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EDITORIAL

Vacation time is over, yet only very few of us enjoyed our vacation this year as we did before. Most of us are working longer days, more days in the week, with less time for recreation and the outdoors. Until this war is ended we cannot, we dare not relax. Our prime object at the moment is to do all in our power to help win the war. We can do much, yet we fail to see it as we should. To really put our all into the effort, let us see what the result would be if Uncle Sam (Heaven forbid) should lose! We grumble about our taxes now—can you imagine what we'd pay Hitler and Hirohito if we lost. We complain because we are asked to save our money and get it back in ten years; if we lose, we'll get what Paddy shot at and missed. We are asked to use the car less, if we lose, you needn't worry about the buggy; you'll not have it. So, make up your mind now, to do your share for yourself and your country.

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NEW MEMBER

No. 110, Miss Lydia Kubena, P.O.B. 176, East Bernard, Texas.

DO YOU KNOW?

Mr. Lowey is breaking up his Mint Collection of Czechoslovakia and sent a copy of the catalog to every member. There are indications that not all members received their copy. If you are among these, write for your copy today.

A LETTER FROM "DOWN UNDER"

Our member W. L. Russell, writes: "You might also mention in your next issue that if any members of the Club, or their sons, arrive in Melbourne with the A.E.F., my arms will be wide open to greet them, and I shall feel hurt if they do not get in touch with me, and let me offer some hospitality." We hope our members who are lucky enough to get over there avail themselves of this hearty invitation.

The article "A Modern Classic" written by our member, Mr. John Velek, appeared in the March, 1942, issue of the S.P.A. Journal. We thank Mr. J. Edw. Vining, president of the S.P.A. for permission to reprint this article and we also thank the S.P.A. for the use of the cuts appearing in connection with this article. In the near future we shall reprint another article from the S.P.A. Journal dealing with the "S. O. 1920" issues written by another member, Mr. Vincent Domanski, Jr.

We hope our members like these articles as much as we do.

F. J. K.

A Modern Classic

By John Velek

Classic...belonging to, or associated with, the first, or highest class (1).

Although issued barely more than twenty years ago, the first issue of Czechoslovakia can be grouped with the classics of philately. Combining the facts that they were the first stamps of the republic, that they were rather crudely printed, and that the plate, cancellation and overprint varieties were numerous, rank these stamps with the early United States and other pioneer postal issues.

The 40 Haleru Stamp

Although some of the following facts apply to the other values of the first issue, we shall consider their relationship to the 40 haleru stamp only because that denomination is the subject of this article.

When the Republic of Czechoslovakia was declared on Oct. 28, 1918, one of the first assignments of the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs was to issue postage stamps. It was particularly anxious to attend to this duty not only to supply the country's postal needs, but also to announce to the world that a new republic, of which the Czechoslovakian people were so proud, had been formed.

The 40h stamp was issued on Jan. 23, 1919, and was legal postage until April 20, 1920. Of this denomination, 16,950,000 copies were produced. They were printed by the Graphic Union of Praha which had never before engaged in the manufacture of postage stamps, but which had been Praha's most extensive printers of books and pamphlets. A typographic process was used and the resulting stamps were masterpieces of the typographic art. Although non-uniform inks, and careless handling by workmen often caused rather crude impressions.

Two plates were used to print the 40h stamp. They were made of zinc and were fastened to a wood block backing with small nails and screws. Due to the nature of the typographic plates, the impressions show much wear in their later stages. Each plate consisted of one hundred stamps arranged ten by ten. Proof exists that four plates were laid in the printing

bed at once, different denominations and even different colors being printed on one large sheet, and later cut into panes of one hundred each. Although I know of no example in the 40h stamp, vertical and horizontal gutter pairs exist of several other denominations of this issue.

The Design

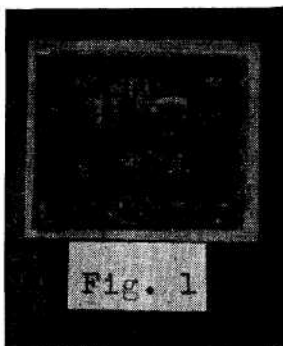
Alfons Mucha, greatest Czech artist of that period, was chosen to draw the design which required but one day to execute. As the central motif, he used the Hradcany, medieval castle of former Bohemian kings, with the towers of the Cathedral of St. Vitus in the background. The word 'Posta' is in the topmost panel, and the words 'Cesko' and 'Slovensko' read vertically. The linden leaves on the upper corners are symbolic of the Czech-Slovak states, and the hearts on either side of the value shield stand for the Czech love of peace. Many collectors consider the birds in the lower corners doves of peace; Mr. Lowey, in his article in the American Philatelist quotes Mr. Mucha as saying they are roosters and "they express and pronounce the coming of a new day—the hope for a glorious future of our nation." (1) We are viewing the Hradcany from the east, and yet the design shows a rising sun over the roof tops! Mr. Mucha was aware of the error, but he wanted so much to stress the dawn of a new day for the Czech people that he ignored the obvious geographical incongruity. Nevertheless this feature was much criticized, and when the design was redrawn for a later issue, the sun was left out.

Proof and Printers Waste

Proofs exist in black on white paper. Ordinarily they are sharp impressions and allow detailed study of the early state of the plate. One of the most interesting features in collecting this issue is the profusion of printers' waste material consisting of multiple prints, of which some may be inverted, or combined with other stamps of this period, including postage dues. Much of this waste got into circulation through printing plant employees

(1) Webster.

(1) Am. Phil. vol 52, #6.



wh had collector friends. However, a more important source was a high ranking official and president of the Czechoslovakian Philatelic Society, who had many varieties made to order for members of the society. It has been reported that more than five thousand full sheets came into the possession of collectors this way.

A prominent Chicago collector told me that in the early twenties he had them in large blocks and used them as labels on the back of private correspondence. In more recent times they have become quite scarce on this side of the Atlantic, but since the beginning of the present war, refugees have brought a great deal of this material into the country.

Oddly enough, printers' waste is rather scarce in the 40h denomination. I have in my collection, and have seen elsewhere, only the following: double impression in brick red on medium brownish paper; the same with the impression shifted four millimeters to the right; quadruple impression on brown paper; the double impression combined with the 100h postage due (Fig. 1); and the double impression combined with the 1000h violet postage due.

Paper and Gum

The paper used for the 40h Hradecany stamp is of the wove type. Due to shortage and uncertain sources of supply, the quality of the paper is not uniform. It varies from very thin white paper to medium and thick yellowish paper.

On the early printings, the gum was yellow and applied quite thick, but gradually the quality improved until the last printings had very white gum, thinly applied.

Shades

The normal color of the 40h stamp is usually referred to as brick red. Because of insufficient time to compare new lots of ink, and the general rush connected with the printing of these adhesives, the colors vary considerably from the original shade. Most of the shades are caused by an over-inked plate or a dry one. In spite of this, brownish-orange, bright orange, and an orange-red all seem to be natural variations of the original color of the ink. The last shade mentioned seems to be quite scarce.

Perforations

The 40h stamp was originally issued imperforate only. Those who used stamps extensively found that cutting them apart was too slow; consequently, they received permission from the postmaster-general to perforate the stamps privately. Some of the other denominations were perforated officially by the Graphic Union. There has been considerable controversy over which perforations are official and which are private. Scott's catalogue has alternately admitted and omitted the 40h from their listing since it was issued; at present, 1942, it is listed, but not priced. Most authorities agree that the 40h was issued only imperforate, but was privately perforated and officially accepted for postage, therefore making it a collectible variety. Two types of perforations exist, the line and the comb. In the line perforation machine, the prongs are arranged in vertical and horizontal rows, and are applied in separate operations. In the comb perforation machine, the prongs are arranged so that the perforations are applied in single horizontal rows, and at the same time the vertical perforations are applied to the height of one stamp. The easiest way to distinguish the two types is to study them in a block; the comb perforations mesh perfectly where they cross.

The 40h is line perforated $11\frac{1}{2}$ and $13\frac{1}{4}$, and comb perforated $13\frac{1}{4}$ by $13\frac{1}{2}$. I have a copy perforated $13\frac{1}{4}$ by $13\frac{1}{2}$, signed by Professor Gilbert, one of the greatest authorities on these stamps. Does this signature mean that the perforation is official, or does it only signify that the stamps were perforated at the time they were in use? I think the latter is correct. Perforated copies used are much scarce.



than those mint. So far I have seen a town cancellation from Prachatic (11½) and a Chicago specialist reports Ceske Budejovice (11½) and Liberec (13¾). I would like to hear from collectors having others. A few stamps were separated by the roulette method without the consent of the postmaster-general. These have been reported from the Praha 17 office, and that of Liprick and Becvou. I also have a roulette copy canceled Auschovitz.

Specimens

On Jan. 19, 1919, the 40h stamp was overprinted 'Vzorec' (Specimen) for presentation to the Universal Postal Congress which met at Madrid, Spain, Oct. 1, 1920. The overprint was selected from twenty types submitted, and three plates of one hundred subjects each were made. Originally five sheets of one hundred stamps were overprinted, all imperforate; one was for the postal museum, and the rest for the postal union. In 1920 many more sheets were overprinted at the request of the Czechoslovakian Philatelic Club of Praha, and sold to its members. These were both perforate and imperforate. I have Vzorec overprints in the following states: imperforate with dull and glossy black overprints; perforate 11½ (Fig. 2) and perforate 13¾. Inverted overprints exist, probably intentional. Plate varieties also exist, mostly consisting of broken letters. Numbers overprinted are not known. (1)

Marginal Markings

Each sheet has control numbers on the bottom sheet margin giving the

(1) Much of this information is taken from an article by Jaroslav Leseticky in the *Filatelesticka Revue*, Volume 3, numbers 1 to 4.

accumulated face value of the stamps under each vertical row beginning at the left. Plate I can be identified by the flat topped decimal point in the control number 40;—, Plate II has no distinguishing marks except the plate varieties in the stamps themselves.

Guide dots (Fig. 3) in the margins were put there for the purpose of helping the workmen to center the sheet when it was being perforated. Positions in the margin vary: in Plate I they are opposite stamps Nos. 71 and 80; in Plate II they are opposite stamps Nos. 40 and 51.

Curved lines (Fig. 3) in the margin were caused by nails and screws used to hold the plates to the wooden blocks on which they were fastened. Due to faulty workmanship, or loosening by constant use, these nails sometimes projected above the surface of the plate and made an impression on the sheet. From time to time they were driven back into place, thus accounting for the fact that they disappear and reappear at various stages of the plate.

Plate Varieties

One of the most interesting phases of study of the 40h stamp is the wealth of plate varieties. Not only are there many, but they are plainly visible to the naked eye—there is no need to invest in microscopes or powerful searchlights as some issues require.

I will list all the important varieties of both plates. Because many would require enlargement, only the major varieties are being illustrated.

Plate I

Position 3—Point on upper right corner. Later stages show increasingly large white spot in the roof below the spire.



Position 8—Three dots above the two right towers.

Position 10—White spots in base below right bushes, and below K in Slovenska.

Position 11—Colored blot in lower left corner.

Position 12—Bush joins arch.

Position 13—Dot on enclosed part of 4 of 40.

Position 14—Break in frameline to the left of Posta.

Position 17—Line joins S of Cesko to frame.

Position 18—O of Cesko extends to frame.

Position 20—White dot in base below left bush.

Position 21—Large colored dot in upper left corner.

Position 24—Colored dot near left arch.

Position 25—Small ring in left side of value shield (Fig. 4).

Position 27—Break in frame over A of Posta.

Position 29—Three small dots around right tower.

Position 30—Dot above each of the towers at right.

Position 33—Colored dot in upper part of value shield.

Position 34—Dot below P of posta in upper panel.

Position 36—Dot above center spire.

Position 37—Line joins A of Posta to frame.

Position 40—Large dot on center spire, known as the 'flag' variety (Fig. 4).

Position 41—White dot over T of Posta; colored dot in upper part of right bush.

Position 42—Colored dot beyond upper left corner.

Position 43—Short white line over left bush.

Position 47—Many small colored dots

above first of right towers.

Position 48—One large and two small dots above right towers.

Position 49—Small colored dots in margin near left frame.

Position 50—Break in top of value shield.

Position 53—Break in K of Cesko.

Position 56—Bush extends into base panel (Fig. 4).

Position 59—Dot below A of Posta.

Position 62—Breaks in left arch.

Position 63—Breaks in upper left corner, and over L of Slovenska. Later stages show broken corner wearing away.

Position 70—Break in lower left frame line; small colored dot in O of Posta.

Position 72—Colored dot in left bush.

Position 78—Point in upper left corner.

Position 79—Break over E of Slovenska. This variety is very confusing since there are three other similar varieties in different positions. Number 79 is a very short break.

Position 82—Point on upper right branch of large bush.

Position 83—Arrow extends from upper left corner. Later stages show arrow almost worn away.

Position 84—Breaks in frame over A of Posta; white dot in center of base panel.

Position 85—Break over O of Posta.

Position 86—Two breaks in left frame, one above E, the other about one-eighth inch lower.

Position 87—Colored dot on left edge of 4 of 40.

Position 88—Short line in margin just outside left frame line.

Position 89—O of 40 joins shield line (Fig. 4).

Position 91—Fork extends from upper right spiral (Fig. 4); dot on top of value shield.

