



VICTIMS OF COMMUNISM
MEMORIAL FOUNDATION™

Captive Nations Christmas Tree

December, 2024

Łowicz – Cutout with roosters and the tree of life from the Polish Embassy

This ornament refers to regional embroidery, presenting the heritage of Polish folk art in a new way, i.e. on glass baubles. The Christmas ornament is inspired by the Lowicz pattern.

The first decorations of this type appeared in Łowicz at the beginning of the 20th century. They were made with the use of wool. Embroidery with silk threads and then mouline threads made a real career, which looked exceptionally impressive on velvet. The most famous motif is roses. Each of the elements was produced in Poland.



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Hungarian Christmas Ornament from the Hungarian Embassy



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Latvian Christmas Ornament from the Latvian Embassy



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Latvian Christmas Tree Ornament from the Latvian American Association

This ornament displays the symbols that have guided the Latvian peoples throughout history. The ancient Latvian worldview and concepts of religion are visible in the many ethnographic symbols that grace the national costumes, jewelry, ceramics and textiles. The following are just a few of these important signs:

Auseklis or Morning Star is the most prominent of the symbols and is the protector of the people.

Jumis or Twin is the sign of fertility and prosperity.

Austras koks or Tree of the Sun denotes upward growth.

Zalktis or Snake/Serpent is the guardian of wealth and well-being, a kindly spirit.



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Christmas Tree Ornament from the Moldovan Embassy

This holiday season, the Embassy of Moldova proudly contributed an ornament in the shape of a grape to the beautifully decorated Christmas tree at The Victims of Communism Museum. The grape symbolizes more than just the shape of our country on the map — it reflects the uniqueness of Moldova’s fertile soils, the richness of our harvests, and the resilience of our people.

However, this was not always the case and this symbol comes to serve as a poignant reminder of the darker chapters in our history. During the era of communism, our welcoming and fertile lands were looted, our hospitable people suffered famine, and countless families were torn apart by deportations.

We extend our deepest gratitude to The Victims of Communism Museum for this inspiring initiative and the opportunity to reflect on these lessons of history. Together, we decorate not only a tree but also a shared memory — one that urges us to remember the horrors of the past.

While it is important to reminisce and honor the past, we must ensure that it is never at the expense of democratic ideals or freedoms. In the challenging times of today, let us commit to ensuring that the mistakes of history are not repeated. Though history often spirals, let us strive to break the cycle and chart a safer, more hopeful path forward.



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Estonian Christmas Tree Ornament from the Estonian Embassy

The origins of those ornaments date back to the second half of the 19th century when peasants started to celebrate the Christmas tree tradition.

Ornaments were easy to make at home, decorations made of straws were very common. Candies in their shiny wrappings were also a part of decorating the tree, they were more for looking than eating since they were expensive back in the day.

In later years, paper became more common and affordable, a new type of ornaments were discovered.



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Ukrainian Christmas Tree Ornament from the Ukrainian Embassy



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"Vyshyvanka" from the American Ukrainian Activists

"Vyshyvanka" ornament is hand-made by Ukrainian artist Olena Suprun. The ornament depicts the full map of Ukraine and represents Ukrainian history, culture, and yearning for freedom and democracy.



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Christmas Ornament from Vietnamese Americans for Freedom

Hand-made Christmas ornament by Vi Kha
Hoang symbolizing Vietnamese history and culture.



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Slovak Christmas Tree Ornament from the Slovak Embassy



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Vietnamese Ornament from the Boat People SOS Organizations

Boat People SOS organization contributed an ornament symbolizing Vietnamese people who were imprisoned and persecuted by the communist government.



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Lithuanian Christmas Tree Ornament from the Lithuanian Embassy



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Lithuanian Christmas Tree Ornament from the Lithuanian American Community



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Taiwanese Keychain Ornaments from Keep Taiwan Free

Christmas tree ornaments are not traditional in Taiwan. To show their support VOC's Captive Nations Christmas Tree initiative, Keep Taiwan Free contributed keychains.



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Belarussian Christmas Ornaments from the Belarussian American Association



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Czech Christmas Tree Ornament from the Czech Embassy

This small piece of art was mouth-blown and hand-painted by European artisans in the centuries-old traditions of crafting Christmas glass ornaments.



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Ukrainian Christmas Tree Ornament from an orphanage in Ukraine

From the VOC's President and CEO Dr. Patterson's
latest trip to Ukraine.



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Ornament from Romania

From the VOC's President and CEO Dr. Patterson's latest trip to Europe.



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Christmas ornament with deer from Poland

From the VOC's President and CEO Dr. Patterson's
latest trip to Europe.



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European Union Christmas Tree Ornament from the Delegation of the European Union to the United States

12 stars of the EU flag symbolize unity and values, they speak about our common history. History continues to teach us great lesson: there are tens of millions of victims of communism, in some places count is not over.



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