

THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

OFFICIAL MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE
CZECHOSLOVAK PHILATELIC SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA

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Editor Frank J. Kovarik, 2502 So. Kedzie Ave., Chicago 23, Ill.

Vol. 6

March 1944

No. 3

EDITORIAL

Most of us take the existence of specialized philatelic societies as a matter of course. Yet only ten years ago, we knew of the existence of only one well-managed and well-organized specialistic organization "Bureau Issues Association," which held together a band of specialists and students of the issues of our own Bureau of Printing and Engraving. Other similar societies popped up amid much fireworks and noise and quickly died a natural death. The only chance for survivorship was as a unit of a large organization as in the American Philatelic Society. There they have the Latin American Unit, the Revenue Unit, the China Unit, the Essay and Proof Unit, etc. The latter now has the nucleus of an independent group. Even among the specialistic groups and units of the A. P. S. many failed to reach the age of adolescence.

When a group of Czechoslovak specialists was considered possible, some eight or ten years ago, the original idea was to build a unit within the American Philatelic Society. To start such a unit a certain number of members was necessary. Members of the A. P. S. who were known to collect and specialize in the issues of Czechoslovakia were contacted. It was then we realized the difficulties of organizing even so small a group. After the exchange of many letters it was decided to forget a group of Czechoslovak students, we could not get ten of them together.

Some six years ago a New Yorker with an over-supply of energy suggested to us the organization of an independent society. His enthusiasm was great, but not enough to warm us to the idea. After all, we had plenty sad experience along this line and so tried our best to cool off this human dynamo. This man was adamant. He saw great possibilities for a society of Czechoslovak specialists. No amount of wet sponges could cool his ardor. While not convinced, we finally subscribed as charter members of the Czechoslovak Philatelic Society of North America. In what seemed a very short time, the organization was consummated and an official organ devoted entirely to the stamps and postal stationery of the mid-European Republic, was born. The first editor was a newspaper man of no mean abilities and we still believe he could be a better editor than we. He found a publisher for us who dared take the risk of publishing our organ and who still does so. At any rate, this publisher doesn't have to "whistle" for his monthly check, now.

The greatest misfortune that befell the new Czechoslovak Philatelic Society of North America was the partitioning of Czechoslovakia, its temporary demise from the family of independent nations and the final outbreak of World War II. Articles of lasting importance were promised by leading philatelic writers of Czechoslovakia. Illustrations of varieties, of outstanding rarities, were promised by the three leading philatelic publications of that country. Everything looked rosy until March 15, 1939, and got gloomier when England and France, in the interest of common decency, declared war on the Junkers of Germany. Czechoslovakia was dead—she left twins, nurtured by the whelps of Naziland.

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JUBILEE ISSUE OF 1928

Guy Greenawalt and F. J. Kovarik

The tenth anniversary of the founding of the Republic was commemorated by a set of ten stamps, each of a different value, comprising the ten values most commonly used at the time. These stamps were first placed on sale on October 22, 1928 and sold at face value (Order Bulletin of the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs, issue No. 80 dated October 17, 1928).

Each stamp in the set comprises a separate design. All the values are pictorial except the 3 Kc which contains the portrait of President Masaryk. The designs were produced from photographs or from paintings by Czech artists. A designation of the pictorial motif is found in the upper part of the vignette of each value. The values, with a brief description of each design are as follows:

- 30 h, gray black, HRADEC U. O. (OPAVY in Silesia, castle known as early as the XI century).
- 40 h, brown, LEVOCA (in Slovakia, the old town hall, from a painting by V. MALÝ).
- 50 h, green, PRAHA TELEFON (new interurban telephone exchange in ZIZKOV a partial perspective view of the building).
- 60 h, red orange, JASINA (Carpathian Russia, bell tower and Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, a typical HUCUL building).
- 1 Kc, carmine red, HLUBOKA (a beautiful SCHWARZENBERG castle, photo taken from an airplane).
- 1.20 Kc, red violet, VELEHRAD (famous pilgrimage in Moravia, from painting by JULIUS MARAK, hanging in presidential box in National Opera).
- 2 Kc, ultramarine, BRNO (Cathedral Church of St. Peter, from the painting by JAROSLAV SETELIK).
- 2.50 Kc, dark blue, TATRY (southern view of the mountain group of the HIGH TATRAS, from painting by unknown artist).
- 3 Kc, brown (portrait of President Masaryk, from a photograph).
- 5 Kc, violet, PRAHA (old town city hall and the TYN Church, from painting by V. MALÝ).

The printed area of all the stamps measures 21¼x27 mm. The 2 Kc, 3 Kc and 5 Kc values are arranged vertically while the other seven values are arranged horizontally. The frame design is the same for the seven horizontally arranged values. It is somewhat different for the 2 Kc and 5 Kc values and entirely different for the 3 Kc value. All frame inscriptions are white on colored background.

This set is the first Jubilee issue which is not burdened with a surcharge. It was favorably received by the public and by stamp collectors everywhere. Large stocks were soon sold out at the Philatelic Agency but later they obtained additional supplies and entire sets were kept on sale, until, by Order No. 13, of April 13, 1929, the set was ordered demonetized on April 30, 1929. The Order permitted their use for postal purposes until May 10, 1929, with no exchange for current stamps permitted.

The issue was printed by the Czech Graphic Union in Praha, from steel engraved plates on unwatermarked paper and gummed with a yellowish gum. Steel dies were carefully engraved by K. SEIZINGER, for the manufacture of the plates, each value being engraved separately, including the frame. The engraver's signature appears on only two of the values: "KS" on the 5 Kc, in the street, lower left corner and "S" on the 2 Kc, in the lower left corner, above the shield containing the numeral of value.

Each value was printed from a single plate marked "1, 1928" under the 91st stamp of the sheet. Since only one plate was used for each value the plate markings have little value, but they were eagerly sought after by collectors and at one time commanded a high price.

The centers of the sheet margins are marked by crosses. A series of straight





lines appears across the top margins of the vertically arranged values and along the length of the right margins of the horizontally arranged values. Guide dots used to aid in the rocking in of the design of the individual stamps on the plates, are found on most of the stamps, above the letters S and K of the horizontal stamps and in the upper left of the vertical stamps. Dots marking the sheets are found beside the corner stamps. In the corner containing the plate marking under the 91st stamps, 1, 2, 3 and sometimes 4, sheet guide dots appear, the location varying with the different values. Control numbers of valuation do not appear on any of the values.

The colors used are well chosen and few shades have been reported. Slight differences in shade are found on the 40 h, 1 Kc, and 2 Kc.

Printing imperfections appear to be only such as might easily escape a careful inspector. They comprise: weak offsets; offset plate markings; creases; thin lines running the length of the sheet, vertically on the vertical stamps, horizontally on the horizontal stamps; weak plate markings, and plate markings omitted.

Perforation of all values is line 13%. Freak perforations are numerous. The 50 h, 60 h, 1 Kc and 2 Kc are known with double perforations. The 30 h and 1 Kc are known with missing perforations. In one lot of the 30 h the horizontal perforations are missing between all the stamps in the 9th vertical row.

The set was used in large quantities for genuine postal purposes, particularly, the 50 h and 1 Kc values. The total issued of each value is reported as follows:

| | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 30 h — 3,043,000 copies | 1.20 Kc— 698,000 copies |
| 40 h — 1,122,000 copies | 2 Kc—2,265,000 copies |
| 50 h —10,260,000 copies | 2.50 Kc— 600,000 copies |
| 60 h — 3,220,000 copies | 3 Kc—1,275,000 copies |
| 1 Kc—10,210,000 copies | 5 Kc— 609,000 copies |

Ekstein Nos. 884-893; Scott Nos. 142-151; Stach Nos. 322-331; Cross Nos. 122-31.

Commemorative Cancellations

On October 28, 1928, all mail at first class post offices was cancelled by a commemorative cancelling die with red ink. Special hand stamps were supplied to PRAHA 1, PRAHA 10 (castle), PRAHA 25, PARDUBICE 1, BRNO 1, BRNO 2, OPAVA 1, BRATISLAVA 1, KOSICE 1, and UZHOROD 1. Special dies for the cancelling machines were supplied to PRAHA 25, BRNO 2 and BRATISLAVA 1. The hand stamps were normal in size and appearance, a double circle with a bridge thru the center within the inner circle, the mark of the station appearing at the top between the circles, 1918-1928 at the bottom within the circles and the date 28.X.28 within the horizontal lines forming the bridge. For philatelic purposes large quantities of the stamps were cancelled with the commemorative cancels as late as November 3, 1928. Many of these were obtained by non-collectors, for speculative purposes, following news items in the press. Their expectation of profits were not realized and stamps cancelled in red ink soon sold below the face value.



**IN MEMORIAM
ERNEST BERKA**

With deep regret we announce the death of our member, Mr. Ernest Berka who died suddenly at the age of 70 years.

Mr. Berka has been a member of our society from the very early days and always keenly interested in the affairs of our organization.

Ernest Berka played a very prominent role in pre-war Czechoslovakia. His was the true Horatio Alger story. From small beginnings he climbed the ladder of success until he became one of the leading industrial figures. His chief interest was with the Association of Alcohol Manufacturers which he helped organize and of which he was Director-General. He also was on the Board of Directors of many industrial concerns such as Skoda, Magnesit, Eskompte Bank, Fezarny, Levoce, Presov, Malacky, Optimit Rubber, just to mention a few.

He was well known in the philanthropic circles in his homeland and since in this country actively interested in the aid to Czechoslovak refugees.

In philately, likewise, Mr. Berka's name was known to thousands. His specialized collections of Austria, Vatican, Bosnia, Indian States, Siam, Haiti and Nicaragua were the finest. He did not exhibit often but when he did he usually received top awards. His collection of Czechoslovakia was the largest and finest in existence. He played a tremendous role in upbuilding Czechoslovak philately.

We have been among those who have had the privilege to know Mr. Berka personally. His was a kind, charming and lovable personality and his sudden departure is felt as a stunning blow.

Mr. Berka, who resided in Chicago, is survived by a widow and son Egon who also is a member of our society. A daughter lives in London, England.

To the family of the deceased this writer, in the name of the Society, expresses deep sympathy. The name Ernest Berka shall be honored amongst us as long as we live.

J. W. Lowey

(Continued from first page)

One is called "Bohemia and Moravia" and the other "Slovakia." The one lives under the tutorship of a M. Hacha, the other by a renegade, Tuka. While neither is as bad as Quisling, they certainly can't compare with Benes or Jan Masaryk. The first, at least, may act only as a scapegoat until the renaissance of a new and better Czechoslovakia.

It is not our desire to enter into a discussion of international politics though, at one time, political science and political economy were our hobby studies. what we want to bring out is the fact that unless YOU pay your dues NOW, your society cannot hope to live; if it continues to eke out a precarious existence it is only because of blood transfusions from the pockets of members who want this society to continue to exist until happy days are here again.

We want all of you to continue your membership in the Society. We need you now more than ever before. We have confidence that soon after this war is over we shall be in a position to treat you to so much interesting matter concerning the stamp emissions of Czechoslovakia that you'll never regret holding on and carrying on!

The treasurer complains the dues are coming in very slowly. When a feller needs a friend, can't you lend a helping hand?

We all feel sure the war will end soon. We may even think we are making sacrifices to bring this end nearer. A dollar or two out of our pockets is not much of a sacrifice, especially when by so doing we are actually helping ourselves, and—here it is needed and the receipt of your dues will be appreciated. Please

PAY YOUR 1944 DUES NOW!

We have set a date, March 20, 1944, as a deadline for the acceptance of dues for 1944. Our May issue shall contain the 1944 membership list. If you are not paid by then—do not complain if your name does not appear in the list.

OUR FEATURE ARTICLE

In the December, 1940, issue of the Czechoslovak Specialist, there appeared an article on the Jubilee issue of 1928. It contained very good information of the historical background of the motifs used for the ten values. In presenting this article we wish to supplement what additional philatelic knowledge we have on this very interesting and popular series of stamps.