

THE EAGLE, THE ROCKET AND THE MOON: US POSTAL ICONOGRAPHY AT THE END OF HISTORY

Laura Goldblatt and Richard Handler, University of Virginia

Two US Express Mail Stamps, one from 1983 (left) and one from 1991 (right)



- (1) Francis Fukuyama's influential 1989 essay, "The End of History?"
- (2) The 1971 transformation of the US Post Office Department, a branch of the federal government, into a government corporation, the US Postal Service
- (3) The 1969 moon landing

Part One: Francis
Fukuyama and the End of
History

The End of History? _____

____Francis Fukuyama_____

IN WATCHING the flow of events over the past decade or so, it is hard to avoid the feeling that something very fundamental has happened in world history. The past year has seen a flood of articles commemorating the end of the Cold War, and the fact that "peace" seems to be breaking out in many regions of the world. Most of these analyses lack any larger conceptual framework for distinguishing between what is essential and what is contingent or accidental in world history, and are predictably superficial. If Mr. Gorbachev were ousted from the Kremlin or a new Ayatollah proclaimed the millennium from a desolate Middle Eastern capital, these same commentators would scramble to announce the rebirth of a new era of conflict.

And yet, all of these people sense dimly that there is some larger process at work, a

process that gives coherence and order to the daily headlines. The twentieth century saw the developed world descend into a paroxysm of ideological violence, as liberalism contended first with the remnants of absolutism, then bolshevism and fascism, and finally an updated Marxism that threatened to lead to the ultimate apocalypse of nuclear war. But the century that began full of self-confidence in the ultimate triumph of Western liberal democracy seems at its close to be returning full circle to where it started: not to an "end of ideology" or a convergence between capitalism and socialism, as earlier predicted, but to an unabashed victory of economic and political liberalism.

The triumph of the West, of the Western *idea*, is evident first of all in the total exhaustion of viable systematic alternatives to Western liberalism. In the past decade, there have been unmistakable changes in the intellectual climate of the world's two largest communist

Francis Fukuyama is deputy director of the State Department's International and Foreign



1969



1971



Part Two: Consuming the Moon



1983



1989 (left), 2019 (middle), 1994 (right)

THE AMERICAN STAMP

Postal Iconography, Democratic Citizenship,
and Consumerism in the United States



Laura Goldblatt & Richard Handler

350 x 525



1993



1991

Exploring
the Moon



USA 18c

Benefiting Mankind



USA 18c

Benefiting Mankind



USA 18c

Understanding
the Sun



USA 18c

Probing
the Planets



USA 18c

USA 18c

USA 18c

Comprehending
the Universe



USA 18c

Benefiting Mankind

Benefiting Mankind

1981



1992

Part Three: Rings/Moons
and the Perils of Corporate
Sponsorship

1991



GAO

United States General Accounting Office

Report to the Subcommittee on Federal
Services, Post Office and Civil Service,
Committee on Governmental Affairs,
U.S. Senate

July 1993

POSTAL SERVICE

1992 Olympic Sponsorship—Profit or Loss Is Unknown





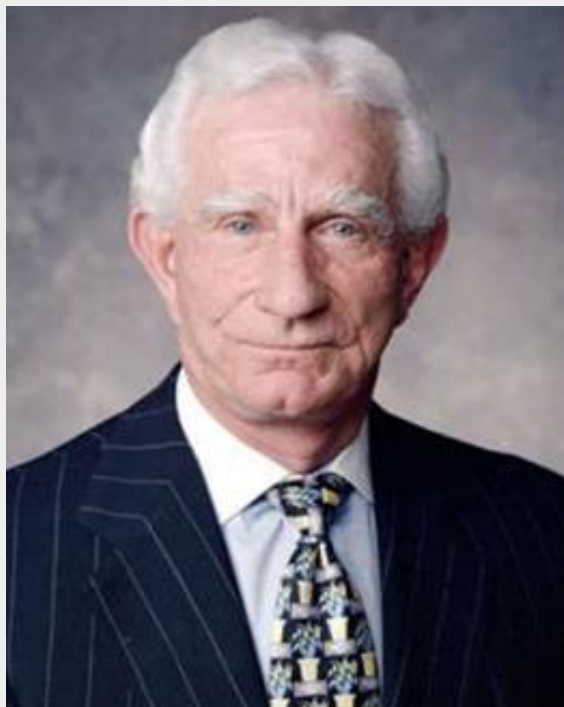
1991

GUY STEELE
Edward D. Jones and Company
P. O. BOX 488
MORRO BAY, CA 93442
(805) 772- 6188



JIM HAVLENA
1040 LOS OSOS VALLEY ROAD
SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA 93402





The End of History? _____

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