

# THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

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## EDITORIAL

The feature article in this issue of The Czechoslovak Specialist deals with Czechoslovak cancellations of the transition period and is the work of our Canadian member, Mr. Osbourn. About a year and a half ago, Mr. Osbourn donated to our Society Library a literal translation from the German by Frederick Leitenberger, of the treatise on Czechoslovakian cancellations. It was then we suggested to Mr. Osbourn that he present a summary of this work and we now have the pleasure to publish it. The Leitenberger translation is, of course, a more thorough study of these cancellations and any member who wishes to borrow this work may do so by writing to our Librarian, Mrs. Mildred Glawe, 9640 So. Seeley Ave., Chicago 43, Ill., observing the rules governing loans of books and pamphlets from the library.

—F. J. K.

## THE PROMISED MEMBERSHIP LIST

We have tried to check up on the membership list as we feel there are a few errors. We therefor decided to hold up the publication of this list until next month; it is better to present a complete and correct list in the June issue instead of a faulty list in May. We trust our members will pardon the delay.

## NEW MEMBERS

148. Arthur J. Mates, 4007 E. 123rd St., Cleveland 5, Ohio.  
149. Rev. Stephen W. Begalla, 252 E. Wood St., Youngstown, Ohio.

## MORE SOUVENIR SHEETS

The Czechoslovak National Alliance in Chile, in conjunction with Union para la Victoria (central organization to aid the Allied Nations and presided over by the former Secretary of State, Marcial Mora Miranda) issued souvenir sheets in commemoration of the 25th anniversary of Czechoslovak Independence, October 28, 1943, and which are sold for the benefit of The Czechoslovak Red Cross in London. The cost of these souvenir sheets is 10 Chilean Pesos, equivalent to 40 cents our money.

500 of these sheets were printed in red and another 500 in blue and they may already be sold out. Those interested may write direct to "Comite Nacional Checoslovaco de Chile, Casilla 9382, Santiago de Chile, Chile."

## ATTENTION CHICAGO MEMBERS

For many years our secretary, Mr. Joseph W. Lowey, has been promising a visit to our city. We are now definitely assured that he'll arrive in Chicago Saturday, May 6th and will spend the first night at the home of Mr. A. J. Hrivnak. Sunday afternoon, May 7th, we all meet at the home of Mr. Hrivnak, 174 Addison Rd., Riverside, Ill. Mr. Lowey will be with us all week and every member should try his best to attend this meeting or make an appointment with Mr. Lowey visiting him at the home of Mr. Hrivnak, Dr. Stolfa or your editor. You may call Monday afternoon, Rockwell 7134 and your editor will endeavor to give you an opportunity to meet Mr. Lowey. Please do not expect Mr. Lowey to spend an evening at every member's home—unfortunately one week has only seven evenings.

**CZECHOSLOVAK POSTMARKS OF AUSTRIAN AND HUNGARIAN ORIGIN**  
C. H. Osbourn

**INTRODUCTION**

The study of the postmarks of those states, whose national status has changed, is a fascinating one. The World War I, 1914-1918, with its deep-rooted hatreds, bitterness and revolution of nations, created among other states, Czechoslovakia.

Czechoslovakia was made up of several states, each with a distinct history and characteristics of its own. Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia were separated from Austria; Slovakia and Ruthenia from Hungary; and the Hultschin Lands from Germany.

Nothing reveals the history of the republic more than its postmarks. For instance: "Pressburg-Poszony-Bratislava" appear as three unconnected names yet they represent the same city, which in a period of sixty years was the Austrian Pressburg; in 1867, the Hungarian Poszony; and in 1917, the Czech Bratislava.

When the Czechoslovak Republic was first set up, the postal authorities had on their hands a big undertaking. It was necessary for an entirely new administration to be organized, which was complicated by disturbances from factious postal officials left over from the previous Austrian administration.

The old Austrian and Hungarian postmarks were kept in use by the new administration, until such times as changes could be made, and were in use until 1920. The use of these postmarks were common to stamps of the following Czech issues: Hradschin, Legionaire, Plebiscite, Allegories, Red Cross and Air Mails.

**COLLECTION:**

The collector of stamps and postmarks of Czechoslovakia, will find that the period begins with the use of "Forerunner" postmarks on stamps of other than Czechoslovakia. This could be followed by postmarks of Czech cities before independence.

Then would follow:

- A. Common Postmarks,
  - (1) Austrian
  - (2) Hungarian
  - (3) German Reich
- B. Nationalized Postmarks,
  - (1) Austrian
  - (2) Hungarian
- C. Renationalized Postmarks.
- D. Postmarks of the Czechoslovak Republic.

\* \* \* \*

Let us take these classifications for study, starting with the beginning:

**A. COMMON POSTMARKS.**

The organization of the postal system was taken over almost unchanged. This arrangement also extended to the retention of postmarking, formerly used in the vanished states, at least until Czechoslovakia brought in its own postmarks.

The completion of the material must always go back to the system in use in Austria and Hungary. Among the Austrian postmarks, a division is made, according to the language characters—German, Czech, Polish and their combinations. In the Hungarian territory, only a single language, Hungarian, had been in use.

**(1) AUSTRIAN POSTMARKS**

The forms of these postmarks constitute a puzzle. The search for origins and beginnings is extremely difficult. Here we deal with only those postmarks adapted for use in Czechoslovakia. We go back to the beginning of things with the so-called "Postmaster postmark." These were invariably in German. In 1871, however, the "double-language" postmarks—German and Czech—came into use. Of course, German was to have first place, but indifferences, national feelings and official errors, permitted postmarks to continue in use, which did not carry out these directions. In 1890, an official order decreed that the inscription appear in the language of the majority of the population. This brought about the "single-language" postmarks.

Several forms of postmarks were used, which are dealt with chronologically. Under the different stamp forms we list:

Long, Thimble, One circle, Double circle, Line, Box, Wheel, Machine

In addition, there are postmarks of a specialized character, as:

Railway Station, Train, Official, Post Office Deposit.

#### LONG POSTMARKS—

The Long Postmark was the first to be generally used and comes from the stampless cover era. Two types are known.

- (1) With and without borders (approximately 50mm long x 12mm wide).
- (2) Used as Post Deposit Postmarks. Three types are known, all of which are scarce. They are of different sizes, and their use on stamps is only an accident, for they were merely names of places which had no post office.

#### THIMBLE POSTMARKS—

Their existence reaches back to the year 1868. They are circle postmarks up to 20mm diameter. Only one type is known, and only one language is used, this being at the top.

#### SINGLE CIRCLE POSTMARKS—

The language order of 1871, was the entrance of the double language postmark and since the size of the thimble postmark did not permit the use of the increased inscription, there was a general change to the bigger circle, which is approximately 23mm to 28mm in diameter. Several types are known. Some are in one language and some in two languages.

Also in Single Circle types are "Railway Station Postmarks," distinguishable by the word "Bahnhof" (Railway Station) at bottom. The development of the amount of railway traffic brought already in the year 1850, the introduction of the train post office, in railway trains, where mail was sorted and handled during the trip. The postmark used for this purpose bears the number of the train post office in box at bottom.

#### DOUBLE CIRCLE POSTMARKS—

Following in chronological order, came the Double Circle Postmarks. The outer circle measures 25mm to 30mm diameter, while the inner circle measures 12mm to 18mm diameter, between appears the inscription, which is either single or double language, inside appears the date, and at the bottom is a star or letter. About 28 types have been noted.

In accordance with the opinions of local postmasters, many of the postmarks did not follow the official design, but followed the individual ideas of the local postmasters. Consequently many inscriptions appear in reverse; or other differences are noted. Because of this about the turn of the century, the name inscriptions were placed to left and right. The political situation brought about a further compromise, the placing of the place name in the language of the population.

Railway Station Postmarks, Train Postmarks, also appear in this form, the former using the word "Bahnhof," and the latter the train number together with the letters "F. P. A." (traveling post office).

#### WHEEL POSTMARKS—

All the place postmarks encountered up till now, have been the so-called "inset" postmarks, because the date and hour were set by the postmaster with separate type and set in. We find in the wheel postmarks, that the date figures were on the movable rim of a wheel, and required for their insertion merely a rotary motion.

Two types of this postmark were used. The difference being in the two spokes which bisect the postmark; in the first type they only appear within the inner circle, while in the second type, these spokes or lines go from the outer circle. This date opening, for that is its use, averages 8½mm in width. The outer circle was from 27mm to 32mm diameter, while the inner circle from 17mm to 22mm diameter. This type of postmark uses both single and double languages.

In the regular postal postmarks, 28 types have been noted; while Train Postmarks and Official Postmarks also were used.

#### LINE POSTMARKS—

Between the double language postmarks, with the two languages above and below, and those with the left and right inscription, lies in point of time, a new postmark form, the Line Postmark. Its introduction came about through the need for a more complete cancellation of stamps. It appears only in one lan-

guage; is octagonal in form, approximately 22x32mm, and encloses the entire inscription within 15 or 17 lines. According to the length of the place name, it either fills in the width of the postmark completely, or only in part. In the latter case, the space beside the name is filled in with three short lines. Eleven types are known.

In order that mail posted at a railway station without a post office of its own should be able to go on its way without delay, a new postmark form was brought out, the "railway station letter-box postmark," and this is different from the genuine railway station post office markings. It has an eight-sided box form, and when it is single language, it is divided into two parts; and when it is double language, it is divided into three parts. According to the length of the inscription, it occupies one or two lines. Because of their limited use, these postmarks are not plentiful.

#### MACHINE POSTMARKS—

In order, with one stamping, to be able to cancel stamps, a mechanical device came into use. They were essentially wheel postmarks, completed with 3½cm wide stripes of 11 to 17 parallel segments of a circle, both top and bottom of circle. The principle is that of rotary printing which rolls over stamps to be cancelled.

This postmark was retained by the Republic.

#### (2) THE HUNGARIAN POSTMARKS

We find among the postmarks of this period, under Hungarian jurisdiction, not a double-language, but exclusively a Hungarian inscription. Before the separation of Austria and Hungary, in the year 1867, there were indeed German, Hungarian and also mixed language postmarks, but from the moment of autonomy, the postmarks were brought out in Hungarian alone.

Unlike the Austrian postmarks, we find here much less variation. Apart from the use of one language, a "Post Office Mark" appears, which is expressed by a number. In the lower part of the inner circle, appears a letter, which is explained as follows:

- (1) Forenoon—"d.e."; afternoon—"d.u."
- (2) In the wheel postmarks the letters "N" and "E"—morning and afternoon.

The decorations used, as stars and scrolls, are extensive. They are used solely to fill out an empty space, or as a division point in the inscription.

#### LONG POSTMARKS—

With border, no date, sometimes with letters P. U. (Palya Udvar-railway). This is a Railway Freight Postmark.

#### CIRCLE POSTMARKS—

A Thimble Postmark (approximately 10mm diameter). Used as a Ticket Postmark. Bears date only. Also larger circle, used for Postage Due Postmark, and bearing word "Porto."

These postmark forms, were frequently used during revolutionary days, in default of regular postmarks.

Among the most common postmarks of this period were single circle postmarks, bearing the place name at the top and the date. Less common are those with the inscription divided above and below. Also among stamps of this form are the Money Order Postmarks, distinguishable by the word "Penzutalvány" (Post Office Order); and "Besztergzebanya" (Postal Note); Parcel Post Postmarks, with the word "Kocsiposta" (Parcel Post).

#### DOUBLE CIRCLE WHEEL POSTMARKS—

It is in this group we see the decorative attempts already mentioned. 28 types have been noted—but they all fall into four main classes:

- (1) Scroll decorations
- (2) Star decorations
- (3) Star with scroll decorations
- (4) Letter with scroll decorations

They follow the wheel design of the Austrian postmarks, and can be easily recognized by the decorations. There are 11 regular types known: 2 Railway Station Postmarks (PU-Railway Station); and Train Postmark (train number in top arc and letters SI in bottom arc).

#### BOX POSTMARKS—

These are of different shapes and sizes and were used for specialized purposes. First was the regular types, and eight-sided rectangular postmark, with

inscription in three lines, and with words "postal Ugyň" (meaning postal agency). Then there was the Railway Freight Postmark—a four-sided rectangular postmark, divided into three sections, vertically, with the words "Kiadotott" also "Delelott" (forenoon), or "Delusa" (afternoon). Also the Money Payment Postmark—a six sided postmark, with the word "Penzrovatolas" (Money Payment).

### (3) POSTMARKS OF THE GERMAN REICHPOST

On February 4th, 1920, part of the Hultschin countries and on March 16th, 1923, the remainder, was handed over to Czechoslovakia. This area of 333 sq. kilometers was a part of Silesia and a plebiscite was held under the auspices of the League of Nations by which the population determined their own form of government.

Fifteen post offices were affected, and all postal material, including stamps and markers, were handed over. The German stamps were discarded, but the postmarks were retained. Since the line of demarcation is hard to define, it is difficult to place definitely postmarks of the region. The capital of the Hultschin Lands was Troppau (Opava in Czech).

### B. NATIONALIZED POSTMARKS—AUSTRIAN

It has already been shown that among the Austrian postmarks, a certain freedom of choice was the rule. National interest invariably took precedence of the law.

This makes it understandable that after the founding of the Czechoslovak Republic, national enthusiasm showed itself more powerful. The inscriptions on the postmarks as taken over, were adapted to the new nationhood. All this was no sudden revolution and many months before it came about, changes were being affected. The postmark of "Prossnitz-Prostejov" is an example. The characters are German-Czech, but the remaining inscription has been changed, the series of time and hour of issue always had appeared in this order, vertically, day-month-hour-year; but in this case it became, year-hour-day-month. In addition it was inverted. By such means, nationalized postmarks came into existence. They must have sprung from a genuine national feeling.

Under date of November 7th, 1918, the postal authorities in Prague, issued instructions that postmarks must not be altered. This order was not able however to curb the national spirit; indeed it increased.

The greater part of the post offices eliminated the German inscription, the cases appeared where Czech was eliminated. Racial sentiment was so strong that in many German Sudeten localities, Czech postmarks were not used for two years after the founding of the Republic.

The form the nationalized postmarks took, is difficult to classify. They cannot be brought into any hard and fast system. There were many kinds. The types traced here come into the picture, because they have shown some peculiarity. In my own collection I have a postmark with a  $\frac{3}{4}$  arc; others with substitutes such as stars, rosettes and other markings. Also several types in which part of the inscription has been obliterated by some form of disfigurement. A very interesting type is that in which only part of the German text has been removed as:

Freiwalddau Osterr. Schles.

Freiwalddau/ /Schles.

A further method of nationalization is revealed by the changing of non-Czech lettering into Czech.

The simplest example among double language postmarks is the inverted date. Any accumulation of Hradcany stamps will reveal some of these. Keep in mind that the star is always at the top. Also noted has been blocking out of the hour of issue, and the omission of year.

What has been termed "double nationalization" were a common occurrence. A double circle postmark, with on the left and right, separate double language inscriptions and the vertical one-under-the-other arranged time declaration—had the German inscription and the vertical date deleted, and a horizontal date used.

A brief resume of the commonest types may not be out of order:

- (1) Single Circle Postmark
  - (a) German inscription omitted at top
  - (b) German inscription omitted at left
- (2) Double Circle Postmark
  - (a) Language omitted to right

- (b) Language omitted at left
- (c) Reversed dates
- (d) Hour of issue obliterated
- (e) Inscription at bottom
- (3) Wheel Postmarks
  - (a) Language omitted at right
  - (b) Hour of issue obliterated
  - (c) Language omitted at right
- (4) Box Postmarks
  - (a) German inscription deleted.

#### HUNGARIAN NATIONALIST POSTMARKS

The nationalization of Hungarian postmarks could not go as far as the Austrian markings, because there was no double language and here there were but two possibilities:

- (1) Changing the date from "year-month-day-hour" to the new series, "day-month-year-hour."
- (2) Making unrecognizable the crown in certain postmark forms.
- (3) The letter denoting morning or afternoon is omitted. This is considered the first evidence of nationalistic sentiment.
- (4) Another form of nationalism used was to block out the first figure of year in the date line.

#### RENATIONALIZED POSTMARKS

It has been shown, that the nationalization of postmarks extended not only to the German part of the inscription, but also, sometimes allowed the Czech text to disappear. There are several examples. One was "Znaim." Originally a double language postmark in May 1919, the Czech inscription had been deleted; then the Czech name was once more inserted; then the German inscription was alone again; to be finally seen with the German-Czech names. The changes lie but a few months apart.

#### TRANSITION POSTMARKS

On January 15, 1919, the Ministry of Post Offices issued the following decree:

"The setting-up of new place and date postmarks, for post offices will soon be begun. For the purpose of gaining an oversight over each district, with regard to the outfit for inscriptions, as well as the different characteristics and the necessary postmark numbers; the local officers are instructed herewith to send to the office in Prague, within three days, impressions of all place and date stamps, etc. Carefully taken on a sheet or half sheet of clean white paper, since these copies are to be filed away in our postal museum."

This immediately brought a response, and some postmasters took the opportunity of arranging the postmarks to suit themselves. These changes came about either with the use of the old stamp tools, with the displacing or changing of the old inscription, or through new additions to the whole. There were therefore, forms similar to those of Austria and Hungary. Their use, in the time before the introduction of the true C. S. P. postmarks (which had in single language postmarks, the letters CSP in the lower arc of the circle; and in double language, postmarks, the letters CSP in the upper inner segment of the circle) their use makes it necessary, for the avoidance of errors, to take notice of them here, although they do not belong to this study.

Most of the Transition markings deviate considerably from the usual form and it is impossible to classify them into hard and fast types. Four types are noted here:

- (1) The postmaster at Olomouc used a double circle postmark, and by deleting the German name and placing the Czech inscription at the top, created a new form.
- (2) The same postmaster took a wheel postmark, and by converting the stamping tool and changing the ornaments, another new type appeared.
- (3) The postmaster at Znojmo converted a wheel postmark and by eliminating the inscriptions at right and left and placing the Czech at the top, formed another type.
- (4) One transition postmark has all the appearance of a Swiss type with its bars. It has no similarity in any way to Austrian types, and definitely was newly created.