

THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

OFFICIAL MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE
CZECHOSLOVAK PHILATELIC SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA

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Editor Frank Kovarik, 2502 So. Kedzie Ave., Chicago, Ill.

Vol. 5

January 1943

No. 1

Dear Members:

I have been honored by your confidence in electing me to the Presidency of our Society. You may be sure that the interests of the organization will be paramount with me and that I will do my utmost to contribute towards its growth.

I would like to express thanks to the officers who have administered the affairs of our society during the past two years,—especially to my predecessor Dr. Reiner-Deutsch, who by genuine interest and sincerity has set a high standard for the office of President.

At this time one particular matter is on my mind and I would therefore like to discuss it with you from the outset. With the December issue you have received a circular from our treasurer, Mr. Greenawalt, in which he has explained to you our financial situation. You have especially been informed that the printing costs of this publication have gone up considerably and that its further existence at its present size is only possible thru an increased revenue.

May I, therefore, emphasize to those members who are financially able to either enter the associate or patron groups to do so. I well realize that some of you are not able to contribute more than one Dollar per year. On the other hand I assume that a percentage of the membership is in a position to join one of these groups and it is

to these that I am extending my appeal.

We all now know that the Allied Nations are on the road to Victory. The tide has definitely turned. Just visualize how things will change as soon as the power of our enemies has been broken. Changed conditions, of course, will simultaneously pertain to Philately, and especially to the stamps of the country in which we are primarily interested.

Again the stamps of Czechoslovakia will be planned, designed and printed by free men of a liberated land. Again we will resume long interrupted correspondence with friends and receive printed material which we so long have missed. We will suddenly be able to take up where we left off in 1938 and again resume adding the stamps of Czechoslovakia to our collection.

From that day on I visualize a great expansion and lasting future for the Czechoslovak Philatelic Society of North America. Our aim, therefore, for the present time, shall be that each of us do the best according to his ability. Thru the past years we have been able to hold aloft a flickering torch but on the day of Victory it will burst into a great flame.

May I, in view of this, again remind you, to give your best possible support to our organization by joining one of the above mentioned groups.

In closing I wish you the Best in the coming year of 1943.

Rudolph Secky, President.

Buy MORE War Bonds than you can AFFORD!

SOUVENIRS

During the annual Bazaar held in New York on November 26th to 29th, the Czech-American National Alliance of America issued a set of Souvenir Sheets which were sold to the public. Mr. Secky and Mr. Lowey who were in charge of the Philatelic counter at the Bazaar were informed by the Committee that unsold sheets would be turned over to our society and that we would be permitted to retain the receipts from the sale of the sheets for our treasury.

The set consists of two sheets, measuring $5\frac{1}{2}$ x $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches and are of heavy carton paper. They are printed in two colors, one sheet in red and the other in blue. Around each sheet there is a blue-red border. The inscription reads as follows: "Czech-American Alliance of America, Czechoslovak Bazaar, New York, 1942."

One sheet has the 50h Benes stamp affixed, the other the 1K Masaryk adhesive. The stamps are obliterated with a round, double circle, blue postmark in Czech which reads as follows: "Czechoslovak War Effort in America, New York and in between two cross bars the Date 26-29, 1942 and below the word Bazaar."

In the upper part of the sheet the coat of Arms of Czechoslovakia is embossed. The embossing device for this purpose has been loaned to the Bazaar authorities by the Czechoslovak Consulate of New York.

The price for a set of these sheets is one Dollar. However, single sheets are obtainable for 50 cents. Requests accompanied by money shall be sent to Mr. Rudolph Secky, 13-30, 145th Place, Malba Heights, L. I., N. Y.

Help Win the War
BUY MORE BONDS

THE LEGION STAMPS (1934) OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA

By W. L. Russell

The Czech Legions are not unknown to philatelists! They first swam into our ken in 1918 when, during "the march of the seventy thousand" across Russia and Siberia, they issued their own stamps and organized a postal service. A year later, in Prague, their exploits were commemorated by an issue of six stamps. Then, twenty years after the creation of the Czech Legions, came a series of stamps, beautifully engraved epitomising the history of those legions in four dramatic pictures.

The highest value, the 3Kr stamp, shows, three figures; the first in the uniform of the French Foreign Legion, the second as a Russian infantryman, and the third as a Serbian volunteer. Above them the names—France, Russia, Serbia, with the dates 1914-1918.

The Italian legionaries with the well-known plumed hats are not shown in the group because in 1914 this Legion was not yet formed. The uniform of the Italian legionaries, however, was to be seen every third day prior to the Munich pact, at the castle in Prague. The castle guard at the Hradcany conformed to tradition in those days (may they soon return!) and adopted each day the uniform of the legionaries—Russian uniform one day, Italian the next, and then the French. The last-named, however, was the later uniform of the legionaries and conformed to that of the French "Chasseurs d'Alpins." It was, therefore, quite different from the uniform of the first period—that of the Foreign Legion—which is seen on the 1Kr stamp.

The inscription on the 1Kr stamp reads; "PRISAHA ROTY NAZDAR V BAYONNE" (Administering the oath to the Nazdar Company in Bayonne). "Na Zdar" is a customary form of greeting amongst the Czechs, something equivalent to the German

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"Heil". Before the war of 1914-18 a group of Czechs, hostile to Austria, had gathered together and they had the support of a certain French scholar, Denis, who read Bohemian history at the Sorbonne. This Denis, like Woodrow Wilson, has a railway station in Prague named after him, and a statue is also erected to him on the Kleinseltner Ring in Prague. On the statue may be found a passage from his works beginning "L'union de la Boheme et de la France est naturelle." This dictum of Denis' is, of course, political, for Denis was more an agent of the French Minister for Foreign Affairs than a teacher. He supported the propaganda of the exiled Czechs against the imperialism of Austria. It was for this reason, of course, that he sought in 1914 to win the exiled Czechs to the cause of the Entente. He at once agreed with his Czech friends that a Czech troop should be created in the French Army.

This caused difficulties, however, because high French Army Officials had misgivings and made no concealment of their mistrust of these "hostile citizens." Because of this mistrust the first Czech troops were sent to the Foreign Legion and became therein the first company of the 3rd Battalion in the First Foreign Legion Regiment. It is noteworthy that these Czech Legionaries left all in order to join in the fight against the Central Powers. And yet not only had they to suffer the mistrust of their French confederates without complaint, but also to make themselves a part of the notorious Foreign Legion—that Legion that, right up to the outbreak of the war, was the rallying-point for the dregs of humanity! We must acknowledge that their self-control was admirable.

On the 1Kr stamp we see the "Nazardar" Company taking the oath at Bayonne, in France. On this occasion the troop was also presented with a standard, on which one may see the double-tailed lion of Bohemia. At the right, beside the flag, stand two French officers—the commandant of the troops, Salle, and his Lieutenant Chapoulet. At the left the troops are seen taking the oath. The flag itself, a gift from the Bayonne ladies, is held by the standard-bearer, Karel Bezdicek. Amongst the guests of honor in the background may also be seen Ernest Denis. In front of the standard-bearer, S. Svoboda, in the

uniform of the Foreign Legion, reads the oath.

Now we turn to the 50h and 2Kr stamps, which are devoted to the Russian Legion. Here is a horse of another color. The 50h stamp speaks not of the idea of freedom for an oppressed people through the democracy of the West, but of the Russian Pan-Slav ideal! It pleased the Czechs to set up Russia as the father of all Slav peoples! And further, it was hoped at one time—at least, by a section of the populace—that one of the more-or-less-occupied Grand Dukes might one day occupy a seat on the throne in Prague. Here in Kieff the exiled Czechs gathered and dreamed of a new lustre for the throne of St. Wenceslas. These had a considerable preponderance over the republicans at the beginning of the war. Even Masaryk and Benes, so it was stated by portion of the Czech press, were at first for a monarchy.

On September 28, 1914, in Kieff, the solemn administration of the oath of the troops to their flags, and the consecration of the colors, took place before high ecclesiastical dignities.

We shall deal with the flag-bearer when reviewing the 2Kr stamp, but in the meantime let's look for a moment at the flag itself. It consists of red and white bunting, in the upper white half of which is embroidered the crown of St. Wenceslas. Adorning the flagstaff is the well-known Russian double eagle which, before the war, was seen on all Russian stamps. The monarchistic leaning in the whole affair is emphasized further in the name of the troop. We found in France the colorless word ROTY (Corapany), but here we find another remarkable term, of which the origin itself repays investigation.

The inscription on the stamp runs as follows: "PRISAHA A POSVECENI PRAPORU CESKE DRUZINY V KIEFFE" (Taking the oath and consecration of the Czech "Druzina" in Kieff). What does "Druziny" signify? The word is known to us already from the oldest Russian chronicles, and signifies the followers of the sovereign. Thus also was understood in medieval Czech. Brandl, in his Glossary (Brno, 1876) gives the following definition; "Druzina"—followers of the Bannerets, the chivalrous Knights from the more distinguished of the 'Celed' and usually with the addition 'dobra' (Celed means the common

house-retainer; dobra, properly speaking, means 'good', but in medieval Czech is translated as 'noble')." Therefore, in Bohemia, "druh" was handed down as an expression for the lower followers of the nobility, and means a sort of bodyguard of the sovereign. Consequently, it was not by chance that the Czech troops in Kieff were given the name "Druzina" in 1914. They were viewed as the basis of a bodyguard for the future Czech king.

And now to the last, the 2Kr stamp. On it we see the first volunteer and standard-bearer, Hejduk. The inscription runs "PRAPOR CESKE DRUZINY" (The flag of the Czech Legion). But here we see the flag in its later stage. First of all, the Russian double eagle—after the revolution of 1917—gave way to the Falcon, the insignia of the Sokols (Pan-Slav Athletic Clubs). Further, the flag has been embroidered with 4 coats of arms—upper left, Bohemia, upper right, Slovakia, lower left, Moravia, and lower right, Silesia.

Jaroslav Hejduk, the grey-bearded standard-bearer, was an outstanding personality among the Czechs in Russia, and was not only the first to volunteer, but carried the flag for three years with honor and distinction. After the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 he proceeded to Novorossijsko to recruit Czech volunteers for Kornilov's army. At Tuapse, however, he died suddenly.

The deeds of the Czech Brigades were the subject of comment in the press, not only in Russia, but in all the Allied countries. These stamps were issued not only to commemorate an event, but also to the memory of those heroes of the Czech legions who laid down their lives in order that the Czechoslovak nation might regain

the independence it had lost three centuries before.

There remain only the technical details to add. The stamps were designed by the Czech artist Fiala and engraved by Seitzinger. They were recess-printed at the Czech State Printing Works, on unwatermarked paper, and were perforated 9%.

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