

THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

A publication of the Czechoslovak  Philatelic Society of N. America

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Editorial Board:

Dr. Wm. Reiner-Deutsch, Editor, P. O. Box 24, Bayside 61, N. Y.

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No. 219

EDITORIAL

Greetings, members of the Society and readers of the Specialist. We are taking over a job which was admirably managed for twenty years by Frank J. Kovarik. In 1942, during our tenure as president of the Society we asked Frank to tackle this difficult task just for a short time, i.e., until some other willing person was found to edit the Specialist. Frank faithfully and ambitiously carried on for two decades, bringing a four page publication up to sixteen pages. We tried recently to convince him that he should go on with it as long as he possibly could but our urging was of no avail. He desired to retire and hence having been elected to the office we are taking over, though only in the hope that we will find a young man approved by the membership in the not too distant future, who will be willing to give his time to this worthwhile publication.

We are starting our editorship with a distinct innovation by having an Editorial Board. We feel that, with the cooperation of able writers possessing fine knowledge of Czechoslovak philately, we will be able to give our readers much information of interest to them. In addition we wish to announce that the "Parade of New Issues" will be conducted by our National Secretary, Mr. Frank J. Kosik.

According to our Constitution our Society is a "non-political" organization and therefore we shall at all times limit ourselves to the study of the philatelic material, past and present, of the country. We firmly believe that there is much that can be done to forward interest in the collection of Czechoslovak items. We have heard rumors to the contrary. However, actual facts do not bear out the rumors that interest in the stamps of the country is waning. We have only to study the issues of the Specialist for 1961. Without any membership drive, many new members are listed. In every philatelic society there is an annual relinquishment of membership, hence that proves very little. However, annual addition of new members indicates interest in the country by other individuals. It is our understanding that at auctions the Czechoslovak items are selling quite well, which is another indication of interest in the philatelic material of the country.

The very fine work of one of our active branches, the Chicago Branch, must be mentioned in this first Editorial. The annual Complex with 90-100 frames of Czechoslovak material, is keeping our specialty in constant view of collectors. The auctions conducted at Complex with the aid of the members there, helps greatly to defray the high cost of the Specialist and other expenses in the running of the Society. The Bohemia-Moravia Handbook originated from Chicago

with a number of contributors. The more recent Hradčany catalogue by John Velek was put on sale at Compex 1961.

The New York Branch has been kept alive by its active members. Each meeting has a speaker, usually a member, showing some of his material, with oral explanations. The Branch has staged a number of member exhibitions at the Collectors Club throughout its participation as a Study Group at the Collectors Club. On September 20, 1961, our New York Branch participated in an exhibition of all Study Groups. Mr. L. M. Horechny, present chairman of the branch, exhibited two frames from his collection and explained the activities of the branch to all present. His presentation was a very successful one.

We, of course, will have articles with numerous illustrations, published in one of the well-known philatelic journals, as has been done in the past, only because we do not have the funds for the many cuts needed. After those articles will have appeared in the particular journal they will be reprinted in the Specialist.

We will work hard and hope that we will have the cooperation of the membership.

A very interesting article by member Verner will appear in the February Specialist. This will be reprinted from the December issue of the Postal History Journal. Another article by Karásek, translated and edited by Verner, will appear at a later date. An important compilation of essays and proofs of the Hradčany issue by Jiranek and co-workers is due soon. Finally we can also look forward to a fine article by Kvasnička in the not too distant future.

Anyone interested should send his comments to us. It is a known fact that it is simply impossible to please everybody. However, we will try, at least, to explain our policy to any critical member answering the queries as promptly as possible.

We wish to acknowledge with many thanks the receipt of the following additions to our library: from member J. J. Verner—A. Jonas, vol. 1: Studie o Čsl. Otiscich Frankotypu and J. Vacek: Proprevratová Razitka Byvaleho Československa. From member Frank J. Kovarik—Pofis 1961 Catalogue and from member C. J. Pearce—Dr. Heinrich Wittmann, unter Mitarbeitung von Paul Salamon, 6. Auflage, 1960: Bautenserie 1948, Spezialkatalog.

Since this Editorial is being written before the receipt of the November Specialist, i.e., on November 18th, we do not know whether the membership has been informed that Mr. George Koplowitz of New York was appointed by Dr. Matejka Membership Drive Chairman, a very important post.

IMPORTANT — MEMBERS PLEASE NOTE

Due to an unfortunate error when the November issues were distributed, the membership dues envelopes were mailed out without a very important correction. The membership had voted to raise the dues of active (and associate) members from \$2.00 to \$3.00. The envelopes do not show that change in dues.

Members are urged to send the additional dollar to the new Treasurer, Mr. Joseph Stein, 673 Hinsdale Street, Brooklyn 7, N. Y. It is actually vital for the Society to have this money as otherwise it will not be possible to publish our Specialist every month. Now that we are trying to secure interesting articles for our publication, it would be a shame to have to curtail this because of an accidental error.

Mention this publication when answering ads. Thanks!

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE BEGINNINGS OF CZECHOSLOVAK STAMP DEVELOPMENT

Written by Engineer Milos Hrdlicka

Written serially in the magazine Filatelie, beginning Vol. VIII No. 22, Sep. 24, '58

Translated by Joseph J. Jiranek
(continued from last issue)

1931, May 15	Karlovy Vary-Marianske Lazne
1931, June 1	Marienbad-Halle (Leipzig)
1932, May 3	Prague-Salonica (by Cie Cinna)
1933, Sept. 11	Prague-Brno-Uzhorod (Ungvar, Cluj-Bucharest)
1935, April 1	Prague-Budapest
1935, April 1	Piestany-Bratislava-Vienna
1935, May 15	Prague-Zurich-Marseille
1935, June 1	Prague-Uzhorod-Cluj-Bucharest
1935, July 1	Bratislava-Kosice-Uzhored
1935, July 1	Praha-Hradec Kral.-Opava-Moravska Ostrava
1936, April 8	Prague-Split, Jugoslavia
1937, April 5	Prague-Brusselles
1937, May 1	Brno-Zlin-Piestany
1937, June 15	Prague-Liberec-Jablonec
1946, June 15	New York-Prague
1946, June 17	Prague-New York
1948, July 21	Prague-Beyrouth
1948, Feb. 10	Prague-Bombay
1957, Dec. 9	Prague-Moscow
1958, April 3	Prague-Brussels (Fair)



PRAGA 1962

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Provisional Newspaper Labels and Handstamps

Compiled by Joseph J. Jiranek

A. Provisional Newspaper Labels

From December, 1918, until February, 1919, there developed an acute shortage of newspaper stamps and to relieve this, an order, No. 121 G 18, was issued by the Minister of Posts and Telegraph permitting the cash payment of postage for newspapers and magazines. To comply with this order the management of all periodicals was to see to it that all their publications so prepaid were to be distinctly marked "Fronka Hotově Zaplaceno" (Postage Prepaid). This was accomplished either with printed labels or by rubber stamp imprints. The labels were pasted upon the wrappers enclosing the periodicals or used to seal them. These provisional emergency labels were postmarked at the receiving post offices instead of the sending post offices as was done with the regular newspaper stamps. Because of this procedure these labels can be found with a great variety of postmarks, even field postmarks.

Provisional Newspaper Labels of the following Publications are known:

- I. "Narodní Politika" (from Prague)
 - a. Newspaper Label, size 27x25¼ mm., printed in brick red or deep red color on yellow paper. Printed in sheets of 4 stamps wide and 8 stamps high by typography. Legend in three lines: top, "Narodní Politika" underlined; "Franko" in the center; "Hotově Zaplaceno" at the bottom. Labels were ungummed.
 - b. The "Narodní Politika", as a matter of policy, even during the Austrian Empire sent complimentary copies of their publication to the soldiers in hospitals. For these mailings a gummed label, size 24¼x28 mm., printed in red on white paper with colorless gum was used. The sheet was printed 5 labels wide and 4 labels high. The format included "Narodní Politika" at top, a red cross in rectangle with spiral ornamentation at the sides and "Gratis" (free) below, with a double lined frame surrounding it.
- II. "České Slovo" (from Prague)

The label was printed in size 26x27½ mm.; in sheets of 4 labels wide and 2 labels high, on white paper with colorless gum. Known colors are light brick red, red brown, light green or dark green. According to Donaupost some were also printed in black. Printed by typography, its format was vertical rectangle. "Franko" at the top, underlined; "Hotově Zaplaceno" in the center and "České Slovo" at the bottom, all surrounded by a single line border.
- III. "Našinec" (from Olomouc)

The label is in the format of a red square, size 21½ mm. Text in white letters: top, "Našinec"; left edge, "Denník" (daily); right edge, "Olomouc"; center legend "Franko, Hotově Zapla-ceno". Printed on white paper with yellow gum by lithography.
- IV. "Pilsner Tagblatt" (from Pilsen)

This label is in size 20¼x22 mm. and is printed in black on rose gummed paper. Legend on top "Franko, bar bezahlt"; bottom "Pilsner Tagblatt", framed. Printed by typography.
- V. "Rovnost" (from Brno)

The label is 21¼ mm. square and is printed in black on rose paper and is gummed. It is printed by typography with legend "Franko" at top, "Hotově" in the center and "Zaplaceno" at the bottom and framed.
- VI. "Národné Noviny" (from Turč. sv. Martin)

An unframed label printed in black by typography on light, brownish, un-

- gummed, ribbed paper. Legend at top "Národní Noviny", underlined; center, large "Franko" and at bottom "Zaplaceno".
- VII. "Prace" (from Prague)
This label was printed on sheets size $93\frac{1}{2} \times 87$ mm., in blocks of four stamps separated by a cross of dotted lines. Typographed in black on either coarse texture paper with grayish cast and colored gum or thin white paper with colorless gum. The label is framed by a heavy line; the legend "Práce" in a lined off upper portion, center "Franko" and lower portion "Hotové Zaplaceno".
- XIII. "Merkur" (from Prague)
Size $27 \times 25\frac{1}{4}$ mm., typographed in black on white paper. Four-lined legend: top "Merkur", boxed in by line below; lower portion has "Franko, Zaplaceno, Hotové".
- IX. "Český Merkur" (from Prague)
This publication is also known as "Kurýrem". This fact is not well known because the former Daily III Kurier is often mistaken for it.
First Issue:
Various size labels with blue border as sold by stationery stores with a single line legend, imprinted by handstamp "Porto Hotové Zaplaceno" in violet or red. The length of the imprint is 38 mm.; colorless gum.
Second Issue:
Same blue border stationery labels with a three-line legend: "Poštovné, Hotové, Zaplaceno". Colorless gum, photogravure.
- X. "Lloyd" (from Prague)
This label has a three line legend with black imprint in two types on green paper with colorless gum:
First Printing:
The legend "Poštovné, Zaplaceno, Hotové" is 14×8 mm. high with letters 2 and $1\frac{1}{4}$ mm. high.
Second Printing:
The legend "Poštovné, Zaplaceno, Hotové" is 17 mm. by $8\frac{1}{2}$ mm. high with letters 2 and $1\frac{1}{2}$ mm. high.
- XI. "Komenský" (from Zábřeh)
A 26×25 mm. perforated label on white paper, printed in black. Imprint is $15\frac{3}{4} \times 10\frac{1}{4}$ mm. high; type is $2\frac{3}{4}$ and 2 mm. high, perforated $11\frac{3}{4}$. Legend in three lines: "Poštovné, hotové, zaplaceno". Distance between lines of overprint is $1\frac{3}{4}$ mm.
- XII. "Ankündigungsblatt der Forstwirtschaft des Handels und der Holzindustrie" (from Prachatice)
Label printed in black "Bar Bezahlt" on violet paper. Two scripts: German and Latin.
- XIII. "Čech" (from Prague)
Label printed in aniline red with two lined legend "Poštovné Placené" (Postage paid).
- XIV. "Mährisch Schlesische Presse" (from Frývaldov)
Label with black legend "Franko Bar" on white paper.
- Provisional Newspaper Labels from Unknown Publications
- XV. Label imprinted on green paper with two lined text "Franko, hotové, zaplaceno" enclosed in a rectangular frame. Length of frame $28\frac{1}{2}$ mm. and spacing between lines $2\frac{1}{4}$ mm., typographed.
- XVI. Label printed on blue green paper with two lined text "Poštovné, placeno" without frame. Legend $13\frac{1}{4} \times 10\frac{3}{4}$ mm. high, spacing between 5 mm. Height of letters 3 mm. and $2\frac{1}{4}$ mm., typographed.
- XVII. Perforated label printed on pale green paper with lined border $21 \times 22\frac{1}{2}$ mm., surrounding the black text: "Franko" at top, "Bar" in center and "Bezahlt" on bottom, perforated $11\frac{1}{2}$, typographed.

- XVIII. Large label, 45x38½ mm. At the top lengthwise is a two lined legend "Poštovné, Hotově, Zaplaceno" in Czech. Below is the inverted two lined legend "Frakatur, Bar Gezahlt" in German. Typographed in black on green paper as well as in bright red on coarse newsprint.
- XIX. A three-line label, typographed in black on bright red paper. The legend "Franko, Hotově, zaplaceno" is 15x11¼ mm., spaced 2¼ mm. between lines, height of letters 2½ and 1½ mm.

B. Periodical Provisional Postmarks.

Various other periodicals complying with the directive of the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs imprinted wrappers indicating that the payment had been made, either by machine or with various hand stamps. Below is a listing of several of these:

- XX. "Jihočeske Listy" (from České Budejovice)
Imprint on wrapper by hand stamp in black with two-line text "Franko, hotově, placeno". Length of the first line is 42½ mm., height of type 7 and 5 mm.; length of second line is 43¾ mm., height of type 3½ and 2½ mm.; spacing between lines is 3 mm.
- XXI. "Humoristické Listy" (from Prague)
A two-line hand stamp printed in violet red. Legend: "Franko" at top, 20 mm. wide, 4¼ mm. high: "hotově, zaplaceno!" at bottom, 53 mm. wide, 4¼ mm. high: spacing between is 2 mm.
- XXII. "Pražské Noviny" (from Prague)
Single line violet hand stamp with text: "Franko, hotově, placeno"; length 37½ mm., height of type 2½ and 2 mm.
- XXIII. "Živnostense Rozhledy" (from Prague)
Single line red brown hand stamp with text: "Poštovné hotově zaplaceno", length 50½ mm., height of type 3½ and 3 mm.
- XXIV. "Tribuna" (from Prague)
Single line violet hand stamp with text "Poštovné hotově zaplaceno", length 50½ mm., height 4 and 3 mm.
- XXV. "Realitní Oznamovatel" (from Prague)
Two-line violet hand stamp with text: "Franko", length 17¼ mm. and Hotově zaplaceno", length 50 mm. with letters 3 and 2½ mm. high.
- XXVI. "Pilsner Tagblatt" (from Pilsen)
Imprinted in violet blue on wrappers with rubber stamp in three-line text: "Franko, bar, bezahlt". Width 23¼ mm., height 17¼ mm.; height of type 3¼ mm.; spacing between lines 2 mm. This hand stamp was used before the issuance of Label IV.
- XXVII. "Narodnie Noviny" (from Turč. Sv. Martin)
Printed in strips in violet by rubber canceller. Legend: "Poštovné Zaplatené"; length of imprint 41 mm.; height of type 5 mm. This hand stamp was used before the issuance of Provisional Stamps.
- XXVIII. "Mahr. Handelsblatt"
Single line hand stamp in two types:
Type I. "Franko bar", length 49½ mm., height of type 10 and 6½ mm., violet.
Type II. "Franko bar", length 34¼ mm., height of type 8 mm., red.
- XXIX. "Obchodní Listy" (from Prague)
Two-line blue hand stamp imprint on newspaper wrapper: "Franko", length 12½ mm., "Hotově Zaplaceno", length 30¾ mm.; height of type 3½ and 2½ mm., space between lines 2½ mm.
- XXX. "Lidov Noviny" (from Brno)
Two-line violet imprint: "Franko", length 16¼ mm.: "Hotově zaplaceno", length 29 mm. Height of type 4½ and 2½ mm., spacing between lines 3 mm.

XXXI. "Hudební Revue" (from Prague)

Single line imprint: "Hotově placeno 2 h", length 56 mm., height of type 3 mm., in violet.

Parade Of New Issues

Stamps to Mark the International Trade Fair in Brno



To mark the occasion of the International Trade Fair—which took place in Brno from 10th to 24th September, 1961—the Czechoslovak Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications issued on August 14, 1961, a series of three stamps of the following denominations, designs and colors:

- a) 30 h map of Europe with capital letters MVB (International Trade Fair in Brno) and the inscription "Peaceful Business Cooperation"; blue and yellow-green.
- b) 60 h horizontal boring machine as symbol of modern technique; blue-green and red.
- c) 1—Kčs International Scientific Symposia (emblem of nuclear physics in background); brown-violet and grey-blue.

All stamps were designed by the academic artist František Hudeček, and engraved by Jaroslav Goldschmied (30 h, 60 h) and Ladislav Jirka (1 Kčs).

The stamps were printed by the rotary recess print combined with photogravure in the Post Printing Office in Prague in sheets of 50. Dimensions of the stamp picture are 41x23 mm (30 h, 1 Kčs) and 23x41 mm (60 h).

The stamps are valid in internal and international postal use from August 14, 1961, until further notice.

One First Day Cover was issued with this emission. The cachet was also designed by František Hudeček and engraved by Jaroslav Goldschmied.

"Agricultural Produce" on Postage Stamps

On September 18th, 1961, the Czechoslovak Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications issued a series of postage stamps intended to propagate important agricultural produce. The stamps are of the following denominations, designs and colors.

- a) 20 h sugarbeet (*Beta vulgaris* L); greyish-green and violet
- b) 30 h clover (*Trifolium pratense* L); reddish-violet and yellowish-brown
- c) 40 h wheat (*Triticum aestivum* Vill); brown and orange
- d) 60 h hops (*Humulus lupulus* L) green and yellowish-brown
- e) 1.40 Kčs maize (*Zea mays* L); brownish-red and brick red
- f) 2.—Kčs potato (*Solanum tuberosum* L); violet-grey and blue



All these stamps have been designed by Prof. Cyril Bouda and engraved by Ladislav Jirka.

The stamps were printed by rotary recess print combined with photogravure in the Post Printing Office in Prague in sheets of 50. The dimensions of the stamp picture are 23x41 mm.

The stamps are valid in internal and international postal use from September 18th, 1961, until further notice.

Two First Day Covers, designed by Prof. Cyril Bouda and engraved by Jaroslav Goldschmied, was issued with this emission.

Commemorative Stamp of the XXVIth Session of the Governors' Council of the Red Cross Societies League in Prague

On September 25th, 1961, the XXVIth session of the Governors' Council of the Red Cross Societies League was held in Prague, attended by the governors of the individual national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies. On this occasion the Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications issued a 60 h postage stamp, depicting a panorama of Prague including the Castle, St. Nicholas church, one of the Charles Bridge towers and part of the bridge itself. The stamp has the red cross insignia and the inscription: XXVIth Session of the Governors' Council of the Red Cross Societies, Prague 1961.

The design of the stamp is the work of the painter Jaroslav Šváb, the stamp was engraved by Jaroslav Goldschmied according to sketches by Jindřich Schmidt.

The stamp was printed by rotary recess print combined with photogravure in the Post Printing Office in Prague in sheets of 50. The dimensions of the stamp picture are 23x41 mm. The color is red.



The stamp is valid in internal and international postal use from September 25th, 1961, until further notice.

One First Day Cover, designed by Jaroslav Šváb and engraved by Jaroslav Goldschmied, will be issued with this emission.

HRADČANY SPECIALIZED

by John Velek

This fine volume can be had for \$3.00 from the publisher, postpaid. Kindly send your orders to Fritz Billig, 168-89 Highland Ave., Jamaica 32, N. Y. By buying this book you are helping your Society; a percentage from the sales of this book is paid to the treasury. Be sure to mention you read this in the CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST.

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The Theresienstadt Issue

By Sam Simon

Reprinted from The Israel Philatelist



Ill. 1

Looking at the reproduction of the Theresienstadt issue one gets the impression of a calm, pastoral scene, where all is serene and nothing is amiss. All that is lacking is a herd of contented cows and happy children romping about. Undoubtedly that is the atmosphere the Nazi supermen intended to impart when the issue was conceived and printed. But look beyond the bucolic vignette and see the nefarious purpose for which the stamp was used. Actually, to call it a stamp is a misnomer, for in reality it was a permit to send a food parcel to an inmate of the Theresienstadt Concentration Camp. So let us now look into another sad chapter of human suffering inflicted by the Hitlerian hegemony as it is revealed behind the pretty picture we see on the stamp.

Herr Heydrich, shortly after being named Reichsprotector of Bohemia and Moravia had ordered on November 24, 1941, the complete evacuation of all the inhabitants of the town of Theresienstadt. But even before the town had been completely emptied, the first transports from Prague and Pilsen began to arrive.

On January 20, 1942, Herr Heydrich announced that Theresienstadt had been selected as a special Ghetto for a select, specially deserving group of Jews. They comprised those who were over 65 years of age, or those Jews who had earned high military decorations in World War I, or had sustained serious war wounds in that conflict.

The site was considered a privilege camp. The German Foreign Office devoted much interest to it and proclaimed it a "model ghetto." Three diplomatic groups were conducted on tours to display to the outside world how well treated were its inmates. And it was held forth as exemplifying the conditions that prevailed in all the other ghettos and concentration camps.

So glowingly was it "advertised" that being confined to it was considered a privilege. Some Jews even contrived to be sent there by buying their way

into the camp and paying their own fare to get there. The payments were made to Kriminalsekreter Baab, presumably to be placed in his "protective custody." But once arrived at Theresienstadt, they found themselves in the deadly Gestapo's hands. For the camp had been relegated as the "private reserve" of Guenther (Eichman's representative in Prague).

For the inmates the only departures, aside from death, were to Auschwitz. Economically, the camp was under the Economy Office of Oswald Polh, but it was administered under the supervision of Adolph Eichmann. The camp commandants were selected from Eichmann's office. Eventually, all the three commandants, Rahn, Seidl and Joeckl were executed after the war.

During 1942 approximately 125,000 souls passed through the Theresienstadt gates and from there most were sent to the horrors of Birkenau, Auschwitz and the other dread concentration camps. From July 1943 until October 1944 the camp population averaged about 35,000 people and from October 1944 until May 1945 there were approximately 12,500 Jews in the camp. The prisoners were finally liberated by the Russian forces on May 11, 1945. This is just a sad glimpse of the human facts of Theresienstadt, but an interesting philatelic aspect is the food stamp that was used for the camp inmates.

The stamp was issued in July, 1943, by the German authorities for use on food packages to be sent to the inhabitants of Theresienstadt. The stamp was restricted to those inmates who originally came from the "Protectorate of Czechoslovakia" or to those from other countries who had friends in the Protectorate. Their friends on the "outside" had to apply for a permit (Ill. 1) which was usually granted and with it they received this stamp which had to be affixed to the food package. No package could be sent without this stamp. The shipment, when it arrived, was delivered with the stamp removed to prevent any further use by the recipient. The stamps, as a rule, thereafter were resold by the German camp officials for their own personal gain.

The prisoners permitted to receive packages were allowed to do so every 2 to 4 months. It is estimated that approximately 71,000 such stamps were used legally. They were printed in sheets of 25, perforated 10½, dark green in color on smooth white paper with white, shiny gum. The area of the printed sheet measured 196.5x140.5 mm. The illustration was a fine line drawing and the stamp was issued by the Staatsdruckerei (Ill. 2).



III. 2

Incongruous as it may seem, a four stamp souvenir sheet was also issued. The paper was the same as the regular issue but it was un gummed and each sheet was consecutively numbered in red. They were printed in brown, but a few specimens are known also in green and black (Ill. 3).

The souvenir sheets were used only for propaganda purposes. As for example, when notified that a Red Cross delegation was to inspect the camp, the authorities would attempt to hide all its gruesome aspects and have it appear



III. 3

neat and clean looking. A special brochure was made up for the occasion showing pretty scenes around the camp. The brochures and the souvenir sheets were presented to the delegates to further illustrate the presumed well-being of the camp's inhabitants.



III. 4



III. 5

After the camp was liberated, it appears that a supply of unused stamps together with the plates was removed by unauthorized persons. Recently, some reprints on ungummed paper have appeared. The bogus copies can be recognized by the not-so-fine reproduction of the drawing (Ill. 4). And if that was not enough, entirely new plates appear to have been made of both the stamp and the souvenir sheet. The latter were in blocks of four but unnumbered. The printing can easily be recognized by the coarse drawing, especially of the clouds and the foreground road, which is made up of long lines instead of short dots on the original (Ill. 5).

The ironic note is that few, if any, of the camp inhabitants of Theresienstadt ever saw the stamp while detained there. The stamps were always removed or cut off the wrapping before the package was delivered.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

By Ladislav Kropáč

Translated by George R. Skopecek

Born in Salzburg, Austria, Jan. 27, 1756, and died in Vienna, Dec. 5, 1791. Every musician and lover of music knows and respects this genial composer—the son of a violinist and composer J. L. Mozart (1719-1787) who was a member of the archibiscopal orchestra in Salzburg, Austria. Of seven children, only Wolfgang and his older sister, Marie Anna, remained alive. Marie Anna began to learn to play piano and Wolfgang, then 3 years old, was immediately interested. Without being asked, he spent hours at the piano trying to pick out proper trios, and when successful, was enchanted. The father, noticing his efforts, began to teach him and was surprised at his progress. Wolfgang could learn in half an hour a song or minuet and repeat them faultlessly thereafter. When six years old he began to compose short pieces which his father transcribed.

At this time Wolfgang, his sister and father undertook a concert tour to Munich and later to France, where he created a sensation with his technical prowess, when we stop to consider that children of his age just begin to take musical lessons. Soon after that, Wolfgang started to learn to play the violin with the same success. At eight years of age he played in Versailles and later in London as an accomplished organist. At 12 he played his own compositions in Paris. Later he conducted an opera in Vienna with great success and composed his first opera.

In his travels he met many well known conductors and musicians and their opinions and ideas influenced his musical thinking. Although he received much adulation, titles and decorations, Wolfgang was liked by everybody for his modesty and cordiality.

The admiration of the Court and the aristocratic class for his music, was not very sincere, and when he began to compose in a modern vein, almost stopped. The idea of appointing him as musical director came to naught, and this musical genius had to be satisfied with a position of organist at the Salzburg Archbishopric. The death of his mother during his tour in Paris 1778 and shabby treatment from the Archbishop caused Wolfgang to move to Vienna for good.

Mozart's spirit could not condone any subservience to the Court and the aristocratic clique, so he separated himself from all of it and proceeded as a free and independent composer.

In Vienna Mozart composed "Figaro" which was not received very well by the Viennese but on the contrary, the Praha public received the Figaro, with its new and enchanting harmonies, with great applause. One of its several productions Mozart himself conducted. After playing his Praha Symphony at the Academy of Music, Jan. 19, 1787, he decided to compose an opera specially for

the Praha public as a reward for their support. This was the opera "Don Juan" considered as the "opera of the operas" and was completed at Bertramka the home of the Duše family. In this opera, Mozart accuses the privileged society of moral turpitude. Again the Praha public received it at its premiere, Oct. 27, 1787, with a great acclaim, showing their highly developed musical culture.

Mozart's last visit to Praha was in connection with the composition of the opera "La Clemenza di Tito" on order from the Czech aristocrats for the Coronation of Emp. Leopold II as the King of Bohemia. Mozart arrived in Praha at the end of August, 1791, and the premiere was given Oct. 6, 1791. Unlike "Don Juan" it was received without interest, in fact with contempt, the auditorium being filled with courtiers and their followers. The Empress was heard to say "Porcheria tedesca" of the opera. This remark spread like wildfire through the theater and the fate of the opera was sealed. The newspapers did not even mention it next day. The disfavor of the Royal Couple was partly the result of Mozart identifying himself with a Masonic organization. So, after the Coronation, when the Emperor was dispensing decorations with both hands, there was nothing for Mozart. Some time later some sort of a letter was handed to him by a minor official with a remark "He who belongs to Masons will find no favor at the Court. They don't like it!"

Broken in health and spirit, Mozart returned to Vienna, to struggle for a mere living, for what turned out to be a very short time. This genial composer at the height of his productivity accepted an unpaid position of organist at the St. Stephen Cathedral, in a faint hope the position would soon be a paid one.

Mozart often recalled the prophetic advice given to him by Casanova in Praha—"Stay away from Vienna, it does not deserve your noble presence." Almost on the eve of his demise and in premonition of his death, Mozart composed the "Requiem" which became his funeral mass.

Mozart died in Vienna, May 12, 1791, in his 35th year. There being no money for a funeral, he was buried in Potters Field. The unmarked grave was soon forgotten, and no one knows where it is. When the news of his death reached Praha, he was given a grand mourning wake with all Praha bells ringing. Mozart's musical production was enormous, comprising symphonies, chamber music for pianos and violins, concertos, operas, occasional compositions, dances and masses. To mention a few of his operas: Magic Flute, *Così fan Tutti*, Figaro, Don Juan and Titus. In all, his production is an amazing total of 626 compositions. Mozart's influence on the musical development of the 19th century is very great. It shows in the works of all composers, contemporary and future. Even B. Smetana was influenced, showing it in the comic opera "Bartered Bride." Mozart's death did not diminish our love for his music.

List of Stamps Issued in Honor of W. Mozart

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- 1956 At the opening of Praha Jaro (International musical festival) held every spring since 1946 in Praha and participated in by many famous musicians. For the 200th anniversary, May 12, 1956, 80 hal. Portrait.
 1 Kčs. Bertramka—where he lived in Praha
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 1.40 Kčs. Portrait of his hosts—Mr. and Mrs. Dušek
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 During the occupation of Czechoslovakia a set of stamps.
 30 hal and 60 hal. Nostic Theater with a coupon with the first notes of
 the opera Don Giovanni
 1.20 and 1.50 Kčs. Mozart at a spinet.

U. S. S. R.

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