

THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

OFFICIAL MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE
CZECHOSLOVAK PHILATELIC SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA

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Editor Frank J. Kovarik, 8748 Rockefeller Ave., Brookfield, Illinois

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EDITORIAL

Another year has gone into oblivion. No, that is not the right word! Oblivion means that all that has transpired is forgotten. It is not so with our Society. We have strived hard to place the country of our choice among the first in philately and we feel confident we succeeded.

For many years the American Philatelist, official organ of the American Philatelic Society, published an index of the important philatelic articles from the entire philatelic press. Your editor was named collaborator now it seems this index may be discontinued but we heard it may be taken over by the Philatelic Literature Review. If this happens we shall urgently ask our members to support the Review; it will enable us to get articles listed for which we may have no space in the Specialist.

In the September 1956 issue we reviewed a book published in Czechoslovakia relative to the exhibits in the Philatelic Section of the Postal Museum in Praha. George Kobyłka who has been handling this, informs us that five more members signified their intention to acquire this very illustrative and informative work. Ordering only a few brings the cost up; so does an order of more than 10 copies. George will have 5 extra copies of this at \$3.50 a copy and remember, the first orders with cash or money order enclosed will obtain this volume.

You have received a draft of the new Constitution and By-Laws to govern our Society. From past experience we know that 80% of the members will not take the trouble to read the changes, much less to act on them. The president called a committee to examine the changes proposed by a committee of three East Coast members and found these to be correct and necessary for the proper conduct of the Society. Our first Constitution went into effect in 1939, since then much has changed. We didn't fathom the interest in the Society outside of North America. We thank Dr. Wm. Reiner-Deutsch, president and L. M. Horechny and Joseph Stein, members of the committee for a job well done. This magnificent job was performed at the expense of member Horechny who, especially, deserves the thanks of the entire membership.

Members who belong to other philatelic societies know that dues have been raised anywhere from 50 to 200%. Your Society's dues have remained unchanged for many years despite some printing raises. We economized by drastically reducing the number of illustrations used. Now we received the sad news that the printing rates will be given another boost and we may find it necessary to either cut down on the number of pages or increase the membership rates. If you want to remain a member pay your dues now. If you hold back it may be necessary to raise the dues sooner. If you can afford to

voluntarily increase your dues, this gesture will be appreciated. At any rate, look for a change in 1958.

Our sales manager, Wolfgang Fritzsche writes us he obtained the bronze award at Postex in Baltimore in the form of a beautiful silver plated tray for his Tvar post cards. His Hradčany and Chain-breaker specialized got him a bronze medal in Berlin including a page award identical to the pages used in his album. We congratulate Wolfgang on his successes but especially for his ability to keep the stamps of Czechoslovakia in the fore.

We received sad news of the death of Joseph A. Hudec, who up to recently was a member of our Society. Like so many who refused to be connected with the country of his parents' origin, Joe continued to collect Czechoslovak stamps up to 1938. Our sympathies are extended to his parents and brother.

Our members received a cordial invitation to attend the 25th wedding anniversary of our Praha member Zdeněk Kvasnička and his wife. Distance, time and especially money prevented our participation. To our very dear member and his spouse our most cordial congratulations.

A very fine letter from our past president Dr. Wm. Reiner-Deutsch warmed our heart. Will was our second president; he helped draft our first Constitution and By Laws. It was he, more than any other member, who convinced us to retain our office in the Society another term (providing it is the wish of the majority). He sent us reasons for the various changes in the Constitution. He did not know of the printer's rate hike, otherwise there would be one change more. We could always turn to him for counsel and were never turned down.

To all the members and their families a bountiful New Year!

CHICAGO GROUP MEETING

The regular meeting of the Chicago group took place Sunday Nov. 21 in the home of member George Havlik with the following members present: G. Kobylka, J. Velek, Dr. J. Matejka, J. Janecka, P. Kreischer, J. Jiranek, P. Marusic, Sr., F. Rosner, F. Zaviska and F. Kovarik.

The first subject on the agenda was the publication of the handbook which, in reality, is to be a specialized check-list and informative book about the stamps of Bohemia-Moravia and Slovakia. Kovarik reported that his committee is ready to tackle the final task of assembling all data and before the end of 1957 the manuscript should be ready for the printer. The most important facet of this is the raising of money to pay for the work. The original estimate (not binding on the printer) was \$1400.00 for 400 copies finished and bound. The treasury of the Society is bare and it is necessary to contact members for a loan to cover the cost. Because the editor is better known to most members than any other officer he is asked to contact his friends for a subscription to raise the complete cost. The plan proposed and adopted is this: Every member is invited to actively participate. He is asked to loan the sum of \$10 or more and as soon as the book is published he will receive the book or books he ordered. As quantities of books are sold the subscribers will be paid off percentages of the amounts subscribed until the last cent is repaid to the guarantors. This will require some bookkeeping but it is hoped some Chicagoland member will handle this as well as the expediting of the book. There is at present \$30 in the treasury for this project; we are confident that the three subscribers may increase this amount. One member in the Chicago area agreed to subscribe \$200., three others agreed to \$100 each. This is only the beginning and we hope every member residing in U.S. or Canada will do his or her share. If this venture proves successful, the members can be assured that the 1918-38 period will also appear in print.

The above could not become a reality without the help of member Ray

Van Handel, Jr. of Sheboygan, Wisc. He gave the suggestion we publish the book employing the vari-type process. This is a variety printing of the offset method; the stumble block was illustrations. Ray sent us a technical letter which we did not fully understand had it not been for illustrations which pictured the finished product, but his sincerity and earnestness convinced us that the problem can be and is licked. The low quotation is especially due to the fact that Ray handles the lay-out and technical and art aspects of the project. At cost for the 400 copies, the Chicago group figures we can break even if we ask \$5 per copy, providing the manuscript has been correctly estimated at an x number of pages. If we can sell copies above the 400 we estimate that we may expect a small margin of profit. If any member deserves credit for this volume-to-be, it is Ray Van Handel.

Complex was our next problem. The preparatory work for this mammoth Chicagoland philatelic exhibition is proceeding well; there seems to be perfect accord on the allotting of frames for the various organizations; the program problem seems to be resolved very amicably, each club obtaining as many ads pages as free space they need to advertise their group, to list the exhibits of their group, to list their officers or to place therein a short article about their specialty. We are confident our members will take enough advertising space to offset our "dead space." One of our members pledged a 2-page spread; we need not too much more to make sure we'll profit on the program.

A membership card for the Society's Chicago group in the Central Federation of Illinois Stamp Clubs was received. The secretary wrote our delegate of more than 15 years standing but has received no reply. We do hope member Miles Skrivanek is not too ill to reply! Our Society has played a part in the Federation since our organization in 1939. Several successful shows under the aegis of the Federation placed our prestige high and we hope to borrow on this prestige to help along with all our future endeavors.

This may have been the liveliest of all the meetings of the Chicago group because we even forgot to designate where the next meeting is to be held. George Kobylka happened to come to our home while we were preparing this copy and volunteered to have the next Chicago group meeting in his home. The next meeting will take place Sunday, January 19, 1958, 2:30 p.m., at the home of G. Kobylka, 1433 Cuyler Av., Berwyn, Ill. Every member and every Czech collector is cordially invited.

NEW YORK GROUP MEETING

The regular meeting of the group was held in the Collectors Club Friday evening November 15 and the following members were present; Dr. Wm. Reiner-Deutsch, L. Horechny, E. Michaelson, R. Secky, W. Schoenig, N. Feiwelsohn, G. Kaplowitz, P. Flynn, Mrs. Reiner-Deutsch, A. Kessler, E. Pobuda and J. Stein.

L. Horechny showed his beautiful collection of the "Newspaper" issues with an explanatory talk on these very interesting provisionals. He has a marvelous collection of these especially on cover which makes them doubly interesting.

The 1958 program is set up as follows: January 17, W. Schoenig will show his Czech collection; February 21, N. Feiwelsohn will show his Czech first day covers; March 21, E. Pobuda will show his First Czech Republic. At the February meeting J. Stein will talk and lead a discussion about the perforation varieties of the Masaryk issues of 1925; at the March meeting E. Michaelson will talk on printing.

The January meeting's discussion will center around our annual exhibition. The success of our 1957 end-of-season show prompts us to make this an annual affair. We hope to make it even bigger than the 1957 trial!

A very interesting post mortem annent the New York World's Fair sheets which were sold at the Czechoslovakian Pavilion developed. It was noted that members Frank Vinson and Alfons Stach could shed considerable light on this subject as could also Mr. J. Janeczek who managed the Pavilion. Member A. Kessler showed some interesting misprints and trial printings on stamps other than the Praga 1938 and Bratislava sheets. It is to be regretted that our late member Brunner who also took an active part in these interesting labels cannot tell about these. Member Stein disclosed that several members in the Chicago area have worked on an article concerning these interesting reminders of Munich and its repercussions and that at an opportune time their findings will appear in the Czechoslovak Specialist.

The annual New York A. S. D. A. Show was attended by most of our New York members. They were gratified to meet Chicago member Leo Eaton and asked him to convey the best wishes of the New York group to the members in the Chicagoland area.

CORRECTION

In the December, 1957 editorial we mentioned Czech-English dictionaries. The \$7.50 by Osicka and Poldauf is English-Czech only. The Prochazka volume is Czech-English and English-Czech. We are sorry if we caused any inconvenience.

NOUSS WINS LAGERLOEF AWARD

The 1957 Lagerloef Award was presented to Henry O. Nouss, Executive Secretary of the Society of Philatelic Americans, at the recent convention in Long Beach, California.

Established in 1944 by the late Col. Hans Lagerloef to be given annually to the member who had done outstanding work for the S.P.A. during the current year, it is one of the most coveted awards in philately.

Mr. Nouss, retired and living in Florida at the time of the sudden death of former Executive Secretary, J. Edward Vining, volunteered his services at the 1956 convention. He was asked to take the reins and has performed an excellent job. The Lagerloef Committee, consisting of past winners, picked him to receive this year's award.

To Precancel collectors particularly, Henry O. Nouss is well-known. He served the Precancel Stamp Society from 1937 to 1941 as its President. His genial smile has been seen at stamp gatherings and conventions all over the country for many years.

Henry O. Nouss has been a collector of Czechoslovakia and a member of our Society for many years. The officers and members of the Czechoslovak Philatelic Society congratulate him on this award and the recognition he deserves.

NEW MEMBERS

- 599. Charles Vochaska, 1942 55th Ct., Cicero 50, Ill.
- 600. Brother Adrian Joseph, F. S. C., Manhattan College Parkway, New York 17, N. Y.
- 601. Norman A. Tagg, 961 Jay Lane, Phoenix, N. Y.
- 602. Josef Hanak, Brno 12, Vodova 44a, Czechoslovakia

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

- 473. Geo. J. Dolezal, 1030 Dolores St., San Francisco 10, Calif.
- 570. Anthony Jirousek, 2547 So. Springfield Av., Chicago 23, Ill.

MAIL AUCTION

Lot. No.	★ mint	○ used	Suggested minimum bid:
1	★		Boy Scout stamps, 2 sets, color shades ----- \$6.00
2	○		43a 10h green, imperf, nicely cancelled ----- 1.50
3	★		43a 10h green, horizontal pair, wide margins ----- 5.00
4	○		45a 20h red, nicely cancelled ----- 3.50
5	★		47a 30h purple, imperf ----- 8.00
6	★		61a Masaryk 1920, 125h ULTRAMARINE ----- 3.00
7	★		61a Masaryk 1920, 125h ULTRAMARINE IMPERF. PROOF ----- 5.00
8	★		61-63 Masaryk 1920 IMPERFORATED ----- 12.50
9	★		71 40h red brown, LINE PERFORATION 13% ----- .50
10	★		74 Hussite Priest 80h violet IMPERFORATED ----- .75
11	○		80-81 Agriculture, 500h, 600h, Comb. perf. 13%, 13½ ----- 3.50
12	★		80-81 Agriculture, 500h, 600h, YELLOW PAPER PROOFS (2) -- 1.75
13	★		73a 60h blue, tete-beche pair ----- 1.25
14	○		84a 20h orange, tete-beche gutter pair, canc. RARE ----- 8.00
15	★		82a 5h violet, tete-beche gutter pair ----- .60
16	★		84a 20h orange, tete-beche pair, very fine ----- 5.75
17	★		87a 50h green, tete-beche pair ----- 8.00
18	★		92 100h LINE PERF. TYPE I, II, III (3 val.) ----- 3.75
19	★		93 200h LINE PERF. TYPE II, III, (2 val.) ----- 4.50
20	★		94 300h LINE PERF. TYPE II (rarest of type & perf. varieties) 12.50
21	★		94 300h LINE PERF. TYPE III ----- 7.50
22	★		92-94 ALL COMB PERF. TYPE III (3 val.) ----- 5.50
23	★		97 Masaryk 60h violet Comb. perf. rare watmks 1 and 4 ----- 6.00
24	★		97 Masaryk 60h violet Line perf. rare watmks 2 and 3 ----- 6.00
25	★		96 Masaryk 50h green Comb. perf. Watmk. 4 ----- 2.00
26	○		98-101 Masaryk 1-5kč Special Red Canc. on piece ----- .75
27	★		102 Masaryk 1 Kč Type II well centered ----- 15.00
28	★		105a Masaryk LKč Type III perf. 14 Wmk. 8 ----- 4.00
29	★		175-8 Masaryk 1930 with lower coupons ----- 3.00
30	○		175-8 Masaryk 1930 (175-7 with upper cpns.) RED CANC. ----- 1.00
31	○		175-8 Masaryk 1930 lower left corner plate No. 1 ----- 4.00
32	★		200-201 National Anthem, block of four, plate 1A ----- 3.50
33	★		200-201a National Anthem SHEETS ----- 42.50
34	★		200-201b National Anthem singles from souvenir sheet ----- 2.50
35	○		200-201b National Anthem singles, lightly cancelled ----- 2.00
36	★		159-63 St. Wenceslas, lower left corner plate set ----- 2.50
37	★		241-242 Winter games, Complete Miniature Sheets (10 sets) ----- 1.75
38	★		243-245 Legionnaires, Complete Miniature Sheets (8 sets) ----- 2.00
39	★		343-345 Sokol Congress, Complete Miniature Sheet (10 sets) -- 2.50
40	★		357-359 Slovak Insurrection, Cplt. Miniature Sheet (10 sets) -- 2.00
41	★		373 Gottwald 10k green, cplt. miniature sheet (10 sets) ----- 2.50
42	★		B124 15 green IMPERF. ----- .75
43	○		B133-136 Masaryk Anniversary set ----- 1.75
44	★		B150-51 Masaryk—Children, LEFT COUPON ----- .75
45	○		B152-53 Both sheets nicely cancelled ----- 1.50
46	★		C7-9 Airmails, nicely centered block of four ----- 5.50
47	★		E1a-E3a Special Delivery on white paper ----- 6.50
48	★		Eastern Silesia No. 25 LINE PERF. 13% RARE ----- 12.50
49	★		E. Sil. 3h, 30h, 40hB, 40hBL, 50h Bl., 50h Br., Priv. Perf. 11½ -- 6.00
50	★		E. Sil. 3, 30, 40, 50 Br., 50 Bl., 75, 80h, Private perf. 13% ----- 6.00

All bids must reach us at the latest, January 31, 1958.

FLEM STAMP COMPANY

5921 33rd Street, N. W.

Washington 15, D. C.

EASTERN SILESIA

Did you ever wonder about the historical background of an issue of overprinted definitive postage stamps? George A. Blizil has called our attention to an interesting news item, dated 1920, which may possibly explain some of the reasons for the "S. O. 1920" overprints on stamps of Czechoslovakia and Poland. The article is entitled "TESCHEN", and reads as follows:

"PARIS, July 28.—The Ambassadors' Council before adjourning today established the division of Teschen between Poland and Czechoslovakia, and outlined a treaty to settle details.

Another of the innumerable disputes that sprang up at the Peace Conference, to the consternation of statesmen who had never heard of them but had to decide them, has now been settled by the arbitration of the Council of Ambassadors. The dispute between the Poles and the Czechs over Teschen has been compromised and one may hope that the settlement will be somewhat more enduring than have been some of the others reached by this method.

Teschen was a duchy attached to Bohemia and swallowed up along with Bohemia by the Hapsburgs. Historically it belongs to the Czechs but, the bulk of the population is Polish. The district contains valuable coal mines which both Poles and Czechs wanted and on which Bohemian industry had largely depended. Before outsiders knew that the brotherly emotions aroused by the struggle against the Teuton had evaporated, Poles and Czechs were engaged in actual war; a localized war, to be sure, but a somewhat peevish one.

If the Poles were mainly in the wrong in starting it, as seems probable from this distance, they suffered more in consequence. Bad feeling generated by the fighting set against each other two kindred and neighbor nations which badly need each other's friendship and support. Not only could the Poles count on no help from the Czechs in their war against Russia, but the Russians even hoped, though in vain, for a Czech attack on the Polish rear. The Czechs have remained neutral, but Poland has found little sympathy among them. By the ambassadorial arbiters the district has been divided in almost equal parts, with Poland getting the town of Teschen, where the Austrian Army headquarters were situated during most of the war and the Czechs the coal mines, but with the stipulation that Poland must be allowed part of the coal at fair prices. This is seemingly about as well as anybody could do in the way of a settlement, and ought to satisfy both sides. Provisional postage stamps are planned for use in the area."

—George A. Blizil

WORLD FAIR SHEETS

ANY ONE OF THE FOLLOWING

Each 75c

1939—Black overprint on Bratislava, Praga or Newspaper Sheet.

1939—Canadian—Black overprint on Praga Sheet.

1940—On Praga Sheet—Black, green, red, blue or gold overprints.

All with folders. Limited Quantities.

B. J. MILLER

264 E. 180th St.

New York 57, N. Y.

I am very interested in obtaining a postmark or cancellation commemorating Eisenhower which was applied to mail in Czechoslovakia some time in 1945. I understand there are souvenir post cards as also other philatelic material with a special reference to General Eisenhower. I need these to complete my Eisenhower specialty collection and am ready to pay any reasonable price for these items. JOHN H. SMALL, 251 W. King St., York, Penna.

The Great Controversy

REVOLUTIONARY STAMPS OF 1918

(Continued from last issue)

In spite of these contrary arguments, it is an established fact that in the period between Oct. 29 and Nov. 18, 1918 letters and postcards franked with overprinted Austrian and Hungarian stamps were regularly handled and delivered by postoffices. Postal employees, not having any definite instructions on what to do, passed either with pleasure or fear, anything that showed the glad tidings of liberation. Not until Nov. 18, 1918, was the order promulgated to prohibit the use of overprinted Austrian or Hungarian stamps for franking mail.

In Slovakia, where Minister Šrobár was in complete authority, this order was not always obeyed and there were regions which used overprinted Hungarian stamps until April 1919.

Without wasting any more time on arguments pro and con, we will now proceed critically to scrutinize the various groups, how the collector was acquainted with them in 1918-1919, how they were described, valued and recommended by publications.

Revolutionary Stamps of Czechoslovakia I and II Praha Issues

In the first number of the first independent Czechoslovak philatelic publication there was an article describing the Czechoslovak Revolutionary overprints. The author emphasized that the article was written by a committee of philatelic experts of renown (but not named). According to him the overprinting was done in a **secret print shop**, with the emphasis on **secret**. As a result of this effort the Committee decreed that all stamps on hand in Praha and its suburbs should be overprinted with an accepted design. When legislator Rašín was informed of this, he vigorously protested. This angered the top brass, who abhorred the sight of an Austrian stamp, so they decided as a countermove to put in circulation stamps with the legend **PROVISORNÍ ČESKOSLOVENSKÁ VLÁDA** together with the Czechoslovak escutcheon. To quiet any objections from Slovakia, the "secret print shop" put out a new overprint **ČESKOSLOVENSKÁ STÁTNÍ POŠTA**.

Later the author reported to philatelists that 3000 sets of each overprint were issued and were more valuable than the overprints from southern Czechoslovakia, which were not approved by any committee and were handled by the postoffice without objection. With the stop order of Nov. 13, 1918, this, per se, constituted approval and should be accepted for our collections. This heap of lies, half-truths and smart suggestions could have been told in fewer words.

At the instigation of Rössler-Ořovský, a Scout official, the Wiesner-Knap print shop overprinted some current Austrian stamps (3h to 10K and the 2 & 5 hal.) special delivery. Some letters were fixed up and franked with these overprints, sent through the mail, accepted and delivered, either through ignorance or collusion. When collectors manifested interest in them, the overprinting went into high gear, and all members of the Klub Českých Filatelistů obtained as much as a block of four of this printing. The supplies as well as the stereos were in the possession of the instigator of this overprinting, who also was the only supplier to the trade. According to all moral principles this was solely a profiteering venture, which was proven by the large stocks and extensive correspondence with Praha dealers, which was found in the estate of the instigator. There is no doubt that some of this overprinting was done even much later, proof of which are the overprints of the 4K & 10K current stamps. All of this shows that stamps with these overprints are absolutely of no value to collectors.

SCOUT STAMPS

Under the pompous name **Revolutionary Stamps of Czechoslovak Scouts in the Service of the National Government** appeared another candidate for the name of Revolutionary stamps, described in an article in the first number of "Český Filatelista." These so called Scout Stamps were issued in denominations of 10 hal. blue and 20 hal. red. They were relief printed by Kolmann in Vinohrady. Beside the postage stamps they also made three cancellers. One of metal, was round, about 2½ cm with the letters N V (Národní Výbor), another round, of rubber about 31 mm. with the text "Pošta Skautů, Praha," with space for date and two lines: "Dopis od skauta——převzal——." Sometimes an elliptical stamp with legend **Národní Výbor Československý v Praze** and date was used. The above mentioned article describes in detail how the letters were handled by the scouts and how they were delivered to the addresses. The whole situation can be summed up as follows: A few boys began to play postoffice, (not the American style) and the grown-ups being the prime movers, soberly played with them. This explanation could be accepted as true, if the name of Rössler-Ořovský did not pop up again. The assertion, that some 2000 of both values were used, so that only a small number remained is just another pipe dream, which Rössler was a master in dreaming up. For that reason we must not be surprised at his monopolistic pursuits of producing stamps of different shades and a wholesale manufacture of covers. When we personally discovered that the cancelling stamps and the covers, together with the stereos of the Praha issue were left in the possession of the wide-awake Scout, we ceased to believe all the heroic stories about the Scouts, the existence of a secret printshop and the unselfishness of the commander! We will meet this character again later. He got his profit from these Scout playthings when in Dec. 21, 1918 he put out a small issue of both values with the overprint **Příjezd Presidenta Masaryka**. This compensated him for all previous expenditures and left a tidy sum for future products, which were not long coming. There is no doubt that all this was not postally necessary.

BUDEJOVICE OVERPRINTS

Under this overall name we can group the following:

- a) Mareš overprints (Hluboká)
- b) Horner overprints (Budějovice)
- c) Beck overprints (Budějovice)

Mareš Overprints

Shortly after the overthrow of the Austrian Government (possibly Oct. 29, 1918) the superintendent of the Švarcenberk schools in Hluboká, Vojtěch Mareš, had an engraver named Hora in České Budějovice engrave a die of primitive design, constituting a Czech Lion and legend **ČESKO-SLOVENSKÝ STAT** in two lines. With this die he overprinted stamps for his correspondence. Later when he combined with a stamp dealer, J. Horner, he extended his overprinting to the number of 42 values, including postage dues. Mareš was not satisfied with ordinary overprinting, but created a lot of "errors," such as inverts and tete-beche in pairs, sometimes even overprinting stamps already cancelled. In České Budějovice as in Praha there were numerous postal employees willing to cancel these things on letters giving them an official status, but a registration label and passage through the mail are no criteria of genuineness.

After Dec. 18, 1918 Mareš was prosecuted by the government and fined. He stated that the dies for overprinting were destroyed, but that statement was found to be false, because his heirs tried to make some overprints in 1930. As in the Praha case, the chief motive for the overprints was profit from the sale of whole sets including postage dues and newspaper stamps which could

not be actually used. From the philatelic standpoint the stamps were entirely without value, even used on envelopes, although they were vouched for with Mareš's private mark.

Horner overprints

The financial success of Mareš, which Horner involuntarily assisted with his stock of stamps, caused the two to split and Horner had the same engraver make him a die, supposedly a true copy of Mareš's. It was, however, quite different, easily noticed and so collectors had two speculative issues instead of one, the second one being later extended to embrace the three high postage due values. If we refuse to accept the philatelic validity of Mareš overprints, who at least had the original, if sad prerogative, it is natural that we consider the Horner overprints just as valueless.

Beck Overprints

This southern Czechoslovakia miner in the gold fields of Czechoslovak stamps was Jos. Beck of České Budějovice. He had a die similar to those of others, with which he overprinted an unknown number of sets. These are, if possible, of even less value than the others.

SKALICE OVERPRINTS

Even Slovakia was not overlooked by the Revolutionary stamp makers, who awarded to Skalica that honorable task. There, in November, 1918, appeared a set of 15 Hungarian stamps, with an overprint peculiarly similar to the Praha type II. With the same text, it is reasonable to suspect who the author of these 15 values was. They are just as valueless as the others. In connection with this case, there appears the name of Dr. Blaho who, however was only a cover, behind which we can smell the manipulations of the stamp patriot Rössler-Ořovský.

Šrobár Overprints

It would seem that this is about the only group of overprinted stamps which might have a possible legal standing. On Dec. 10, 1918 the National Assembly passed law No. 64 containing special transition ordinances for Slovakia. Its paragraph No. 7 states:

"----- from the date of taking over the administration only such revenue stamps, stationery and postage stamps can be used which are so marked by the Government-----"

In consequence of this law, so say the philatelic promoters and manufacturers, the Slovak Minister Dr. Vavro Šrobár, ordered from the Praha firm of Jan Šenc four stereo plates for overprinting. The plates were sent to Žilina in January, 1919. From now on the reports as to what happened differ. One story is that the overprinting was abandoned because of the dearth of Hungarian stamps and the nearness of the issues of the regular Czechoslovak stamps. Another story is that the overprinting was actually started, but abandoned.

Sometime later it was reported that the responsibility of overprinting was put in the hands of the postmaster of Žilina, Klenka, who gave the job to the printing house of H. Pokorný in Žilina. Another statement is that single values were on sale in Žilina, Štrb, Tatranská Lomnice, Trenčín and other places.

After the termination of overprinting, the plates, considered of no value were left lying around the printery. Some unknown entrepreneurs got possession of the plates and later overprinted additional values and produced various "errors" and other trifles. From the foregoing it would seem that the Šrobár overprints could stand a closer look as to their genuineness. However, after a closer investigation a tie up with the Praha philatelists was discovered, and if not the producers, they are at least the instigators of the whole unseemly mess. Collectors should approach the buying of these overprints very care-

fully, because of a possibility of financial loss.

Several years later, there bobbed up a letter from R. Pilát, a transition period delegate, to J. Weiss in Moravská Ostrava, disclosing further information on how the overprint came into being.

"After the overthrow of the Austrian Government I called Dr. Rašín's attention to the necessity of having the Austrian and Hungarian postage stamps overprinted, so that their stamps could not be used in our territory to the detriment of the finances of our Government. Dr. Rašín did not approve of this, so I took it up with Dr. Šrobár, suggesting that it be done in Slovakia. Dr. Šrobár agreed with me and in order to have a legal right to do so, had paragraph No. 7 inserted into a law then formulated for Slovakia. It says in part—'from the date of taking over the administration, only revenue stamps, stationery and postage stamps provided with some mark by the Government of Czechoslovakia can be used.' This law was approved by the National Assembly and published Dec. 10, 1918 as No. 64.

"In consequence, Dr. Šrobár asked me to order from the firm of J. Štenc in Praha stereos for the overprinting of Hungarian stamps. I did so and the plates were sent to the Slovak Ministry in care of Dr. Šrobár, in Žilina. The consignment arrived and was turned over to Kornel-Stodola, the superintendent of Posts and Railways in Slovakia. About that time I arrived in Žilina for the meeting of delegates of Slovakia and asked as to the disposition of the stereos. Dr. Šrobár referred me to Kornel-Stodola who informed me that at the personal request of the Director of Posts in Praha, the overprinting was not performed, because the Ministry of Posts intended to overprint all stamps of Austria and Hungary with a uniform overprint in Praha. I requested him to have some stamps and covers, which I had purchased in Košice, overprinted as a memento. Director Stodola acceded to my request and instructed his secretary to have the stamps and envelopes overprinted in Žilina. The next day they were returned to me overprinted and I departed for Tatryland. From the postoffices of Tatranská Lomnice and Poprad I mailed them to my wife." (Excerpt from a letter of R. Pilát, Praha XII, Mánesova Ostrava, Sept. 13, 1931.)

This letter impresses one as trustworthy, but differs considerably from other letters about this matter and of the issues written by Rössler-Ostrovský.

Our uncompromising stand on the matter of these stamps will be a painful disappointment to all practical collectors and will cause some bitter censure. However, we call everyone's attention to the fact that we had an opportunity to speak to the Czechoslovak collectors only in 1921, at the time when all of these stamps and overprints were solidly established in Czechoslovak philately. Perhaps we made up partially for this mistake, by preventing, with the help of a few friends, similar patriotic machinations which by indulgent ignorance injured the Czechoslovak philately so much.

Our views on this group, emanating from the principles of international philately and the experience of the last few years are dictated by a sincere desire to cleanse Czechoslovak philately and to that end we requested their publication.

Sequel to the Franěk and Hirsch articles.

Why So Late?

In some of the previous numbers of *Filatelie*, the former philatelic journalist, J. Franěk took it upon himself to recapitulate the history of the origin of the Czechoslovak Revolutionary Issues of 1918, Scout stamps, Russian stamp of 1909 with the overprint "Češskja Pošta" and the Siberian Lions.

I do not think he told us anything really new. Everybody knew for years that we were not dealing with official issues (foreign catalogues list them as

private issues), but with a product put out by private persons or groups, who finagled some sort of a permission from the temporary government. I am sure that the various Revolutionary Committees, under whatever name they operated, had or appropriated to themselves certain powers. So it happened that J. Rössler-Ostrovský wangled such a permission to issue stamps and with his co-workers did issue them. All this is ancient history, but at that the stamps were listed in all Czechoslovak and many foreign catalogues.

Now after 38 years, the collectors of Czechoslovak stamps are supposed to throw away all these, according to J. Franěk, as worthless "pieces of paper." OH, NO, Mr. Franěk! You have not been active as a philatelic publicist for quite a number years. I assure you, that nothing would have happened nor will happen, even if you had not written your article. You had ample opportunity for years, even during the time the producers of these stamps were alive, to sentence these "pieces of paper," but you did not do so! Of course, you were the son-in-law of the largest distributor of these stamps Mr. A. Černý and could not, or would not defend your present statements. You may alibi yourself on the ground that your father-in-law was selling these stamps and you could not from family motives turn against him. That is quite understandable, but why did you sell them yourself? If you want a reason, I will gladly give it to you! Why did you not unveil these shenanigans after the death of A. Černý? I will tell you! You still had them in stock."

Now a word to the collectors. All of us know that these stamps were not official issues. We look at them in the first place as valuable documents of the Transition Period, when the Czech Nation, after some 300 years again gained its independence. It is quite clear that, during such times many unusual things do happen, which would not be allowed in ordinary times. Also, we must remember, that under the old Austrian law, it was illegal to overprint or otherwise change the postal stationery or stamps and put them in circulation. The postal personnel at that time, accepted and forwarded letters, and postcards franked with all of these Revolutionary issues until Nov. 18, 1918, when a definite order against them was issued. I am sure, many of you own some of this material. There are registered letters, special delivery and just ordinary letters and it is easy to prove if they were postally handled. This refers to all the Revolutionary Issues. I doubt very much, if after reading the Franěk article, any of you took this material out of your albums and consigned it to the fire.

Something about the overprint "Češskja Pošta," Mr. Franěk! There is not a collector in Czechoslovakia who took more interest in the Siberian Post than I. You write that the overprint originated in the fall of 1919. There you are mistaken! It originated at the end of 1918 at the request of the Director of the Russian Field Post in čeljabinsk, after the approval No. 1173. P.p. —IV of the postal Director in Omsk. The 10kop. stamp was used for franking of letters to and from the members of the Czechoslovak Army with the Russian correspondents. The members of the Czechoslovak Army did not have at that time the free franking privileges. That was granted to them later on petition to the Ministry of Posts in Omsk. The request was duly granted and with that the overprinting of stamps was stopped. It is quite reasonable, that because the stamps were used in correspondence with the local people, not many were saved. That is the reason why they are so much more valuable. For your information—the Silhouettes were issued Dec. 1919. The Siberian Lioms, as far as the first and second issues are concerned, although unnecessary, were properly forwarded to Siberia, but many were lost in transit. They were not used as much as the Silhouettes, because they were delivered too late. If they are on the original covers, they are very valuable.

This also will answer the article of Mr. Hirsch, which followed the one

by Mr. Franěk.

Finally a few words to the collectors and catalogue publishers. Do not be afraid that you have in your albums worthless "pieces of paper." You have a postage stamp history of the stormy days of 1918 and with the Siberian Lions an eventful time which followed. Keep them in your albums, because I know, the catalogue publishers will always list them. Be careful, however, as it is possible, that sometime in the future, someone will come up with another story that this or that stamp does not belong in a collection. I hope, that those who sold these stamps will not try to buy them back at a low price. — Collectors — beware!

—Jan Mrňák.

Do You Know How To Tell if a Stamp is Printed by Letterpress or Lithography?

By F. A. Richardson

(Reprinted from THE STAMP LOVER)

We would be brave (or shall we say dogmatic) who claimed always to be able to differentiate between stamps printed letterpress and those printed by the lithographic process.

Often, of course, the differences are obvious but borderline cases frequently leave honest experts undecided.

An understanding of the two methods will facilitate recognition of the majority. A stamp to be produced by the letterpress process is first engraved in relief on a steel die, the original surface of the steel being left to accept ink to represent the matter to be printed and the steel being cut away where whites are required on the finished stamp. A print from this original is obtained in the same way as a print from the electrotyped machine plate for quantity production. A flexible roller charged with ink is rolled across the die to which ink adheres and paper is then pressed into contact so that the ink is transferred to the paper.

Resulting quality of the print will be affected by many factors—the original engraving, the texture of the inking roller, the suitability of the ink employed, the paper surface, the materials of the "make-ready" which applies the pressure and, above all, the skill of the printer.

The inking roller must be flexible to allow for some inequalities in the plate. Even when set most delicately at the correct height for good inking it is obvious that when meeting the top edge of a vertical piece of metal the roller will compress a little and tend to leave a little ink below the corner. When paper is pressed on to the plate this ink will be picked up and show an excess of ink giving a hard edge. This "ink squeeze" is readily visible in commercial letterpress stamps, but a really skilful printer may reduce it to a degree when it becomes extremely difficult to recognize.

Clues to Identification

In these cases we have to search for some other clue to identify the process. We find it in the paper surface. The vast majority of letterpress stamps nowadays are printed on uncoated papers. Under the microscope the surface of an uncoated paper appears as a series of mountains and valleys.

To avoid excessive "ink squeeze" the pressure on to the inked plate is generally insufficient to give complete contact at the bottom of a deep valley. This results either in no ink, or in a much reduced amount of ink, adhering to the paper at that spot. A little practice with a good magnifying glass will enable the philatelist to recognise this letterpress clue, especially as somewhere on the design a valley is sure to coincide with a printed line which

should be continuous and is not.

With an understanding of the principles of letterpress firmly in mind, let us now consider lithography.

Fundamentally, lithography is based on antipathy between water and grease. The design to be printed is produced by a variety of methods in a greasy medium on a stone or grained metal plate. A roller charged with water is first rolled across and the parts of the plate bearing no grease become wet. Then a roller carrying a greasy ink deposits ink wherever the plate is not wet. In the case of a stone the paper is pressed directly on to the inked surface and the print is taken. This is the "flatbed" process which is not now used to any large extent. The method now generally in use is the "offset" process. The "offsetting" takes place on the machine. The plate is dampened and inked as already described, the impression from the plate is "set off" or transferred to a rubber-covered blanket which in turn puts the impression on the paper.

The Best Clue

This printing from a rubber surface gives the philatelist his best clue to identifying the process. Broadly speaking the rubber blanket adapts itself to the hills and valleys on the paper surface. The resulting impression therefore shows a solid unbroken ink surface easily distinguishable from the slightly ink-starved paper valleys in letterpress stamps. Looked at superficially the above would seem to suggest that since lithographic printing gives a solid unbroken line it is superior as a process to letterpress. Curiously enough, general opinion does not support this suggestion. Letterpress stamps often have a sparkle and liveliness sometimes missing from the lithographic. The fact that lithographic lines and solids are uniform helps to give a flat appearance to a design.

In conclusion, distinguishing letterpress from lithographic stamps is sometimes extremely difficult. There would almost seem to be an instinct possessed by the experienced and not by beginners. This is equal to saying that there is no substitute for experience in a matter which often finds the expert in doubt.



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