

# THE CZECHO-SLOVAK SPECIALIST



OFFICIAL MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE  
THE CZECHO-SLOVAK PHILATELIC SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA

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An interesting meeting was held by the New York Chapter of the Czecho-Slovak Philatelic Society of North America at the offices of Alfons Stach, 99 Nassau St., New York City. Mr. Lowey, our Secretary, showed his collection "Military History of Czecho-Slovakia Depicted Through It's Postal Issues at Home and Abroad. The exhibit was enjoyed by all.

The New York Chapter wishes to make a motion that our surplus fund in the Treasury which runs between \$50.00 and \$100.00 be turned over into Defense bonds or stamps. All the members present at the meeting approved this idea, and as your Editor, I wish that all the members would write me a penny post card giving your opinion.

After spending a month in Civilian life, our Draftee member, Emil Michaelson, has again been called to the colors. He saves Czecho-Slovak and has a very interesting collection of censored covers, particularly of this late war. His present address is: Private Emil J. Michaelson, Company "B", Barracks 2, 1229 Reception Center, Fort Dix, N. J. He expects to be moved very soon, but all mail will be forwarded. I will publish his new address from time to time, as I will be in touch with him right along.

Our Librarian sent me a complete list of articles, catalogues, etc., which make up our library. Members are urged to make use of this service. A charge of 10c is made for each loan, with postage paid both ways by the borrower.

#### Library List

1a—The Hradcany Issue of 1918

2a—Illustrated Check List of Uncatalogued Varieties.

4a—An Aero-Philatelic Survey

5a—Czechoslovakia and Her Stamps

6a—The Fifth Anniversary of Czechoslovakian Independence

7a—History of the 1918 Provisional Overprints.

8a—By Post Across Czechoslovakia

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18a—A Czechoslovak Counterfeit

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25a—Czechoslovak Engineering Pictured on a Bohemia & Moravia Stamp

26a—Czechoslovak Legions

27a—Legion Stamps

28a—"Posta Ceskoslovenska 1919"

29a—The Republic of Czecho-Slovakia, Miniature Sheet

30a—The Masaryk Mystery Catalogues

1c—1936, 1937, and 1939 Ekstein,

- German Text  
 2c—Tribuna, 1937, 1938 and 1939,  
 Czech. Text with Supplement  
 3c—Revue, 1937 Czech. Text  
 4c—Cross, English Text, 1937 Edition  
 5c—Stach, 1937 Czech. Text  
 6c—Stach, 1941 English Text

**Bound Volumes**

- 1v—Hirsch-Frank Monograph—Czech  
 Text

**Hand Books**

- 1h—Postal Cancellation of Czech.,  
 Ger. Text by Leitenberger  
 2h—Postal Cancellation of Czech.,  
 Czech. Text by Leitenberger

**Bound Copies of "The Specialist"**

- SP.1—Vol. I—May 1939 to Dec. 1939  
 SP.2—Vol. II—Jan. 1940 to Dec. 1940

In this issue we start a series of letters from our member dealer, Alfons Stach, who writes and tells us of his first impressions of Czech stamps.

October 28, 1918.

Dear Member Philatelists:—

My father has just returned from the Army barracks and the cheering people in the street surge upon him and, looking for mementos, tear from his military cap the insignia "F.J.S." We then go to the city, and on Wencelaus Place the Infantry Regiment #2 is leaving town. This regiment was garrison in Prague under the Austrian monarchy to keep order in all eventualities. The people smile to see them leave. Soldiers with full equipment, cannons, machine guns and loaded trucks can mean only that now they are independent and free to govern themselves. A new republic has been born.

My first thoughts as a philatelist are, what will the new stamps be like? We first had the scout stamp. The entrusting of important official mail to the scouts for delivery. It did not take long for a new variety in this issue to appear. I remember the excitement in Prague when word was flashed that Thomas G. Masaryk was on his way there after many years in foreign countries always working for his dream and now newly born republic of Czechoslovakia. When he rode down Wencelaus Place to the castle, it was a moment I will never forget, the cheering crowds of people crying with joy.

Will the philatelists forget when the scout issue was overprinted with "Prijezd Presidenta Masaryk." Their

price was then only 10K or 20K (about 50c).

Up until the new issues were put up for sale, the different Post Offices sold the Austrian and Hungarian stamps then on hand. Numerous overprints appeared. "I Provisional Government". Small and large coat of arms. These were all unofficial and issued by "Horner" Beck Mares and Budejovice. They were later known as the Budejovice issue and in Prague as the Levec issue. All the above issues were admitted for prepayment of postage by the Post Office Department without any comment, though never officially sanctioned by them.

Alfons Mucha, a celebrated artist, was asked to design the first issue of stamps. Several other artists also submitted designs, but the Mucha designs were accepted, and the first stamp to be on sale was the 3H HRADCANY shortly after 5h and 10h appeared, and the balance of other values to the 400h.

I remember one evening that I spent with my old friend, Joroslav Lesecký, who was then a high official in the Post Office, and was known to his superiors as a rabid philatelist. He had been asked by them as to his opinion of overprinting officially the remainders of the Austrian and Hungarian stamps. When he told me this, I just answered what a riot that will cause in the philatelic circle, and well do I remember the rumbling of the philatelist when these stamps appeared.

We sat late in the evening drawing up forms for overprinting, many in different shapes and colors, some wide, some long, some narrow and numerous complicated affairs. Not long after this evening, the Post Office accepted one type, the "POSTA CESKOSLOVENKA 1919" overprint. Very shortly, the issues appeared and then began the mad scramble of all philatelists to get complete sets. Some values, not commonly used, were to be had only in very small amounts. At the beginning, the amounts of each value overprinted were not known to the public, but when the facts were published a hunt was on for the rare values.

I remember a gay incident that occurred with the 20h light green with the picture of Emperor Charles, but about that I will write in the next issue.

ALFONS STACH,

## MASARYK ISSUE 1920

Perhaps the most popular stamps in Czechoslovakia are the different varieties of Masaryk issues and many collectors specialize in this broad field. As early as 1918, essays bearing the portrait of the President were submitted by Minister Stribny to the "Committee for First Contest on Proposed Stamps" and constituted the first official printing of adhesives, forerunners of the many Masaryk issues. These essays are printed in two types: the first with a bust of the President at the left, the other with only a three-quarter face portrait and a label "28. rijen, 1918" (Oct. 28, 1918) in two lines at right instead of value.

The firms A. Haase and J. B. Piebl of Praha submitted essays of Masaryk types. The committee refused all.

Every stamp collector knows that Dr. Thomas Garrigue Masaryk is first President of Czechoslovakia, that parliament elected him to that office for life in recognition of sacrifices made during the World War for the liberation of his country. His was indeed a career of romance. Born March 7, 1850 at Hodonin, Moravia, son of a coachman. He started out in life as a blacksmith's apprentice, studying in spare time, advancing as pupil and teacher, rising to the post of University professor in London, and first President of the Czechoslovak Republic. To philatelists the knowledge that Masaryk, too, is an ardent stamp collector, whose private collection was exhibited hors concours at the International Philatelic Exhibition held in Brno, in August 1923, will be welcome.

On the seventieth anniversary of Dr. Masaryk's birth, March 1920, two commemorative stamps were issued; the first stamps bearing the portrait of the President. According to the official report (July 21, 1921, #48403) these stamps are printed December 1, 1919 and placed on sale January 21, 1920. The official date of issue according to Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs report of March 10, 1920, is March 7. The design measures 23 mm in width and 32 mm in length. The decorative frame, as well as the portrait is the work of Max Svabinsky, Professor at the Academy of Arts, Praha, and the engraving is the work of Eduard Karel. The names of both artists appear at the bottom of each stamp. The stamps were officially issued line perforated 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ ; some

firms with cutting machines for imperforate stamps asked for imperforate sheets and so we find this issue in imperforate condition as well as perforated 11 $\frac{1}{2}$  on ungummed paper. Printed by "Unie" in Praha. Because of the different grades of paper used, many shades are found in both values. Sheets of these stamps numbered 100 pieces, the 81st stamp of the 1000h is called "President with Rose" because of plate damage in the shape of a flower above the President's ear. This stamp has the label "POSTA CESKOSLOVENSKA" damaged. Stamp 90 of the same value has two small spots which, however, are not as prominent as #81. These stamps were issued in the following quantities.

500h ..... 530000  
1000h ..... 505000

5000 of each were overprinted "S. O. 1920" for use in Plebiscite area in Upper Silesia. The overprinted stamps were withdrawn from circulation August 10, 1920, the others January 31, 1923.

The 125h was not issued with the previous two values which are classified as commemoratives, but followed them August 7, 1920. At the same time a 50h of duplicate design but smaller format was to be issued, also 1200h and 2000h of the large type. These were printed but never issued for postal purposes because of a change in postal regulations whereby cash was paid for all parcel post and no stamps were affixed. Many essays and trial printings of these stamps exist; some very rare and much sought by specialists. The 125h was demonetized with the 500h and 1000h. Entire output 18240000 pieces.

### Reference:

1920, first Masaryk Type, Imperforate or line perforate 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ ; 125h gray blue  
a) ultramarine  
b) spot in oval  
500h slate, grayish paper  
a) gray black  
1000h black brown, brownish paper  
a) dark brown  
b) slate, on grayish paper  
c) rose above president's ear  
d) two spots in oval

Proofs and essays of the above exist in many colors.

Essays of printed, not issued values:  
50h)

1200h) Each in many colors and shades  
2000h)

## HISTORY OF THE 1918 PROVISIONAL OVERPRINTS

Among the issues of Europe concerning which no little doubt exists, the earlier issues of Czecho-Slovakia hold a prominent place. According to the catalogues there is little unity of opinion as to the status of the various issues, one catalogue at least giving them place on the ground that postally used specimens have been seen. The whole truth of the matter is that none of these surcharges were official, and the fact that a few have gone through the post does not make them so; while from a historical point of view they may claim a place in a collection.

### Austrian Series

When the revolution broke out in Bohemia the Committee approached the Director of Posts with a request to be permitted to surcharge the existing Austrian stamps with a suitable overprint, and this request, made several times, was as frequently refused. Members of the Committee, however, used such Austrian stamps with the overprint on their correspondence, and, though a certain number went through the post, it was entirely contrary to the official instructions. On November 17th, 1918, the postal authorities issued an order definitely prohibiting the use of all overprinted stamps.

Two of the issues at least were definitely prepared for use, though they never came officially into circulation, and so may be regarded as essays, but besides these, there were several "issues" without the slightest semblance of any authority whatever.

The first series appeared about the middle of October, 1918, the overprint consisting of the words "Ceskoslovenska Statni Posta", in two lines, over a shield bearing a lion and triple cross. The current Austrian stamps from 3h. to 1k. received this overprint.

The next series appeared in November, 1918, the overprint being "Provisorni Ceskoslovenska Vlada", in three lines, over a small shield bearing the Bohemian lion. The current Austrian from 3h. to 10k. were issued with this type of surcharge.

The next type appeared at Budweis

and were in unofficial currency from November 5th to 17th, 1918. All values of the current Austrian stamps were overprinted, including Express and Postage Due. The surcharge is very crude and consists of a spidery and very heraldic lion over a curved inscription, "Cesko-Slovensky Stat." These have even less claim to recognition than the foregoing two series, and were suppressed by the order of November 17th quoted above.

In addition to these, several other varieties of overprints have been applied to the Austrian stamps of that date, but they are all, without exception, bogus issues due to private enterprise.

### Hungarian Series

There still remains another series to deal with, the Hungarian stamps with similar overprint. These, too, were prepared for use, but never came into official circulation, though used specimens are known. While the stamps used in Bohemia had been Austrian, those used in Slovakia were Hungarian, and when the Czech troops occupied Slovakia before its definite annexation to the Czecho-Slovak Republic, all the stamps found were overprinted.

The first type made its appearance in December, 1918, and consisted of the inscription "Cesko Slovenska Posta", in three lines, in small block capitals. The following were the values and types overprinted:—

Reaper, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 15h.

Parliament, 50h.

Karl and Zita, 10, 20, 25, 40, 50h.

Newspaper, 2h.

War Charity, 10 and 15h.

Postage Due, 1, and 2h.

The next type appeared about the middle of December, the overprint being the same as the October, 1918, overprint on Austrian. The values overprinted were the same as those mentioned above, except for the 50f. Parliament and two Postage Dues.

Another issue appeared on January 5th, 1919, overprinted on the 5 and 15f. Reaper type and 10 and 20f. Karl. The surcharge was, in this case, "Slovenska Posta", in two lines, surmounting a shield with three peaks and triple cross.

—Stamp Collecting.

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