

THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

OFFICIAL MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE
CZECHOSLOVAK PHILATELIC SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA

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Editor Frank J. Kovarik, 8748 Rockefeller Ave., Brookfield, Illinois

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EDITORIAL

In the September issue of the Specialist we published a list of delinquent members. Your treasurer has asked for it many times in the past but we declined contending there could be an air of stigma attached to such treatment. Yet the treasurer tells us it was more effective than sending out special notices and so we learn from experience. Incidentally, only one member wrote this should not have been done.

One way to avoid publication such as that mentioned above would be to pay dues early. Several members had already mailed in their 1958 dues and your officers are grateful to them. With costs mounting on every side your Society finds it difficult to keep above water. We need more members and, of course, we could use more associate and patron members. We must explain this to the new members: Our regular membership is \$2 per year, the member gets the Specialist as it is published, he is entitled to the use of the Society's library and can take advantage of the Society's sales department. The Associate member pays \$5 per year and besides the privileges enjoyed by the regular member he gets the entire volume mailed flat at the end of the year. The Patron member pays \$10 per year (or more) and besides the privileges of the regular member he gets a volume of the Specialist bound in cloth as soon after the first of the year as the bookbinder gets the work done. These last two types of membership are the sustaining members who help financially to continue our work.

A very good friend of ours sends us photos of specialized material of the 1947 issue of Saar. It consists of die proofs, plate proofs and color trials and is in the hands of the artist designer. We promised to mention it in our editorial and if anyone is interested in this type of material he should contact the artist, Mr. V. K. Jonynas, 86-19 150 St., Jamaica 35, L. I., N. Y.

In the last issue of the Specialist the readers were treated to the beginning of a series of articles entitled "The Great Controversy." It is impossible to satisfy every reader with the contents of every issue of any publication. So far we had three letters of praise and no letter of condemnation, though it is the latter we expected. We shall accept no further articles on the subject pro or con the Revolutionary Issues of 1918 unless they could teach us something positive.

It is not too early for our participation in Compex 1958 which will be held in Chicago May 30-June 1, 1958. As this exhibition will contain many exhibits of diverse countries we hope our members will concentrate on stamps of Czechoslovakia, which will be an advertising medium for the Society. It is possible we may have to limit showing of non-Czecho material and in the

Czecho section allow a wider scope of freedom.

We mentioned in a previous issue that Compex is an ideal time to hold our election of officers. This is also the right time to announce that your editor is about ready to throw in the towel. We have edited your publication since 1942; we enjoyed the work immensely because we succeeded in making many helpful contacts which enabled us to bring to you much good information and we have gained many excellent friends. It is obvious that in a position like ours we also made one or two enemies but we must ignore them because life is too short to spend it in bitterness.

A short time ago we mentioned that one of our members possesses a Hungarian Field Post cancellation on a 10h stamp of Hradčany. Our member has gone more deeply into the study of this heretofore unknown cancel and has sent his comments which we add herewith:

"Novotny's catalog of 1949, Section III, page 63 has a reproduction of that Hungarian Field Post cancellation. However, I must state that the town that he mentioned never had any Hungarian Field Post. According to Kvasnička the town was Levoča, which is a more likely proposition. The thing that I do not understand is that according to Kvasnička this hand stamp was used by Hungarian troops when they reoccupied that town. I do know for a fact that no Hungarian troops made any offensive moves in June 1919 because Bela Kun and his Army were too careful about it. They all were afraid of the armies surrounding them at the time. So it still remains a mystery to me. Kvasnička told me that he saw a couple of covers with that cancellation addressed to Hungary and therefore he feels that Hungarian soldiers must have been writing letters home. On the other hand there was no postage required on Hungarian Army mail."

Member Robert E. Breeding of Thompsonville, Conn., writes us that his collection of Czecho Hradčany and Masaryk issues was exhibited at the Connecticut Philatelic Society Exhibition in New Haven and received the top award in the foreign class. At the same society's Barbecue and Exhibition he obtained not only the best in the class but also the best in the Show. It is advertising of this nature that helps our Society in the long run and promotes a better understanding of our specialty.

Your editor visited the American Philatelic Congress in Norfolk where no Czecho material was shown but where he had the pleasure of meeting a member, Dr. Southgate Leigh and the doctor's son. Member George Turner, president of the Congress, and Admiral Jesse Johnson made sure to introduce us as "editor of the Czechoslovak Specialist" which is a good plug for the Society. The following week on our return trip we stopped in Baltimore to view the Postal Stationery Exhibition. Czecho material was represented by our sales manager Wolfgang Fritzsche; unfortunately we had to leave before the Show was fully mounted.

In recent months our very active member John Velek gave talks on the stamps of Czechoslovakia at the Hawthorne Stamp Club and the Jack Knight Air Mail Club. This too, is good propaganda work for the Society and helps to keep our phase of stamp collecting in the limelight.

CHICAGO GROUP MEETING

The regular meeting of the group will take place Sunday, October 20, but as this copy must be in the hands of the printer before then a full report will appear in the December Specialist.

The November meeting will take place Sunday, the 17th, at 2:30 P.M. at the home of George Havlik, 2336 56 Ave., Cicero. Use side entrance please.

The December meeting is tentatively scheduled for Dec. 15 at the home of Frank Kovarik, 8748 Rockefeller Ave., Brookfield, Ill.

NEW YORK GROUP MEETING

The first regular meeting of the season was held in the Collectors Club Friday, September 20, with 7 members present: Wm. Reimer-Deutsch, L. M. Horechny, E. Michaelson, P. Flynn, Geo. Koplowitz, N. Feiwelsohn and J. Stein.

Dr. Reimer-Deutsch showed his newly formed specialty, the Hradčany issues which included proofs, specimen stamps, color trials, cancellations and all other related material. The talk which accompanied the showing was very interesting because the doctor understands his subject.

The future meetings were discussed. The October meeting will feature a showing of the commemorative sheets of the New York World Fair of 1939 and 1940 and the Toronto Fair sheet of 1940 by member Rud. Secky. On Nov. 15 member L. M. Horechny will show his specialized Newspaper stamps which always evoke a great deal of interest. No December meeting is contemplated because of the Christmas holidays.

A discussion on the possible reasons for poor attendance at meetings closed without a solution. The Collectors Club is centrally located and the transportation is of the best of any metropolitan area in the United States. Every member is welcome to these meetings which are held every Friday evening at 22 East 35th St.

Another problem taken up concerned the delinquent members. It has been decided to contact dropped members of the New York area, make an effort to bring them back into the Society or learn the reason for their divorce from our organization. Though every specialistic group has the same grievances the New York group, at least in its area, intends to do something about it.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

About a month ago member Joseph J. Jiranek presented the library with a manuscript on the first essays and proofs of Czechoslovakia and illustrated by the photostatic process with such items as he had or could borrow. Since the presentation he has added much to the original listing of items as well as several pages of illustrations. Any member who possesses a quantity of this type of material (exclusive of printer's waste) is requested to contact him. His address is: Jos. J. Jiranek, Jr., 5032 W. 25th St., Cicero 50, Ill. When this grand opus is about complete we hope to find some Maecenas who will underwrite the cost of the cuts and then publish it in the Specialist. It is very interesting and Joe succeeded in placing much valuable information into comparatively small space considering the extensiveness of the subject.

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Tips

By Leo Eaton

PRAGUE, CZECHOSLOVAKIA—In order to travel from Berlin to Prague and at the same time avoid East Germany, one must fly around Bohemia via Munich, to Vienna, and then to Prague. We boarded our plane at the Berlin Tempelhof Airport, and were very much pleased to meet a well known Chicago philatelist, namely J. Steindler, who specializes in Suez and Danube ship covers and cancellations. Mr. Steindler proved to be very pleasant company until he left us at Munich, and we really enjoyed every minute of it. In Vienna we changed planes and on an SAS plane we continued our journey to Prague. Here at the airport we came through customs within a few minutes and a half an hour later we found ourselves in the Palace Hotel right in the middle of the city. Our stay, which was really a pleasant one in every respect, gave me a chance to learn more about the state of stamp collecting in a country which, as far as the form of government is concerned, is so different from ours. I went to the government agency Artia, which regulates the trade with the outside world, and the two gentlemen who are in charge of this department are Mr. Prokop and Mr. Bohm. These two men, who take care of all foreign transactions, tried their utmost to make our stay as pleasant as possible. Mr. Bohm took us around, and we paid a visit to one of their local salesrooms, where stamps are bought and sold to and from local collectors. The store was very roomy. It is located on Prikopech, which is one of Prague's largest and busiest streets. There were stamps of post-war Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Poland, and Russia prominently on display, but very little is shown of pre-war issues. The store at this hour was busy with a few collectors buying some of the mentioned material, and naturally I was very anxious to find out something more about prices. To shop there at the official rate of 7 crowns to one dollar is absolutely impossible, but at the so-called Tourist rate of 21 crowns to a dollar one eventually could find a bargain which might be worth while purchasing. In general, it is not so easy because the prices, in comparison with the present world market conditions, are entirely out of line. Should Czechoslovakia ever try again to export other than new issues, prices would have to be adjusted in order to make them agreeable to the West. While in Prague, I did manage to purchase a few items, and thanks to these two gentlemen, I found the scarce gutter pair (not tete beche) of Czechoslovakia No. 1. I never saw this rare item before and was very glad to be able to purchase it. Other rare and interesting items are the Siberia Scott No. 31-33 overprinted for parcel post use to Yugoslavia, and some nice errors of the first three air mail sets of Czechoslovakia. To mention a few of the post-war issues which, according to the information I gathered, should turn out to be somewhat better and which are recommended to be bought are Czechoslovakia Scott No. 719 perf. and imperf., 736-739, especially 737 used, and the late Komensky 60 heller stamp which comes in a small sheetlet of four stamps. All these items, I was told, are at the present time worth more than four times face value. To sum it up, I believe it will still take some time before Czechoslovakia will be able to retake its former prominent place which it used to occupy in the world stamp trade.

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NEW MEMBERS

- 595. Robert E. Mitchell, 3833 So. Oak Park Ave., Berwyn, Ill.
- 596. Jindřich Nováček, Horní Černosice 184 u Prahy, Czechoslovakia.
- 297. SP-2 John Jasinski, 8239 Peach Orchard Rd., Baltimore 22, Md.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

- 547. Ralph A. Palmer, 11630 Wallace St., Chicago 28, Ill.

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STAMP MARKET TIPS by Leo Eaton

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Czechoslovakia—As I have mentioned before, this year of 1957, being a Scout year, is being philatelically honored all over the world. One of the earliest Scout issues is that of Czechoslovakia (1918). There are many pros and cons as to the validity of this issue, and collectors are divided in their opinions. These lines should bring more light to the issue, which is not listed by Scott, though Zumstein, one of Europe's leading catalogs, lists it as Nos. 1 and 2, and the same two values overprinted for President Masaryk as Nos. 3 and 4. Zumstein does state that Nos. 3 and 4 were issued just to exploit collectors, but gives full catalog status to Nos. 1 and 2, priced at 9.00 Swiss Francs mint and 6.50 used; Nos. 3 and 4 are listed as 440 and 380 Francs, respectively. These figures are, in my estimation, somewhat low, and a used set of Nos. 1-2 is easily worth \$3 mint and \$3.50 used, while Nos. 3 and 4 are worth full Zumstein, but are very hard to find at this price.

And now the story behind this debateable issue.

Prior to the bloodless revolution, which took place October 28, 1918, there were many forces working and planning for the establishment of the new nation. Legions of Czechoslovakia were fighting in France with the French Army. In Siberia an Army of 80,000 men fought independently and controlled the Trans-Siberian Railroad, playing an extremely important part in the maintenance of an Eastern Front after the Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917.

In America plans, money, and material aid of many kinds were being prepared to support the other more active fronts. This same sort of planning and preparedness was being actively carried on in the Czechoslovak homeland, but because of the necessity of secrecy, all activities had to be carried on Underground, with the death penalty hovering over everyone who participated. Because freedom from the Austro-Hungarian Empire was the main idea of the times, the home-front effort was a cooperative venture. The various segments of the Underground movement were assigned definite duties and responsibilities.

The Scouts were assigned the duty of handling the Official Mail transmission for the National Committee of Liberation. They of course would not have anything to do with the regular or business mails, but only with the Official communications between the various elements of the National Committee. They assumed this job on November 7, 1918, and continued only until November 25, 1918, except for the honorable task of again assuming the carrying of the mails on December 21, 1918, the day of entry of the newly elected President T. G. Masaryk into Prague, the capital of the new State.

Their method of service was as follows: Mail to be transmitted through official channels was brought to Scout headquarters, where the stamps were affixed, the 10 Heller blue on cards and the 20 Heller red on letters. Carriers then took the mails and delivered them to the addressee, who paid the delivering Scout the amount shown in the stamps on the letter. The Scouts were to keep this money for their services, but a fund was established into which the individual Scouts could contribute from their receipts. This fund was then used to help maintain the needy Scouts so that they could continue serving.

About a week before the revolution M. Knapp ordered the two stamps from the Kolman Printing Firm in Vinohrady. The printing of each value was done by one die which, besides printing the stamp, embossed the central design (consisting of the Czech Royal Lion, the lettering at top and bottom) and cut the outer edges of the stamp to resemble perforations. These edges, however, cannot be called perforations because each stamp was printed and

cut individually, thus, neither a block nor a pair can exist. The upper legend "Posta Ceskych Skautu" means "Czech Scout Post," and the two bottom lines "Ve Sluzbach Narodni Vlady" means "In the service of the national government."

Because of the various ink mixtures, there exist about three shades of each color of each value. The 10 Heller exists in dark blue, violet blue, and light blue; the 20 Heller exists in dark red, light red, and rose.

When pasted on covers, these stamps were cancelled by a circular postmark with the letters "NV," standing for the Czech legend, "National Committee." In addition, there also exist oblong postmarks which were used only for mail actually posted at National Committee headquarters. These postmarks have the legend in Czech "National Committee, of Czechoslovakia, in Prague," and are very RARE on covers.

Although these stamps are not listed in many world catalogs, this story shows that they did play a very proper and basic role in the transmission of Official Mail for the then Provisional Government, which later became the Official government. Even though up to this time the stamps have been of interest only to the specialists of Czechoslovakian philately, collectors of Scout stamps, now becoming so numerous, will surely take a heavy toll of this limited issue. It should be remembered that these stamps were not printed or planned for philatelic circles, but served an actual need, and therefore deserve recognition as legitimate issues.



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Parade Of New Issues

Commemorative stamp "Third Congress of Agricultural Cooperatives"



On the occasion of the III Congress of Agricultural Cooperatives having taken place in Prague, the Ministry of Communications issued a single commemorative stamp of 35 hal., green.

The stamp was recess-printed by the Post Printing Office in Prague in sheets of 50 copies, vertical form, dimension of the stamp picture 23 mm by 41 mm.

Validity for postage from 22nd March, 1957.

On the First Day cover designed by František Hudeček, engraved by Jaroslav Goldschmied, are two stamps stuck on.

Commemorative Issue "250 Years of Engineering Schools in Prague"



To celebrate the 250th Anniversary of the founding of Engineering Schools in Prague in 1707 the Ministry of Communications issued 4 commemorative stamps of the following values and topics:

- a) 30h, The portrait of J. Božek, inventor and mechanician of the Polytechnic in Prague. The design by Jan Podhajský, painter-artist, the engraving by Jan Mráček.
- b) 60h, The portrait of Frant. J. Gerstner, Post Office director and professor of the Polytechnic in Prague. Design by Jan Podhajský, engraving by Ladislav Jirka.
- c) 60h, The portrait of Ladislav Skuherský, professor of the Polytechnic in Prague, the design by Jan Podhajský, the engraving by Ladislav Jirka.
- d) 1.40 Kčs, The building in Husova ulice in Prague in which the Czech Polytechnic was placed. Design by Dr. Ing. V. Kozák, engraving by Bohdan Doule.

The colours of the stamps in the order as above: Blue, brown, red and blue violet. The stamps were recess-printed by the Post Printing Office in Prague in sheets of 50 stamps. Dimension of the stamp No. a)-c) 23 mm by 30 mm (vertical form), No. d) 30 mm by 23 mm (horizontal form).

Validity for postage from 25th May 1957.

The First Day cover was designed by Jan Podhajský and engraved by Bedřich Housa.

Commemorative Stamps "Exhibition of Young Philatelists Collections — Pardubice 1957"

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50	★		Boy Scout stamps, 2 sets, different color shades ----- 5.50

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the "Old Post Office—New Communications Exhibition" both sponsored by Mr. Alois Neuman, Minister of Communications and Mr. František Kahuda, Minister of Education and Culture, took place from 8th to 23rd June 1957, at Pardubice.

On this occasion the Ministry of Communications issued on June 8th 1957 two commemorative stamps in the following denominations, motives and colours:

- a) 30h, A pioneer with a bugle and standard, green and red,
- b) 60h, A little girl setting free from her hands a dove holding a letter in the bill, dark brown and light blue.

The author of both motives is Mario Stretti, painter artist, the engravings are by Jiří Švengsbír.

The stamps were printed by the Post Printing Office in Prague, the 30h value by recess print combined with photogravure, in sheets of 25, the 60h value by recess print from flat plate in sheets of 4 copies. Both the stamps are of vertical form, 30 mm by 49 mm in dimension.

Validity for postage from 8th June, 1957.

At the same time two First Day covers showing a picture of young philatelists, one cover with both the stamps, the other without the stamps.

The author of the designs is Mario Stretti, painter artist, the engraving is by Jiří Švengsbír.

Commemorative Issue "Lidice"



To commemorate the 15th anniversary of the extermination of LIDICE falling on 10th June 1957, the Ministry of Communications issued on June 8th, 1957, two commemorative stamps, the 30h in black, the 60h in red and black. Both the stamps were designed by professor Karel Svolinský.

The first (30h) stamp shows a tragical face of a woman, partly in mourning veil, the second (60 h) stamp features the symbol of the Garden of Friendship at Lidice, a rose growing up from the ruins in dark background.

Both the stamps were printed by the Post printing office in Prague, the first by recess print, in sheets of 50, the second bicoloured stamp by recess print from flat plate in sheets of 10 copies. Dimensions of both the stamps 23 mm by 30 mm, vertical form.

Validity for postage from June 10th, 1957.

At the same time a First Day cover designed by professor Karel Svolinský, engraved by Jindra Schmidt, was issued.

(All New Issues illustrations have been reduced one-half)

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The Great Controversy

REVOLUTIONARY STAMPS OF 1918

(Continued from last issue)

"According to the law of Dec. 10, 1918, relative to the Transition procedures in Slovakia, it is permitted to use stationery, revenue stamps and postage stamps, if marked by the Government of Czechoslovakia. Consequently Minister Dr. Šrobár ordered from the firm J. Štenc in Praha four zinc plates for the overprinting of Hungarian stamps and stationery. The legend was "Československá Pošta" in three lines. The plates were forwarded to Dr. Šrobár in Žilina Jan. 10, 1919. As the re-occupation of Slovakia proceeded it was discovered that the Hungarians on their withdrawal had left a very small number of postage stamps. For this reason and after a consultation with the Postal Administration in Praha it was decided not to issue any provisional stamps. As a keepsake a few overprints were made in Žilina by the printer B. Pokorný. The plates are in the possession of the Slovak Government and were removed from Žilina to the new seat of the Government in Bratislava. None of these overprints were put in circulation and the general public had no access to them."

On this the "Český Filatelista" commented:

"Before the issue of the stamps described above, the Revolutionary committee in Praha, which at that time issued the Praha Revolutionary stamps, overprinted some Hungarian stamps and sent them to Slovakia. Although these stamps were not accepted by the government, they were used at various places for franking letters. The overprinted stamps (about 12 sets) are similar to the second Praha Revolutionary issue with the inscription "Československá Státní Pošta". Even though these stamps were used for franking they can not be considered official, but as a private issue (meaning Skalice)."

The provisional stamps mentioned by Director Pilát, (Šrobárs) are nothing more than semi-official essays. They were not for sale at any agency and the public never saw them. The advice concerning the number overprinted conflicts; some say that only a few were overprinted, others claim very many. We know of one case, where a dealer bought between 80 and 150 sets at once, containing 20 overprinted values.

This negative opinion of "Český Filatelista" of the Revolutionary overprints was not so bad, although it is brief, superficial and inadequate, but the main thing is, it did not last. It also created suspicion by giving only brief information about new Czechoslovak issues and then going all out with detailed description of dubious overprints on postage dues and procuring for its readers stamps of little value, such as samples (for face value plus surtax), additional allotments of printers waste, black prints etc.

I had to deviate considerably in order to recall to readers the stale atmosphere of the periodical "Český Filatelista" at the time our very first classic stamps and also the Revolutionary overprints were being issued. This atmosphere, in which a determined opposition was not healthy, gave considerable help to the Revolutionary profiteers and caused numerous collectors to delight for 15 years in the collecting of stuff of no consequence. Also, it greatly increased our work when we wrote the monograph "Československé Známky" in 1932-34. This work could have been done better at the time of each issue.

Like many others, I had collected stamps since I was 6 years old, but between 1915 and 1922 I interrupted active collecting. For that reason I am not conversant with the conditions in the Klub Českých Filatelistů as I joined it in 1923. However, I do remember the enthusiastic meetings, the fervor at each new issue of Czechoslovak stamps and the bitter disappoint-

ment at the scarcity of Revolutionary overprints. The club periodical refused to recognize them and never illustrated them. Some lucky collectors had a few of them on postally used envelopes. Interesting details about them were found only in foreign periodicals, sent to them by Mr. Rössler ("Illustr. Briefmarken Zeitung," "Echo de la Timbrologie" and others). He also wrote to the editors of foreign catalogues and he must have been very much hurt to have the Česká Filatelie reject them.

"—because there were none of these stamps on the market, certain members of the club, who wanted at least one set of these stamps, sent the president, Dr. Šula and Major Maký to our committee, who obtained for the club the remainder of the issue. I think there were about 50 sets for which they were charged a nominal amount plus expenses. Agreement was made and signed to the effect that these stamps were not for sale, solely to be distributed to the members according to my list."

This note by Mr. Rössler in no. 9 of "Český Filatelista," of May 13, 1922 changed the attitude of the periodical toward these issues. Mr. Rössler bought the members of the club and their organ by selling them 50 sets for 60K instead of 400K. That statement was only half true, which was Mr. Rössler's habit. It was openly told in the club and written in periodicals that in 1919 Dr. Šula obtained from Rössler reprints of the Praha Revolutionary issues for the club. The 4K and 10K Austrian stamps were then obtainable only on granite paper, not on the smooth paper. These stamps, by the way, were not issued until 1919, and so were spoken of as the club reprints.

The change of tone was here and "Český Filatelista" published articles by Rössler and advertisements of Ing. Šula, Napravitel, Černý and others who were offering Revolutionary overprints at high prices. Ing. Šula left the presidency of the Klub Českých Filatelistů to enter a stamp business and Klečka was displaced by B. Šubert, director of the VLAST printing firm in Ječná ul. in Praha. He provided imperforate Hradčany, special delivery, newspaper, postage dues and even S. O. 1920 stamps with private perforations and later made numeral overprints on the Siberian Lions.

On June 4, 1921 the first number of the second philatelic periodical, "Tribuna Filatelistů," was published. Its editor, Hirsh, was a philatelist, but was conversant with only the Austrian stamps and totally ignorant of Czechoslovak stamps, to which he intended to devote most of his efforts. In the first number he published an interesting article "Pošta Československé Armady v Sibiři," translated from "Illst. Briefmarken Zeitung." No doubt, Mr. Rössler got a kick out of it, because he wrote it himself. Ing. Šula wrote an article about Czechoslovak stamps for the "Tribuna Filatelistů" and Lešetický was a regular contributor later. The Rössler articles were published more often. All these articles about the Scout, Siberian Lions and Revolutionary stamps must have at first confused inexperienced collectors, but in time they created doubt and suspicion, because of the contradictory statements. The old boy forgot what he wrote in previous articles and he did manage to squeeze in many untruths and fabrications.

In 1923 Rössler recruited another Revolutionary stamps companion in arms, Ant. Novotný, at first a lieutenant, later a captain, leader, organizer, commander and finally the Director of the Fieldpost of the Czechoslovak Army in Russia (T.F. 1923, 1922, 1929). Novotný wrote a number of knotty articles about the Siberian Lions, which were manufactured in Praha to the tune of about 60,000 under the aegis of the Czechoslovak Red Cross and sent to Siberia together with a canceller. Later there were articles about the Russian overprint (Češskja pošta) produced in Čeljabinsk in 1919 with the consent of the Director of Fieldpost in Russia, and others about the Irkutsk silhouettes, printed in Irkutsk by the printery of the Committee for the Enlight-

ment during the winter of 1919 with the approval of the representative of the Czechoslovak government, Bohdan Pavlu. For a long time we had to be satisfied with these stories. The stamps were listed in all Czechoslovak and some foreign catalogues and were collected so much that they achieved high prices.

In the spring of 1926 there appeared in Praha the so called SEKULA counterfeits, certified by Lešetický as genuine. Investigation by the "Tribuna Filatelistů" brought out some peculiar information. Ant. Novotný proclaimed these stamps to be fakes and invited editor Hirsch to his house, where he showed him the original die as a proof that it was undamaged and different from the fakes. Mr. Rössler also stated that he compared all Praha and Siberian prints (so there must have been many) and that the offered stamps were counterfeits.

In 1927 I married the daughter of Ant. Černý, a dealer in stamps since 1904, while I acted as a philatelic public relation journalist. Because I was related to a stamp dealer, some people looked askance on me as a journalist. The fact of the matter is, that this relationship obtained for collectors much information. For instance, when collecting information for our monograph "Czechoslovak Stamps," Mr. Černý gave me access to his whole stock of Czechoslovak stamps, from which we dug up information the "Český Filatelista" never published at the time of the issue. I never disclosed any business information, such as I can divulge today, that Černý bought all his Scout, Praha on smooth and granite paper, Skalice, Šrobár and Siberian stamps from Rössler. Černý paid him for them with European and other foreign classics. Rössler was a very careful and suspicious person and did not deal with other stamp dealers! He had the monopoly on selling and Černý got the monopoly on buying. I then began to see the light, by re-reading the Rössler articles more critically and weighing their contents. However, I had to keep quiet!

Who was this Josef Rössler-Ořovský? Some things he told about himself in his articles, some were found in newspapers, some were told by Černý and others. He was a wholesale druggist in Dlouhá Třída, a commercial councillor, a sportsman and organizer. A long time ago he brought the first skis to Praha and was responsible for the spread of the sport in Czechoslovakia, backer of Czechoslovaks in the Olympic Committee, president of the Water Scouts, (by his own admission) an old philatelist, member of the Klub Českých Filatelistů from 1906 and finally a member of the National Revolutionary Committee.

These various activities gave his reliance and confidence. Cunning, diligence and organizational talent made it possible for him to handle many activities at the same time. When we consider that the National Committee was the Government from Oct. 28, 1918 to Nov. 15, 1918 and that in that time he was in absolute control of the Postal Department and its affairs, we can see that he was in just the place for his machinations. Although he assured all and sundry that the planners and the Committee never thought of any speculations or philatelic double dealing ("Tribuna Filatelistů 1922") we now can see what was going on.

In 1918-1919 Rössler took care not only of his business and the affairs of the National Committee, but conceived the idea of Revolutionary stamps. He collected the designs, provided the printing, looked after the deliveries and cared for the business end of his stamp inventions, by writing various articles for Czechoslovak and foreign periodicals at his own expense. His investments in 1918-1919 may safely be put at 50.000K. The manufacture of Scout, Praha and the Slovak Revolutionary stamps and the Siberian Lions was a manifold care.

For quite a time Mr. Rössler was able to put over his stories. He never said—"I decided" or "overprinted" or "issued"—but always it was "it was

decided" etc. passing the buck to the National Committee, Scout Legion, Czechoslovak Red Cross or Dr. Blaho. Only Šrobár overprints were not mentioned in his articles (perhaps he used Dir. Pilát). Nothing is known of his contacts with Dr. Šrobár, but I know that he sold to Černý complete sets of Šrobár overprints.

With the recognition of Rössler products, the Horner and Mareš issues were accepted, which is proven by the favorable items in the "Tribuna Filatelistů" for 1928.

1929 was an unusually active year for the Revolutionary issues. On May 25 I bought at the Stach auction Austrian triangular special delivery stamps with the Praha overprint, which Rössler did not manufacture. It was found that they were counterfeits, although Lešetický pronounced them to be genuine. Hirsch took up the case energetically and with Police Commissioner Küntner, uncovered the manufacturer, the distributor and the dealers. This brought the expertization of Lešetický into disrepute, but at the same time brought up the question of the stereos, which were supposed to be in the possession of Rössler. The case of the manufacturer and the distributor was called up April 7, 1930 and after the decision of the Supreme Court in Brno, an appeal was made to Praha, where a final decision was made Jun. 25, 1933. The manufacturer Koukal and the distributor Müller were sentenced to 3 months in prison. Rössler was a witness at the first trial and testified that the Praha overprint was ordered by the National Committee and so it was not a private issue and that the stereo was destroyed sometime at the end of 1918.

When his testimony was challenged as to its correctness, he issued the following statement in the "Tribuna Filatelistů" May 28, 1930, correcting his former testimony:

"My statement that the stereos were destroyed in 1918 referred only to the stereos made from type, which were used for the first overprinting of stamps on smooth paper and later, at the beginning of 1919 on a small number of sets of stamps on granite paper for the Klub Českých Filatelistů (Ing. Šula). According to my notes and correspondence, they were destroyed about the beginning of 1919. At the first trial I did not have my notes and it is hard to remember everything after so many years. The fact that a small number of sets were overprinted for Ing. Šula sometime at the end of 1918 or beginning of 1919 has nothing to do with the value of genuine overprints."

Thus Rössler covered one lie with another, only a bigger one.

In 1930 fake Šrobárs and Sekula Lions appeared in Slovakia, but no one paid any attention to them. At the Rakovník and Moravská Ostrava exhibitions I showed my specialized collection of Siberian Lions, showing chronologically the printings from the first genuine to the reprints and counterfeits. In a Tribuna Filatelistů article (1931) on Siberian Lions, I particularly stressed that the third issue, offered for sale at that time, was a later reprint of no value, characterized by a worn die and damaged stereo, cut in the bottom left of the oval on Type I. This damage prevents production of good prints, if the holder of the cuts desired to use them. The holder did decide to do it, although I warned him in my article. Early in 1932 there appeared a regular rash of fantastic prints in many colors some of them blue on gold paper and red on silver paper and all of them produced by this damaged die. In my article TRIAL PRINTS FOR THE INEXPERIENCED I described them in detail and also mentioned that the cuts were still in the possession of Ant. Novotný. It was conceivable that he was the producer of this merchandise and I suggested that for the good of philately and his own he should hand the cuts over to the Liberty Memorial. Novotný did nothing.

(To be continued)

We just bought a big stock of

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

and

Slovakia

and

Boh Moravia

and a VERY Specialized Collection
of these countries

WE FILL WANT LISTS

Alfons Stach

LENOX, MASS.