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All descriptions for this supplement are taken from the January 4th, 2004 issue of The Ukrainian Weekly newspaper and are used with the kind permission of Inger Kuzych and The Ukrainian Weekly.

### ***Thank You!***

I would like to express my thanks to Inger Kuzych and The Ukrainian Weekly for allowing me to use the text of his article on the Ukrainian Famine Relief issues. To see the original issue with the excellent famine relief article, you can go here:

[http://ukrweekly.com/archive/pdf3/2004/The\\_Ukrainian\\_Weekly\\_2004-01.pdf](http://ukrweekly.com/archive/pdf3/2004/The_Ukrainian_Weekly_2004-01.pdf)



# UKRAINE

1923  
Semi-Postal Stamps



## Famine Relief

The 1921-1922 famine was brought on by crop failure and by sociopolitical conditions following World War I. Because of drought, only 35 percent of the normal harvest was obtained in 1921. The southern areas of Ukraine were particularly hard hit. The calamity was even greater in Russian areas, particularly in the southern Volga region. An unusually heavy tax in kind was exacted from Ukraine in 1922 and this further exacerbated the situation. Up to 1 million people died of famine and many thousands more of related epidemic diseases.

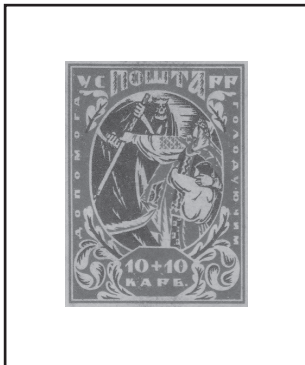
The Soviet government organized a relief program, but focused most of its - and the world's - attention on the Russian Volga areas. In Ukraine, most of the relief work was carried out by civic and cooperative organizations.

One of the methods by which the Soviet government sought to raise funds for relief was the creation of a special famine semi-postal stamp issue, with the surcharge designated for hunger alleviation. This four-stamp set was the only one that ever indicated that it was produced by the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (USRR).

Although already ordered in mid-1922 when the effects of the famine were still prominent, various obstructions and delays (see box) prevented its release until June 25, 1923. The stamps - produced at the State Printery in Berlin, Germany - were distributed in nine Ukrainian cities and towns (Bakhmut, Chernihiv, Katerynoslav, Kharkiv, Kyiv, Odesa, Poltava, Vinnytsia and Zhytomyr), as well as in Moscow and Petrograd.

By the time the Famine Issue stamps were finally ready in 1923, there really was no more famine and the Soviet ruble had declined to the point where a new currency was introduced. The new ruble was equal to 100 rubles/karbovantsi of 1922. This new situation made the 1923 Famine Issue stamps practically useless for postage - the high value 150 + 50-karbovantsi value saw far more use than any of the three lower values - and somewhat of an embarrassment for the government. Nevertheless, since the hard currency to have them printed abroad had been spent, it was decided to put them into circulation for a short period of time.

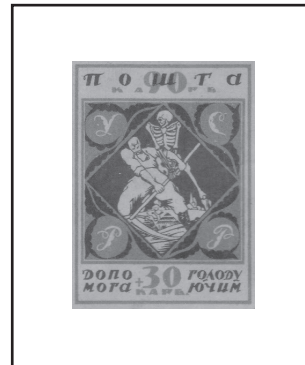
## Perforated 14 x 13.5, Unwatermarked



The 10+10 karbovantsi value stamp, in blue and black, shows the specter of death. Ukraine is shown, wearing a Red Army soldier's cap, shielding a young peasant with one arm while removing hunger's scythe with the other.



The 20+20 karbovantsi stamp, violet-brown and orange, presents a very popular Ukrainian topic, the national bard Taras Shevchenko. The official description refers to him as the "national revolutionary poet."



The 90+30 karbovantsi stamp, in brown and black, shows the struggle of a peasant with death. The peasant is shown pulling death's scythe out of its bony hands.



The 150+50 karbovantsi high-value stamp, in red-brown and black, pictures allegorical Ukraine distributing bread. Ukraine is shown as a young woman in traditional Ukrainian attire. She offers bread to a hungry woman and child with her left hand, while holding a ripe sheaf of wheat with the right.

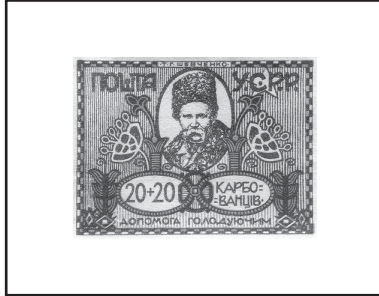
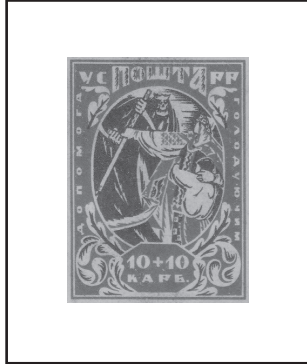


# UKRAINE

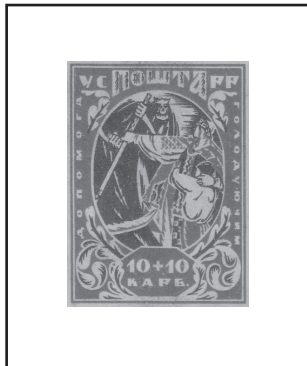
1923  
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## Perforated 14 x 13.5, Watermarked Paper



## Imperforate, Unwatermarked Paper



## Imperforate, Watermarked Paper



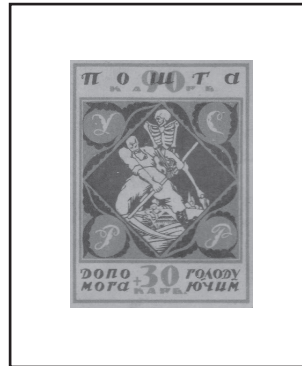
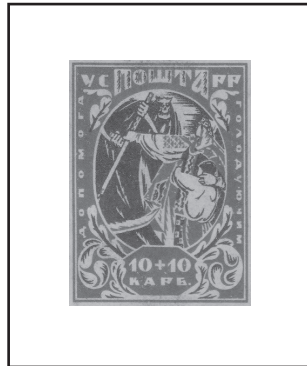


# UKRAINE

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## “Зразок” Overprint



The “Зразок” overprints were specimen stamps prepared for submission to the Universal Postal Union.