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The December and January issues contained full details on renewal of your membership with timely payment of your dues. Despite that, only one third of the members have paid to date. Remember — if you don't pay by Feb. 28, your dues must include an additional \$3 late charge.

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The fate of the Specialist is in your hands!

A SHORT HISTORY OF REGISTRY LABELS

By Adolf Hujer

This is a "first" for the Specialist. Even though Registry was the subject of an article appearing in the May 1965 issue, page 75, that article was admittedly not concerned with the history and development of labels in Czechoslovakia, but rather with their general usage worldwide. In the present issue, Adolf Hujer has delved into the beginnings of registered mail and its evolution through all the political phases of Czechoslovakia's history. His research has culminated in this detailed story.

1. The Monarchy Years

The organized shipment of mail under a centralized authority has existed in Europe for several centuries. In Bohemia it was founded in 1526, though mail delivered under a receipt existed as far back as the latter part of the 15th century. In the second half of the 17th century, receipted mail was discontinued in favor of certification. Under that system, the postal authority issued a confirmation certifying that the involved parcel was handed over to the appropriate mail service for delivery.

Registered letters were first mentioned officially in the "Postal Rule" issued by Emperor Leopold I on April 16, 1695 as follows: "Registered shipments require special handling which means that special care must be taken to assure their safe delivery". (Edited translation).

There were probably older "Postal Rules" regulating the issuance and usage of registered letters, since the oldest known "Recomandirt" (registered) letter in the Austrian Empire is dated 1667. But if there were, they are presently unknown to postal historians. This is particularly true of Hungary.

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In the middle of the 18th century, a new designation for registered letters was being used in Austria including the territory now occupied by Czechoslovakia. It comprised the letters "NB" (Nota Bene, or Note Well!). Its meaning was practically the same as "Registered Letter". The fact is that "NB" existed as early as 1680 and has been found on letters dated that year. Between 1830 and 1840, "NB" was replaced officially by special cancellations such as "Recomandirt". These cancellations differed in form and size.

The numbering of Registered Letters in Bohemia started in 1791, so that there was an overlap period when "NB" cancels and numbering existed side by side.

Registry labels were introduced in Germany in 1875, though they had been used experimentally in Alsace-Lorraine since 1870. The inscription on the label was nothing more than "Recomandirt" inside an ornamental frame which was eventually replaced by the word "Eingeschreiben".

In 1880 the Union of Postal Administration, in an effort to initiate simplicity and uniformity, suggested to all its members the use of the letter "R" on all registered mail shipments within and between their countries. As a result, its members agreed to use "R" as a conspicuous and unmistakable mark of Registry, to list the name of the postoffice where the shipment originated on each parcel and to issue a number designated by that postoffice for each registered parcel. These recommendations by the U.P.U were combined into the modern registry label.

In Austria-Hungary, these labels were introduced experimentally in 1885 and involved 36 postoffices throughout Vienna. A year later, they were introduced in 190 main postoffices throughout the Empire. 63 of those were in the Czech-speaking lands encompassing Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia. Seven of them were in Prague.

In the late 1860's, an unusual experiment was conducted at Smichov's railway station postoffice in Prague. (Smichov Bahnhof). An anonymous postmaster released a special Registry label bearing the name of that postoffice along with an issuing number and added a postmark with the letters "RECOM." in place of just the single letter "R". He did this on his own initiative without official order or approval. This event preceded by several years the first Registry labels used in Germany. And so it came about that the first Registry labels to be

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postally used were found in Prague. They were in some respects a Czech invention, having been introduced fifteen years sooner than the official recommendation which the U.P.U. handed down in 1880 and twenty years sooner than the official experiment was begun in Vienna. As a matter of fact, they came into postal use some two to three years before the Germans experimented with them in Alsace-Lorraine. (see fig. 1).

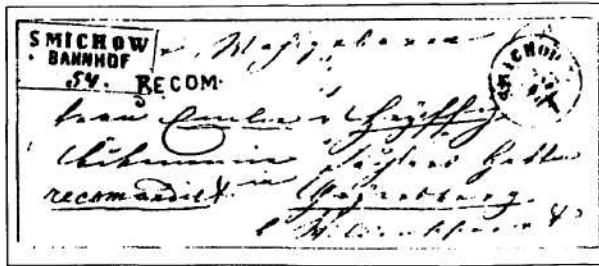


Fig 1

The first Registry labels used in Bohemia after Oct. 1, 1886 were on yellow paper with black print. The paper was very thin, brittle and crumbly. As a result, many of those early labels deteriorated just sitting in someone's collection. Those destined for main postoffices were perforated with imperf side margins. The same labels supplied to smaller postoffices were imperf only. Names of postoffices appeared on these labels in German language only. Some of the small postoffices in rural areas bearing Czech names were fortunate to have the Registry labels bear their names in Czech from the outset (eg. Řepy, Smečno, Proseč, etc.) (see fig. 2).

This very first type of label in the Czech portion of the Austro-Hungarian Empire is generally identified as type R1. Issued after Oct. 1, 1886, its most distinctive mark consists of two letters "NO" in script and the name of the issuing postoffice in German only. Exceptions existed where the name of the community could not be translated into German (see fig. 3).

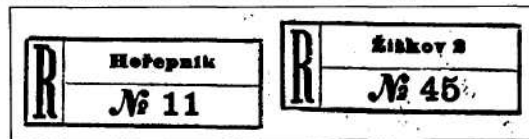


Fig 2

A second printing of Registry labels valid in the Czech sector of the Austrian Monarchy is frequently referred to as type R2. The labels were issued after 1896 and were bilingual in those areas where the population was predominantly Czech. Where Germans were in the majority, the labels were still in German only and that included communities in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia. These changes came about because of new laws which permitted the use of "land languages" like Czech, Polish and Slovenian in appropriate areas. However, these laws did not apply in the Hungarian part of the Monarchy and certainly not in Slovakia. Besides, the abbreviated word "NO" (number) is bilingual; "číslo" is not. Where both languages were allowed - German and the "land language" - German always appeared first, regardless of the predominant language of the community.



Fig 3

The second, or R2 printing, disclosed yet another change. This included changing the name of some of the branch postoffices at railway stations such as Prague Staatsbahnhof, which now became Prague 7 (see fig. 4).

R3 became the designation for the third label printing in the Czech territory of the Austrian Monarchy. The only visual difference between that and the second printing was the omission of "NO/číslo" next to the registry number identifying the parcel. (see fig. 5a and b)



Fig 4

The name of the specific postoffice was shown in R2 and R3a in German where the German population was in the majority; in R3b in German and Czech where the population was either exclusively or predominantly Czech; and in R3c in Czech where the German equivalent of the Czech name did not exist or was unknown.

The only exception to this three-part rule occurred in Prague in 1908 during the "Jubilee Exhibition". There the specially-equipped temporary postoffice used not only the registry label in a Czech-German version, but



Fig 5a



Fig 5b

show the name of the issuing postoffice. The postmark over the label showed the applicable train mail service and indicated where the envelope or parcel was registered.

The postal laws of 1885 authorized the Church and the Government along with its departmental offices to use free mail service. This was referred to as EX OFFO postal service. Some of the larger postoffices in the Czech part of the Austrian Monarchy used special registry labels for this purpose. These labels showed the name of the issuing office with the words "EX OFFO" to denote free delivery. Many such labels were in use.

In the territory of Slovakia and what was later to become Ruthenia, only Hungarian registry labels existed. They were inaugurated there on Feb. 4, 1890, so that they came into use much later than the Austrian labels did in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia. Printed on yellowish paper, they showed the issuing number and the names of the postoffices in black while the frame, the letter "R" and the word "Ajanlott" (Registered) appeared in red. The postoffice was always listed in Hungarian because there was not the slightest hint of linguistic freedom or equality in the Hungarian portion of the Empire. The labels were perforated and of the same size as the Hungarian ones. In the larger towns, the postoffices divided these labels into four parts (see fig. 6). In 1891, some postoffices printed their labels in black only.

2. The Republic Years

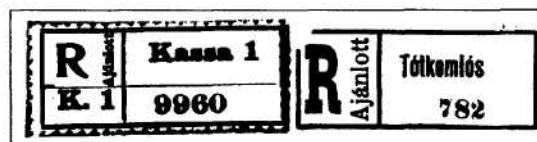


Fig 6

also a corresponding postmark in Czech-German with the Czech text in first position. This postoffice was disbanded after a few months, so that postally used letters with registry labels from this source are rather scarce.

During World War I, there was no fieldpost on what is today Czechoslovak territory. Therefore no fieldpost registry labels were used there between 1914 and 1918. But railway registry labels existed since about 1900 and were in use during the War. These were perforated blank labels of 52 x 20 mm. size printed in black on yellow paper. They did not

Although Czechoslovakia became a Republic in October 1918, the existing Austrian labels continued in use until the middle of 1919. Where German text was present, it was scratched out or cut off. Covers existing with this kind of primitive alteration are not seen too often and make for interesting collecting.

lecting.

Meanwhile the new Government in Prague undertook a complete revamping and modernization of postal services throughout the country. The names of many localities were changed, new postoffices with new names were established, special postoffices in various ministries were opened. Each of them devised its own registry labels.

Midway through the year 1919, the Government began to print its own labels in order to bring uniformity to Registered Mail. These labels appeared in the red, blue and white colors of the nation's flag. The frame with the letter "R" appeared in red; the name of the postoffice and its issuing number was printed in blue on white paper. And this color combination has remained in use to this very day. The only exception took place during the years of the Nazi occupation. From 1939 to 1945, labels appeared in red and black, including some provisional prints in 1945.

The first labels printed in the new Republic followed a pattern similar to the ones used during the closing years of the Austrian Monarchy. There was a horizontal line between the name of the postoffice and the issuing number. The paper had a slightly brownish or beige tint, was relatively thin and somewhat translucent. Through officially imperforate, privately perforated labels have been found in abundance. These early labels have been designated type CS1. Its identifying marks are the above-mentioned dividing line and the tall numbers.

From the very outset, the labels were printed in Czech except where German or Hungarian minorities flourished. In those areas, the labels were bilingual, (ie. Czech and German or Czech and Hungarian in that order.) In what was eventually to become the Carpatho-Ukraine, they appeared in Czech and Ruthenian; the Czech in Roman script, the Ruthenian in Cyrillic script (Azhuka).

Where the inscription had four lines of text, the dividing line appeared two-thirds of the way down from the top line of the frame. The numbers used were of smaller type. These labels were designated as type CS2. (see fig. 7a and 7b).

At the end of 1920, a second printing of labels was released and they were identified as type CS3. Basically, they were the same as the ones in use today. The dividing line between the name of the locality and the issuing number has disappeared. The numerals themselves are shorter and not so wide. They are perforated 9 1/2 on brownish or beige paper and, since 1922, the paper tends to be yellowish. The inscriptions are a much darker shade of blue than the original. Minority languages are recognized and respected in all areas (see fig. 8).

The third printing of labels took place in 1934 and is marked as type CS4. In comparison to CS3, the blue is a brighter shade and the labels are perforated 11. The letter "R" is broader and the numerals in the identifying number and are generally considered more attractive. They continued in use during and after the Nazi occupation right up to 1950. Even the bilingual text was retained, though the dual inscriptions necessitated reduction in the size of the numerals, of which there were two varieties. They were classified as types CS5 and CS6. (see fig. 9a, 9b, 10a, 10b, 10c).

Between 1920 and 1938, several registry labels were issued for special occasions. These include:

1920 — Prague: The Sokol Festival	type CS3
1926 — Prague: The 8th Sokol Festival	type CS3
1927 — Prague: Philatelic Exhibition	type CS3
1929 — Prague: 1000 years of St. Wenceslaus	type CS3
1932 — Prague: The 9th Sokol Festival	type CS3
1937 — Bratislava: Philatelic Exhibition	type CS4
1938 — Prague: The 10th Sokol Festival	type CS4

In addition to the above, registry labels were also issued to publicize miscellaneous events. These are:

- 1920-25, 27, 29, 30: Worker's Olympic Games, Fairs and Fair Markets
- 1921, 1923: Zionists' Congresses
- 1921: World Congress of Esperantists

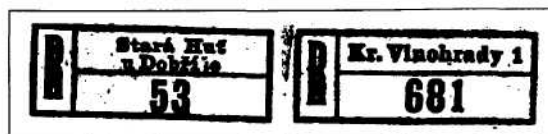


Fig 7a



Fig 7b



Fig 8



Fig 9a

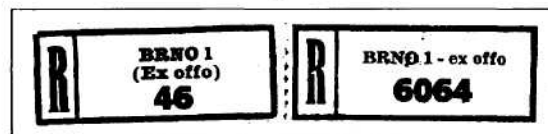


Fig 9b



Fig 10a

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Interspersed with these were numerous other labels honoring special groups or events of lesser significance. This ultimately led to the issuance of a permit in 1926 by the Postal Money Order Headquarters in Prague and Brno authorizing the use of a special machine cancel to replace the special registry label. This permit lasted till 1939. The idea for this cancel probably originated during the war between Communist Hungary and Czechoslovakia in 1919-1920 when a special registry fieldpost cancel was in use in six fieldpost offices in Slovakia.

During the Sudetenland crisis of 1938, there were many fieldpost offices in operation, including railway offices. All of them used registry labels of the type used by the railway service with the postmark cancel of the particular fieldpost office. These were blank labels in that they bore no numbers. The numbers were written in by hand. Some fieldpost offices had rubber stamps which made the imprint of a blank label whose number was then added with pen and ink. Railway labels came with or without numbers and without the name of the railway issuing office. The name was then added by rubber stamp. These labels were perforated on yellowish paper of 52 x 20mm. dimensions. The letter "R" and the number might be found on different parts of the label.

3. The Protectorate Years

In October 1938, a large portion of Bohemia and Moravia was occupied by the German Army. Most of Silesia and Slovakia was occupied to the north by Polish units and to the south by Hungary. This seriously affected postal life in Czechoslovakia. Within a few days of the invasion, German occupation labels were put into use. What existing labels were left over from the Republic days were still allowed, but the Czech text had to be obliterated.

German registry labels were of two types. In Western Bohemia, so-called Bavarian labels were employed. They are somewhat scarce. The outer perimeter of Bohemia known as the Sudetenland used normal German labels issued under Germany's Postal Code. These were known as type N2. The Bavarian labels are perforated on all four sides; the normal German labels are perforated only along the two short sides. (see fig. 11a and 11b).

The occupied part of Silesia and Slovakia, being under Polish rule, used Polish labels. What few Czechoslovak labels were left continued in use for several more weeks. And when Nazi Germany occupied Poland soon thereafter, Polish labels were supplanted by German labels that were already being employed in the Sudetenland.

Southern Slovakia and portions of the Carpatho-Ukraine at first came under Hungarian domination. But after March 15, 1939, all of Carpatho-Ukraine became part of Hungary. Hungarian labels were brought in and remained in use till the post-war liberation of Czechoslovak territories.

Hungarian labels appeared in two colors. The frame, the letter "R" and the inscription "Ajanlott" (Registered) were red. The name of the postoffice and the identifying number were green. These were Hungary's national colors. The labels were perforated 9 1/2 on all four sides and were slightly higher than the older Czechoslovak labels. (see fig. 12a and 12b).

The remainder of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia was occupied by Hitler's troops on March 15. The Protectorate was thus established and it lasted till the end of the War in 1945. The old Czechoslovak labels with the Czech text obliterated were used until their supply was exhausted. Czechoslovak postmarks and cancels

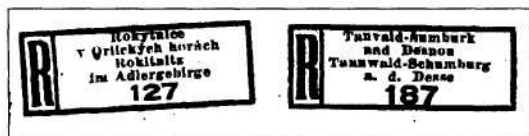


Fig 10b



Fig 10c

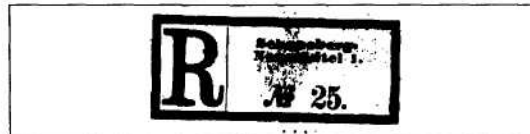


Fig 11a



Fig 11b

continued in use only till 1940 because they were in Czech. After that, only German postmarks were allowed.

Returning to the second half of 1939, bilingual labels in German and Czech were printed in the same color combination as in the days of the Republic, i.e. red and blue on white paper. German occupation forces soon perceived this as a kind of provocation and ordered a halt to their printing and a withdrawal of those already in distribution. Since few postoffices had actually used these early Protectorate labels, their presence on covers and parcels is scarce. This so-called tri-color bilingual edition is referred to as type P1.

To replace these "provocative" labels, the Germans released new bilingual labels which, except for the fact that the print was all in black, were exactly the same as CS5 and CS6, the last to be released by the Republic before it became a Protectorate. They were printed on white or slightly yellowish paper of poor quality and perforated 10 1/2. They were delivered to all postoffices in the latter part of 1939 and were referred to as type P2. Where four lines of text appear, the numerals of the identifying number are smaller, as in CS6, and the labels are referred to as type P3.

Midway through 1942, a new issue of registry labels was prepared. The frame and the letter "R" were red while the rest of the printing was black. The paper was white. In all other respects, the labels were the same as types P2 and P3. They remained in use till the end of the war and even for a few months thereafter. They were designated as types P4 and P5. (see fig. 13a, 13b).

During the years of the Protectorate, a so-called "Deutsche Dienspost" flourished. It was an organization designed to coordinate certain postal duties of the occupation forces with Hitler's administration of the country. Using only German language labels, it distributed them to certain specific localities throughout the Protectorate.

After March 15, 1939, Slovakia was proclaimed theoretically to be an independent state. Clearly it was nothing more than a vassal of the Third Reich and its appointed leaders were Hitler's puppets. This is an important factor when considering that Slovakia's postal authorities used the same registry labels that were provided to them by the Republic before the outbreak of war. What's more, those labels continued in use till 1943. After that, Slovakia issued its own labels similar to the previous ones, but with slightly different numerals on white paper. (see fig 14) Oddly enough, that style of label was adopted subsequently throughout Czechoslovakia and remains to this day as the last vestige of a postal reminder of the oppressive years of the German occupation. True, there were two different types of labels introduced in Western Czechoslovakia since then, but they co-existed with the post-1943 Slovak labels. In Slovakia itself only the post-1943 labels survive to this day. One can only wonder why, after 47 years, no attempt has been made to introduce a more practical, uniform and streamlined registry label for the whole country.



Fig 12a



Fig 12b

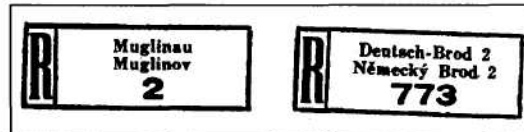


Fig 13a



Fig 13b

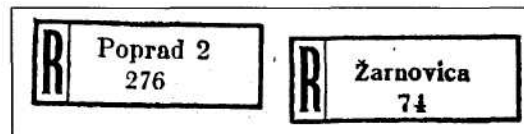


Fig14

4. The Communist Years

The Protectorate's postal forms continued to plague Czechoslovakia's postal authorities even after the country's liberation. Perhaps this is why the existing labels continued in use with only the German text obliterated. In liberated areas like those which had formerly been referred to as the Sudetenland, the old German labels remained, though in blank form, ie. without the name of the issuing postoffice and only the letter "R" printed on them. Once used on a parcel, the Czech name of the locality was rubber-stamped on it or handwritten in the blank box. Sometimes no label was used at all. A rubber stamp containing a framed letter "R" was used and a number written next to it. Improvised solutions like these formed substitutes for a temporary lack of registry labels during 1945. (see fig. 22).

As the year drew to a close, new labels appeared in Western Czechoslovakia. Printed in black on white paper of poor quality and inferior perforating, they reached most postoffices ungummed. Furthermore, not all postoffices received them. These first post-war labels became known as type C1.

By 1946, this provisional issue of labels was replaced by one that was graphically the same except that it was printed in red and blue on white paper. These labels, marked type C2, could easily be mistaken for labels of 1934 marked CS4. Their similarity is remarkable. However, the C2's have a slightly darker shade of blue, appear only on white paper and have only Czech text (see fig. 15).

In 1951, another kind of registry label came into being. Identified as type C3, it was destined for twenty years of use and therefore contains several varieties of paper. These included raw paper, parchment, cardboard, lilac paper, lined paper and finally, in 1953, watermarked paper. Varieties also appear in the numbering. For example, some small postoffices used numbers from "1" to "100" only. Other small ones inserted a zero in

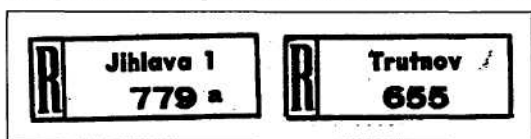


Fig 15



Fig 16

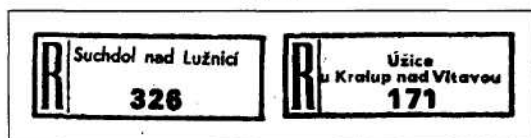


Fig 17



Fig 18

front of each number, ie. "01" to "99". During that twenty year period, the color of the frame and the letter "R" changed from bright red to brownish red. Other minor irregularities also exist. (see fig. 16).

During 1969, type C3 was replaced by type C4 in which the numerals are more rounded, especially "2", "3", "5", "6" and "9". In some instances, one or even two zeros were inserted before the issuing number, such as "001" to "099". (see fig. 17).

Finally type C5 came into being in 1975. The numerals are of the same styling as C4, but are considerably smaller. The color used in the frame and the letter "R" changed from bright red to carmine. After 1983, a variety of the C5 appeared with a very thin frame and a shorter line separating the "R" from the rest of the label. This variety is still in use today. (see fig. 18).

As mentioned above, labels in Slovakia have not changed since 1943, though they differ from the labels in the western part of the country. However, the labels contain some minor changes in structure which are valid in Slovakia

but not elsewhere. In 1962, for example, the labels were printed with a considerably shorter "R". The numerals are totally different from those used in the provinces of Bohemia and Moravia in that they are small and thin. Since 1984, silhouetted numerals have been introduced. And in the last few years, printing was by roulette instead of perforating machine. Despite these minor varieties, there is no systematic cataloging of these changes, making it a wide open field for interested philatelists. (see fig. 19 for 1962 Slovak labels).

Railway registry labels underwent no change after World War II. They remained the same as those used prior to 1938 (see fig. 20). But in Sept. 1983, railway registered mail was discontinued. Having been in force

for over 80 years, its termination leaves an unexplained gap in the history of Czechoslovak labels.

You may recall that between 1920 and 1938 there was a sudden outpouring of registry labels for special occasions. That promotional concept was revived after 1945. For instance in 1948, the 11th Sokol Festival was publicized on Prague labels and, in 1960, the Second Spartakiada was announced also on Prague labels. In addition, the Philatelic Exhibitions of 1946, 1950, 1955, 1958, 1962, 1968, 1978 and 1988 were all listed on registry labels.

Not only were special occasions given prominence on labels, but special postoffices were afforded similar courtesies. These were chiefly offices servicing major public projects, such as water and waterway facilities (Orlík, Želovka, Kramolín, Vranov nad Dyjí, Štěchovice, etc.) and power generating facilities (Počerady, Horní Počaply-elektrárna, Dukovany-elektrárna, Ledvice-elektrárna, etc.). Also included were offices servicing state administrative works as opposed to public works (Ministerstvo pošt, Praha; Ředitelství pošt, Praha, Brno, Tábor, Pardubice; Telegrafní ústřední stanice, Praha; HUS, ústřední sklad, Praha; TUS, Ústřední sklad, Praha, etc) (see fig. 21).

Throughout the lifespan of Czechoslovakia's registry labels, the provisional labels offer the most lucrative field for collecting and research. During periods of historic change, postoffices had to improvise to solve their problems of political fluidity and upheaval. For this, they usually employed blank labels and filled in whatever name the situation warranted. Rubber stamps were also utilized. Ingenuity and imagination made for some interesting labels. An alert collector can find myriads of twists and turns and variations. What is gratifying is the knowledge what all registry labels on covers are genuine. Forgers were always too preoccupied with the stamps themselves and did not tamper with the labels.

It may interest our readers in America to know that there are many in Czechoslovakia who collect registry labels. There also numerous label collectors in East and West Germany, in Austria and other European nations. It is a relatively new and expanding field of philately in which rarities are as precious as rare postage stamps. As labels grow in popularity, their prices, especially of those affixed to parcels, postcards and covers, will rise accordingly. Philatelic posturing points to a decline in the interest of stamps of those countries where new issues are almost a daily occurrence. Collectors are searching for material that is a necessary adjunct to the operation of postal services and not contrived as a source of bureaucratic revenue. Registry labels offer one such answer to the philatelic purist. And because of its short and spectacular history, Czechoslovakia is the ideal source for a dynamic label collection.

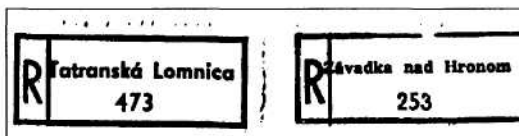


Fig 19



Fig 20



Fig 21

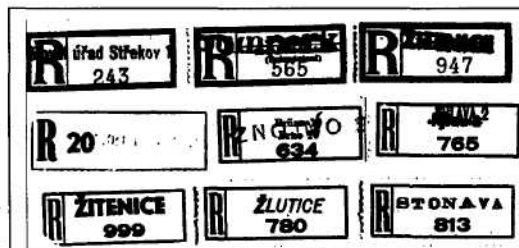


Fig 22

LETTERS TO THE OCCUPIED HOMELAND

By Vratislav Palkoska

Translated by Henry Hahn

During times of war, postal communication between adversaries is generally curtailed. This, however, does not apply to POW mail organized by the Red Cross with the cooperation of neutral states. That was the case during World War II with the exception of Soviet POW's in Germany and

German POW's in the U.S.S.R. The responsibility for this exception lay with the Third Reich.

In the early years of World War II, some members of the Czechoslovak Armed Forces located in the West wrote home to occupied Czechoslovakia. This was made possible through the rules and regulations of British censorship organs, though it is difficult to determine how that came about. It may have been the fact that some foreign troops like Czechs, Poles, Norwegians, Dutch and soldiers from other occupied countries tried through friends and relatives in neutral lands to let their dear ones know that they are alive and also tried to receive some word from home. These contacts took place in spite of frequently published warnings in daily communiques to these foreign units that postal contacts with persons in enemy territories via neutral countries is strictly forbidden. Letters of this sort apprehended by censors brought severe punishment to violators.

However, as early as 1940, the first leaflets appeared instructing foreign troops on a means of communi-



Fig 1



Fig 2

ating legally with their occupied homeland through British censorship organs. Such contacts applied to all territories occupied by Germany as well as territories of Germany's allies. In the course of time, the rules were modified somewhat depending upon the enemy territory in question and the current location of the soldier. At first, any language could be used. Later, only English or the language of the destination country was allowed except in the case of Czechs who could not use their own language because the Germans did not permit the use of Czech in mail going abroad.

Only letters containing personal messages were permitted. No mention of the war was allowed nor the writer's current address nor his membership in any military organization. The recipient of the letter was expected to presume that the writer lived in Portugal to which country the response was to be addressed. (e.g. P.O. Box 506, Lisbon, Portugal.) The procedure for mailing was relatively simple. Letters no more than two pages long were to be enclosed in an unlined, unfranked and unsealed envelope bearing the address of the intended recipient. This in turn was to be enclosed in an envelope together with a card bearing the sender's name and address in block letters and a franked envelope to be used for sending a response from the enemy territory. Originally the sender had to attach a postal money order for two shillings, the normal foreign letter rate, plus return postage from Portugal in anticipation of a response.

Within the British Isles, this service was rendered by the firm of Thomas Cook & Sons, Ltd., Berkeley Street, Picadilly, London, W 1, which dispatched the letters as well as the response if there

was one. In the Middle East, for example, this service was performed at the 4th Czechoslovak Infantry Regiment by the censor administration in Palestine. The procedure was established by Regimental Command Order no. 49 of Aug. 29, 1940. The soldier's mailing envelope had to be marked "Letter to Enemy Territory" and could only be mailed at the main postoffice either in Jerusalem, Haifa, Jaffa or Tel-Aviv. The sender paid 125 mills for the service.

The two illustrated covers (Fig. 1 & 2) reflect the application of the aforementioned regulations.

Both covers were censored by both warring sides. In England, the censor removed one of the Slovak stamps to see if it didn't hide an additional message. The letter from the Bohemia-Moravia Protectorate is addressed to the Cook Agency rather than to the designated P.O. Box number. In Lisbon, the letter is readdressed to Cook's London address on Berkeley Street.

But the Cook Agency was not the only intermediary working with censoring administrations to facilitate such communication for Czechs and soldiers from other countries.

Another preserved flyer (Fig. 3)

describes the means of accepting personal messages of not more than twenty words for transmission via the British Red Cross.

Portugal was probably not the only neutral country through which permitted mail could be dispatched. It is believed that a contemporary route and covering address also existed in Switzerland. However, we have no records of the applicable rules or of any postally dispatched covers.

For Czechoslovaks a correspondence route existed through France up to its fall, in and through, Yugoslavia which fell a year later. We have learned of this from a former Czechoslovak military pilot, Ing. Karel Mrázek, who was a member of the 313th Bomb Wing of the Royal Air Force. In 1939, Ing. Mrázek escaped through Poland and made his way to France where for a short time he served in the French Colonial Air force. He also showed us correspondence which he and others sent legally by delivering it to a particular hotel in Paris. However, he does not recall the name of this hotel. He addressed the letters to himself with the return address of a friend. The responses arrived accordingly. One of the routes of these letters was through Yugoslavia where the service was supposedly provided by the Czechoslovak Military Mission in Belgrade under the command of Lt. Col. František Hiecke-Stoj. Letters franked with Yugoslavia stamps with envelopes rewritten in different handwriting, as noted in one of the preserved letters, were apparently handled by two women working at the Mission: Mrs. Seltner and Milica Mělč, both supposedly still living in Czechoslovakia.

Another letter to the family of Karel Mrázek, i.e. to his sister in Brno, arrived via Switzerland. The return address reads: "M. Kopečka, 24 Av. de Champel, Geneve, Suisse." Ing. Mrázek unfortunately has no recollection of this return address. Thus there remain some unanswered questions regarding correspondence from the free world to Europe's occupied lands. These authorized avenues of communication were terminated for the Czechs following the assassination of R. Heydrich and the repressive actions of the occupying forces against the Czech population.

In the book "U.K. Sanne: Norwegian Exile Mail 1940-1945", a similar cover sent from Norway to England is illustrated. It is also addressed to P.O. Box 506, Lisbon. Among other facts, the book states that addressing mail to this "cover address" was possible up to April 1946. It also mentions that up to the time of occupation of Holland, it was possible (for Norwegians?) to correspond in a similar manner through Amsterdam.

According to U.K. Sanne, the firm of Thomas Cook expedited nearly 500,000 letters through Portugal. How many of them are preserved in our collections? The author requests information on such correspondence - in both directions. Please write to the author at P.O. Box 184, 16 000 Praha, Czechoslovakia, or to the translator at 2936 Rosemoor Lane, Fairfax, Va. 22031.

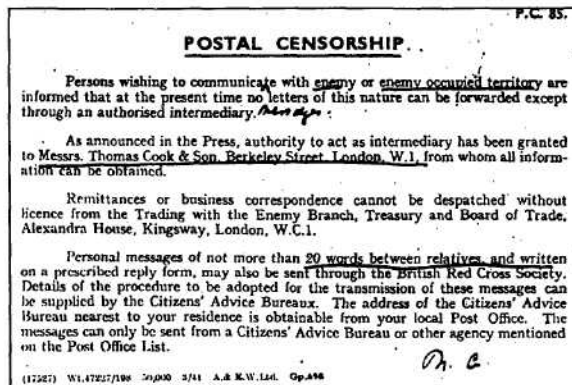


Fig 3

Editorial Hinges

PRAGUE'S PHILATELIC SPRING

Winter is barely half over but as this issue goes to press, there is a hint of Spring in the air - Prague Spring!

People will tell you that philately and politics don't mix. That is true! But in 1968, they DID

mix. Not officially. But through an undercurrent of reform sentiment, the Dubček government of 1968 evoked sympathy among many freedom-loving Czechs and Slovaks. People found the Soviet military intervention in the affairs of its country so repulsive and distasteful, they expressed their feelings in whatever means and fashion they could. One such way was through the mails.

Harlan F. Stone is the editor of the Postal History Journal whose reputation rivals that of our Specialist. Recently he called our attention to a letter his father received in September 1968 from Prague. The letter was franked with three 30 h. and three 60 h. stamps all bearing the portrait of the late Ludwig Svoboda, former President of Czechoslovakia during the Dubček regime (see Scott no. 1540 & 1541). The most interesting aspect of the cover is the three cancellations neatly affixed to the six stamps. This cancellation bears the word "PRAGA" at the top and the date 5/9/68 (Sept. 5, 1968). In the center is the outline of a leaf containing the names of "Svoboda - Dubček - Černík - Smrkovsky", all members of the reform government which was brutally overthrown by the Soviet invasion. At the bottom are the words "Jsme s Vámi" (We are with you)(see fig. 1). The same cancellation appears on the back

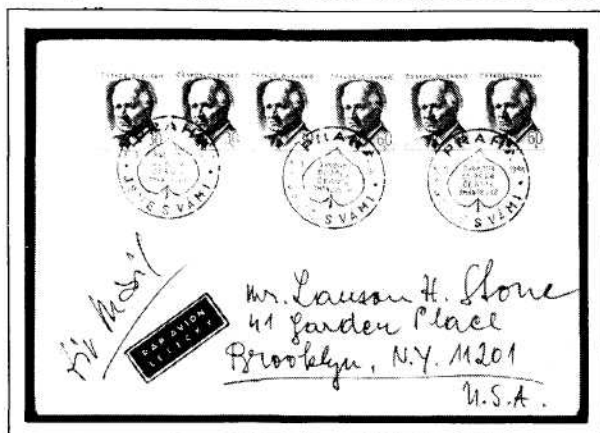


Fig 1

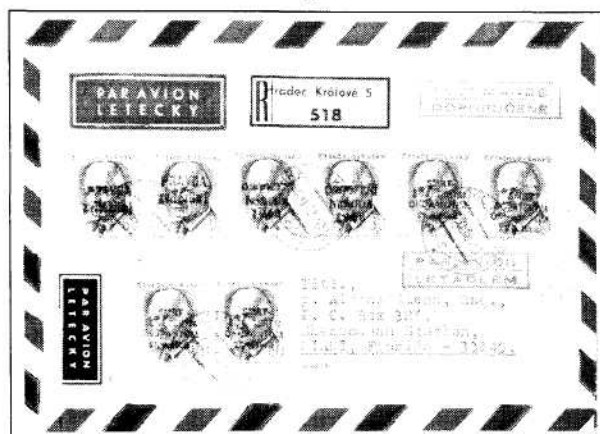


Fig 2

of the cover below the sender's name and address.

Mr. Stone's father made some inquiries and learned that though the stamps themselves were officially issued and commonly used, the cancellation was the work of a few employees of Prague's central postoffice who were sympathetic to the Dubček government. Disenchanted with the hardliners that preceded him and disgusted with Brezhnev's military intervention in the affairs of Czechoslovakia, these dissidents had no better way to express their indignation than to make these private cancellations and install them on letters validly sent through the mails.

Incidentally, Mr. Stone's father had extracted the following quote from the letter which came in the envelope and which he translated from German:

"You are surely informed of the events in this country. It was dreadful and one can only guess what will happen next. Perhaps you will let us hear from you in the future; news from friends is banned during these troubled times...."

This cover is not the only example of what some postal employees were using to transmit their fears and frustrations to the outside world. Alfons Stach, a well-known dealer of Czechoslovak philately in his day, was still living at the time. He received batches of such cancelled mail from various locations in Czechoslovakia, as did other similar dealers. One of the covers he obtained in illustrated in fig. 2. The same 30 h. and 60 h. stamps were affixed to this cover as to the one sent to

Mr. Stone's father. But note the difference. Ordinary cancellations were used because the postoffices in Hradec Kralové did not have specially made private ones. Instead, the postal employees made overprints to put on each individual stamp. Reading from left to right, the first overprint contains the words "Pravda Zvítězí" (Truth will prevail). The second states "Obrození Národa" (Rebirth of a nation). The third one proclaims "Smrt Sovětským Okupantům" (Death to the Soviet occupiers).

History has made a full circle since the brutally aborted Spring of 1968. The likes of Brezhnev, Andropov and Chernenko have departed. The puppet regimes of Poland, Hungary, East Germany and Rumania are gone. This year a new Spring is beginning to blossom in Prague and it is not unlikely that a new rash of cancellations and overprints will emerge from the current melee in which the reformers and former dissidents fought for and found freedom for their country. If they haven't yet appeared, these anticipated cancellations and overprints may again turn out to be private and unofficial or - if all goes well - they may turn into one of the most prolific outpourings of official mail markings to be seen since Nazi Germany was defeated in World War II.

The cleaning of the house and the sweeping of debris has reached down into the lower ministries and echelons of government. Henry Hahn informs us that at its December meeting, the Union of Czechoslovak Philatelists, the country's dominant philatelic organization, accepted the resignation of Ladislav Dvořáček, as its long time leader. He is still president of F.I.P. In parallel actions taken by other Czechoslovak institutions, a "Citizens' Forum" was organized within the Union to bring about democratization. Based on reports received from Prague last month, the Union elected a new executive committee and replaced Dvořáček with a Slovak named Antala. As this issue goes to press, it is uncertain whether the new leadership will serve the full five-year term or whether additional changes will take place following normalization.

In the meantime, a new organization designed to serve the philatelic community has been formed. On Dec. 12, 1989, PROFIL (Pro filatelisty - For the philatelists) was established to provide supplies to collectors, some of which are made in Czechoslovakia and some of which are to be imported from abroad. Ing. František Beneš, a former philatelic expert employed by POFIS, has been named chairman of the PROFIL Cooperative. Ing. Břetislav Janík, former secretary of PRAGA 88, has also accepted a responsible position within the organization, though his specific duties have not yet been announced.

Finally Dr. Vratislav Palkoska, whose article on page 10 was written before he dared dream what are today's realities, has just transmitted to us two remarkable postal items evidencing the changing times. Both are airmail correspondence cards and both are cancelled on Dec. 29, 1989. Fig. 3 shows the logo cancel of the Civic Forum ("OF" for "Občanská Forum") which playwright Vaclav Havel led to victory in a peaceful people's revolution. Fig. 4 shows the special cancellation "Volba Prezidenta Republiky - Praha Hrad" (Election of the President of the Republic - Prague Castle) alluding to the election of Vaclav Havel as the first President of a free Czechoslovakia in 41 years.

We are indebted to Dr. Palkoska for his timely submission of this material.

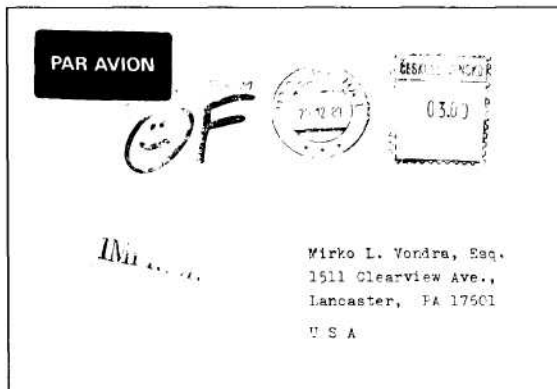


Fig 3

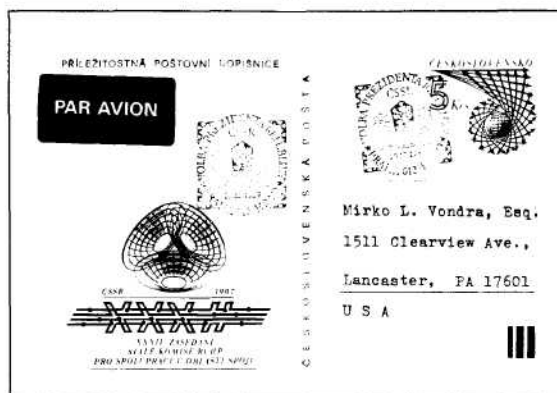


Fig 4

WORLD STAMP EXPO '89

by Henry Hahn



World Stamp Expo, the first stamp show to be sponsored by the United States Postal Service, took place from Nov. 17 through Dec. 3. This international philatelic event was organized by the USPS and was held in conjunction with the Universal Postal Union Congress held in Washington, D.C.

Billed as an "International Show", EXPO 89 was more of a bourse than a show. Dealers and postal administrations from the far corners of the world overshadowed the exhibits, which were non-competitive and few. There was not a single Czechoslovakia or even Austria exhibit and the closest one could come to a Czecho-related stamp was the Heydrich sheet which reposed in Rev. Fitz's well-known topical exhibit entitled "Murder on Stamps." The Court of Honor, ie. the entire exhibit, included some of the

finest exhibits ever assembled, though the selection (by invitation) was a bit uneven in quality and emphasis.

Our Society's participation consisted of lectures given by Ing. Pavel Pitterman and Henry Hahn on Sunday, Nov. 19. Pavel Pitterman, who came to EXPO directly from Prague, chose as his subject the identification of forgeries. He illustrated some of the most recent findings and warned the audience of new forgeries entering the market, many with forged expert markings. Ing. Pitterman's presentation was preceded by a lecture of prestamp mail of Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia by Henry Hahn. Both presentations were attended by a relatively large audience, thanks to the excellent publicity given to the lecture program and organized by Mrs. Mary Ann Owens.

ARTIA, Czechoslovakia's philatelic export agency, had a well-stocked booth at which it sold new issues, some old issues and the unusual souvenir sheet illustrated on the previous page. Our Society presented a one-frame exhibit which was located in an area devoted to promotion of stamp organizations.

New Issues

1. WORLD WILDLIFE FUND — AMPHIBIANS



Czechoslovakia is home to eighteen different species of amphibians. To insure optimum natural conditions for their preservation, four stamps were issued on July 18, 1989 to draw attention to these endangered species. The set was designed by Radana Hamsíková. Rotary Printing Office in Prague, the stamps depict the following:

- 2 Kčs. The Tailless red-bellied toad (*Bombina orientalis*). Engraving was by Martin Srb.
 - 3 Kčs. The Tailless yellow-bellied toad (*Bombina orientalis*). Engraving was by Bedřich Housa.
 - 4 Kčs. The Alpine newt of the genus *Triturus alpestris*. Engraving was by Bohumil Šneider.
 - 5 Kčs. The Carpathian newt, *Triturus montandoni*. Engraving was by Miloš Ondráček.
- All four stamps bear the W.W.F. logo in the form of the well-known panda.

2. BEINÁLE ILUSTRÁCIÍ — BRATISLAVA

Four stamps and a miniature sheet to commemorate this event were issued on Sept. 4, 1989. The stamps measure 23 x 30 mm. each and were printed in sheets of fifty. Each represents a different subject theme:

- 50 h. A Finnish tale by Hana Taina.
- 1 k. A Bulgarian subject by Aleksander Aleksov.
- 2 kčs. A tale by Jurgen Pohn of West Berlin.
- 4 kčs. A Czechoslovak tale by Robert Brun.

The first three were engraved by Martin Činovský. The last one was done by Bedřich Housa. Graphic layout was by Jan Solpera.



3. POISONOUS FUNGI



On Sept. 5, 1989, a set of five stamps was issued depicting poisonous fungi. All of the stamps bear the familiar symbol of the skull and crossbones, a warning that they are poisonous. The stamps were

printed by multi-color flat recess print at the Post Printing Office in Prague in sheets of ten, each stamp measuring 23 x 30 mm. The quality of the production ranks this set among those that can truly be called classical. All five designs were by Josef Sosna. They consist of:

- 50 h. *Nolanea verna*. Engraved by M. Ondráček.
- 1 k. *Amanita phalloides* (death cap). Engraved by V. Fajt.
- 2 kčs. *Amanita virosa*. Engraved by V. Fajt.
- 3 kčs. *Cortinarius orellanus*. Engraved by V. Fajt.
- 5 kčs. *Galerina marginata*. Engraved by M. Ondráček.

4. 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CLOSING OF UNIVERSITIES

On November 17, 1939, the Nazi regime closed down all universities in occupied Bohemia and Moravia. This was preceded by a student demonstration in Prague during which Jan Opletal, a student at Charles University, was fatally wounded. To commemorate these tragic events, Czech postal authorities issued a 1 k. stamp bearing his portrait along with an emblem of the International Students' Union.

Designed and engraved by Josef Herčík, the stamp was printed by rotary recess and multicolor photogravure at the Post Printing Office in Prague. The picture measures 23 x 30 mm. and the stamp comes in sheets of fifty.

— G. M. van Zanten



WILL TRADE

A nice unused copy of the 12 f green and black "Pošta Československá 1919" postage due Známnumber 129, type 3, watermark "Y" for a similar copy with watermark "Z", any type. Mine is with Karásek certification. Please contact J. L. Klein, Stoeplaan 9, 2243 CV Wassenaar, The Netherlands.

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