed within the Ministry of Internal Affairs
- 1884, Main Office for the Posts and Telegraph (*Glavnoe upravlenie pocht i telegrafov*) established within the Ministry of Internal Affairs
- May 1917, postal administration reorganized under the Provisional Government as an independent ministry
- November 1917, People's Commissariat of Post and Telegraph (*Narodnyi kommissariat pocht i telegrafov/Narkompocht*) assumes administration of communications in Russia
- March 1946, postal commissariat reorganized within the Soviet Ministry of Communications; all postal communications supervised by the Main Postal Communications Administration (*Glavnoe upravlenie pochtovoi sziiavi*)

¹ I have compiled this chronology based on my research. I have also confirmed the dating based on the listings in Winnifred Gregory, ed. *List of Serial Publications of Foreign Governments 1815–1931* (New York: Kraus Reprint Corporation, 1966) and Rudolf Smits, comp., *Half a Century of Soviet Serials 1917–1968: A Bibliography and Union List of Serials Published in the USSR* (Washington: Library of Congress, 1968).

APPENDIX II

ZEMSTVO STAMPS ISSUED ON UKRAINIAN TERRITORY

1. Chernigov Government¹

Kozelets: numerals

Oster: castle and gateway surmounted by three towers, with a Maltese cross atop the middle one

2. Ekaterinoslav Government

Bakhmut: one of the basic key-plate designs, a coat of arms with a circle centered on a shield

Mariupol': cross and half moon between the arms of a "v"

Novomoskovsk: rising star, broken sword across its scabbard, eight-pointed star

Pavlograd: horse facing left, river

Verkhne-Dneprovsk: geometric designs, letters, and numerals

Ekaterinoslav: emblem of Catherine the Great

3. Khar'kov Government

Khar'kov: horse's head, cornucopia

Lebedin: swan on a coat of arms surmounted by a crown

Okhtryka: a botony cross

Starobelsk: horse, either standing or running to the right

Sumy: mail pouch, three sheaves of wheat

Valki: ornaments, letters, denomination

Volchansk: wolf

4. Kherson Government

Aleksandriia: double-headed eagle, four-armed cross, three crowns

Ananiev: a coat of arms surmounted by a cross, three crowns

Elisavetgrad: a small coat of arms, an imperial eagle, and a six-pointed rosette-like ornament, all between two pillars

Kherson: postrider on a horse, double-headed eagle

Odessa: imperial eagle, four-branched anchor

Tiraspol': double-headed eagle, fortress wall with two large acorns

5. Kursk Government

Sudzha: three birds and a swan

6. Poltava Government

Gadiach: eagle, St. George

Kobelaki: laurel, crossed sword and scabbard, two clusters of sugar beets or grapes

Konstantinograd: a turbaned warrior holding an upright sword in his right hand and a rod in his left

Kremenchug: horizontal parallel lines

Lokhvitsa: castle tower with three flying flags

Lubny: hand holding a mace

Pereiaslavl: tower surmounted with a crown

Piriatin: letters and denominations in two concentric circles

Poltava: stone pyramid surmounted by crossed swords and flags to either side with crossed poles, Peter I, Ukrainian village

¹ This listing is based on the information provided in the Fred W. Speers, *The Zemstvo Gazetteer* (London: The British Society of Russian Philately, n.d.).

Priluki: ox's head with a short sword passing through it

Zen'kov: geometric designs, letters, denominations

Zolotonosha: four-sided cross

7. Taurida Government

Berdiansk: beehive and anchor

Dneprovsk: crown, double-headed eagle, a man pouring water from a jug into a stream

Melitopol': postrider on a horse

8. Voronezh Government

Boguchar: letters and numerals

Ostrogzhsk: letters, numerals, an arch

APPENDIX III
RUSSIAN POSTAL CHIEFS FROM 1665 TO 1917

Dates²	Name	Post Subordinate To:
1665–1668	Jan Van Sweden	Foreign Department (Posol'skii Prikaz) ³
1668–1671	Leontii Petrovich Marselius	Foreign Department
1671–1675	Petr Marselius	Foreign Department
1675–1695	Andrei Andreevich Vinius	Foreign Department
1695–1701	Matvei Andreevich Vinius	Foreign Department
1701–1722	Petr Pavlovich Shafirov	Foreign Department
1722–1727	Aleksei Ivanovich Dashkov	Foreign Department
1727–1741	Andrei Ivanovich Osterman	Chancellor/Vice Chancellor
1741–1742	Aleksei Mikhailovich Cherkaskii	Chancellor/Vice Chancellor
1742–1758	Aleksei Petrovich Bestuzhev-Ryumin	Chancellor/Vice Chancellor
1758–1763	Mikhail Ilarionovich Vorontsov	College of Foreign Affairs
1763–1781	Nikita Ivanovich Panin	College of Foreign Affairs
1781–1798	Aleksandr Andreevich Bezborodko	Chancellor/Vice Chancellor
1798–1799	Dimitri Prokof'evich Troshchinskii	Independent
1799–1799	Ivan Borisovich Pestel'	Independent
1799–1801	Fedor Ivanovich Rastopchin	Independent
1801–1801	P. A. von Pahlen	Independent
1801–1806	D. P. Troshchinskii	Ministry of Internal Affairs
1806–1807	Viktor Pavlovich Kochubei	Ministry of Internal Affairs
1807–1810	Aleksandr Borisovich Kurakin	Ministry of Internal Affairs
1810–1819	Osip Petrovich Kozodavlev	Ministry of Internal Affairs
1819–1842	Aleksandr Nikolaevich Golitsyn	Independent
1842–1857	Vladimir Fedorovich Adlerberg	Independent
1857–1863	Fedor Ivanovich Pryanishnikov	Independent
1863–1865	?	—
1865–1867	Ivan Matveevich Tolstoi	Independent
1867–1868	Aleksandr Egorovich Timashev	Independent
1868–1880	Ivan Osipovich Velio	Ministry of Internal Affairs
1880–1881	Lev Savvich Makov	Independent
1881–1882	Stepan Stepanovich Perfil'ev	Ministry of Internal Affairs
1882–1884	vacant (run by Deputy Postal Director Pavel Nikolaevich Morozov)	Ministry of Internal Affairs
1884–1895	Nikolai Aleksandrovich Bezak	Ministry of Internal Affairs
1895–1903	Nikolai Ivanovich Petrov	Ministry of Internal Affairs
1903–1903	Evgenii Konstantinovich Andreevskii	Ministry of Internal Affairs
1903–1913	Mikhail Petrovich Sevast'yanov	Ministry of Internal Affairs
1913–1917	Vladimir Borisovich Pokhvisnev	Ministry of Internal Affairs

² David M. Skipton, and Peter A. Michalove, *Postal Censorship in Imperial Russia* (Urbana: John Otten, 1989), volume 1: A-1.

³ Post may possibly have been subordinate to the Secret Affairs Department (*Prikaz Tainykh Del*).

APPENDIX IV
POST OFFICES IN TRANSCARPATIA UNDER HABSBURG
ADMINISTRATION

Location of Post Office and Date of Opening ¹	Population in 1860
Alsó-Vereczke, Bereg county, 1833	1,095
Beregszász, capital of Bereg county, 1836	4,230 (3,009 in 1835)
Berezna, Máramaros county, opened on 25 July 1871	
Bilke, Bereg county, 8 July 1868	
Bustyaháza, Máramaros county, 15 November 1868	
Dolha, Máramaros county, 1 March 1865	1,241
Dombó, Máramaros county, 7 March 1870	
Fekete Ardó, Ugosca county, 1 June 1866	1,221
Gát, Bereg county, 16 July 1867	
Huszt, in Máramaros county, 1836	4,955 (2,712 in 1835)
Kaszony, Bereg county, 1 October 1858	1,210
Kis Almas, 1 December 1866	
Kisfalud, 1 December 1866	
Körösmező, Máramaros county, 1 July 1854	5,372
Kövesliget, Máramaros county, 7 March 1870	
Mező-Kaszony, Bereg county, 1 October 1858	
Munkács, Bereg county, 1786	7,524 (3,223 in 1835)
Nagy-Berezna, 1 July 1862	1,232
Nagy-Bocskó, Máramaros county, 1 June 1867	
Nagy Kapos, 1 October 1858	
Nagy-Szöllös, capital of Ugosca county, 1787	3,476 (2,052 in 1835)
Ökörmező, Máramaros county, 14 February 1859	1,865
Perecsény, Ung county, 1 July 1862	1,086
Polena, in Bereg county, 1833	274
Rahó, Máramaros county, 1 July 1854	2,113
Som, Bereg county, 1 July 1864	1910: 1,074 for Beregsom, 774 for SomogySom
Szerednye, Ung county, 1786	1,358
Sztávna, Ung county, 1 October 1864	641
Szurthe, 1 June 1864	
Técső, Máramaros county, 1836	2,413 (1,351 in 1835)
Tiszaújlak, Ugosca county, 1836	1,711 (1,434 in 1835)
Trebusa, Máramaros county, 1 July 1854	642
Ungvár, capital of Ung county, pre 1850	9,061 (6,224 in 1835)
Uzsok, Ung county, 1 March 1866	564
Veresmart, 1 December 1866 ²	
Vári, Bereg county, 15 November 1868	
Visk, Máramaros county, 27 August 1868	

¹ Andrew Cronin, "Pre-Stamp Mail and Adhesives Used in Carpatho-Ukraine until 1871," *Ukrainian Philatelist* 36, no. 2 (56) (1989): 40; Dominick J. Riccio, "The Postal History of Carpatho-Ukraine; Part II: Austrian Stamps, 1850-69," *Ukrainian Philatelist* 31 (47) (1984): 8. Riccio later reported that only ten post offices functioned before 1850 and that Nyires Falva, a postal drop without postal services, was closed prior to 1850. Dominick J. Riccio, "Ten P.O.s in Carpatho-Ukraine Prior to 1850: A Clarification," *Ukrainian Philatelist* 32 (48) (1985): 4.

² This location cannot be verified according to Cronin, "Pre-Stamp Mail and Adhesives Used in Carpatho-Ukraine until 1871," 45.

APPENDIX V
POSTAL CARDS WITH UKRAINIAN INSCRIPTIONS

All cards listed here chronologically were printed in Moscow by the State Bank Note Factory (Fabrika gosudarstvennykh znakov/Goznak), with tirage levels of one million each.¹

1. Cards for intercity mail with the inscription “postal card” printed in both Russian and Ukrainian; the main message is presented in Ukrainian; the Russian “kuda” has been replaced with the Ukrainian “kude” (the phrase “komu” is correct for both Russian and Ukrainian); all cards are printed with a five-kopeck stamp, which has the image of a Red Army soldier

- 1930 Text: “Ukrghostorg [Ukrainian branch of the State Import-Export Trade Office (Gosudarstvennaia importno-eksportnaia tovgovaia kontora)]. Collect and submit to Gostorg: rags, bones, paper, scrap metal, broken glass, old clothes, rubber shoes, bristles, horse hair, down-feathers, etc. Gostorg pays money for waste material.”
Design: scene at an Ukrghostorg state collection point
- 1931 Text: “For the cultivation of beets, use horse or tractor-drawn multiple hoes! It saves 30-40% manpower compared to hand cultivation and shortens work!”
Design: a beet; cultivation of a beet field
- 1931 Text: “Do not delay pinching beets! Beets pinched to 2 leaves give a harvest of 281 centners² per hectare, 4 leaves – 279 centners, 6 leaves – 259 centners.”
Design: diagram of the text
- 1931 Text: “Complete collectivization of beet areas guarantees the sugar industry — raw materials, the nation — sugar!”
Design: sugar beet against the background of a sugar factory; a tractor transporting crates of sugar
- 1931 Text: “Collective farmers and peasants! Contract and sow sugar beets! Sugar beets increase the profits of the farm.”
Design: a sugar beet
- 1931 Text: “Members of cooperatives! Pay your share on time, strengthen your consumer cooperative!”
Design: a worker with an account book and money at the entrance to a consumer cooperative
- 1931 Text: “Organization of workers control — is a basic part of cooperative functions, the battle assignment of consumer cooperation!”

¹ These cards are found among the chronological listing of Soviet postal cards in G. M. Listov, *Markirovann'e pochtove kartochki SSSR 1923-1979 gg.* (Moscow: Radio i svyazi, 1982). The translations are based on George V. Shalimoff, “Ukrainian Texts on Soviet ‘Propaganda’ Postal Cards,” *Ukrainian Philatelist* 32, no. 48 (1985): 23-34. See also Andriy Solchanyk, letter to the editor, *Ukrainian Philatelist* 34, no. 2 (54) (1987): 2; William T. Shinn, Jr., “More About the Ukrainian Zip-Code System,” *Rossica Journal* 81 (1972): 50; and Melvin M. Kessler, “Covers Relating to Russia,” *Rossica Journal* 120 (April 1993): 74.

² 1 centner = 100 kilograms

- Design: workers control in a cooperative (foreman overseeing factory workers)
- 1931 Text: "We will fulfill Lenin's order to the party, we will direct all our strength to improve workers provisions, reduce prices, and increase real wages."
Design: trucks loaded with goods at a consumers cooperative store
- 1931 Text: "Tobacco growers! Contract and increase the growing of tobacco. With timely and attentive care of tobacco, you will increase the amount of yield, increase the profit of the farm. Give the entire yield to the receiving point. Not one gram for the speculator or middleman — enemy of Soviet power. We will destroy the illicit trader."
Design: planting tobacco; tractor working a field; warehouse
- 1931 Text: "Beet growing collectivists and peasants! Mechanize the harvesting of sugar beets!"
Design: mechanization of the sugar beet harvest
- 1931 Text: "Beet growing collectivists and peasants! Protect the harvested beets from withering! Gather the cleaned beets into mounds and cover them with soil!"
Design: mounds of beets covered with dirt
- 1931 Text: "Beet growing collectivists and peasants! Submit the entire harvest to the sugar factory. The concealment of contracted beets from the factory leads to unprofitableness for the farm and inadequate sugar supplies. Raw materials for industry means sugar for the nation!"
Design: cards with sugar beets at a collection point
- 1931 Text: "Beet growing collectivists and peasants! Do not reduce the weight of beets when cleaning! Be careful when digging not to damage the beets, damaged roots keep poorly and yield less sugar. When cleaning, cut off the head at an angle as shown here. Cut the tail of the root to the size of a grivnik³ as shown on the diagram."
Design: explanation of the text

2. Cards for intercity mail with the inscriptions "postal card," "to where," and "to whom" printed in eight languages: Russian, Ukrainian, Belorussian, Georgian, Armenian, Azerbaijanian (Latin letters), Tadzhik (Arabic letters), and French; the main message is presented in Ukrainian; all cards are printed with a ten-kopeck stamp, which carries the image of a factory worker

- 1931 Text: "Sugar beets are the foundation of the collective farm in the beet growing regions. Is your collective ready for sowing?"
Design: mechanized sowing of beets; sugar beet root; a factory
- 1931 Text: "Remember, early harrowing in the fall will save moisture in the spring and hasten an early sugar beet harvest!"
Design: plowing beets; harvested sugar beets
- 1931 Text: "Only good preparation before sowing the soil ensures the vigorous sprouting of

³ a ten-kopeck coin

sugar beets!"

Design: sugar beet; tractors in a beet field

- 1931 Text: "Only early sowing and timely cultivation ensures an abundant crop of sugar beets! With early sowing – 286 centners per hectare. Mid sowing – 269 centners per hectare. Late sowing – 246 centners per hectare."
Design: illustration of the text
- 1932 Text: "Chemicalization and mechanization in the battle with sugar beet pests ensures an increase in the yields of Soviet farms and collectives!"
Design: cultivation of sugar beet crops with chemicals; sugar beet pests
- 1932 Text: "Fight weeds. They take the power and nourishment from the sugar beets."
Design: sugar beets grown without weeds and those overwhelmed by weeds
- 1932 Text: "Depositing your savings in a savings bank will accelerate the tempo of socialist construction!"
Design: a savings book; smokestacks; a column of tractors
- 1932 Text: "I received a letter quickly because the 'INDEX' was indicated on the letter, that is, the conventional designation that was adopted by every populated area in Ukraine. Information at the post office!"
Design: a man; an envelope with an address

3. Cards for local mail with the inscription "postal card" printed in both Russian and Ukrainian; the main message is presented in Ukrainian; all cards are printed with a three-kopek stamp, which has the image of a collective farm worker

- 1932 Text: "The conventional designation 'INDEX,' which was adopted by every populated area in Ukraine, is by all means required to be written on each postal sending. This ensures correct and timely receipt of a letter!"
Design: postal bus; a letter addressed in Ukrainian with the postal index
- 1932 Text: "The correct address on a letter guarantees timely delivery! Inform all and write on the addresses the conventional indications 'INDEX,' which were adopted by every populated point in Ukraine. 'INDEX' — this is the correct way to address a letter! Information at the post office!"
Design: a postman with a packet of letters
- 1932 Text: "A conventional indication 'INDEX' has been assigned to every populated point in Ukraine. The presence of such a conventional designation on a letter guarantees the correct sending and timely reception! Information at the post office!"⁴

⁴ Another interesting example of the use of postal cards to spread the government's messages occurred in May 1932, when the State Printing Office prepared four series of postal cards to publicize the newly created Soviet postal code system. Apparently, the system was used only until 1939, when because of the onset of World War II, it was canceled; a new postal code system was introduced in 1969. The composition of the codes consisted of a Cyrillic letter to specify the republic and two numbers, the first indicating the specific postal district and the second the particular post office. The following examples were used for towns in the Ukrainian S.S.R.: 11-y-15, Kiev; 24-y-11, Olgina; 41-y-3, Kichkas;

Design: a letter with the address in Ukrainian and the postal index

4. Card for intercity mail with the inscription "postal card" printed in Ukrainian and French; the main message is presented in Ukrainian. Under the "kuda" line is additional text; line 1, "name of the place where the post office is located, and the oblast (region) or krai (district) but for stations, the name of the railway line"; line 2, "area, small town or village"; line 3, "street, house number and apartment number." Under the "komu" line is the additional text "complete name of the addressee." Below a dividing line is the heading "adres otravitelia" (sender's address). Because of these added text lines, the design and text of the message are in the form of an inverted letter "L" at the left side of the card. The cards are printed with a ten-kopeck stamp, which has the image of a factory worker.

1932 Text: "In the USSR loans and deposits in a savings bank are used to build socialism and to improve the welfare of the workers; among the capitalists they are used for wars and the exploitation of the people."

Design: a factory building under construction; new housing; gun barrels and graves

161-y-27, Kytayiv-Kitaevo; 205-y-30, Nemirinty; and 348-y-1, Sumy. The most important post office in any district was assigned the number one, and thus the code 22-y-1 referred to the main post office of Postal District No. 22 situated in Odessa. Andrew Cronin, "A Ukrainian Zip-Code System," *Ukrainian Philatelist* 34, no. 1 (51) (1987): 15. Four million postcards were printed by Goznak with one of four slogans — as presented here — to promote the use of the mail sorting system. The content of the messages also shows the continued emphasis that was placed on proper and responsible conduct for all Soviet citizens.

A similar practice is related to the 1941 Kolomea provisional postal cards. The cards were used by the Ukrainian District Administrative Committee, which was formed on 3 July 1941, immediately after the retreat of the Soviet army and just prior to the arrival of the German forces. The district committee established some public institutions and postal services before the arrival of the regular Hungarian army on 8 July 1941. Again, four slogans were used to provide advice on how to properly address the mail: "Write your return address on each postal mailing;" "Write correct, exact, and legible addresses;" "Use air mail;" and "Use an address postal card in giving address data." Alexander Malychy, "About Postal Service Slogans on the Kolomyia Provisional Postal Card of 1941," *Ukrainian Philatelist* 41, no. 1/2 (65/66) (1993): 7.

APPENDIX VI
THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF ADVERTISING-AGITATIONAL POSTAL CARDS,
1927-1934

1. Vladimir Il'ich Lenin = 2 ¹	
a. sayings:	2
2. Members of the Communist Party = 1	
a. Josef Stalin:	1
3. Civil War = 6	
a. the Red Army:	6
4. Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics = 163	
a. international relations:	2
b. publications:	13
c. education:	1
d. health, sanitation, hygiene:	8
e. trade policies:	19
f. savings accounts:	20
g. State Insurance Association:	6
h. consumer cooperatives:	9
i. development loans:	8
j. lottery:	15
k. societies:	
— Defense, Aviation, Chemical Construction:	13
— Down with Illiteracy:	1
— Automobilmism and Road Improvement:	8
— Aid to Fighters for Revolution:	14
— Red Cross:	16
— Friends of Children:	10
5. Women = 25	
a. in public/political life:	13
b. in industry:	4
c. in agriculture:	8
6. Youth = 7	
a. in industry and construction:	1
b. Pioneers:	6
7. The Economy = 196	
a. development of the national economy:	54
b. national and international exhibitions:	1
c. collective farms:	15
d. material, technical foundations of agriculture:	18
e. grain farming:	10
f. animal husbandry, poultry farming:	11
g. technical development, garden crops:	35
h. railway transport:	8

¹ This analysis is based on the listings in G. M. Listov, *Markirovann'e pochtov'e kartochki SSSR 1923—1979 gg.* (Moscow: Radio i svyazi, 1982). In cases where the topic of a postal card fell into more than one category, it is counted in both.

i. automobile transport:	6
j. safe driving regulations:	3
k. ocean fleet:	1
l. civil air fleet:	7
m. dirigibles:	6
n. communications:	2
o. postal service:	19
8. The Armed Forces = 21	
a. strengthening of defense capabilities:	21
9. World War II = 2	
a. protection of the motherland:	2
10. International Relations = 48	
a. international workers:	14
b. anti-fascist movement:	1
c. sports and tourism:	11
d. Intourist:	13
11. Physical Culture = 2	
12. Emblems, Symbols = 18	

APPENDIX VII
THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF SOVIET POSTAGE STAMPS,
1918-1980

1. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels = 80 ¹	
a. Marxism-Leninism:	15
b. jubilee dates:	26
c. associated places:	2
d. named for Karl Marx:	1
e. portraits of Karl Marx:	23
f. portraits of Friedrich Engels:	13
2. Vladimir Il'ich Lenin = 843	
a. childhood and youth:	23
b. leader of international workers:	3
c. 1917 Revolution:	37
d. founder of the socialist state:	41
e. organizer of the socialist movement:	9
f. organizer of the Communist Party:	20
g. organizer of the party press:	15
h. celebrations associated with Leninism:	46
i. the Komsomol program:	52
j. Young Pioneers:	37
k. depictions of Lenin	
— in graphics and paintings:	63
— in literature:	2
— in sculpture and monuments:	66
l. portraits:	134
m. the Lenin Mausoleum:	43
n. museums:	25
o. Lenin Prize:	38
p. International Lenin Prize:	4
q. named for Lenin:	110
r. Leningrad:	75
3. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union = 81	
a. establishment:	8
b. and the civil war:	7
c. and World War II:	1
c. relations with the union republics:	21
d. program:	19
e. plenums, congresses, etc.:	25
4. History of the Soviet Union = 165	
a. medieval Rus':	30
b. Zaporozhian Sich:	7
c. Defense of the throne, 1611:	5
d. unification of Russian lands:	19
e. peasant liberation movement (17–18th century):	4

¹ This analysis is based on the listings in the official *Katalog pochtovykh marok SSSR 1918–1980*, 2 volumes (Moscow: Ministerstva svyazi SSSR, 1983). No volume was produced for the years 1981 to 1991. In cases where the topic of a stamp fell into more than one category, it is counted in both.

f. bookprinting in Russia:	5
g. War of 1812:	5
h. Crimean War:	5
i. 1905–1907 Revolution:	21
j. World War I:	5
k. anniversary dates of cities:	34
l. anniversaries of industrial enterprises:	7
m. geographical expansion:	7
n. history of the post office:	11
5. 1917 Revolution = 186	
a. emancipation of workers and peasants:	34
b. anniversaries of the Revolution:	146
c. Museum of the Revolution:	4
d. named for the 1917 Revolution:	2
6. Civil War = 82	
a. the Red Army:	51
b. execution of the 26 Baku commissars:	7
c. Red Army victory at Pskov:	1
d. First Cavalry:	8
e. heroes of the Perekop battle:	12
f. Red Army in Vladivostok:	3
7. Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics = 1125	
a. state symbols, flag, seal:	112
b. constitution:	15
c. government ministries:	9
d. union of workers and peasants:	9
e. trade unions:	5
f. anniversary of the formation of U.S.S.R.:	11
g. population:	39
h. exhibitions:	106
i. maintenance of public law and order:	9
j. Hydrometeorological Service:	2
k. Standardization Committee:	1
l. Leningrad Mint:	1
m. Consumers' Cooperative Societies:	1
n. savings banks:	3
o. Post and Telegraph Department:	1
p. Red Cross and Red Crescent:	6
q. national census (1959):	2
r. national days:	
— Artillery:	4
— Air Fleet:	9
— Navy:	2
— 8 March (Women):	12
— Protection of Children:	4
— Health:	3
— Constitution:	1

— Cosmonauts:	44
— Soviet Youth:	2
— United Nations:	3
— Liberation of Africa:	2
— 1 May (Workers):	8
— 5 May (Press):	2
— Victory over Fascist Germany:	5
— Postage Stamps and Philatelists:	2
— Radio:	4
— Builders':	3
— Tankmen:	4
— Theater:	1
— Miners':	4
s. union republics	
Armenia = 29	
— flag, seal, capital city:	14
— population, anniversary dates:	2
— agriculture, science:	5
— culture:	7
— sports:	1
Azerbaijan = 23	
— flag, seal, capital city:	12
— population, anniversary dates:	3
— agriculture, culture:	5
— unification with Russia:	1
— Nakhichevan A.S.S.R.:	2
Belorussia = 46	
— flag, seal, capital city:	12
— population:	2
— Belorussian Communist Party:	2
— unification of Western Belorussia with B.S.S.R.:	7
— anniversary dates:	7
— World War II:	7
— agriculture, culture:	8
— international relations:	1
Estonia = 31	
— flag, seal, capital city:	13
— agriculture:	2
— anniversary dates:	2
— culture:	13
— health spas:	1
Georgia = 42	
— flag, seal, capital city:	16
— population:	4
— agriculture, science, culture:	9
— natural environment:	7
— health spas:	4
— Abkhazian A.S.S.R.:	1
— Adzhar A.S.S.R.:	1
Kazakhstan = 21	

— flag, seal, capital city:	10
— population:	3
— anniversary dates:	1
— agriculture, culture:	5
— health spas:	2
Kirghizistan = 23	
— flag, seal, capital city, population:	15
— agriculture, anniversary dates:	6
— natural environment, health spas:	2
Latvia = 26	
— flag, seal, capital city:	15
— agriculture, population:	4
— culture:	3
— anniversary dates:	2
— health spas:	2
Lithuania = 20	
— flag, seal, capital city:	12
— agriculture, science, culture:	6
— anniversary dates:	1
— health spas:	1
Moldavia = 14	
— flag, seal, capital city:	9
— anniversary dates:	4
— culture:	1
Russia = 177	
— flag, and seal:	12
— autonomous republics:	42
— population:	19
— culture:	14
— exhibitions:	6
— natural environment and resources:	28
— anniversaries of cities:	23
— 50th anniversary of liberation of the Far East:	3
— health spas:	28
— sports:	2
Tadzhikistan = 25	
— flag, seal, capital city:	13
— population:	2
— agriculture, science, anniversary dates:	8
— natural environment:	1
— sports:	1
Turkmenistan = 19	
— flag, seal, capital city:	11
— population:	3
— agriculture:	3
— anniversary dates:	2
Ukraine = 138	
— flag, seal, capital city:	19
— population:	2
— Ukrainian Communist Party:	3

— unification with Russia:	11
— unification of U.S.S.R. and Western Ukraine:	7
— anniversary dates:	14
— World War II:	13
— agriculture, science, culture:	47
— natural environment:	21
— international relations:	1
Uzbekistan = 40	
— flag, seal, capital city:	14
— Karakalpak A.S.S.R.:	2
— population:	3
— agriculture, science:	5
— anniversary dates:	8
— architectural monuments:	8
8. Moscow, the Capital City = 408	
a. Lenin in Moscow:	22
b. the Kremlin:	87
c. Red Square:	17
d. Moscow and the 1905 Revolution:	3
e. Moscow and World War II:	9
f. architecture:	138
g. monuments:	32
h. Lenin Subway:	27
i. museums and theaters:	44
j. Moscow in works of art:	6
k. 800th anniversary:	20
l. named for Moscow:	1
m. Moscow flowers:	5
9. Women = 127	
a. in public/political life:	15
b. in industry and communications:	14
c. in agriculture:	26
d. in World War II:	10
e. in the struggle for peace:	4
f. bringing up the younger generation:	9
g. in health services:	4
h. in the arts:	7
i. in physical culture and sports:	37
j. international movement:	1
10. Youth = 247	
a. Komsomol and Soviet youth	
— in the Civil War:	3
— in World War II:	4
— in industry and construction:	16
— in agriculture:	9
— in science and culture:	10
— and the conquest of space:	23

— in the struggle for peace:	29
— orders and badges:	10
— congresses:	11
— anniversaries:	16
— named for the Komsomol:	2
— labor, education, and relaxation:	3
b. Soviet children	
— Lenin and children:	3
— aid for homeless children:	10
— health of mothers and children:	8
— Pioneers and school children:	45
— 50th anniversary of the newspaper:	1
— young scientists and naturalists:	10
— proper behaviour, medical aid:	7
— young athletes:	3
— artists:	9
— peace and happiness:	10
— international year of the child:	5
11. The Economy = 1177	
a. development of the national economy:	61
b. 50th anniversary, first five-year plan:	1
c. industrial, agricultural exhibitions:	39
d. 50th anniversary, material basis of socialism:	6
e. industry	
— strength of industrial power:	30
— heavy industry:	36
— electrification:	44
— metallurgy:	42
— mechanization, instrumentalization:	37
— chemistry:	9
— fuels, energy:	19
— light industry:	5
— mining:	4
— porcelain:	2
f. capital construction	
— industrial and hydrotechnical:	35
— civil:	34
— architects of socialism:	2
— materials for building industry:	2
g. agriculture	
— U.S.S.R., the forerunner of agriculture:	8
— collective farms:	33
— material-technical foundations:	33
— grain farming:	33
— planting of crops:	14
— animal husbandry:	28
— fruits, vegetables:	40
— forestry, hydroculture:	28
— hunting, fishing:	7

h. transportation and communication	
— Lenin announcing socialist plans:	3
— resolutions of the Party:	5
— development in cities:	9
i. means of transportation	
— railways:	31
— automotive:	46
— subway systems:	35
— on seas and rivers:	49
— aerial:	150
— postal communications:	45
— express and air mail:	111
— growth of communication:	12
— radio and television:	43
— communications ministry:	1
— 20th anniversary, Org. for Com. Coop:	1
— traffic rules:	4
12. The Armed Forces = 340	
a. Lenin addressing the troops:	2
b. growth of the Soviet military:	97
c. defenders of freedom for Soviet people:	57
d. Soviet Navy:	34
e. Soviet Air Force:	58
f. infantry/motor forces:	15
g. artillery:	13
h. tank battalions:	14
i. cavalry:	11
j. communications units:	3
k. frontier guards:	2
l. modern hardware:	4
m. Soviet Red Guards:	4
n. readiness: Red Army and sports:	22
o. Warsaw Pact forces:	3
p. military newspaper "Red Star":	1
13. World War II, 1941–1945 = 272	
a. defense of the motherland:	83
b. battle fronts:	11
c. Red Army victories:	44
d. cooperation with the United States, France, Britain:	6
e. liberation of Europe from fascism:	30
f. victory celebrations:	30
g. glory to the heroes:	26
h. defense of cities:	42
14. Honors = 407	
a. Gold Star Medal:	167
b. Medal of Hammer and Sickle:	17
c. Lenin Prize, literature:	3

d. Lenin Prize, peace:	5
e. Marshal's Star:	3
f. orders	
— Lenin:	44
— October Revolution:	6
— Friendship:	2
— Red Banner:	28
— Red Workers' Banner:	25
— Red Star:	3
— Token of Veneration:	2
— Patriotic War:	11
— Victory:	11
— Field Marshal Suvorov:	5
— Field Marshal Kutuzov:	3
— Prince Alexander Nevsky:	3
— Bohdan Khmelnytsky:	6
— Nakhimov:	2
— Ushakov:	3
— Bravery:	3
— Mother-Heroine:	3
— Motherhood Glory:	3
— Labor:	4
— Armed Forces:	3
g. medals	
— Bravery and Meritorious Service:	4
— Workers' Gallantry and Achievement:	4
— Partisan of the Patriotic War:	8
— Defense of the Soviet Union:	16
— Victory over Germany (World War II):	2
— Liberation of Warsaw:	1
— Valiant Labor (World War II):	2
— Motherhood:	3
— Kazakhstan Workers (Virgin Lands):	2
15. International Relations = 724	
a. First International:	5
b. First Comintern Congress:	2
c. Paris Commune:	1
d. workers' solidarity:	23
e. peace and nuclear disarmament:	71
f. international movements	
— anti-imperialism, national liberation:	14
— workers and trade unions:	20
— anti-fascism:	7
— women:	19
— youth and children:	36
g. international co-operation	
— political:	42
— economic:	80
— science and culture:	113

— space exploration:	42
— health:	21
— literature and art:	33
— sports, tourism, environment:	195
16. International Socialism = 137	
a. Bulgaria:	16
b. Hungary:	19
c. North Vietnam:	8
d. East Germany:	22
e. North Korea:	2
f. Cuba:	9
g. Mongolia:	8
h. Poland:	19
i. Romania:	10
j. Czechoslovakia:	21
k. Yugoslavia:	3
17. Science and Culture = 357	
a. Marxism-Leninism:	1
b. UNESCO symposium:	1
c. scientific and technical achievements:	26
d. science and industry:	7
e. scientific academies:	25
f. universities, institutes, observatories:	46
g. secondary education:	8
h. libraries and museums:	49
i. printing/publishing:	21
j. exhibitions, forums:	45
k. scientific societies:	6
l. health services:	39
m. development of boats:	10
n. development of trains:	10
o. development of planes:	32
p. development of automobiles:	19
q. development of ice-breakers:	12
18. Exploration of the Arctic and Antarctic = 109	
a. the Arctic:	75
b. Antarctic:	16
c. national fleet of ice-breakers:	18
19. Space Program = 415	
a. exploration of the stratosphere:	13
b. exploration of meteors:	2
c. satellites (Earth, the moon, sun, Mars):	56
d. interplanetary travel, landings:	68
e. manned satellites:	5
f. manned spacecraft	
— "Vostok":	57

— “Voskhod”:	18
— “Soiuz”:	52
g. orbital station “Salyut”:	27
h. “Interkosmos” program:	27
i. link-up of Soyuz and Apollo:	10
j. part of the national economy:	21
k. the future of space exploration:	19
l. Day of the Cosmonauts:	40
20. Literature = 18	
a. national epics and folklore:	16
b. Asia–Africa writers’ conference:	2
21. Arts = 875	
a. drawings, graphics	
— history of revolutionary movement:	10
— 1905, 1917, Civil War:	21
— development of socialism:	15
— World War II:	6
— Academy of Arts:	5
— space exploration:	2
— 100th anniversary of the Itinerants:	7
b. sculpture, monuments	
— 1905, 1917, Civil War:	17
— workers, peasants, and soldiers:	134
— children:	3
— World War II, defeat of fascism:	50
— swords into plowshares movement:	2
— conquest of space:	30
— warships in Messina (earthquake):	1
c. architecture	
— First Architectural Congress:	1
— government buildings:	44
— libraries, museums, education:	103
— pavilions, hotels:	21
— theaters, cinemas, culture:	45
— health spas:	38
— historic architecture:	123
d. decorative–applied arts	
— modern:	53
— antique:	19
e. theater, music	
— theaters and concert halls:	48
— Tchaikovsky Conservatory:	1
— opera, ballet, performances:	25
— National Folkdance ensemble:	6
— amateur arts:	1
— Russian National Choir:	1
— song festivals, Estonia, Latvia:	3
— International Tchaikovsky Competition:	11

— international theater institute:	1
— international ballet competition:	1
— International Theater Day:	1
— Tchaikovsky Museum:	3
— Smetana Museum:	1
f. cinema	
— anniversary dates:	3
— cadres in film:	10
— international film festivals:	7
— cinemas (buildings):	1
g. circus	
— 60th anniversary of the circus:	1

22. Nature = 397

a. animals	
— mammals:	95
— reptiles:	5
— birds:	53
— fish:	16
— insects:	4
— micro-organisms:	2
b. national wildlife preserves:	21
c. international conferences:	25
d. plants:	115
e. minerals:	9
f. landscapes:	52

23. Sports and Tourism = 895

a. physical culture:	52
b. athletic facilities:	8
c. national competitions	
— All-Union Spartakiad:	46
— Trade Union Spartakiad:	12
— Technical Sports Spartakiad:	3
— chess championships:	1
— youth competitions:	5
d. international championships	
— International Spartakiad:	10
— Olympic Games:	150
— Spartakiad of Friendly Armies:	1
— student and youth competitions:	10
— summer sports and gymnastics:	10
— winter sports:	27
— boxing and wrestling:	3
— Peace Bicycle Races:	1
— sailing, 20th Baltic Regatta:	3
— track and field:	7
— pentathlon and team sports:	32
— technical sports:	2

— weightlifting:	2
— fencing:	3
— chess and checkers:	13
e. individual sports	
— mountain climbing:	6
— boxing, wrestling:	16
— cycling:	12
— sailing:	47
— gymnastics:	29
— winter sports:	98
— equestrian:	17
— track and field:	66
— technical:	43
— weightlifting:	10
— shooting:	8
— pentathlon:	1
— team sports:	65
— fencing:	13
— chess and checkers:	15
f. tourism:	48
24. Philately = 293	
a. charity stamps:	40
b. Soviet and international exhibitions:	29
c. VOF conferences/gatherings:	4
d. 50th anniv. International Federation of Philately:	1
e. Day of Philatelists:	4
f. anniversaries of stamp issues:	42
g. souvenir sheets:	152
h. New Years' issues:	21

APPENDIX VIII
SOVIET DEFINITIVE STAMP SERIES,
1921–1978

First Definitive Series, August–September 1921 ¹

1 ruble	symbols of agriculture	399,400
2 rubles	symbols of agriculture	398,450
5 rubles	symbols of industry	543,330
20 rubles	symbols of agriculture and industry	289,760
40 rubles	“Russia triumphant”	174,980
100 rubles	symbols of agriculture	44,391,900
200 rubles	symbols of agriculture	4,000,000
250 rubles	symbols of science and the arts	78,929,150
300 rubles	symbols of agriculture	3,000,000
500 rubles	symbols of industry	1,071,900
1000 rubles	symbols of industry	53,869,950

Second Definitive Series, March–April 1922

5000 rubles	“Workers of the World Unite”	536,050
7500 rubles	Soviet symbols	8,463,050
10,000 rubles	“Workers of the World Unite”	1,708,125
22,500 rubles	Soviet symbols	3,000,000

Third Definitive Series, August 1929–January 1941

1 kopeck	worker
2 kopecks	female factory worker
3 kopecks	peasant
4 kopecks	female farm worker
5 kopecks	soldier
7 kopecks	worker-soldier-peasant
10 kopecks	worker
14 kopecks	Lenin
15 kopecks	worker-soldier-peasant
20 kopecks	peasant
30 kopecks	female factory worker
50 kopecks	female farm worker
70 kopecks	soldier
80 kopecks	peasant
1 ruble	telegraph office in Moscow
3 rubles	Lenin Hydroelectric Power Station on the Volkhov River

¹ For each series, the value of the stamps and the image on the stamps are given. This presentation is based on the listings in the official *Katalog pochtovykh marok SSSR 1918–1980*, 2 volumes (Moscow: Ministerstva svyazi SSSR, 1983). The catalogue provide the number of stamps that were produced for only the first two series; all others were “tirazh massovyi.”

Fourth Definitive Series, 1936–1953 ²

10 kopecks	female factory worker
20 kopecks	female farm worker
40 kopecks	Lenin

Fifth Definitive Series, March–August 1939

15 kopecks	foundryman
30 kopecks	female factory worker
60 kopecks	arms of the Soviet Union

Sixth Definitive Series, August 1939–December 1956

5 kopecks	worker
15 kopecks	soldier
30 kopecks	aviator
60 kopecks	arms of the Soviet Union
60 kopecks ³	Spasski Tower at the Kremlin

Seventh Definitive Series, May 1948–September 1953

5 kopecks	miner
10 kopecks	marine
15 kopecks	aviator
20 kopecks	female farm worker
30 kopecks	arms of the Soviet Union
45 kopecks	scientist
50 kopecks	Spasski Tower at the Kremlin
60 kopecks	soldier
1 ruble	Spasski Tower at the Kremlin

Eighth Definitive Series, October 1948–July 1957 ⁴

15 kopecks	miner
20 kopecks	female farm worker
25 kopecks	aviator
30 kopecks	scientist
40 kopecks	arms of the Soviet Union
50 kopecks	Spasski Tower at the Kremlin
1 ruble	planes and the flag of the Soviet Air Force ⁵

² These designs were the same as those used in the Third Definitive Series. Because of demand, the 10- and 20-kopeck stamps were reissued; the 40-kopeck stamp was necessitated by a change in postal rates.

³ The 60-kopeck stamp was issued with two distinct designs.

⁴ The images of the Seventh Definitive Series were reissued on the values of the Eight Definitive Series.

⁵ This airmail stamp was issued on Air Force Day 1948.

Ninth Definitive Series, August 1958–March 1960

20 kopecks	female farm worker
25 kopecks	engineer
60 kopecks	steel foundry worker

Tenth Definitive Series, January 1961–August 1966

1 kopeck	“labor” (personified) holding a peace flag	
2 kopecks	harvester and silo	
3 kopecks	space rockets	
4 kopecks	arms and flag of the Soviet Union	
6 kopecks	Spasski Tower at the Kremlin	
10 kopecks	worker and female farm worker monument	
12 kopecks	Minin and Pozharski monument, Spasski Tower	
16 kopecks	plane over a power station and dam	
20 kopecks ⁶	portrait of Lenin in 1919	20,000,000
30 kopecks	portrait of Lenin in 1918	7,000,000
50 kopecks	portrait of Lenin in 1920	5,000,000
1 ruble ⁷	the Congress Palace and Spasski Tower	2,000,000

Eleventh Definitive Series, October 1966–April 1969

1 kopeck	Congress Palace (Moscow) and a map of the Soviet Union
2 kopecks	Luna spaceship, soft landing on the Moon
3 kopecks	boy, girl, and Lenin banner
4 kopecks	arms and flag of the Soviet Union
6 kopecks	plane and the Ostankino Television Tower
10 kopecks	soldier and a red star
12 kopecks	steel foundry worker
16 kopecks	“peace” (personified), a woman with a dove
20 kopecks	demonstrators with flags in Red Square, a carnation and globe
30 kopecks	symbols of agriculture and chemistry
50 kopecks	a newspaper, plane, train, the Communications Ministry Building
1 ruble	Lenin and symbols of industry

Twelfth Definitive Series, August 1976–⁸

1 kopeck	Order of the Armed Forces
2 kopecks	medals of Heroes of the Soviet Union (golden star) and of Socialist Workers (hammer and sickle)
3 kopecks	worker and female farm worker monument
4 kopecks	coat of arms of the Soviet Union and “СССР” inscription
6 kopecks	TU-154 plane, globe, airmail envelope
10 kopecks	Order of Labor
12 kopecks	Gagarin Medal for space exploration
16 kopecks	Lenin Prize medal

⁶ These three values (20, 30, and 50 kopecks) were not put into circulation until May–June 1961.

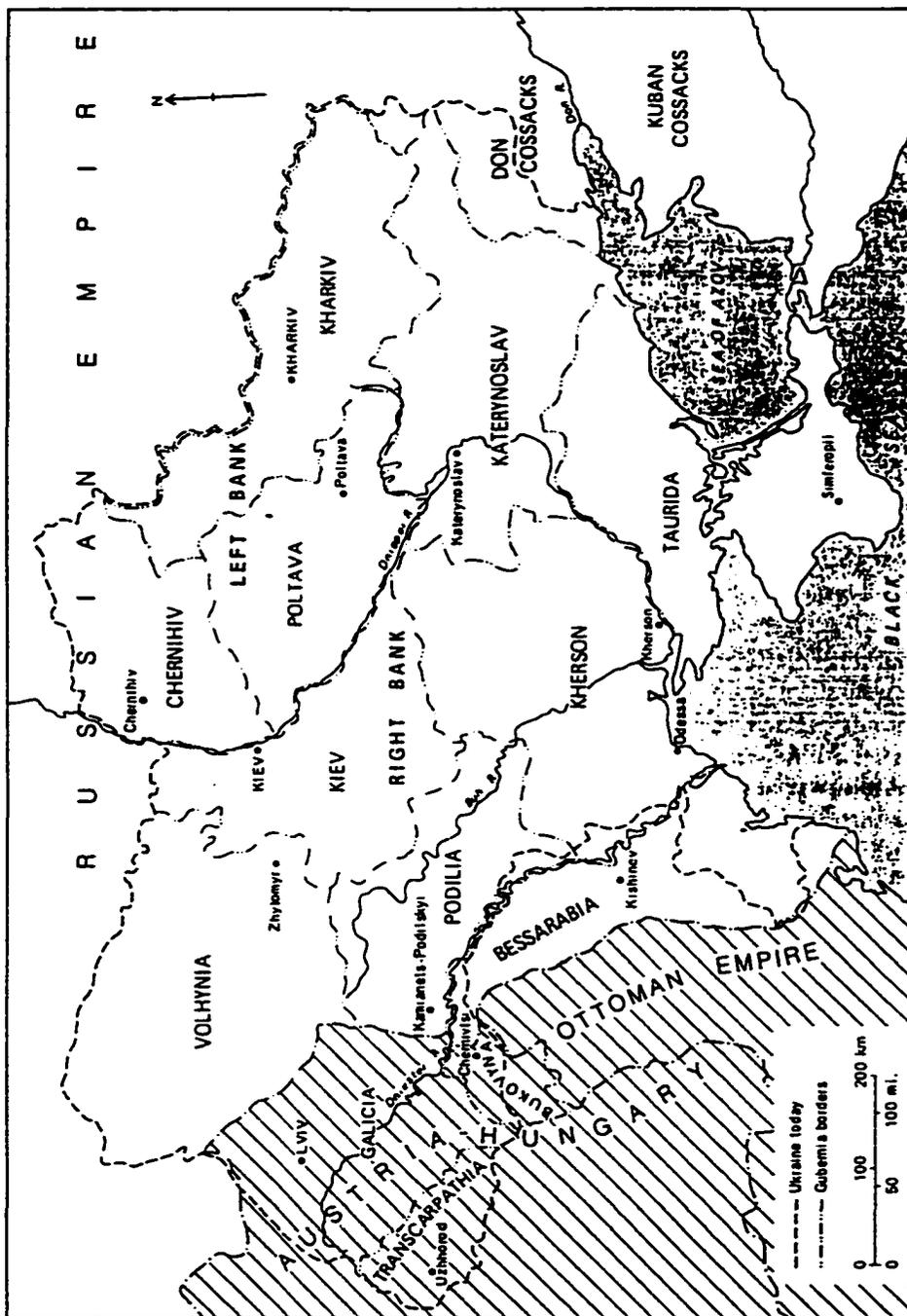
⁷ This value was not released until December 1964.

⁸ The catalog listings end in 1980, at which time this definitive series was still in official circulation.

20 kopecks	portraits of Marx and Lenin, the slogan "Workers of the World Unite!"
30 kopecks	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance building
32 kopecks ⁹	UL-76 passenger plane
50 kopecks	Lenin
1 ruble	Sputnik spaceship in orbit around the globe

⁹ This value was not released until August 1978.

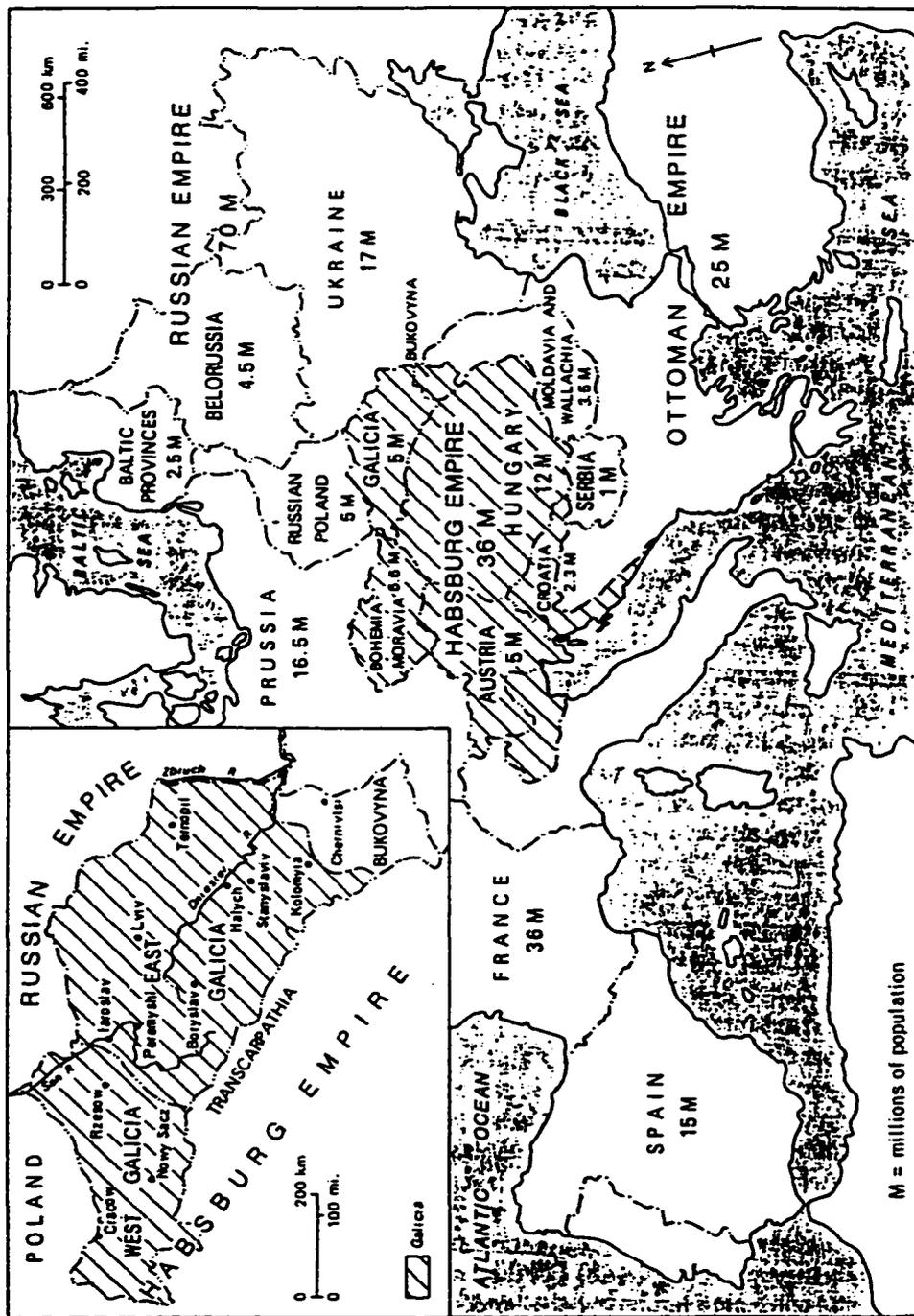
MAP I
RUSSIAN-RULED UKRAINE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY



¹ Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press/Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1988), 267.

MAP II

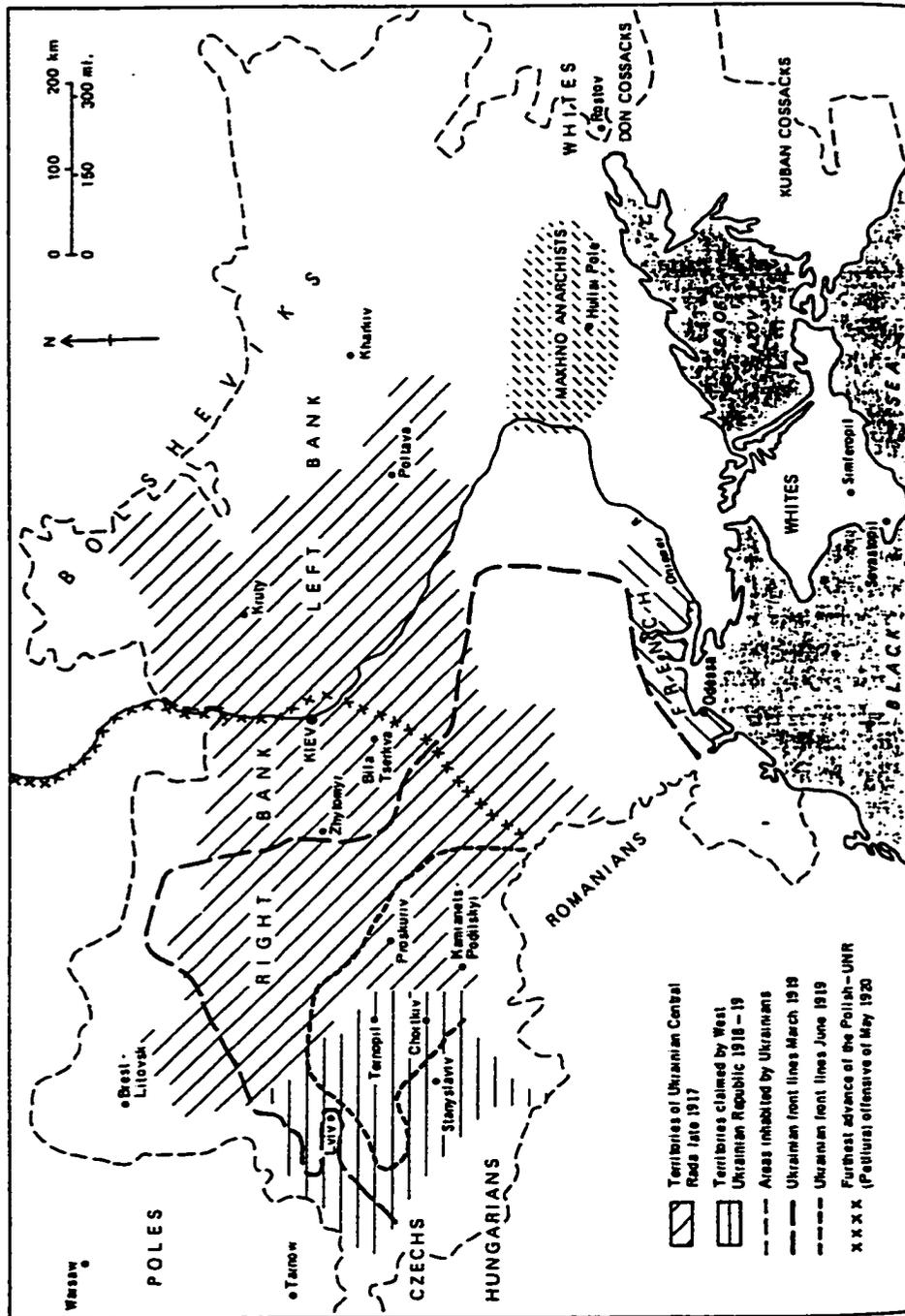
**WEST UKRAINIAN LANDS IN THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN EMPIRE
IN THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY**



¹ Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press/Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1988), 290.

MAP III

UKRAINE IN 1917-1920



¹ Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press/Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1988), 367.

MAP IV

UKRAINE IN 1918,

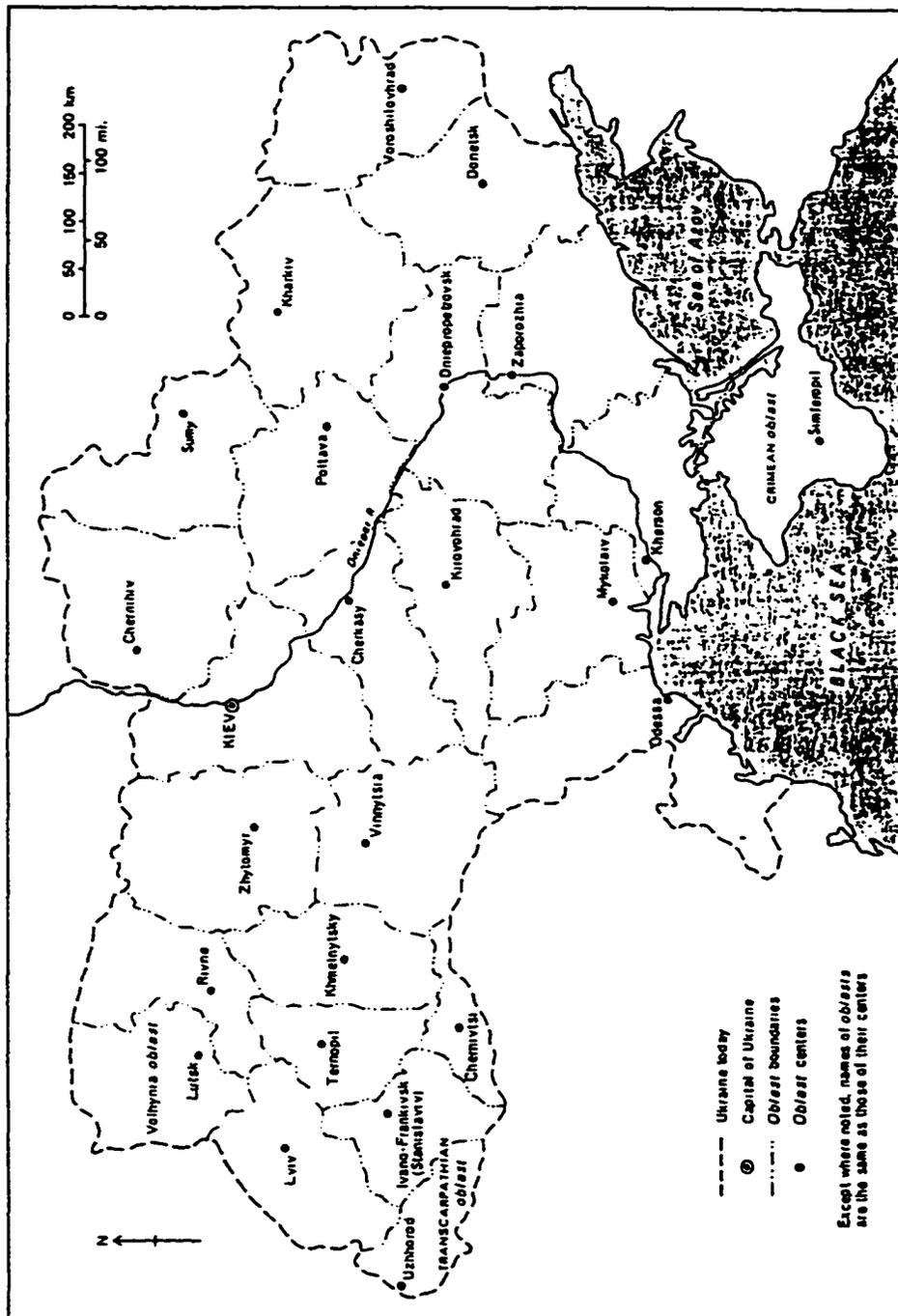
WITH THE SIX POSTAL DISTRICTS UNDERLINED



¹ Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press/Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1988), x.

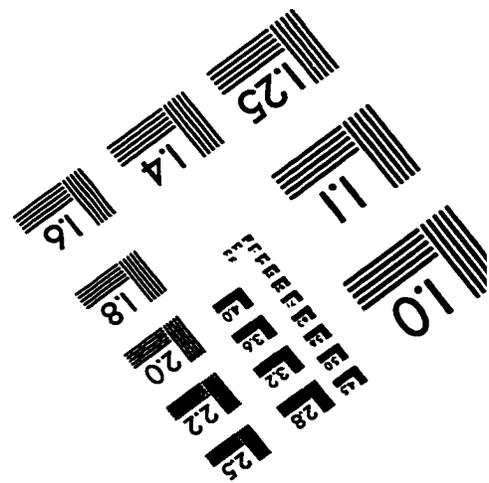
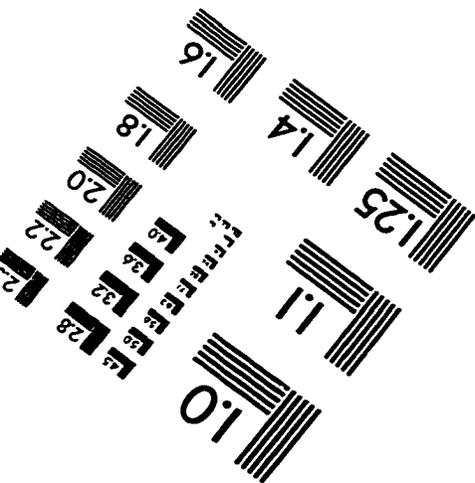
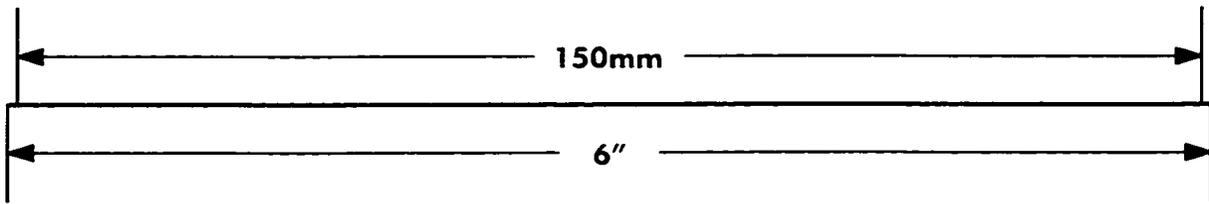
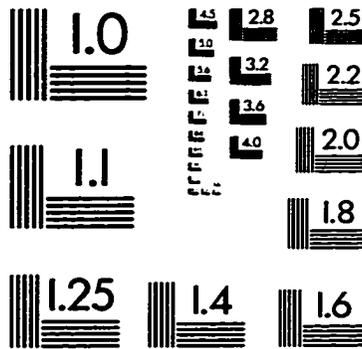
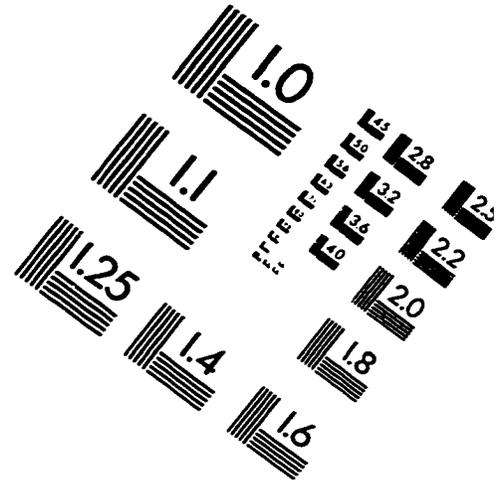
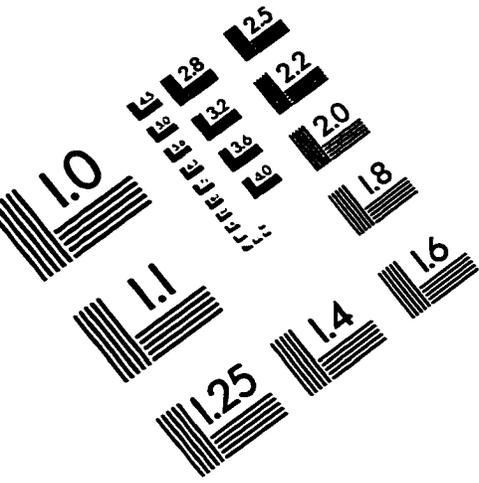
MAP V

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION OF SOVIET UKRAINE CA. 1960



¹ Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press/Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1988), 402.

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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