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Society for Czechoslovak Philately

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The Slovakotur Stamps of Slovakia

By Jack Benchik

Late in 1940 a decree by the postal administration of the puppet State of Slovakia required that post cards, in addition to regular postage, must have a special 10h stamp for domestic use, a 15h for Bohemia & Moravia or a 20h stamp for cards mailed out of the country.

These semipostal tax stamps were not revenues in the strict sense, but their purpose was to raise funds for the promotion of tourist trade in Slovakia. The 15h value is illustrated below.

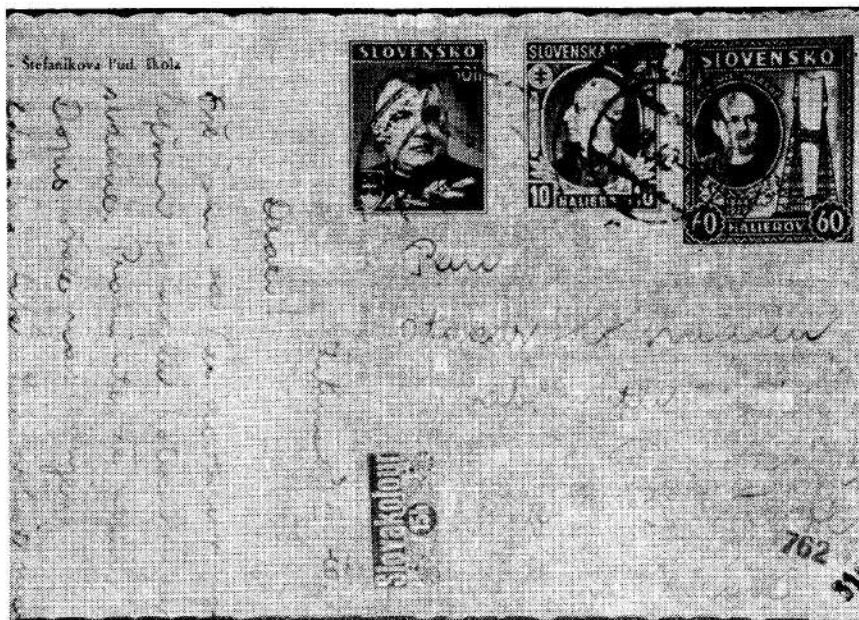


The entire idea of the Slovakotur stamps was to create a fund to improve tourist accommodations and facilities in the Tatra Mountains, which was then, and still is, a famous European recreation area. Under a vacation plan created by Hitler's administration, German citizens could subscribe to a "prepaid vacation." The Slovaks had intended to host the Germans at their resorts. How did it turn out? Well, that is another story.

The stamps were printed in Bratislava by a private printer, rather than by the Slovak State Printery, producer of regular postal issues. They are perforated 12½. The 10h was printed in red on yellowish paper, the 15h is brown and the 20h is blue on white paper. These were the only denominations of this issue.

Although I haven't seen a full mint sheet, I was told by George Blizil* they were printed in panes of 100 (10x10). George also assisted with about every facet of this article.

An unusual feature of this issue is that these were probably the only stamps with the red-colored gum applied in small circular spots on the back, which disappeared when once moistened. This red "polka dot" gum was sup-



posed to prevent reuse of the labels.

Due to the fact these stamps were not for general revenue, but were issued for a specific purpose, they are not listed in Burianek & Ittel's fine catalog of the "General Revenue Stamps of Czechoslovakia." Nor are they listed in Michel, or Novotny's handbook.

Their two-year usage was short-lived as they were not too successful. Postal officials frequently overlooked their "mandatory use." It was not the practice to cancel these stamps.

The 20h, properly used on a postcard is quite scarce. For that matter, the more common 10h or 15h on a card are seldom seen.

It was the intent to have these "tourist" stamps affixed to post cards by vendors before sale. Several souvenir shops throughout Slovakia did this. But this practice was discontinued because of confusion. What if the buyer wanted to mail his card within Slovakia? Or possibly someplace else within the Third Reich? Some cards had 10h labels affixed, and very few had 15h or 20h. As a rule the merchants affixed their entire supply to their stock.

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and left no loose supplies for adjustments.

Look through your old post cards from Slovakia. You may find a Slovak-tour stamp on a card, which certainly has unusual interest. Cards like these are postal history items.

*Director of SCP and prominent collector (Ed.)

From the Editor's Stock Book

Walking along Prague's ancient little streets not far from the Týnský Chrám, at the tail end of a hurried trip to Europe, what else would your amateur editor wish to do but stop by and visit a true professional—Editor Ing. Vítězslav Houška of FILATELIE. Not having a copy of this fine publication in my pocket, and not realizing that FILATELIE is sold at many of Prague's kiosks and "trafiky" (tobacco shops), I quite naturally headed for a phone book for the address and phone number in order to call for an appointment. Not finding any listing under FILATELIE, I emerged from the phone booth a bit surprised, continuing my walk wondering what to do next. Just then I passed by the well known publishing house ORBIS, and it was there that I finally made contact.

The offices of FILATELIE are only a few steps from Prague's magnificent Prašná Brána at Hybernská 5. A rather long walk through the building and courtyard takes one to the inner sanctum, which is manned by Editor Houška assisted by hard-working team-mates Rudolf Kvíz and Mrs. Věra Kubínová. I was quick to notice the June issue of the SPECIALIST on the Editor's desk, and was amply assured that each of our issues is carefully read just as we follow FILATELIE. Two FILATELIE writers whose names are well known to many of our readers joined the lively exchange of views which stretched right into lunch. They were Ing. V. Feldmann and a man whose material is particularly familiar to us, Mr. Jaroslav Ježek. What did we talk about? First about organized Czecho philately in the U. S., the reunification of our Society in particular, the collecting interests of our readers, our resources, technical and logistic problems of putting out our respective journals, etc. We discovered our library far exceeds that available to the FILATELIE staff. On the other hand, FILATELIE's literary contributors are paid for their efforts, and Editor Houška thus appears to demand (and receives) the fine, polished copy which we consistently find in his publication. With all this professionalism, Editor Houška quite obviously enjoys his job. This was particularly apparent as we discussed his operation over lunch, together with Mr. Ježek. When I asked him for some critical comment concerning the SPECIALIST, he expressed the feeling that we lack an "aim." He wonders whether we are wise in addressing ourselves primarily to the specialist rather than the general collector of Czechoslovakia. He felt that we may be neglecting the intermediate or starting collector, and suggested that we might seek some basic and educational articles from among the many fine philatelic authors in Czechoslovakia. This criticism was most constructive, and we shall implement his suggestions in the near future.

We also discussed our conventions and shows. In response to my question concerning what we may expect from the Czechs in terms of participation and cooperation at INTERPHIL '76, Editor Houška believes that they will go all out.

My afternoon amidst the architectural marvels of the Malá Strana and Hradčany Castle was made even more lovely due to the company of Mr. Ježek, who compounded history and philately in the right proportions to have made our time go all too quickly.

HH

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

After seeing all the magnificent material, exhibited at Compex by several members of our society, I began wondering, why so few of them are entering competition at the international level, and if they do, why they do not bring home more "big golds" and Grand awards. The material, which is in our member's collections, is in many cases unique and seldom seen outside of the U. S.

International competition is tough and requires plenty of hard work and know-how. Not everybody has the experience, the necessary gift of art or the knowledge of all the nooks and corners of the highly specialized philately of today. International competition today could be compared to the professional teams of sport or big business, where it takes many specialists in different fields to make the venture successful. For an individual, no matter how smart and skillful, it is almost impossible to beat the better prepared exhibits. One little mistake in the write-up, little careless mounting, not perfect presentation and thousand other miniscule faults can cost the gold, silver or bronze medal.

In our Society, we have many good people with many specialized skills and knowledge and with international competition experience. It took years to acquire it, many headaches, heartbreaks and disappointments. Why not pool these resources and enable more of our members with all the wonderful material to compete and WIN more often abroad, and show our full strength and capabilities?

This cannot succeed without the co-operation of the right people. But it can be done. There is nothing wrong or against regulations in pooling knowledge or experience. Let's form a workshop for the international competitors with volunteers in any specialty and show the world what can be done with what we have. I will be the first, who would like to add the little I know to the pool of knowledge. Any more takers? I will be delighted to hear from you. And that goes for the competitors too!!

Philatelically, Richard Gray

SEMI-ANNUAL N.Y./N.J. BRANCH MEETING

The New York and New Jersey branches had their semi-annual combined meeting at the home of Mirko Vondra in Westfield, N. J. on Saturday, June 29. It had rained for an entire week in that area of the country just prior to the meeting, but on that day, the sun broke through in the morning. To those in attendance, this was a blessing because it was scheduled as a picnic meeting and the picnic was therefore held on the back lawn of the Vondra residence instead of on the side porch or in the basement.

The highlight of the meeting was an unusual exhibit of Zeppelin covers shown by our Board member and Sales Manager, Wolfgang Fritzsche. After the showing, it was generally agreed that there are not many Zeppelin collections as complete as that one.

As if this were not enough, Mr. Fritzsche, after the meeting, gave a most interesting talk on his trip to Ethiopia last year, illustrated by a truly remarkable collection of colored slides which had the members and guests "oohing" and "aahing."

To round out the meeting, Mr. Fritzsche offered about ten circuits of philatelic material to the members attending the affair and everyone plunged in to help decimate the circuits and fill in various gaps in their own collections. In addition, a portion of a Hradčany collection devoted to plating was offered for sale at the table. Since no one present seemed interested in plating, the material remained unsold and, as of this writing, is still in Mr. Fritzsche's hands.

M.V.



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Czech Monetary Reforms and Philately

by Jiří Nekvasil, translated by L. H. Vydra

There were two monetary reforms made after 1945 and both were accompanied with interesting entires. These rightfully deserve the attention of stamp specialists.

According to the Presidential decree concerning renewal of the Czechoslovak monetary system, the starting date for the reform was November 1, 1945. However, as far as mail was concerned this fact became a reality only in the second half of that month. A new series of portrait stamps were issued on November 15, 1945 in the following denominations: 30 h, 60 h, 1.20, 3 and 5 Kčs, and a semi-postal 2.50+2.50 Kčs. At the time there were in circulation only limited numbers of stamps of the Bratislava, Moscow and London issues.

The stamps issued by Prague (linden leaf and branch design) were considered officially as stamps with the old currency denominations. There were four stamps (10, 30, 50 and 60 hellers) printed by photogravure and five engraved stamps (60, 80, 120, 300 and 500 hellers). All these stamps could be used for franking purposes only until Nov. 14. After that date these were invalid and could not even be exchanged for the new stamps which replaced them after the currency reform. However, there were no postage due penalties if these stamps were used as late as Nov. 15, 1945.

During those days there appeared some very interesting mixed frankings. For example, on Nov. 14, there were many combined frankings with the linden leaf stamps and the student commemorative stamps (2.50+2.50 Kčs) while the following day, on Nov. 15, various combinations of the same stamp with the new issue of the so-called portrait series were combined. In addition there were various mixed frankings of the above mentioned new series with the stamps issued in Moscow and London.

The second Czechoslovak monetary reform was declared by the government on May 30, 1953. In paragraph 17 of the pertinent decree it was stated that the postage stamps and revenue stamps which were in circulation on June 1, 1953 could be used until the new postage and revenue stamps would be issued. The rate was to be 50 Kčs of the old money for 1 Kčs of new money. The Ministry of Posts and Telegraph would not issue new stamps until June 30, 1953 and the Ministry of Finance would at the same time issue new revenue stamps. All postal rates were to be adjusted accordingly, with the new currency from June 1, 1953 in a ratio of 50 Kčs old money for 1 Kčs new money. The domestic mail rates in new currency were as follows:

Postcard30 Kčs
Letter (local mail) up to 20g40 Kčs
Letter (outside local mail) up to 20g60 Kčs
Registered letter, up to 20g	1.60 Kčs
Special delivery	1.50 Kčs
Foreign Mail Rates	
Postcard45 Kčs
Letter up to 20g75 Kčs
Registered letter up to 20g	1.95 Kčs

During the period between June 1 to June 18 all mail rates were in old money, in the ratio of 1 to 50. Therefore the domestic mail rates were as follows:

Printed Matter	10.00 Kčs
Postcard	15.00 Kčs
Letter up to 20g	30.00 Kčs
Registered Mail up to 20g	80.00 Kčs

On June 19, 1953 a new series of stamps was issued and franking with stamps of the old currency was discontinued.

It is obvious that in the period between June 1 to June 18, 1953 a great multitude of very colorful franking combinations appeared and the envelopes used during that time were covered with blocks of stamps on both sides. There are of course also various combinations with air mail stamps, since these had high values, which was advantageous. For example if a sender had only regular stamps of 1 Kčs old currency, he would have used 80 of these stamps on a single registered letter. Naturally, he would have preferred to use high valued air mail stamps. This period of currency reform brought out diverse letters franked with the old currency stamps in the ratio of 1 to 50; some other letters with machine franking, also with mixed machine and regular franking and in case of post offices which ran out of stamps, the franking was effected in cash.

The postage due stamps belonged to a special category. They were not available to the public and during the currency reform were accounted for in the ratio of 1 to 50; however, after the transitory period they were revalued in the new currency. Consequently letters between June 1 and June 18, 1953 affixed with postage due stamps belonged to the most interesting entires of this second monetary reform. One more detail regarding air mail stamps: in domestic mail, these stamps could be used for surface mail as well as air mail. On the other hand, air mail stamps could not be used for foreign surface mail.

In conclusion I should like to add that philatelically overfranked letters of these two periods do not belong in a serious stamp collection. Therefore, a careful check of stamps on each letter is necessary to determine if the letter or other materials were correctly franked at prevailing postal rates.

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Library Corner

by Jay T. Carrigan, Librarian SCP
12448 Over Ridge Road, Potomac, Md. 20854

We would like to thank Mr. Joseph Stein for a recent donation of several books and magazines. Joe has also donated his entire file of correspondence relating to the Society's 1970 convention at SEPAD, which he chaired. This item won't be listed in the library catalog, but it should prove useful to anyone faced with a similar chore in the future.

The library has made several recent acquisitions of new material, including some replacements for material in poor condition. In addition to Mr. Stein's donations, purchases were made in the auction of John Velek's estate as well as some recent publications directly from Czechoslovakia.

We will now begin to list the periodicals available in the library. In general it will be our policy to lend only complete bound volumes, and we are now trying to find some needed issues. We expect to publish a "want list" of periodicals. In the meantime, please feel free to write if you wish to donate periodicals (or anything else) to the library.

First, here are the library regulations.

Library Rules and Regulations

The following rules and regulations constitute the conditions under which material may be borrowed from the library. Any modifications to these rules and regulations will be published in a future edition of the CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST.

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6. The deposit may be forfeited in whole or in part when material is re-

- turned in damaged condition, or whenever material is not returned for any reason. If the deposit is not sufficient to cover the loss to the library, the borrower will be expected to replace or make suitable restitution for all material lost or damaged when in his possession.
7. Submission of a request for material constitutes acceptance of these rules and regulations.
 1. Ascher; Tschechoslowakei aus dem grossen Ganzsachen-Katalog, (1928, 9pp, German)
 2. Cross Stamp Co.; Cross Specialized Postage Stamp Catalogue Czechoslovakia, (1937, 27pp, English)
 3. Cross/Billig; Specialized Postage Stamp Catalogue of Czechoslovakia, (1942, 40pp, English)
 4. Drufila; Katalog Známek Československa, (1948, 212pp, Czech)
 5. Drufila; Katalog Známek, (1949, 202pp, Czech)
 6. Skstein; Katalog Československých Známek (1935, 112pp, Czech)
 7. Ekstein; Katalog Tschechoslowakischer Briefmarken (1935, 121pp, Ger.)
 8. Ekstein Katalog; Deskové Značky a Příležitostná Rázítka/Plattenzeichen und Festabstempelungen (1936, 102pp, Czech-German)
 9. Ekstein; Katalog Tschechoslowakischen Briefmarken (1937, 148pp, Ger.)
 10. Ekstein Katalog; Deskové Značky a Příležitostná Rázítka/Plattenzeichen und Festabstempelungen (1938, 120pp, Czech-German)
 11. Franěk-Hirsch (Billig pub.); Katalog der Tschoslowakischen Briefmarken (1937, 93pp, German)
 - *12. Hirsch & Franěk; Československé Znamky (1935, 434pp, Czech)
 13. Hirsch & Franěk; Handbuch der Tschechoslowakischen Briefmarken (1938, 100pp, German)
 14. Hirsch-Mrňák; Sbératelský Katalog Známek Československa (1948, 111 pp, German)
 15. Hirsch-Mrňák; Sbératelský Katalog Známek Československa (1949, 118 pp, Czech)
 16. Hirsch, Ervín; Studie o filatelistických sbírkách Poštovního Musea (1956, 138pp, Czech)
 17. Jonáš. Arch. A.; Studie o čsl. otisčích Frankotypu, Vol. I (1933, 112pp, Czech), Vol. II (1934, 91pp, Czech)
 18. Karásek, Kvasnička and Paulíček; Padělky Československých poštovních známek (1963, 367pp, Czech)
 19. Kessler; Specialized Postage Stamp Catalog of Czechoslovakia (1945, 36pp, English)
 20. Kvasnička and Kubát; Monografie Československých Známek, Volume I (1968, 347pp, Czech)
 21. Lehovec, Katalog Československých Známek (1946, 112pp, Czech)
 22. Möbs, Theodor; Theresienstadt: Eine philatelistische Studie (1965, 20 pp, German)

(to be continued)

NEW MEMBERS

- 1055 Robert E. Mitchell, 3833 So. Oak Park, Berwyn, Ill. 60402
- 1056 Robert Worley, P. O. Box 261, Agoura, Calif. 91301
- 1057 Joseph T. Jurick, 1750 W. Main St., Riverhead, L. I., N. Y. 11901
- 1058 Maurice LeBrie, 9554 Telegaph Rd., Downey, Calif. 90240—PATRON
- 1059 Jaroslav Kracik, Lothringerstrasse 6, 4056 Basel, Switzerland—PATRON
- 1060 Stig Askund, Jakobslundsvagen 16, S-141-71 Huddinge, Sweden
- 1061 Lucille A. Wallace, 2639 No. Evergreen St., Phoenix, Ariz. 85006
- 1062 Lyall Smith, 243A Townshipline Road, Upper Darby, Pa. 19082



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Fig. 1



Unfinished Die

Finished Die

In past issues of the SPECIALIST a few articles have been written on Czech stamp engravers, but only the work of Karl Seizinger was covered and illustrated. An article by Richardson Spofford in the January 1956 issue had a biography of Karl Seizinger and illustrated a portion of his work. The Czech engravings shown on page 12 of that issue were illustrations from the collection of the late Frank Kovarik. Here one can readily see the mastery of this great artist.

Now we would like to acquaint you with the masterful work of Bohumil Heinz. The engraving technique of Heinz was quite different from that of Seizinger. Karl Seizinger had a heavy, precise stroke and this made his landscapes and architecture—castles and buildings—among the finest such stamp engravings in the world. His detail was extraordinary—showing clocks in towers with actual times being visible. This heavy stroke, however, did not favor his work on the human form, especially facial shading and contours.

Unlike Seizinger, Bohumil Heinz had a much softer stroke which enhances

Fig. 2



Finished Die

Unfinished Die

Fig. 3



Unfinished Dies

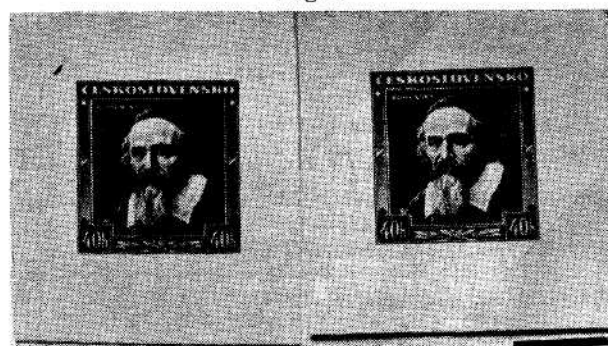
his portraits as well as his work on the human form. In this area Heinz was far superior to Seizinger. From 1934 to 1939, when both were engraving Czech stamps, Seizinger did mostly landscapes, castles and other buildings, while Heinz worked on designs showing the human form. In 1939-40 Heinz engraved landscapes and architectural forms on the Protectorate issues, and one has to realize that Heinz was truly exceptional in this area as well. Heinz was a true master, and his life was entirely dedicated to his art. Today, 34 years after his death, he is heralded as one of the foremost artists of his country.

His engravings carried secret engraver's marks "HB" or HEINZ carefully hidden in the design. Fig. 1 shows the 1935 Masaryk 1 Kč die proofs. The unfinished die proof shows the value tablets incomplete. Fig. 2 shows the 3 Kč, both finished and unfinished. The unfinished proof shows incompleting value tablets as well as partially incomplete background shading. Fig. 3 shows stages of the unfinished die from the 1935 Komenius issue, while Fig. 4 shows proofs made from the finished die.

In Fig. 5 and 6 one can see the progression of the unfinished die on the 1935 Beneš issue. Proof from the completed die are shown in Fig. 6.

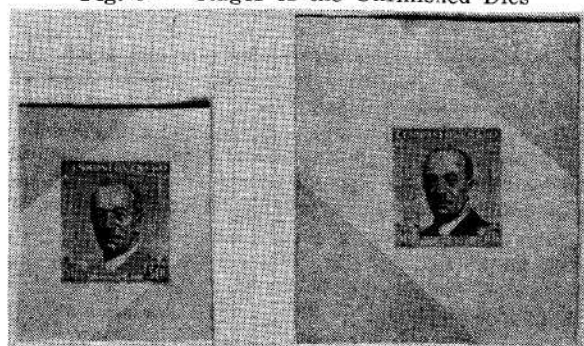
More on Heinz in future corners.

Fig. 4



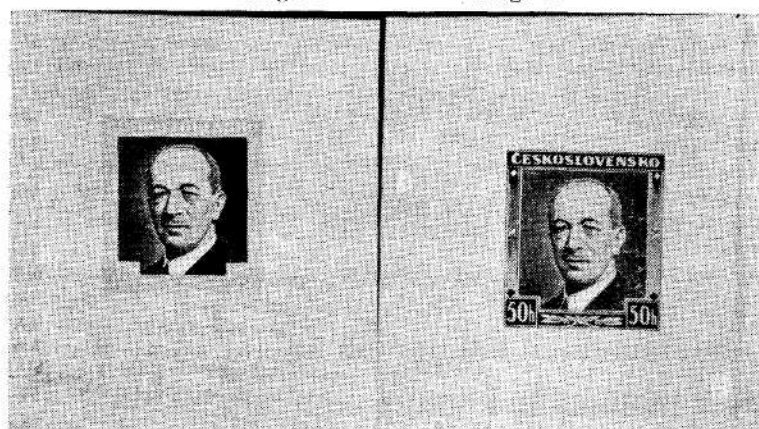
Finished Dies

Fig. 5 — Stages of the Unfinished Dies



Stage I

Stage II



Stage III—Unfinished Die

Fig. 6

Finished Die

On February 20th, Czechoslovakia issued a commemorative stamp dedicated to the Brno '74 National Stamp Exhibition. The single 3.60 Kčs denomination was designed by the painter and graphic artist Josef Liesler, and was printed by rotary recess print combined with three-color photogravure in sheets of 25. The next day, on February 21st there was issued a series of four stamps depicting Czech and Slovak graphic art (shown below).



WHY I COLLECT THE STAMPS OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA

by Yvonne King

"Would you like these?" It was my father's voice which called me to attention one Sunday afternoon. I held out my hand to receive a small brown envelope which I found to contain about a hundred stamps of various countries. I was aged nine at the time and the contents of the envelope were to set me upon the hobby of stamp collecting; a hobby which I have found more and more absorbing the more I have become involved in it.

My first efforts resulted in a space for every stamp even though I may have had only one stamp to the set. The stamp collection invaded my school holidays and I completed my school career with four albums containing stamps methodically arranged in catalogue order, the spaces on many of the leaves being more conspicuous than the stamps.

At this stage I decided to further my interest by joining the local philatelic society. I remember my first meeting vividly and was pleased to find some lady members among the learned gentlemen, the youngest of whom was probably twice my age.

I felt very much a beginner and wished I had something specific to offer rather than a "world collection." I was advised to concentrate on a narrow field and possibly choose one country.

I scanned my albums many times and the country of which I had most stamps was Czechoslovakia. It is probably this single factor which diverted my attention to the stamps of that country; a choice which I have never regretted.

I reached for my catalogue and was very pleased to see that Stanley Gibbons 1 and 2 (the equivalent of Scott's catalogue) were within my financial reach.

The stamps offer plenty of philatelic study. The first issue of Czechoslovakia is rich in plate varieties and can be plated. For the postal historian there are the covers of the Austro-Hungarian Empire which are postmarked with towns now in Czechoslovakia.

Czechoslovakia is proud of her country and its people and many of her stamps depict her landscapes and buildings, her famous writers and poets. Thematically the stamps are rich in the cultural traditions of the Czech people, the characteristic fauna and flora and the countryside. Each year a painting set gives the collector a chance to see the treasures of her art galleries. All this gives a glimpse of the country and after all a stamp which has seen postal service has passed through many hands and there can be no better use of the area covered by the stamp than to advertise its country of origin.

The Czech people are as a nation keen on philately and do much to promote the hobby. This is evidenced by the fact that the stamps are the work of outstanding artists and engravers and the printing is of the highest quality.

Then there are the various sidelines to the collection; the occupation of the Sudetenland, the independent state of Slovakia and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, to name but a few.

Collecting the stamps of Czechoslovakia has two disadvantages as far as I am concerned. Firstly the difficulty in keeping up with the large number of stamps produced each year. Secondly I am no linguist and most of the handbooks are written in Czech or German. Perhaps this adds to the fascination as things which come too easily are not appreciated and the fact that the information concerning the stamps does not come easily to me provides a challenge which I enjoy.

Three 60h commemoratives were issued on Jan. 4th—all depicting personalities of the world of culture and art. The first (below, left) honors Josef Suk, composer of symphonies, chamber music, choral works and founder of the world-famous string quartet which still bears his name. The second (below, right) commemorates the 150th anniversary of the birth of Bedřich Smetana, composer of the Bartered Bride and numerous other works well known the world over. The third 60h stamp issued simultaneously (not shown) is dedicated to Chilean poet, Pablo Neruda (1904-1973). While young, this Chilean poet and ardent fighter for peace and a better life came under the spell of Czech author-poet Jan Neruda (1834-1891) whose name he adopted. All three 60h commemoratives were designed by the Slovak painter and graphic artist Albin Brúnovský.



STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION

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