

THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

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

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EDITORIAL

This is the last issue of the Specialist for the season. We want all the members to know there will be no Specialist in July nor August. Most members have a vacation in one or both months and it has been our custom to omit these issues. We hope our readers spend pleasant summer holidays and that they return refreshed to their hobby.

For many months we gave you regular reports about the COMPEX exhibition. When this reaches you, Compex will have been just a memory; a pleasant memory we hope. Most collectors, in fact most humans, are procrastinators. We feared we'd not have enough material to show; instead, to be able to show material sent from Europe several of us from Chicago removed our own material from the Exhibit and to show a beautiful Czecho Air Mail collection we arranged with the Jack Knight Air Mail Society to exhibit this material in their section. It will be judged with material from our Society.

While on the subject of Compex, we must do a little bragging. In the past, we always had a First Day of Issue stamp or postal stationery. Not so this year. The theme of COMPEX 1961 is "Intra-Hemispheric Solidarity" and to further the thought we invited not only the Post Master General of the United States, the Honorable J. Edward Day but also the Canadian Postmaster General, the Honorable Bill Hamilton and the Mexican Minister of Communications and his head of the Post Office Department. This will be the first time in the history of the Western Hemisphere the three postal dignitaries of North America will meet at a public social function. Those people who attend the Compex Dinner-Dance will participate at an historic event never to be forgotten.

Another great event which has recently taken place is the appointment to the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee of our president, Dr. James J. Matejka, Jr. With him are two other friends of our Society, Mr. George Brett of Washington, D. C., vice president of the Bureau Issues Association and an outstanding authority on stamp production, especially the Giori press, and Mr. David Lidman, president of the American Philatelic Congress and a well-known philatelic journalist, whose career we followed from the time the Chicago Sun opened in Chicago, thru his editorship with Philately (now defunct) and his work on the American Philatelist, the official organ of the American Philatelic Society. The Society is proud of the honor bestowed upon its president and the officers and members of the Society take this opportunity to congratulate Dr. James J. Matejka, Jr. and Messrs. David Lidman and George Brett on their appointment and to the Post Office Department on such a happy choice.

As the readers know, our Society holds a general meeting whenever a

large convention of a national philatelic organization takes place. Perhaps the most popular philatelic group is the American Philatelic Congress which will be held in Philadelphia during the first week-end of November this year. The meeting of our Society will take place November 4, in the Hotel where the Congress holds its sessions. We shall bring further details in the September issue of this publication.

We announced that a Hradčany Handbook will be out in time for Compex and if the order is received by the time of Compex, the cost shall be \$2.75 per copy. Orders received subsequently must be paid at the rate of \$3.00. Our treasurer complains that a few members sent him orders with only \$2.50 enclosed. The members were informed that the publication of this handbook is not a Society project, but the work and financial outlay of our member Fritz Billig. He is vacationing in Hawaii and should be back early in June. After reading this please do not remit anything less than \$3.00 per copy; you may order directly from Fritz Billig, 168-39 Highland Ave., Jamaica 3, N. Y. or from your treasurer, George C. Kobyłka, 1433 So. Cuyler Ave., Berwyn, Ill. When we published our Bohemia-Moravia Handbook, some members complained that if it was Czechoslovakia and not the Protectorate, they'd order the book. Not one of those who complained in this manner ordered the Hradčany Handbook up to this writing and we doubt they will. Frankly, we are disappointed because to date we received only 15 prepaid requests.

We received from member Joseph Jiranek a very nice and seemingly most complete listing of the Essays, Proofs and Trial Printings of Czechoslovakia, Hradčany Castle Regular Issue and First Air Mail Overprint and Surcharge Trials. This nine page listing goes to the members of the Hradčany Study Group, who are to check it against their collections and report their findings to Frank J. Kosik or/and to Joseph J. Jiranek. When, in their opinion, the check-list is complete, it is hoped to publish the entire findings in the Specialist. The idea of a study group is not new; the group was more or less active in the past and we certainly hope its reactivation will provide all the members of the Society with valuable information. We recall that some time ago a highly specialized collection of Czechoslovakia's Hradčany collection was sold at auction and brought ridiculously low prices. One of the chief reasons for this was the fact that the dealer, one of the best in New York City, had a very small clientele of Czecho collectors. We are sure that some knowledge of the stamps would have brought in more than 100% above what it did to the estate. With a continued listing of even minute varieties, with the fine specialized handbook of the Hradčany issues as published by Billig, the first issues of Czechoslovakia, popularly known as the Hradčany issues, should for all times be the most popular series of the country.

With this group firmly established, we should move on to the second issue of Czechoslovakia, the Allegory Issues. The strangest news about a study group of this series of stamps, is the fact that the three outstanding students in this group are: William L. Russell of Australia, C. H. Osbourne of Canada and George Pearson of England. Really, no superb authority in this group is an American from the U. S., (at least not to our knowledge), unless he or she is too modest to deck himself (or herself) with laurel leaves.

Another very interesting, yet really neglected group, is the Pošta Československá 1919. Among those who have studied these stamps most assiduously are Frank J. Kaps, Arthur I. Kessler and your editor. As you all know this is our last year as editor. It is in our plan for the future to form a group to study these stamps. It has been said, and almost too truly, that if one dealer in these United States passes away, there will be no one to expertize this series of stamps. Fortunately, these stamps cannot be counterfeited as easily as most collectors believe it possible. To produce counterfeits which can fool a student would necessitate the use of high power presses and a per-

fect knowledge of inks. A good ultraviolet lamp can almost always detect a fake.

Our only known expert on the Siberian issues and those of Silesia Orientalis (Eastern Silesia) is member Zdeněk Kvasnička. We are confident we can induce him to start a study group in these two groups. If there are any experts, quasi-experts or just interested members in these fields, we'd like to have them step forward. Our president, Dr. Matejka, has a very fine collection of Siberia, rich in covers bearing almost all the known markings. In the S. O. 1920 field, we feel sure that many of our Hradčany students delved into these historically interesting overprints.

Not many other Czecho stamps were counterfeited, except perhaps, the 1934 Music Sheets. We have the statement of one dealer that there are more fakes of this issue than genuine items. At least two different fakes are known; at one time, believe it or not, the fakes carried a higher premium than the genuine article. No wonder the counterfeiters were busy.

Within the last few days we received the 1961 Pofis catalog which, we understand, will shortly come out bound. In general appearance it looks like its predecessor of 1959, but a closer look shows that prices, at last, are getting attention. Published by a socialist state, it gives in to capitalist caprices and raises the prices on some of the older stamps. In our estimation, the price hike is insufficient; we'd gladly buy at their price, only they can't deliver. One thing bothers us; why can't we exhibit everything listed in Pofis 1961 at the PRAGA 1962 show?

In the last issue of the Specialist you saw an ad by František Aleš, a travel bureau agent, who solicits your participation in a pilgrimage to Praha in the fall of 1962 to the Praga World Stamp Show. It would be nice to come to Praha as a group in a large caravan.

Searching contacts are:

Václav Kotva, Hlohovičky 55, Pošta Terešov.

Leopold Vinš, České Budějovice, Husova 26.

Antonín Drescher, Janovice u Rýmařova, Školní 30, okr. Bruntál. (This gentleman is interested in match box covers and labels.)

PERSONALITIES ON THE NEW CZECH STAMPS

(concluded from last issue)

VIKTORIN CORNELIUS of Všehrad (1460-1520) a lawyer, author and humanist was the son of a middle class family from Chrudim. Graduating from the Charles University at the age of 24, he became a dean, with the degree of Bachelor of Sciences. In 1487 Kornel was appointed to an office in the Crown Land Court and six years later was made registrar of the Crown Land Office. In this capacity, he opposed the clerically inspired land laws, which conflicted with the ancient usages.

Kornel kept constant contacts with all humanists in the government services and in his translation of J. Zlatoustý's book, "Redeeming the Fallen" he affirmed his love of the Czech language and national hopes.

His most important work is the "Nine Books of Laws, Decisions, and Records of Czech Lands," in which he insisted that the confiscation, which was then being prepared, be done in a manner consistent with the Czech land laws. These views were opposed by the nobles, who were trying to enrich themselves. They accused him before King Vladislav of changing the old files and records for the advantage of officers of the Land Court and to the disadvantage of the nobles. The King dismissed him from his office, of recorder, but the case against him was dropped. Kornel was ordered to prepare a new edition of the "Books" in somewhat milder vein. The importance

of these "Books" is that in them he correlated and preserved the old and important acts, legislative proceedings, land records, and decrees as the originals were destroyed by fire in 1541. His opinion was that the public laws should not be changed at the whim of the nobles and that the king should govern by laws and not his absolute will. His humanism was at his best in battling for the common people, especially the serfs.

KAREL MATEJ ČAPEK, the Chod, was born in Domažlice Feb. 2, 1860, and died in Praha Nov. 3, 1927. In the Kunz encyclopedia he is listed as a novelist, dramatist and romancer. Mixing with people of all classes and occupations, he collected material for his sometime grotesque stories. His story "Kašpar Lén, the Avenger" describes the hard lot of a common laborer. The naturalistic story "Antonin Vondreje" takes the reader into the underworld. Other critical stories are "Jindrové" and "Turbins."

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712. Dr. Ellis Haworth, 4401 Davenport Jt., N. W., Washington 16, D. C.

OUR MEMBERSHIP LIST

With this issue of the Specialist you receive a listing of the 1961 members who were paid up to May 14, 1961. It is surprising how many of the members wait, not up to the last minute, but after. Very often they don't pay until after they stop getting the Specialist. We ask all who are delinquent to please send their dues immediately to the treasurer, George C. Kobylka, 1433 So. Cuyler Ave., Berwyn, Ill.

PRAGA 1962

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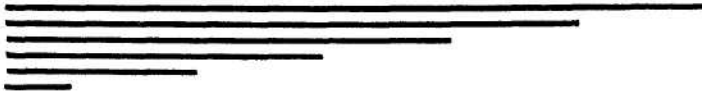
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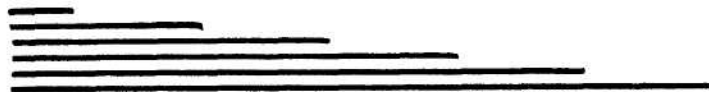
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