

THE CZECHOSLOVAK Specialist

Official Monthly Journal of the  Society for Czechoslovak Philately

Silver Bronze Award Praga 1968

Vol. XXXV

April 1973

No. 4, Whole No. 330

PRAGUE EXPOSITIONS FROM 1891 TO 1908 THROUGH THE EYES OF A COLLECTOR

By Jiří Nekvasil



In the years between 1848 and 1914 there were several temporary posts on the territory of the former Bohemian Kingdom (Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia) which in some instances used special or commemorative cancellations to document a variety of political, economic and cultural events. We often read in the philatelic literature that the earliest commemorative cancel was used in either France or Germany. I believe this not to be so. The first, undoubtedly, belongs to the old Moravian cultural center in Kroměříž, where in the revolutionary year 1848 a Council met. While the Council was in session, there was a temporary post office which used two cancelers: one having a single circle, the other oblong. Both belong to the pre-stamp period, because Austria issued its first stamps only in 1850. Both the aforementioned cancels are extremely rare.

All of these special cancellations speak clearly of Czech cultural life prior to the 28th of October 1918. They represent Czech postal history and are indeed Czech postmarks even though admittedly on Austrian stamps.

Permit me now to acquaint you briefly with some interesting philatelic material which documents a number of outstanding cultural occasions which took place in Prague during the years 1891-1908.

Prague, the seat of Czech kings encompasses 7 hills and is split by the foaming Moldau River. The city is dominated by old Vyšehrad fortress, residence of the Czech princes, and beautiful Hradčany castle, residence of the Czech kings. The city has always been the political and cultural center of the Czech lands and boasts the oldest university in central Europe, founded in 1348 by King and Emperor Charles IV, the Father of his Nation. Following defeat at the Battle of the White Mountain, the Czechs lost their independence and for a 300 year period remained subject to Austrian rule. However, they never lost their yearning for independence. In the 19th century there occurred a strong resurgence of Czech national feeling, manifesting itself in the expan-



The first such event was the "General Jubilee Territorial Exposition" which took place from the first of May to the 31st of October, 1891. It took place 100 years after the first such exposition in the year 1791. Because of disputes with German exhibitors this event materialized as a purely Czech affair which incorporated a grand review of the entire Czech national economy. The exposition was located on a plain of 300,000 sq. meters arranged according to a plan devised by architect Antonín Wiehl, and located on the territory now occupied by the Julius Fučík Park of Culture and Rest. As part of the exposition, there was constructed in record time the Petřín Lookout, patterned after the Eiffel Tower of Paris. On Letná Street arose the Hanavský Restaurant Pavillion, a beautiful example of artistic foundry practice native to the town of Hořovice. Several other objects were created which even today remain principal points of interest in Prague. The exhibition area was further enhanced in the years 1895, 1908 and after World War I at which time it

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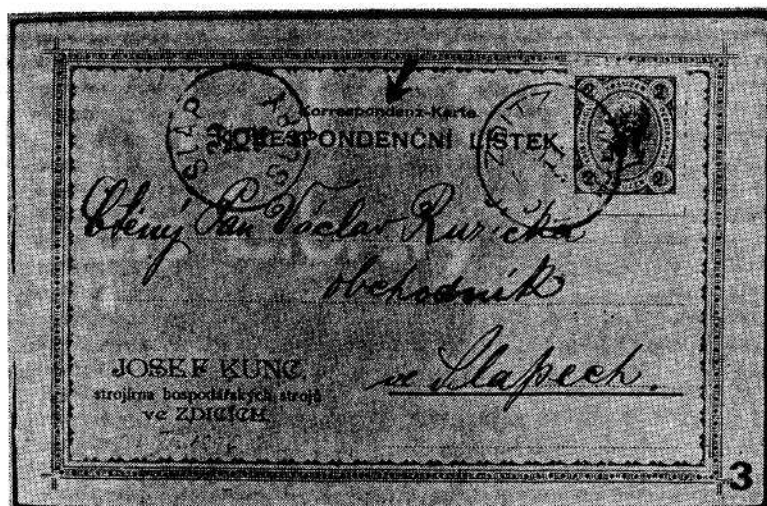
Published monthly except July and August

Application to mail at second class postage rates is pending at
Lawrence, Kansas 66044

Office of Publication, 821 Vermont St., Lawrence, Kansas 66044
\$5.00 per year

Editor: Henry Hahn, 2936 Rosemoor Lane, Fairfax, Va. 22030
Assistant Editor: Edward O. Tabor, 7465 Keystone Lane, Forestville, Md. 20028

Postmaster: Send form 3579 to 821 Vermont St., Lawrence, Kans. 66044



became part of the exhibition facilities of the "Prague Sample Fairs." In these facilities there were held the international postage stamp exhibits, i.e. Praga 1962 and Praga 1968. The most interesting philatelic memento of the 1891 Exposition is the single circle commemorative postmark in black, having a diameter of 28 mm. The postmark with a text PRAG AUSSTELLUNG-PRAHA VYSTAVA (Figure 1) which was used by a temporary post office located on the exposition grounds. The date of the postmark is arranged vertically in the order of day, month, hour, year.

Between May 15th and October 23rd 1895 there took place the "Ethnic Bohemian-Slavic Exposition" which was visited by over two million people. This fair is documented by means of a similar commemorative postmark and similarly in 1896 there took place a "State Exposition" which was held simultaneously with an "International Pharmaceutical Exposition," which took place between August 15 and September 21.

In 1898 Prague hosted another Czech exposition, this one having an exclusively technical theme, entitled "Architecture and Engineering." It took place between June 15 and September 19. The exhibition postmark was bi-circular with the outer circle having a diameter of 30 mm and the inner circle having a diameter of 17.5 mm, without date bridge, with a date arrangement similar to those found in former postmarks. This postmark had a significant innovation. The Czech name was located in the prime location, i.e. on the left, whereas the German was in the secondary location, i.e. to the right (Figure 2). In the illustration we see the address side representative of several official picture post cards which were printed right at the exhibition grounds by the Prague Publishing firm J. Otto. One such card pictures an allegoric figure representing technical progress, another pictures (in color) the popular Prague panorama from Petřín, another shows an exhibit which featured machines and engines manufactured by the principal Czech manufacturers. At the top there is a two Kreuzer stamp with a portrait of the Emperor which is cancelled with the exposition postmark. The title of the address side is particularly interesting. In the first place, the title is in Czech in large lettering, with the almost imperceptible title in German below. While today this may be taken for granted, at the time it represented a major victory for language equivalence. The language war began in 1883 when the legendary chair-



man of the Club of Czechs Philatelists in Prague, Vincenc Jedlička took action. In that year the Austrian post issued a new release of post cards bearing the two Kreuzer stamp with the portrait of the Emperor and the eagle. The title on the post card was in huge gothic German, below which was the almost imperceptible Czech title, even though these cards were specifically meant for use on Czech soil. This particularly annoyed Jedlička, who swore revenge against the Austrian Post for this insult to the Czech people. According to the regulations of the day it was always necessary to title in German first and only below in the languages of the other nations constituting the Austrian Monarchy. He therefore printed his own postal stationery (cards), which had the languages in the legal order but the German on top in extremely small letters. The Austrian Post Office initially levied a postal fine (tax) but later refused delivery altogether. Jedlička would not give in, continued harassing the Post Office and finally issued a card bearing the title in Czech first. Ever an attempt by the German representatives in Parliament in Vienna to restrain him was to no avail. Finally, Jedlička sent his nationalistic post cards to philatelic friends abroad who used them for their correspondence to Prague. This forced the Austrian Post to capitulate. That Jedlička made his victory stick is apparent in Figure 3. It is an ordinary post card which was used by the firm Josef Kunc, manufacturers of agricultural machinery in Zdice, near Pilsen. On this card, though the German title is above, it is virtually overwhelmed by the large Czech title. By then the language war was virtually won, Czech became the principal language in Bohemia, and the Austrian Post, now dominated by Czech employees, capitulated altogether.

The next exposition was an agricultural one, which took place in Prague in 1907 and was also documented with a similar commemorative postmark. The color of the cancellation was black.

One of Prague's largest expositions was undoubtedly the "Jubilee Exposition of 1908" which took place between the 1st of May and 18th of October. On the occasion of that exposition the Austrian Post Office issued an official picture post card. On the address side it has printed (at the center) the five heller green issue bearing a portrait of the 18-year old Monarch. On the address side at left top there is the Czech title "Jubilejní Výstava/Praha/1908/Korespondenční Lístek (Figure 4) and only to the less prominent right one



finds the German title. The picture side bears a lovely engraving of the emperor Francis Joseph I, dressed in a general's uniform, in the center, with a panorama of the Hradčany Castle at the right and the Castle Karlštejn to the left. This card was similar in execution to the picture post card issued on occasion of the 60th Anniversary of the reign of the Emperor, which took place on December 2, 1908.

The temporary post office was again located at the exposition. The commemorative post marks were several and bore the distinguishing letters "a" to "e." The color was black and registered letters received special registry labels with Czech text in the prime location (Figure 5). On the exposition grounds there was also a postal print shop, where visitors could have printed, on valid postal stationery, some of the stamp imprints having values 3, 5, and 10 hellers bearing the portrait of the Emperor with the so-called "Door Frame" type (this stamp design does not exist in the adhesive issues), or the same values of the Jubilee issues (Figure 6). Through efforts on the part of certain Prague collectors, there emerged a large number of postal stationery items with these imprinted values, primarily since it was something novel and secondly because at that time the collection of postal stationery was even more popular than adhesive stamp collecting. It is possible that these activities were pushed by the chairman of the Prague Club of Czech Philatelists, Ing. Jaroslav Šula, as these items were eventually nicknamed "Šuloviny." There are altogether 12 postal stationery envelopes, 23 letter sheets, and 104 cards, which at the Jubilee Exposition were imprinted with varying combinations of stamps as selected by individual customers. Today it is of course extremely difficult to assemble a complete collection of these items, which, incidentally, are priced rather highly in postal stationery catalogs. Wagging tongues also claim that these imprinted stamps could be purchased on ordinary paper, or even on mens starched shirt cuffs! Simultaneously there was issued at the Jubilee Exposition a long set of picture post cards (with the pictures on the back) all of which had imprinted the green five heller stamp of the "Door Frame" type. These pictured all of the exposition pavillions, restaurants and even bars, with which the exposition was adequately endowed. Today, however, these postal stationery items are quite rare.

Because this exposition was to be a celebration of the Jubilee of the reign-



ing monarch, the occasion became, through the initiative of the Czech Chamber of Commerce in Prague, a major manifestation of Czech know-how and maturity. The Emperor, who at that time visited the Czech lands was welcomed everywhere, but purely with the Czech national anthem "Kde Domov Můj?," by closed ranks of Sokols bearing red and white flags, and welcoming speeches which were entirely in Czech. Because the Emperor did not understand a single word of Czech he on one occasion lost patience, turned on his heel and hurried back to his private railroad car and left for home in Vienna. This act by the Emperor caused great excitement throughout Bohemia.

The Prague exhibits between 1891 and 1908 were not the only ones which were documented by means of philatelic materials. Minor expositions took place in 1892, 1902 and 1907 in Olomouc, 1903 in Ústí nad Labem and in Pardubice, in 1906 in Liberec, in 1908 in Kroměříž, in 1909, in Klatovy, in 1910, in Brno (photographic exposition), in Chomutov in 1911, in Mladá Boleslav in 1912 (Figure 7), in Landškroun also in 1912 and in 1913 again in Chomutov.



All of these today represent rare items of postal history.

From the Editor's Stock Book

If by now you have NOT made nominations for DIRECTORS of the SOCIETY, it is NOT too late. Nominations remain open throughout the month of April. Please refer to the last issue of the SPECIALIST for instructions and form. You need not necessarily use the form, but be sure to nominate in accordance with the BYLAWS OF THE SOCIETY FOR CZECHOSLOVAK PHILATELY as published in the last issue.

This month we are pleased to announce yet another new feature column. Bill Schoenig, past editor of the SPECIALIST is introducing his "SELL-SWAP-WANT" adlet column elsewhere in this issue and we wish him much success in this fine venture. I'm sure we'll all make good use of it.

Tod Stromquist of Chicago writes on the organized activities of Chicago area collectors, many of whom are also members of our SOCIETY. The groups described have no regular publications of their own. We are pleased to print parts of his letter and occasionally cover activities of these fine groups, (as we did in our last issue) for the benefit of all our readers in the Chicago area. Tod writes:

Two long-established groups devoted to Czech philately meet regularly in adjoining Chicago suburbs.

At 2:30 the second Sunday afternoon of each month, THE CHICAGO-LAND CZECHOSLOVAK PHILATELIC SOCIETY meets at the Lincoln Federal S. & L. Assn. Bldg., 6635 Cermak Rd., Berwyn 60402. John Velek is the President and Frank J. Kovarik the Secretary. Everyone is welcome; there are no dues or membership cards. A talk by a member or by a visiting philatelist is scheduled for each meeting, followed by some stamp trading between members. Dr. James J. Matejka arranges for participation in the annual COMPEX exhibition, which includes a good auction of Czech material.

At 9:00 every second Sunday morning THE FIRST CZECHOSLOVAK PHILATELIC CLUB OF AMERICA meets at the T. G. Masaryk School, 5701 S. 22nd Place, Cicero 60650. This earliest Czech society will celebrate

its 50th anniversary next spring when it will host the annual exhibition of the Illinois Federation of Stamp Clubs (with 52 clubs the largest federation). One of the Clubs charter members, Anton Dragoun, is still a very active member. Joseph J. Janecka is the President and Vaclav Sana the Secretary. Alternating every second Sunday are business, social, and correspondence matters and bourse member's trading.

Chicago is fortunate to have some of the most knowledgeable experts in Czech philately, and the meetings of these two clubs are the best place to meet them.

The lead story in this issue by Mr. Nekvasil of Prague is an original work by this prominent collector-author, and the SPECIALIST is indebted to former SPECIALIST editor, Dr. Wm. Reiner-Deutsch for arranging to have us publish it.

1973 STAMP PROGRAM FOR CZECHOSLOVAKIA

By George A. Blizil

It really would be nice if the Czechoslovak postal administration announced its entire 1973 philatelic issues program late in 1972. But problems arose regarding dates of issue because of production schedules. Through the courtesy of ARTIA, Philatelic Dept., in Prague, we report the following plans for 1973.

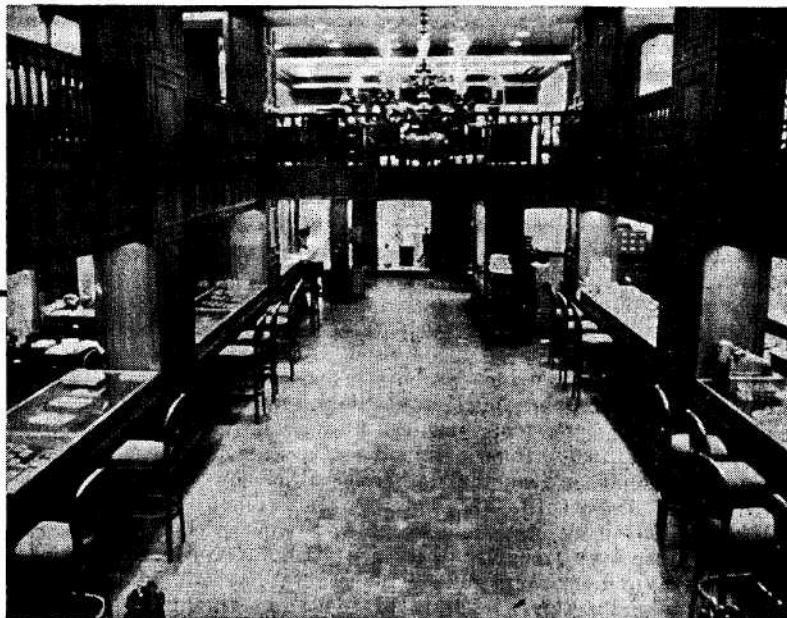
It is noted there are altogether 62 stamps to be issued in 14 special issues. Total face value of the program is Kcs. 78.60, or approximately \$12.05 U.S. ARTIA also advises the program is subject to change. This probably means one or two additional "sneakers" could creep in before the end of the year.

Date of Issue	Description	Vals.	FDCs
Jan. 25	Czech and Slovak Graphic Paintings	4	4
Feb. 22	World Figure-Skating Championship in Bratislava		
	60th Ann. Lawn Tennis in CSSR		
	3rd Summer Army Spartakiad	3	3
Feb. 23	25th Ann. of Victorious February and of Militia	2	2
Mar. 20	Fighters against Nazism and Fascism during the Occup.	6	3
Apr. 12	Space Exploration	6	4
May 1	50th Anniv. Czechoslovak Broadcast; 20th Anniv. Czech TV;		
	20th Anniv. telephonization of all Czech communities	3	3
May 9	25th Anniv. of Constitution	1	1
May 9	Prague Castle (sheets of 4)	2	2
June 20	Additional Town Coat of Arms	3	3
Aug. 23	400th Anniv. U. of Olomouc	1	1
Aug. 23	"Flora Olomouc" Flower Exhibition	6	4
Sept. 5	50th Anniv. Czech huntsmanship and hunting dogs	6	3
Sept. 17	100th Anniv. birth of painter Max Svabinsky (UNESCO)	5	5
Oct. 24	50th Anniv. Czechoslovak Airlines (Airmail set)	6	3
Nov. ?	Art on postage stamps (from exhibitions in galleries in Praha and Bratislava)	7	7
Dec. 18	Day of Czechoslovak Stamp	1	1

At the time this report was submitted the rate of exchange was \$1.00 US =Kcs. 6.50. This is probably changed now, inasmuch as the U. S. dollar has been devalued.

Flash! Starting in January 1973 all Czechoslovak First Day Covers will be of larger size and every cover will be sold at face value (calculated as per stamps affixed on cover) plus 7c (U.S.) for each cover.

ARTIA mentions that all FDCs will be cancelled with commemorative-type first day postmarks.



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Fig. 1

It has not been often that we have remarked on the stamps of the nominally independent republic of Slovakia, which separated itself from Czechoslovakia on March 14th, 1939, and was proclaimed a German protectorate by Hitler in August, 1939. Immediately the new state began preparing its own stamps, so suddenly, in fact, that the first pair, Scott 24 and 25, retained the printed name, "ČESKO-SLOVENSKO" (with the hyphen), overprinted with the legend, "Slovenský štát" diagonally in red or in blue. Concurrently the Bratislava press was preparing the same stamp, featuring a picture of Fr. Andrej Hlinka, and surmounted with the printed legend, "SLOVENSKÁ POŠTA". This second group was designed to defray franking costs between 5 hellers and 3 Ks, was printed on unwatermarked paper, and had a nominal perforation of $12\frac{1}{2}$; the set is numbered from 26 to 33 inclusive in the Scott catalog. Both the Scott and Minkus catalogues provide information that the 20 heller and the 30 heller values of this set were officially issued as imperforates, their catalogue values suggesting that two perforated stamps were issued for each imperforate. Either lapses in supervision or shortages of materials could account for the small number of these stamps that were partially or wholly perforated $10\frac{1}{2}$; the ratio of the catalog values suggests that the 10 h with the $10\frac{1}{2}$ perforations was only one out of every hundred of the $12\frac{1}{2}$ perforation, and that for the 30 h was about one to fifty.

Fig. 1, however, suggests that there is much more to the story about the

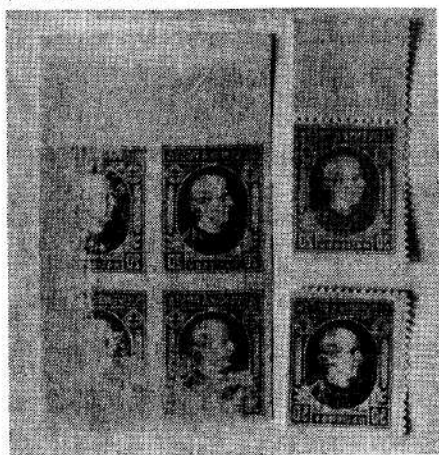
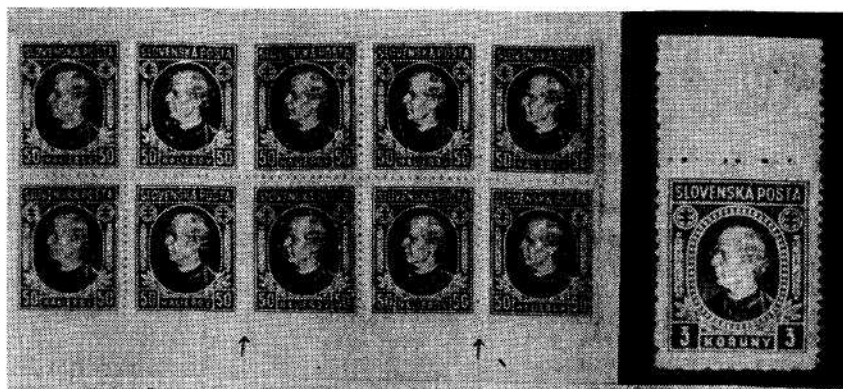


Fig. 2



Imperf between Vertically

Double perforations

Fig. 5

Fig. 3

imperforates than the American catalogues suggest. It shows two striking plate-number pairs of imperforates of Scott #32 and 33. The dates are probably the intended first day of issue, but we cannot be certain unless someone in our membership has in his possession covers bearing these stamps and the specific dates shown, namely, March 21st, 1939 for the 2:50 Ks, and March 23rd, 1939 for the 3 Ks, regardless of whether or not the stamps thereon are perforate or imperforate.

It is possible to account for these uncatalogued imperforate varieties, thanks to the assistance of Mr. Otakar Krejci of the Washington, D. C. branch. In *Katalog známok; Slovensko, Čechy, Morava (1939-1945)* by Hugo Kolar published in Bratislava in November, 1946, it is stated that all the values of this set were printed as imperforates but only the 20 h and the 30 h were issued officially in imperforate setting.

Additional information about this set of Slovak stamps has recently turned up and is well worth sharing with the membership.

Fig. 2 shows some clear offsets of the 20 heller value as imperforates. The same photograph includes very clear offsets of the 20 h and the 30 h perforated $12\frac{1}{2}$.

Figs. 3 and 4 exhibit some interesting perforation varieties. The 50 heller block of ten shows the second vertical from the left as pairs imperforate between, and the first vertical from the right exhibits a double perforation, probably a combination of the usual $12\frac{1}{2}$ with the addition of the $10\frac{1}{2}$. Fig. 4 is a later watermarked issue of 1940, Scott #55, exhibiting the perforation above the #1 position on the sheet shifted off.

As noted, the whole set exhibits varying combinations of perforations $12\frac{1}{2}$ and $10\frac{1}{2}$. Examples of such combinations are found, including those noted in the American catalogues, for the 5 h, 10 h, 20 h, 50 h, 2.50 Ks, and the 3.00 Ks. Great care should be taken in purchasing combinations of the 20 h and 30 h because it was certainly possible for an original purchaser of any of these imperforate sheets to perforate them privately. The other values imperforate are quite rare, so chances of them being privately perforated are remote.

Fig. 5 shows an interesting combination for the 3 Ks value with the right vertical perforated $12\frac{1}{2}$ and the other three sides of the stamp perforated $10\frac{1}{2}$.

Keep your letters coming with their answers, suggestions and questions. And anyone having information about the first day of issue of any of these Hlinka-type stamps of Slovakia can fill in a few gaps in our knowledge about

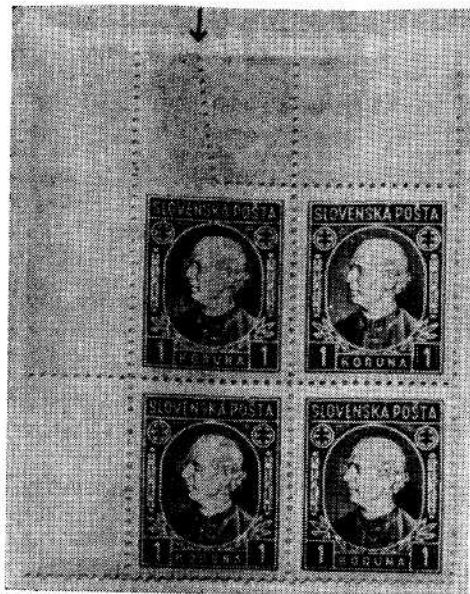


Fig. 4

them. You may rest assured that any such information will be included in a future column.

NEW MEMBERS

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- 985 Thomas Iszard, 302 Second Street, Towanda, PA 18848 (Junior)
- 986 John P. Wynns, 6835 De Soto Ave., Apt. #28, Canoga Park, CA 91303.
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- 3—We will not be responsible for any error arising from longhand or other illegible copy.
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Stumped On Stamps

A collector has recently inquired about specialization in coupons and labels of the pre-WWII issues. There is, of course, no simple answer as to how and what to collect.

The larger size Czechoslovak stamps for the eight years between 1935 and 1949 (excluding the Occupation Period) were issued with coupons or labels. By definition, a "coupon" has no printing, whereas a "label" has printing. All the large stamps from Pofis #287 (Scott #204) to Pofis #513 (Scott 385), including the Airmail issue of 1946 have coupons or labels attached to the left or right of the stamp when the stamps were printed in a vertical format, or above and below the stamps when the stamps were printed in a horizontal format. The only exception is the post-World War II issue of the Sladky-Kozina stamps listed as Pofis #431-32 (Scott #305-06), which have coupons on all four sides of the post office pane, and, therefore, creating the possibility of mounting a left, a right, a lower, and an upper coupon in one's collection. Please note that we are not discussing the Protectorate issues even though those issues present some of the same problems.

For the sake of completeness, let us note that the 1934 issue of the regular Kde Domov Muj stamps, Pofis #281-82 (Scott #200-01), has coupons attached, even though the stamps are smaller than the regular stamps. The arrangement of the coupons is different from other (larger) issues; both sides of the post office pane have the same number of coupons in all rows. The same is true for the overprinted Airmail issue of 1949 with upper and lower margins. However, none of these fall within the scope of this discussion.

In general, then, for stamps printed vertical format, the post office panes were arranged in seven rows and sixteen columns. The first row contained sixteen stamps, and the remaining six rows had fourteen stamps and a coupon or label in the first and last column. For stamps printed in horizontal format, it is necessary to imagine that the vertical format has been rotated 90 degrees counterclockwise. Hence, the first and last (16th) row has one stamp in the first column plus six coupons or labels, and rows 2 through 15 each contain seven stamps.

Thus it is seen that there are alternative ways of collecting the coupons or labels attached to the stamps. From stamps printed in the vertical format, the following possibilities are evident:

1. Left or right coupon or label with about .2 or .3 cm of selvage attached; the maximum obtainable from one pane are six left and six right coupons or labels.
2. Left or right bottom coupon or label with 1.5 cm of selvage below in addition to side selvage as above. There is only one left and one right coupon or label from one post office pane.
3. Label or coupon below stamp with selvage of .2 to .3 cm on the left or on the right, and about 1.5 cm of selvage above the stamp. The maximum is one left and one right below-the-stamp coupon or label in each post office pane.
4. Upper left or upper right corner block of four, which contains three stamps and one coupon or label, plus wide selvage above the two upper stamps, and narrow selvage on the left or the right of the stamp, plus the coupon or label. The maximum per pane is one left, or one right upper corner.
5. Vertical strip of one stamp and two, three, four, five or six coupons or labels attached below with wide margin on top of the stamp and below the sixth coupon or label. There is also the narrow selvage left or right along the whole strip. The maximum is one left and one right strip of

stamps with two, three, four, five, or six coupons or labels below in each post office pane.

In the horizontal format the same combinations apply, except that one must substitute the word 'upper' for "right" and "lower" for "left" in the above descriptions. However, in case "3", it is necessary to substitute the word "right" for "bottom." In the case of the Sladky-Kozina issue, the problem becomes even more complicated, and we shall not deal with it here.

How then shall we collect the coupons and/or labels attached to the large-size Czechoslovak stamps? Consider these questions:

A. Is one coupon or label—left or right, upper or lower—adequate for a serious collector? Mr. E. Hirsch, noted philatelist and author, proposes that one label or coupon is enough for study purposes. For esthetic purposes in mounting a collection, two types appear better for the purpose of balance.

B. Should vertical stamp format, lower coupon or label, or horizontal stamp format, right coupon or label be included in a collection? (Only two such per pane.)

C. Should coupon or label with both the wide and narrow selvage be included in the collection? (Only two such per pane.)

D. Should the left or right, coupon or label have the narrow selvage attached, i.e. and should the item be rejected when the selvage is removed?

As for the publishers of the commercial catalogues, Scott makes little if any reference at all to the coupons and/or labels. Michel distinguishes between a coupon (Leerfeld) and a label (Zierfeld), but in pricing make no distinction between right, left, upper or lower. Pofis lists coupons and labels as "kupony" but does not, with one exception (The Arras Issue) price right, left, upper or lower coupons and/or labels separately.

I'm afraid we have answered a question with more complex questions. We hope that some of our readers can provide answers to these, or at least offer some advice on this complex area of collecting.

Send letters to Richard Gray, 3466 Mildred Dr., Falls Church, VA 22042.

OUR SALES DEPARTMENT

We are in need of sales books for circulation.

At present there are only 6 circuits on their ways. Besides stamps we also can use covers and postal stationery.

At this time it is again necessary to remind our members to hold on to their receipts for insured mail for half a year. It should be known to all by now that the U. S. Mail is extremely slow. Our circuits travel as 3rd class mail and past experience has shown that it may take almost a month to reach their destinations, no matter how long or how short the distances involved may be. Recently we checked some elapsed time and found that for example a package from Georgia to Long Island took almost a month, another one from Canandaigua to Connecticut 29 days. Before we really know that a circuit is lost two months have easily gone by as we have to write to all parties concerned. In 1972 we lost a circuit. The mailer had destroyed his receipt as he assumed that the circuit must have reached the addressee, but it had not and it took us a little over 60 days to find out, writing to different members involved. By the way, the advocate of the post office department advises that tracers should be made between 60 and 90 days of mailing. A claim can be filed within a year. We, therefore, remind all participants to hold on to their postal receipts.

—Wolfgang Fritzsche, Sales Manager

We have just learned of the passing of Secretary Ed Lisy's father, who succumbed after long illness in Florida. We wish to extend to Ed and his family our heartfelt sympathy.

—H. H.

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CZECHOSLOVAKIA

ISSUES 1923-1926
(Scott Nos. 92-118)

Full Sheets

Part Sheets

Blocks

Die Proofs

Color Trials

Plate Proofs

Rare Perforations

Varieties

Rare Watermark Positions

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