

THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

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CZECHOSLOVAK PHILATELIC SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA

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EDITORIAL

In the Good Book we read "And when these things have come to pass, remember that the time is near." At this writing the Russians have come within 25 miles of Berlin; the Americans have not only crossed the Rhine but have secured a beachhead of some 50 square miles on the right bank of the river. Letters from our many soldier correspondents tell us that there isn't much fight left in the Nazi Supermen. All these things point to the fact that what has started not September 1st, 1939, when the Nazis struck at Poland, not March 15th, 1938, when the Nazis took Sudetenland, not when the Germans re-occupied the Rhine, nor even when they repudiated the Versailles Treaty; no, what started in the teachings of Prussian war lords even before Bismarck's day—is coming to a head. The Philosophy of a supernationalism must end; the policy of live and let live must remain alive. The world is big enough for all of us — if we but decide to give just a little elbow room to the other fellow, no matter how small the other fellow may be.

For five long years we have been deprived of contact with our Czech brethren of the stamp collecting fraternity. In that time we tried our best to keep alive an interest in the stamps of Czechoslovakia. Our Society was born at the wrong time; almost simultaneously with the birth of our organization the Republic of Czechoslovakia lost its liberty. Many of us ceased to collect stamps of the Protectorate because every penny we spent on stamps of Bohemia and Moravia added another penny to foreign credit to the Nazi war machine. When, on December 7th, 1941, Japan attacked us and as a result we got into the war, it became unlawful to purchase stamps of any of our enemies or their satellites. We have been told that only new issues can keep alive interest in a country. We proved this statement wrong. We have grown in accomplishments; we have a heavier treasury and we have more enthusiasm than ever before. We are sure that many members will soon have time to devote to their stamps again and with their enthusiasm, help make our society even bigger and better by gaining for us new members. Many of those who dropped out because of lack of time to devote to their hobby, will join us again. Those of us who can do something should do it now — no time like the present.

THANKS TO DAVE LIDMAN

In a recent issue of Chambers Stamp Journal, Mr. David Lidman, able stamp editor of the Chicago Sun, had an article about the specialistic groups in philately. He not only mentioned our Society but gave the editor's address. We were surprised at the number of requests we received about the Society — and at least two new members have been received into the society as a result of Mr. Lidman's fine work. Thanks, Dave, keep up the good work.

"POSTA CESHOSLOVENSKA" — TOP CATALOGUE PRICES

The "Posta Ceskoslovenska" overprints on Austrian and Hungarian stamps, which Czechoslovakia issued in 1919, are much scarcer than the catalogue value indicates. This was shown rather conclusively in the February 27-28 sale of H. R. Harmer, 32 E. 57th Street, New York, when 32 lots of these semi-postals, cataloguing \$1,138, sold for \$1,211. All but six of these mint lots topped the Scott prices.

CESHOSLOVENSKA POSTA ARTICLE

The translation of the Chapters dealing with the 1919 Semi-postal Issue of Czechoslovakia by our good friend and member, Mr. Wm. Russell, is nearing its end. We regret we couldn't accompany this work with worth while illustrations. A newspaper release by H. R. Harmer shows that these stamps are at last coming into their own. It seemed that these stamps can be counterfeited with ease — but, so far, all counterfeits can be easily detected. Many of these stamps are very scarce and the catalogue valuation is no criterion of their actual value. We have been promised sequels to this translation and these should be as interesting as the translation.

OUR EDITORIALS ARE READ

At least one of our members reads the editorials we print. He has disagreed with some statement we made relative to the value of recent United States stamps. Thanks, member, we are not so much interested in the value of these stamps as we are in knowing that somebody really reads what we write. We write our stuff — we are not like Alexander Dumas, papa, who asked Alexander Dumas, sonny, "Have you read my latest book?" and the son answered with the question: "Have you?"

New Members

155 Fritz Billig, 151-14 Eighty Fifth Avenue, Jamaica, New York.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

George Baltheiser, 333 E. 86th Street, New York 28, N. Y.
Wm. Bauer, 19 Holden Street, Clifton, New Jersey
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BUY WAR BONDS -- BUY WAR STAMPS

Ninth All Sokol Meet

Dr. Miroslav Tyrš
1932

GUY GREENAWALT and FRANK J. KOVARIK



A series of stamps commemorating the 100th anniversary of the birth of Dr. Miroslav Tyrš, founder of the national body building and athletic organization, Sokol, was issued for the Ninth All Sokol Meet at Praha, on March 16th, 1932.

The series was announced by Order No. 13940/VII, dated March 4th, 1932 and consisted of the following values:

- 50 h green
- 1 Kc red
- 2 Kc blue
- 3 Kc brown

These stamps are of the intermediate format, the printed design measuring 21 x 22 $\frac{3}{4}$ mm. The 50 h and 1 Kc values comprise a portrait of Tyrš, copied from a photograph, on a crossed diagonal lined background of almost solid appearance, framed by a solid white border line. The name Miroslav Tyrš, in a double line, is in the upper left corner of the background and the year dates 1832-1932 are on a white ribbon entwined with three linden leaves in the lower right corner. The value, with abbreviated monetary designation, is in a small tablet of solid color set off by a white and a colored line, at the lower left. A panel above the portrait contains ČESKOSLOVENSKO in white letters on a solid color background with a decorative white ribbon above it. The portrait panel is set off by a white line and a colored line which merges into the panel at the top. The decorative ribbon at the top is separated from the border line by a fine white line. The 2 Kc and 3 Kc design comprises a portrait taken from a painting by Frant. Zenisek which was finished in 1912 and presented to the Sokol. The background of the portrait panel is the same as in the lower value design with a decorative column added along each side. The name is in the center above the head of Tyrš while the year dates are spaced directly beneath the name. The monetary value is in two panels, which form the lower corners of the design, separated by a narrower solid color panel containing a sprig of linden leaves which extend slightly into the portrait. A white line separates this panel from the portrait. ČESKOSLOVENSKO appears in the top panel but the decorative ribbon has been omitted. The white border around the portrait panel has been omitted and it is separated from the top panel by a white line. The designs are otherwise alike. The engraving is by Karel Seizinger, whose initial, a reclining S, is found in the lower right corner of the two lower values only.

The printing was from steel engraved plates on the Stickney rotary press with the same arrangement as in previous issues of this size. Plates consisted of one group of 100 subjects and one of 50 subjects. Plate numbers 1, 1A appear beside the 91 stamp of the 100 subject sheet. Horizontal gum breaker ridges are found but some sheets do not appear to have these ridges. Colors are somewhat heavy or dull so that the design loses some of its detail. Because of the large quantities printed shades are numerous. The paper is white, rough, and very soft so that the stamps are easily separated along the perforations. Perforation is line 9 $\frac{3}{4}$.

By the original order these stamps were to be valid for postage only until the end of the jubilee year. By Order No. 72812/VII, December 20th, 1932 this was extended to the complete selling out of the stamps. At the Philatelic Agency they were sold out early in 1933, and when it was discovered that there were

no appreciable stocks in the hands of dealers or others, the price of mint copies rose immediately. Because large numbers were used, and many of them saved for collectors, the used copies are common.

These stamps were well received by both the philatelist and the public. The portrait of Tyrš was well executed and it was felt that it symbolized the aims and ideals of the Sokol organization. The values were those most commonly used. The stamps were issued without surcharge and in large quantities. They were widely distributed. On May 31st, 1932 the Postal Department announced that every post office in the country had been supplied with these stamps, that further supplies would be sent any office requesting them and that offices of the first class would continue to receive them in limited quantities. It was pointed out, that those who, for political reasons did not wish to use these stamps, could use the regular issues which were also available at all post offices at the same time. There was some criticism of the issue by minority political groups.

All values of the set were demonitized February 28th, 1937 and the total quantities issued were as follows:

50 h	—	71,560,000
1 Kc	—	70,960,000
2 Kc	—	5,710,000
3 Kc	—	3,770,000

CANCELLATIONS

On the days of the Sokol celebrations combined with the Meet at the Stadium (5, 12, 19, 26, 20 VI (June) and 1-7 (July) a temporary postal station functioned at the Stadium, using special circular dies, with the inscription "PRAHA LX SLET VSESOKOLSKY," inked with black ink, on all postal matter handed in there.

On June 13th, the special Meet cancellation could be obtained on stamps attached on a sheet of paper, or on a special cover with commemorative inscription, at the Philatelic Agency.

Between June 18th and July 10th, the temporary station at the Stadium used a circular cancelling die with the inscription "PRAHA 14 — SLETOVA VYSTAVA 1932."

To advertise the All Sokol Meet the post office PRAHA 25 used during 1932 a special machine die showing a male and female member of the Sokol with appropriate inscription in Czech and French.

DR. MIROSLAV TYRS

1933

Guy Greenawalt and F. J. Kovarik

Special Order No. 4695/VII, dated January 23rd, 1933 in the Bulletin of the Ministry of Posts and Telegrams, announced the issues of a stamp of 60 h denomination with the portrait of Dr. Miroslav Tyrš.

Issued February 1st, 1933, this stamp was not a commemorative issue, but because it contained the portrait of Tyrš in the uniform of the Sokol, it is appropriate to treat it with the commemorative issue. The stamp is the small size and the design is the same as the 60 h Masaryk portrait stamp of 1930, except for the portrait which is of Tyrš and his name which appears in the upper left corner. The engraving was prepared by Karel Seizinger from the same photograph which was used for the 50 h and 1 Kc of the commemorative issue. The head was made somewhat larger but less of the uniform was included due to the small size of the stamp. The engravers initial S is found in the lower left corner above the shield of value.

The printing was on the rotary press from steel engraved plates of 200 subjects marked under the 181 stamp with ornamental plate numbers to the end of 1934 — 1 and 1A. Vertical gum breaker ridges appear on the issue but in some cases are almost invisible. The color is dark violet. The perforation is line 9½.

In printing stamps of this size on the rotary press the plates are separated along the center of the web by a gutter in which is printed a line to be followed by the slitter dividing the web. Sometimes the pull on the web is so great that

the web separates along one of the lines perforations along the gutter before it reaches the slitter and the gutter remains attached to one side of the web. This results in sheets which have the appearances of a double row of perforations, in the margin. In our country these are known as gutter-snipes.

This stamp was demonitized February 28th, 1937 and the total number of copies issued was 97,220,000.

Posta Ceskoslovenska 1919

Translated from the Hirsch-Franek Handbook
by W. L. Russell

(Continued from last issue)



Express stamps printed, but not issued, in unusual colors:

Triangular, 2 h with black overprint B

Rectangular, 5h perf $12\frac{1}{2}$ (also $11\frac{1}{2}$) with blue overprint C.

Light and dark shades of the overprint are not to be viewed as "unusual" colors, nor are the black (instead of blue) overprints on the Austrian Postage stamps of 6h and 1K to be considered as "unissued" stamps.

In addition to these, some stamps were held back and not issued because they were overprinted with a different overprint from that which we are accustomed to find on them. (In this category, of course, the 5f Reaper stamps with overprint D instead of the correct one, F). They are these:

With overprint A: 1h Karl VI PORTA, Turul 3 and 30f; Reaper 6f; Zita 50f; Express 2f.

With overprint B; Austrian P. Due 5K blue.

These kinds of Printer's Waste, with which the stamp format is often quite out of accord with the measurements of the overprint stereo, plainly shows that overprinting was only rarely done on small blocks, or on single stamps. Today it is hard to decide whether such overprints got out of the proofing room accidentally or for speculative purposes.

3. This most important of the various groups of stamp with defective or unsuccessful overprints, does not properly belong in the "unissued stamps" class, because it concerns Printers' Waste — i. e. such prints or print-products as the printers ordinarily would destroy as unsuccessful. With the "Posta Ceskoslovenska 1919" issue, however, the paper material — that is, the Austrian and Hungarian stamps — belonged exclusively to the Postal Authorities, and all Printers' Waste had to be returned to them on the grounds of Control. Thus the Printers' Waste escaped the first control (the Printers') which in the ordinary course of events would have ruthlessly discarded it, since no regular Printery delivery incomplete or damaged products to its clients. The Postal Authorities, which demanded this Printers' Waste as well as perfect stamps, did not take the viewpoint of a Printer, and valued the imperfect overprinted stamp stocks either according to their original face value, which was bad, or according to their future philatelic value, which was worse. The compromise between both standpoints (Treasury and Philately) resulted in the destruction of only portion of the Printers' Waste.

There are various sorts of Waste; Inverted overprints are most frequent, and appear on all values, even on the rarest Cz stamp, the 4K Granite paper. They originated through sheets being fed into the presses in inverted position, or through part of a sheet being stuck to the other part in inverted position. Since out of 118 stamps of this issue, about 75 values are known with inverted

overprints, we must conclude that these irregularities were deliberately produced.

One also finds on Austrian P. Dues an overprint sloping the wrong way —, i.e. from top left to bottom right. (This variation in position is also possible from lower right to upper left) Such overprints can, however, only appear on stamps of quadrilateral format, the sheets of which were fed into the machine about 90 degrees from the correct position.

Double overprints are either set both in the same direction, or in different directions. They occur as a rule through double inserting of the sheet in the machine, and we are not prepared to say whether this always happened accidentally. Rather incomprehensible and technically without foundation are the positive overprints on the gummed side of the stamps which are also provided with overprint on the face. These occur in all possible combinations, due to the sheets being inserted at least twice in the press and in various position. All these overprints have that look of "deliberate mistake," of which every such production gives public proof.

On sheets which were placed in the press very much out of position, one or more rows of stamps remained unprinted, so that stamp groups (pairs) with and without overprint originated. On sheets which were laid in the press irregularly, the overprints often show varying degree of slope.

The origin of other overprint irregularities are shown in the illustration on page 201. The individual hastily-stuck-together stamps were printed without reference to their arrangement, difference in value, and position in the sheet. As may be seen, the printing proceedings of the "Posta Ceskoslovenska 1919" issue offered inexhaustible possibilities in the matter of different kinds of varieties.

We have purposely treated the Printers' Waste in condensed form, since we accord it neither special value nor particular importance. Naturally, the less striking blemishes were able to evade the control and thus arrive in collectors' hands in the normal way; the predominating majority, however, reached the public through uncontrolled means. Most of these items of Printers' Waste (overprints in wrong colors, on stamps for which they were not intended, inverted, printed on back, double overprints, etc.) can't be described with the philatelic designation of "Printing Errors," but if they were issued as a genuine error, then they are presumed in actuality to be "Errors", issued in mistake by the Postal Authorities, i.e. without being noted in the official organ recording their sale. Therefore, Printing Errors can only be designated or valued as such, if they were sold at the Collectors' Counter or by the Central Administration without the Post being aware of their overprint defects.

Of course, all failures and overprints unsuitable for distribution had to be delivered so that they could be burned. In point of fact, on the 17th April 1920, in the Central Incinerators of the Prague C. P. O., the remainders of unoverprinted Austrian and Hungarian stamps were destroyed, as well as a part of the stocks already delivered by the Printers (but which had faulty overprints) and a portion of the unissued values. The face value of the destroyed stamps was Kc 2,043,342. It is an undoubted fact, however, that not ALL the Printers' Waste was burned, by any means, and that some one managed to get hold of a part of the stocks prior to destruction, and was able to distribute them publicly.

Since one of the reasons given for overprinting the stamps in the first place was "necessary saving measures," the official reason regarding the destruction of almost a whole quarter of the original stocks appears laughable, since it holds up to scorn the whole motive for the overprinting; and so does the official account of the destruction of a great quantity of unissued stamps Printers' Waste, with which the market was undoubtedly flooded in the years 1919-1922.

(To be continued)

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