

# THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

OFFICIAL MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE  
CZECHOSLOVAK PHILATELIC SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA

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## EDITORIAL

Many friends send us clippings of philatelic interest from the lay as well as philatelic publications, both in this country and Czechoslovakia. Often it is a very amusing experience to read their comments. The one which really tickled our funny bone was a question: "Did you notice the Colonial part of the recent Student Congress issue? With the old country being now a colony of the great union, is it an expression of a desire for liberation?" At one time stamps used for postage in what is now Czechoslovakia, bore the inscription "Grossdeutsch-esreich"; it was a colony in an empire which deflated fast. It was a colony in the Hapsburg empire. It took 300 years to liberate it from that bondage and we hope their present plight is of a shorter duration.

The American Philatelic Society advises collectors not to buy stamps of countries now behind the Iron Curtain. A similar suggestion was made in an editorial of the Collectors' Club Philatelist. Mr. Antony Walker, editor of Stamp Collecting (London) answers the editors of C. C. P. The one paragraph which sums it all is as follows: "Chronicle the Iron Curtain stamps by all means, even illustrate them, but do so with a healthy grin on your face, and leave it to the good taste of your readers whether they buy it or not. They won't! If you suppress information a whispering campaign which the Communists do so well will start among the collectors that 'so and so will be good; only fifty thousand sold; let you in on the ground floor,' and so on and so forth."

Whenever your editor gets hopelessly behind with his work he goes to his summer home for the week end and prays for rain. This year he carried his mail four times to the country and back home again. On the fifth trip (which, he fears is the last of this season), he had luck. He answered all his old mail, he is now working on this editorial and hopes to prepare the whole of the November Specialist for the printer. Some people complain about weather; he takes it in stride and hopes for rain occasionally to get his extra work done.

We forgot to let the members know that the stork visited the home of our treasurer. That is the reason why papa Sabol needs a little prodding now and then. We could get him away from the radio, we could pull him away from the TV set, but, brother, what a job to make him turn away from his heir! Congratulations, Ed and Fran.

We are nearing the end of the year and your officers will again be compelled to ask you to please pay your 1951 dues early. There is no philatelic organization which gives so much for so little, as does our Society. Your officers do their utmost to raise money to give you two or three dollars worth of printing for \$1.00. There are many members who understand the benefits and willingly contribute \$2.00 and then there are members who appreciate our efforts and contribute \$5.00. If you can afford it, will you please help by voluntarily increasing your dues? Send your check or postal note to Edward J. Sabol, 237 Radcliffe St., Bristol, Pa., as soon as possible. When Ed gets

through preparing the formula and washing the diapers, he'll send your receipt to the secretary. Thank you.

Among the philatelic advertisements which reach our desk in large quantities are many very interesting and striking examples. The latest of these is the one issued by the Monaco Philatelic Agency. Any member interested may write to: Postmaster General, Manager of the Office des Emissions de Timbres-Poste, Monaco-Ville, Principality of Monaco. Write for their list and mention our publication, if interested.

The ever popular Kollar catalogues are now being published by Pravda in Bratislava. The latest to reach our desk was a two part catalogue of USSR. The first part covers the years 1923-1941, the second the years 1942-1950. The interesting feature here is a picturing of the Cyrillic alphabet and its latin equivalents. Each part can be obtained from the publishers by sending 20 cents in U. S. commemorative stamps. Write to Filatelie Pravda, Jézenskeho ul. 14, Bratislava, Czechoslovakia.

With the last issue of the Specialist we took the liberty of sending you a prospectus of the magazine STAMPS and another from the firm of our member, B. J. Miller. If this venture meets with the approval of the firm and of our members, it is possible we can save about \$80.00 a year. If you subscribe to Stamps or if you order from Miller, be sure to mention the Specialist.

#### OUR PRAHA LETTER

In connection with the National Philatelic Exhibition held in Praha this fall, a commemorative sheet of four stamps will be issued. It will show four views of Praha; one of the 14th century, and one each of the years 1493, 1606 and 1794. A subscription is held for these through philatelic organizations and groups united in ROH. Irrespective of the number of organizations to which one may belong, only ONE will be sold to any individual. Subscribers to the new issue service come under the same regulations. Subscriptions for this sheet terminate September 12th. All foreign participants in the new issue service through POFIS (successor to ORBIS) will be cared for by this organization. Only by this means can collectors obtain a block of four sheet in mint condition. During the exhibition and at post offices throughout the republic one may purchase first day covers of this issue. The face value is 11.50 Kcs., the admission to the exhibition 8.50 Kcs., which makes the cost of the sheet a total of 20. Kcs. The designer and engraver of this sheet is the popular artist J. A. Svengsbir.

The recent 15. Kcs. air mail provisional with light violet overprint, can still be had at the Philatelic Agency in Praha but the supply is dwindling fast.

The annual year book of Czechoslovak collectors will be published during the Praha Exhibition. It will contain a resume of the work of the Federation and a complete listing of all philatelic groups in the Republic. All interested in this work are warned that the booklet will be issued in limited quantities.

Additions to the Czech catalog of stamps is being published serially in Ceskoslenska Filatelie. It is done by J. Mrnak and takes in all stamps issued through 1949.

On July 6th, 1950, the Ministry of Posts issued a post card propagating mining. The design represents three boys and below the legend "Hornictvi-povolani spravnych chlapcu" (Mining—the vocation of real boys). (Note of the editor: All this time we thought mining was a punishment inflicted upon the enemies of the proletariat.) These cards are sold for 2. Kcs. and have a representation of K. Gottwald with a 1.50 Kcs. value.

The post offices of Luhacovice and Velehrad used a special cancelling die during Cyril-Methodius Celebrations with the inscription "Modlime se za mir—pracujeme pro mir" (We pray for peace—we work for peace). In this program of peace manifestations an international conference of all Christian denominations took place as well as a great and grand pilgrimage to the Slavic Velehrad.

A new service for the territory of Czech counties was organized, entitled, "Postovni Filatelisticka Sluzba" with the initials POFIS (Postal Philatelic Service). This main service station with headquarters in Praha is subjected to the

central directorship of C. S. P. (branch A). This organization will take care of all auctions of stamps, Czecho and foreign; will buy and sell all postal paper both within the country and to foreign lands. Inland stamps are obtained for POFIS subscribers from the agency in Praha. Foreign stamps are supplied for the inland trade either through direct exchanges or through the central directorship of C. S. P. and then only in conformity to import and export regulations of the Ministry of Foreign Trade. POFIS is the central accounting office with two sub-groups (inland and foreign). All individual stamp shops are regulated through the inland sub-group and their tasks and duties are planned separately in each individual case.

A new series of regular stamps portraying Gottwald and an issue of air mails advertising the spas of Czechoslovakia may also be issued before this year closes.

#### A DISCOVERY?



Among the very interesting items shown us in recent weeks is the here illustrated used stamp. The finder of this variety, Mr. Joseph G. Mollmann, 4409 Glenway Ave., Cincinnati 5, Ohio, submits the photograph. We are told it is Scott No. 101A; the illustration suggests it is Scott No. 98. The peculiarity is the position of the digit "1" in the left shield which has the appearance of being ready to fall out as it is tipped about 15 degrees to the left. We ask our members to look through their duplicates for another copy; we should, especially, like to know the plate from which it came and its position thereon.

#### NEW MEMBERS

429. Dr. John Freehafer, 2925½ E. Venango St., Philadelphia 34, Pa.  
430. John J. Krivanek, 628 Montgomery St., San Francisco 11, Calif.

#### CORRECTIONS TO MEMBERSHIP LIST

317. Chas. Sosolik, Box 50, Bryan, Texas.  
355. Henry Rubin, GPO 3802, Sidney, N. S. W., Australia.

#### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

128. John J. Lisy, 4507 E. 131st St., Cleveland 5, Ohio.  
206. Melvin F. Klozar, 1200 E. Schaaf Rd., Cleveland, Ohio.  
281. John J. Novotny, 6308 Hollis Ave., Dallas, Texas.

#### FOR SALE

##### Large blocks of Czecho. — Hradcany issue

I have duplicate reconstructed mint sheets of 100 of the following Scott types A1 & 2: 1h, 15h, 50h blue, 50h violet, 80h (block of 50), 80h overprinted S. O., 100h overprinted S. O. (block of 70). Also blocks of 20 or larger: 1h, 50h blue, 50h violet, 75h, 80h, 30h S. O., 75h S. O. and 80h S. O. All priced at half catalogue. John Velek, 2229 Kimball, Chicago 47, Ill.

## The Sokols in Philately

By Alois Jicinsky



The American Sokol, Josef Cermak, leads the delegation from the U. S. in Praha in 1912.

The Czechs and Slovaks came to their present home during the Great Migration of the Nations in the fifth and sixth centuries. They were not a war-like people, but peace-loving tillers of the soil, hunters, and later, artisans. They were Christianized very early, and for that reason advanced quickly in culture. Being close to the large German nation, they suffered greatly from the German determination to rule over them, but fought them off. The Czech ruler, the Premyslids, desiring faster growth of arts and crafts in the towns and settlements, those paying the most taxes, imported numerous craftsmen from neighboring Germany. These people did not merge with the local population nor conform to the customs of the Czechs. They lived in their own way and spirit, and spread their influence to all classes of people wherever they were in close contact.

So by the twelfth and thirteenth centuries there were numerous towns in Bohemia and Moravia where the German element predominated. This condition lasted until the Hussite wars in the Fifteenth Century. This struggle of the valiant fighters Hus and Zizka was not only a fight for freedom of conscience and religion, but also for the emancipation of the Czech nation from the German colonizers, who greatly oppressed them. During these wars the Germans were expelled from Bohemian lands, and the Czechs lived in peaceful tranquillity until the Sixteenth Century when Jiri of Podebrad (George of Podebrad), a ruler of their own blood, tried to effect a general European peace. In this tranquil period the Germans began slowly to move into Czechoslovakia again, and once more started to Germanize the Czechs.

After the battle of Bila Hora (White Mount) the nation was at its lowest ebb. Then followed the long Thirty Years War, which did untold damage and exiled the best Czech patriots, among whom was Jan Amos Komensky. This war caused the population to fall off by more than half. The real calamity, however, was the loss of their independence to the House of Hapsburg. These rulers oppressed and Germanized them by brutal force.

It became so bad that in the Eighteenth Century the only people then speaking Czech were peasants in the country and what few patriots were left in the towns. They wrote the grammar of the Czech language in German so



Submitted essay for a stamp honoring Francis Palacky,  
historian and patriot leader

that at least some traces of it were saved for posterity. However, when conditions were at their worst, the sound core of the nation asserted itself. A few patriots began to write books in Czech and edit newspapers, spreading them among the people. The famous historian Palacky (whose history of the Czech nation was first written in German) encouraged all concerned to more and better efforts by picturing the glorious past of the nation.

When the 1848 revolt against the absolutism and feudal system all over Europe brought better political conditions even to Austria, it was clear that the Czechs would again rise to their former glory and independence. For a time after 1848, Austrian interior minister Alexander Bach tried to keep the old order in power, but the military disasters in Italy brought on a financial crisis in Austria, and by 1860 the old state absolutism was on its way out. That was the opportunity for which the nation and its leaders were waiting. Although Praha and other large towns were practically all German, the Czech patriots in cities and the peasants in the country made great strides in breaking up the three hundred-year subjugation to the Germans. Everywhere there sprang up singing and reading clubs and art and theater circles. The Czechs began to obtain a majority even in purely German corporations. Finally in 1861 Praha, after many years, inaugurated a Czech as Primate of the city.

In those days there were no public gymnastic clubs or associations in Praha, either Czech or German. Those who wanted to indulge in physical culture had to patronize one of the two private institutions then operating there. The director of one was Dr. Miroslav Tyrš who believed that if the people were



First Sokol commemorative cancellation, used in 1920,  
the first Congress after the liberation of Czechoslovakia



**Dr. Miroslav Tyrš, founder of the Sokols, featured on the 1932 Ninth Sokol commemoratives, which also marked the 100th anniversary of his birth**

to become their old selves, they must first be healthy in body, for "in a healthy body is a healthy spirit." To that end he and some of his friends decided to start a gymnastic society, the first task of which would be to inculcate in the people a desire for health and strength. This society was founded February 16, 1862, by M. Tyrš and his friends under the name of "Sokol" (Falcon). The first president to be elected was the unselfish and democratic Jindřich Fugner. This new society was truly democratic, the members hailing each other as brothers, addressing themselves as "thou" and using "Nazdar" ("success to you") as their society's greeting. For the activities of Sokol chapters Dr. Tyrš formulated a set of gymnastic rules, differing from all others in that it considered the esthetic as well as physical views.

The Sokol movement, publicly fostering only physical culture, was secretly working also for the liberation of the nation. This was soon felt all over the country. From Praha the movement quickly spread far and wide, even beyond the country's borders. In 1862 eight new chapters were formed in Bohemia and Moravia, and soon after, the idea took root in Poland, Slovenia, Croatia, and even in the United States. The year 1865 saw a chapter founded in St. Louis, 1867 in New York, and later in Cleveland, Cedar Rapids, Detroit, Omaha, and elsewhere. In 1878 all the American chapters united in the **National Sokol League**, which arranged great competitive exercises attended by members of all the American chapters. The first of these exercises was held in New York in 1878, and the second in Detroit in 1881. The first Sokol publication, "The American Sokol," established in 1879, was warmly received, and when Josef Cermak, the well-known and universally-esteemed Sokol worker became its editor, the magazine achieved still greater popularity.

From the foundation of the first chapter in 1862 until the second World War the movement spread rapidly, not only in Slav countries, but every place where Czechs and Slovaks were to be found. At the end of the Nineteenth and the beginning of the Twentieth Centuries, following in the steps of Tyrš and Fugner, prime leaders of the Sokol movement were Jos. Scheiner, as president, and Jindřich Vanicek, as leader, of all the Slav Sokol chapters. The Czech Sokol chapters, combining into a Czech Sokol league, arranged meets from time to time, even under the Austrian domination, in Praha called All-Sokol Congresses. The first Congress was held in 1882. The second to sixth were held in 1891, 1895, 1901, 1907, and 1912. Sokols from Poland, Russia, Slovenia, Serbia, Croatia, and Bulgaria participated in these congresses. American Sokols did not come to the "Old Country" until 1887 for the proposed second congress. This one had to be called off because of pressure from the Austrian government. However, from 1907, the year of the fifth congress, the American Sokols never failed to participate in all congresses, for "what heart joins, ocean cannot divide."

The first six congresses, held while Austria was in power, could not be expected to be reflected philatelically because the government turned a suspicious eye on any Sokol movement. But what a difference after the start of the First World War! The movement proved itself in accordance with the wishes of its founders. Its members were responsible for the formations of the Czech Legions in Russia, France, and Italy. On their return to their freed homeland the Legionnaires formed the core of the Czechoslovak Army. The





Issued 1938 for Winter Sokol Games

Austrian government knew that the Czechoslovak resistance movement on foreign soil was sponsored by the Sokol, so it ordered disbandment of the Czech Sokol League. Its leaders, including President Scheiner, were jailed. The members did not falter, and in 1918 at the formation of the Czechoslovak Republic, they helped to organize, protect, and build up the new state. Sokols gratefully remember now, as then, the American President, Woodrow Wilson, and his efforts to liberate the Czech people.

During the First Republic and up to the time of the Second World War, four congresses were held. The first one was held in 1920 and was commemorated by a special cancel. Not until the 8th congress in 1926 did the postal authorities join in commemorating with the four jubilee stamps of T. G. Masaryk overprinted "VIII. SLET VSESOKLEKY." These stamps are now rare.

For the ninth congress, held in memory of the 100th anniversary of the birth of M. Tyrš, a set of four stamps with the picture of Tyrš was issued. This set also is in good demand. Later the post office issued the same stamp in a small size (the 60 haleru), for regular postage.

For the tenth jubilee of the All Sokol Congress in 1938 the post office issued stamps in connection with the winter sports and the meeting of the Congress. The first set shows a falcon about to take wing in the High Tatras. The second set, the Congress' own, shows the picture of the second founder of the Sokols, Jindrich Fugner, from the wood engraving by M. Svabinsky. This congress was held in a tense atmosphere, everyone feeling the threat of war, but the Czech citizens did not leave anyone in doubt that they would defend their country with blood and iron.

However, came Munich, and with it another subjugation of the Czechs and the joyless life of the Slovaks in their own supposedly free but actually vassal state. During the Second World War Czechs paid even more dearly than during the first. Hitler, with his very able assistant, the Sudetan German K.-H. Frank, knowing well what dangerous opponents they had in the Sokols, disbanded it in 1941 and put its members in jail by the hundreds. There they were mercilessly tortured. How well the Nazis did their job of extermination is shown by the fact that out of 842 imprisoned in the Oswiecim concentration camp, only 68 Sokol leaders returned alive. The war also laid its heavy hand



Jindrich Fugner, Co-Founder of the Sokols, featured on the 1938 issue for the Summer Games



The 5Kcs. value issued on March 7, 1948, for the 11th Sokol Congress. Two other values of the same design (1.50Kcs. and 3Kcs.) were issued on the same day.

on the whole nation and caused great suffering. Not until May, 1945, was the nation liberated. For the second time the nation remembered an American president, this time Franklin D. Roosevelt, who in 1943 had already agreed with Dr. Benes that when the war was over "that which brought on such a catastrophe as was caused by Munich must forever be eliminated."

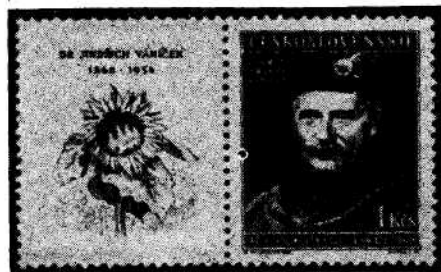
Although during the next four years the Sokol members were not able to drill very much, not having the proper equipment, which had been either stolen or destroyed by the Nazis, they recovered sufficiently to hold the eleventh congress in 1948. With even small cooperation from outside Czechoslovakia, this one was the biggest and most successful. Thirty-five thousand men and an equal number of women, 50,000 teen-age boys and almost that many girls, and about 90,000 school children of both sexes drilled at this Congress. The post office stressed the significance of this by issuing two sets of stamps. On the first set was a reproduction of an allegory by M. Svabinsky and the second honored the memory of the Sokol leaders Scheiner and Vanicek.

#### Epilogue

Again the falcon's wings are shorn, this time not by the German eagle but by the bear, who has suddenly become a powerful international figure. It is well known that a bear is usually a larger and stronger creature than any bird. In this respect the immediate future is not bright, especially since this bear is steadily growing in size and strength.

Physical culture and health are actively promoted in the U. S. S. R. Many periodicals received from there contain photographs of youths engaged in organized mass displays. By no means as large or skillfully performed as Sokol meets, they nevertheless bear an outward resemblance to them. The difference lies rather in the underlying ideology and purpose.

Dr. Tyr's concept of the goal of the Sokols reads in part as follows: "To preserve the nation in the full vigor of its powers, in bodily, spiritual and moral health . . ." The present rulers of Czechoslovakia no doubt promote physical



Jindrich Vanicek, honored on the 1948 issue to commemorate the 11th Sokol Congress in Prague



culture in their homeland with much the same purpose in mind. We maintain, however, that much depends upon the meaning of "spiritual and moral health." To some it may mean the negation of many traditional values by which individuals and nations in Western civilization guide, or should guide, their lives. To them it apparently means the destruction of many things which a majority values in order that a minority may impose its concept of the ideal society.

We prefer to interpret it as did the Sokol leaders, to whom political, social, economic, and religious liberty were essential elements in the good society. They did not ruthlessly seek to impose their will on others, nor to occupy and plunder other countries. Political activity they engaged in, but as a defensive measure against foreign domination.

In his address to the Sokols in 1947, Premier Gottwald stated that the Slavic peoples should never allow another German "Drang nach Osten." He said nothing about a Soviet "Drang nach Westen." Some day the Czechoslovak nation will regain its rightful place among the free nations of the world. When it does, the falcon will again unfold his wings, guided to victory by the ideals of her early leaders.

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## Stamps of the Czechoslovak Field Post in Russia

(Continued from last issue)

After the printing of the stamps the stones were washed so that an additional printing is impossible.

We have mentioned that the stamps were reproduced six times and therefore we have six types of each stamp. (If sufficient interest is shown, we may some day show the differences of these types.)

### Unissued Stamps

Under this heading we place essays, trial printings, and stamps returned to Praha where they were gummed and perforated.

Essays of designs volunteered for the Irkutsk issue have appeared on the market relatively late and in large numbers, so that we feel justified in expressing an opinion that they are only reproductions of submitted designs. Five designs (50-K, a soldier doing guard duty; 1-r, a military train; 1-r, two soldiers at a camp fire; 1-r, a scout; 1-r, volunteer with rifle and bayonet) are printed together on one sheet in the same color, either green, blue, violet, red or brown. The philatelic value of these essays is very insignificant.

Trial printings. The issued stamps were printed in green, carmine, and orange (one sheet each of 25-k and 50-k) and perforated 11½. These were all destroyed.

Any perforation other than 11½ must be classified as "not so issued."

### Overprints

On this Irkutsk issue we find several types of overprints and we mention these but casually. We have very few authentic reports on them and immediately after the return of the stamps to Praha these overprints were not heard of. Only after several years passed did these items come on the market and they appear in different colors, overprints inverted, etc. A word to the wise should be sufficient. Up to the present these overprints are known only on unused copies.

### The Praha Issue

In August, 1919, a "Charity Committee in Czechia" was organized in Praha, to make a collection and send gifts to the Czechoslovak soldiers in Vladivostok. On the suggestion of J. Rossler-Orovsky this committee issued a special commemorative stamp as designed by Lieut. Rybak, a legionnaire recently returned from Siberia, and a large issue (200,000 subjects), together with printing material for an eventual reissue, was sent to Russia in two shipments: one half via England and Canada, the other through Trieste and Japan. The first shipment reached Vladivostok in November, 1919, considerably damaged by dampness and cold; the second shipment arrived in comparatively good condition in the beginning of 1920.

The design of the stamp represents the Czech Lion in an elliptical oval framed by a legend "Posta Ceskoslovenske Armady Sibirske" (Siberian Czechoslovak Army Post); the outer part of the stamp is filled with designs of modern and medieval implements of war, with a Hussite chalice and bible above the post horn and the date "1919" below. In the corners are found linden leaves and berries. The appearance of the stamp reminds us of the early issues of Russia. The design measures 20x25 mm. No values are mentioned.

These stamps were sold at 25 kopeks each; the proceeds to be used for charitable purposes. The color of the stamps was: a blue frame with the center in brick red.

Because the majority of the stamps reached Vladivostok in 1920, the year 1919 was covered by an overprint reading "1920."

This overprint was applied in black ink, either dull or shiny. Although it has been claimed this overprint was applied to the stamps in Russia, it seems most likely it was applied in Praha and sent with the second shipment.

As has been previously stated the service of the field post was used advantageously by the civil population and this is the reason given for a surcharge,

in addition to the "1920" overprint. This surcharge was applied in green in the following denominations: 2k, 3k, 5k, 10k, 25k, 35k, 50k, and 1-ruble, all on dark blue and brick red.

It is generally believed that these surcharges were applied in Praha.

The quantities issued of the different values as well as of stamps with but the overprint purported to be authentic cannot be accepted seriously because those who supplied the information had material interests at heart.

**The Printing**

The stamps were printed by a process which showed the central design (the Czech Lion) in relief (embossed). The stamps were printed in pairs, the central design (white lion in a red field) separately. The embossing of the design as well as the colors employed (brick red for center and blue for frame) were done in one operation and stamped out the stamps on paper already gummed, giving the appearance of perforations to the outside. It is therefore impossible to have a stamp of a different perforation gauge or two or more stamps set-tenant, but these must be classified as stamps "not so issued" or as unfinished products. Both the dies and the printing are the work of K. Kolman in Praha.

As has been noted, these stamps were printed in pairs and as each die was prepared separately, there are two distinct dies or types, easily recognized:

Type I. Small handle on sword in left frame.

Type II. Large handle on sword in left frame.

There are two other noticeable varieties between the two types, but these are most pronounced.

It is impossible to have a scarcity of one or the other type since they were printed in pairs.

Printing of the overprints and surcharges: The year date "1920" in black and values in green form two different types. These types, however, are minor and the difference lies only in the thickness of the numerals.

There are two distinct types in the 1-r surcharge:

Type I. The base of the "R" runs parallel with the base of the "1."

Type II. The base of the "R" is about 1¼ mm. higher than the base of the "1."

(to be continued)



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