

THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

Official publication of the



Czechoslovak Philatelic Society

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EDITORIAL

Delinquent members please note that this is the last call for mailing your 1964 dues, of \$3.00, to treasurer Joseph Stein, 585 East 21st St., Brooklyn, N. Y. 11226.

Our congratulations to member Laddie S. Pata upon his election to the office of Councilor, Central, by unanimous vote of the Council. We are looking forward to hearing of his activities regarding the activation of the Cleveland Branch. As we said some time ago, there are many fine collectors of Czechoslovakia in Cleveland and they are interested to get together regularly. In all such instances, some member is needed to keep this wish alive and to actually arrange for the meetings.

Members please send your frame reservations to Mrs. Robert Fields, Entries Chairman Nojex 1964, 18 Lake St., Paterson, N. J. 07501, as soon as possible. In case you have not received an entry form, write to the Chairman for it. Make your dinner reservations promptly by sending your check for \$4.50 to Emil J. Michaelson, 1833 Arbor Lane, Union, N. J. and specifying whether you wish a meat or a fish course. Anyone planning to attend this celebration of the Silver Anniversary of the Society and at the same time to visit the World's Fair, write to Hotel Robert Treat, Newark, N. J. for room reservations. These notices are necessarily our last ones regarding our Exhibition, Convention and Dinner of October 9-11.

We are indeed pleased to announce that five members from New York as well as member Pearce from Oklahoma have decided to join our sister society in Great Britain. Nothing but good can come of closer ties with the only society in the world outside of Czechoslovakia itself (not counting the Czechoslovak Stamp Club in Chicago) interested in our specialty. Let us hear from anyone wishing to receive a membership application blank.

Member Kovarik has informed us of an error in #1038 Scott which is so listed in Pofis but does not appear in Scott's. The stamp was issued on March 27, 1961, the correct name being Pavol Orszagh Hviezdoslav and the error reading Pavol OrszaCh Hviezdoslav. Further report from Frank Kovarik indicate that he is progressing in outlining plans for the Allegory Study Group. He and a few other members will peruse his library of Czech philatelic literature. They will prepare a bibliography and will produce from that a resume of all

important features of the Allegory issue. Where necessary, entire articles will be translated. We understand also that president Horechny expressed his interest in the project when he approved the plans for the formation of a study group. We hope that some original research also will go into this. Although the more material, translated into English, is made available, the easier will become the specialized collection of that issue. Every single step is an advance.

The philatelic press has published information about an attempt by the Chicago branch to induce the P. O. Department to issue a stamp in 1965 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Sokol movement in this country. We were somewhat surprised to read about these activities in the press without having ever received any previous notice on the subject. It is indeed commendable that a branch is so enthusiastic in its activities that it is even arranging a contest for the best possible sketch or drawing of a proposed stamp. In our many years of experience we have learned that a branch of a national or international organization usually concerns itself with affairs of a local character and does not involve the national society in any way, except for recruiting new members and furthering interest in the mother society in general. The implication is, as can be seen from one of the circular letters, that the Czechoslovak Philatelic Society as such has sanctioned this contest. We are in a rather awkward situation because as Editor of the official publication of the Society it is very positively our job to safeguard the best interests of the Society. We must therefore report on this matter. We shall not comment on the merits or lack of merits of the proposed contest per se and wish only to say that in the future it would seem to us much wiser if a branch were first to contact the Council, including the president of the Society before taking steps not in conformity with generally accepted procedures by a branch. We do not wish to spoil anyone's fun but we do feel that disorganization is not best for any society. Unilateral actions of this nature have never been considered wholesome, as everyone must know.

In the process of composing this Editorial, we received the May 2nd issue of "Stamps," in which we noted to our great consternation, that the Chicago branch decided on a coup to the distinct harm of the Society. Members, having read the Editorials in the April and May issues of the Specialist, may justly wonder whether there is anything wrong that the Editor has been talking about offering a translation of the fine book on Forgeries free to our members, when readers of other philatelic publications note that the Chicago branch members had by the middle of April already translated the entire book and offer the translation for sale to any and all at Compex and at K-Line Publishing, Inc. It is a disease when some members go ahead, using the name of the Society without any permission whatsoever, from the elected authorities, when a past president, for the sake of publicity or for some other peculiar reason, is desirous of proceeding without the slightest regard for the welfare of the Society, when another member, who is under moral obligation to this publication, does not inform the Editor of damaging actions not in conformity with accepted procedures, but rather aids them, then my dear members there is shock that the immorality of our world is so horribly reflected by a few in our society. In a small way, a few members of the Chicago branch, have shown us quite suddenly what can happen when regard for the mother society and for co-workers is one of utter indifference and when a few members of a Society have the desire to harm their own Society consisting of fine membership and from which they have so benefited over the years. We are very much disturbed by the behavior of a few but cannot leave all this unsaid just because it is so unpleasant. We must defend the Society and we must let all

of you know that we were not at all aware of the action contemplated by these few members in Chicago. We were at a complete disadvantage since we had notified one of our correspondents there, a member, as early as February of what we intended to do but he did not tell us about or maybe, thereupon, helped originate this very strange and sad affair. Our president was as much disturbed as ourselves and has communicated with the person over whose name the announcement was published.

We wish all of you to know that our aim is, has been and will be only to serve the Society. We are not interested in personal publicity. Our idea regarding the translation of the text of the Forgery book was only to give you some more for your membership dues, at no extra cost to you. We have been in communication with the appropriate agency in Czechoslovakia for securing permission to translate the copyrighted book. We have the information from Washington that the two countries have had a bilateral copyright agreement since 1927 and that as of January 1960 Czechoslovakia has been a signatory to the Universal Copyright Convention.

Had the members informed us of their intentions, as is proper and would be expected in any Society, we might have found a way to publish the material in a shorter period of time and giving all due credit to them for translation, but still without any cost to our membership.

A nice present to the Society by some members of the Chicago Branch on this 25th anniversary of the Society!

We are publishing a printed matter mailed to customers by one of our regular advertisers, K-Line Publishing, Inc. Members will be interested to hear of this new service.

ANNIVERSARY DINNER AND MEETING OF THE CHICAGO BRANCH

Perhaps the finest social affair of this branch, in its 25 years' existence, took place on Saturday, April 4th, at the Old Prague Restaurant in Cicero. We deplored the inability of our invited guests, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur I. Kessler of New York, to be present at this gathering, but Mr. Kessler had to leave for Europe and so had to be excused. The celebration was due to the efforts of member Joseph J. Janecka, Jr., who, with the assistance of his charming wife, made the anniversary dinner a big success. After welcoming the guests, Mr. Janecka presented Dr. J. J. Matejka, Frank Kovarik and Joseph J. Jiranek who spoke either of the work of the branch or of interesting facets of collecting Czechoslovakia.

The branch meeting was held on Sunday, April 12th, when the subject of Compex was thoroughly discussed and a "labor force" was recruited for Compex activities.

The branch meetings since the beginning of the year have been most enthusiastic. After seeing the book on Forgeries we feel certain there is room for more enthusiasm in the study of the emissions of our favorite country.

Editor's Note: Mr. Kovarik's additional comments sent to us are being reproduced in our editorial. These dealt with the study group, at the present time in its infancy but part of the affairs of the Czechoslovak Philatelic Society.

Mention this publication when answering ads. Thanks!

Printing Errors On the 5h Hradcany Stamp

by Jaroslav Kracik

translated and edited by J. J. Verner

Recently I have become interested in the printing and plate errors, as well as their corrections, that appear on the first stamps of Czechoslovakia, the so-called Hradčany issue. I would like to acquaint fellow collectors with certain errors that have not as yet been recorded and others that have been incorrectly classified.

Today I would like to correct the generally accepted description of the 5 heller light green Hradčany stamp that appears in position 27 of plate II and its "retouch," and the stamp from position 46 in plate I and its "retouch." The 27th stamp of plate II has a small dot (a in figure 1 and 2) on the wing of the dove in the lower left corner and (b in all illustrations) sun rays that differ from those on stamps of position 46, plate I. The faults that appear on these stamps should not be classified as plate errors and their retouches. The stamps shown in figures 1 and 3 should properly be classified as printing error 1 and those shown in figures 2 and 4 as printing error 2. The printing errors on 27, II are oval in shape and those on 46, I resemble a bunch of grapes.

The cause of printing errors 1 in both of these positions was most probably some kind of foreign body becoming stuck on the plate and thus elevating the plate surface at these points causing a dark concentration of ink. The foreign body also prevented the design of the stamp from coming through. The plate under this foreign body became dirty and after the body fell or was cleaned off a printing fault continued to appear because the ink did not catch on this unclean area. Only after the plates were thoroughly cleaned was it possible to print without flaws appearing in these positions.

The best proof that this is how these flaws were created is offered by the new printing of these stamps in 1948 to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the first Czechoslovak postage stamps. The original plate I was used, but neither printing error 1 or 2 appear in position 46. The plate is in the Philatelic Division of the Postal Museum in Prague and its examination reveals no flaws or damage to the 46th position that could account for the 1st and 2nd printing errors produced from it earlier.

Another reason that leads me to believe that the mis-classified "retouch" actually was the earlier printing error in both positions are dates on cancelled

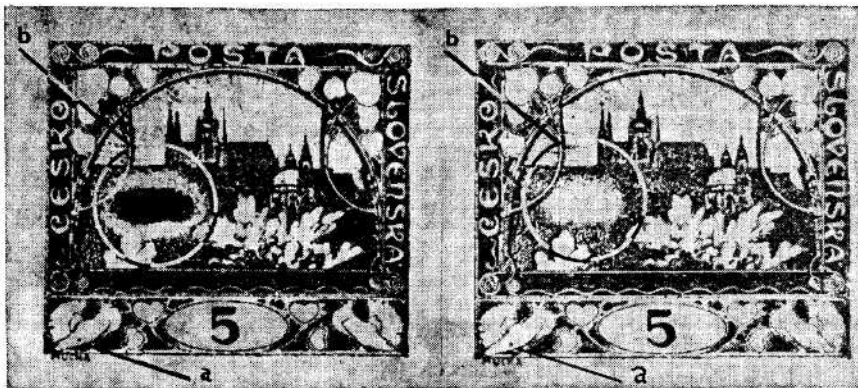


Fig. 1
Printing error 1

Fig. 2
Printing error 2

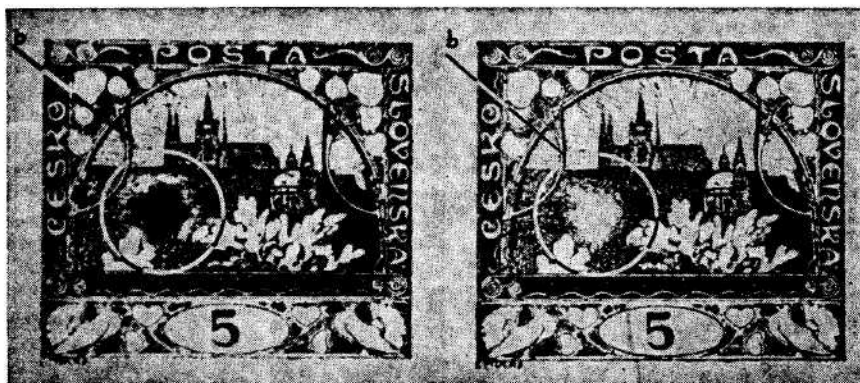


Fig. 3
Printing error 1

Fig. 4
Printing error 2

stamps. I have a copy of stamp 27, II bearing printing error 1 cancelled on January 2, 1919, or less than three weeks after the December 12, 1918 date of issue. The earliest cancellation date of this stamp bearing error 2 is February 25, 1919, or about seven weeks later. Comparable dates for the 46th stamp on plate I are January 25, 1919 for error 1 and March 1919 for error 2.

Full sheets still extant also tend to confirm that printing error 1 did indeed precede error 2. Sheets produced from plate II and bearing the second error have plate faults on four other positions. It would follow that if error 1 had been created later than error 2 these other faults would also be found on sheets bearing error 1. But since this is not the case, damage at these other positions must have occurred after stamps with error 1 had been printed.

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Czechs Solicit Opinions of Their Stamps

By Edgar Lewy

Reprinted from Western Stamp Collector

If the present spate of critical examination of Czechoslovak stamps (not to speak of increased publicistic activity) is anything to go by, the Czechs take their own stamp designs very seriously indeed. Not long ago Dr. Josef Krouman, an editor of the newspaper "Mlada Fronta" (Youth Front) announced the organization of an international public contest in which readers of the paper were asked to judge Czech stamps. This contest has been widely publicised if only because Dr. Krouman, as an active member of the International Association of Philatelic Journalists, spreads the story throughout the Association's membership and it has been generously published.

Here are the four questions which should be answered direct to the following address, please: Dr. Josef Krouman, Mlada Fronta, Panska 8, Prague 1, Czechoslovakia:

1. Which Czech stamp issued in 1963 do you like best, and why?
2. Which of the Czech 1963 stamps do you personally consider the most beautiful?
3. Which of the Czech stamps of 1963 do you like least—give reasons.
4. Which of the stamps issued in 1963 by Czechoslovakia is least successful aesthetically?

There it is. All you need is the current Scott catalog and supplements (if you don't have the stamps in front of you), and away you go.

Just how my colleague Krouman is going to deal with the letters which he is bound to receive, I leave to him to work out—I'm glad that the job is not mine.

Seriously though, this contest is only one of a number of movements in Czech philately which demonstrates (to my mind) that the Czechs are very far from their erstwhile situation of having to take all government handouts lying down. Consistent efforts are being made to insure that only the very best work gets out onto postage stamps, and I am certain that the age of issues such as the 1947 October Revolution set and the 1950 series for the 5th anniversary of the Peoples' Republic is definitely past.

But even in those years, superb work was done in Czechoslovakia, even though it was interspersed with purely party political items of considerably lower merit than the average election poster.

Quite apart from the evident relaxation of the political atmosphere in Prague there is the lively spirit of the newly-founded association of Czechoslovak Philatelic Journalists, now numbering 32. They are wide awake people, and most of them know more than one foreign language—an essential in stamp writing today.

The Vice-Chairman, for instance, is fluent in German, French and English quite apart from Czech, and I believe also knows Russian. The war years he spent in Belgium, returning to Prague in 1945. Professionally he is a broadcaster with Radio Prague.

The Chairman of the group, B. Hlinka, is a professional writer on another Czech newspaper, and author of philatelic books.

The group works in closest liaison with both the postal authorities, the collectors' organisations, and the press and publicity side, so that within a very few years the stamps of Czechoslovakia will be amongst the best publicized in the world.

In this they are aided, of course, by the activities of the state export body "Artia," who with its expert knowledge of the market, are not slow to suggest

that topical exploitation of popular themes will bring in much-welcomed foreign currency.

On the other hand they are not averse to spending it again on such things as international exhibitions, press advertising, etc., so that the money goes round and round to everyone's benefit.

Latest activity of the Journalists' Group in Prague is the award of prizes totalling Kcs. 6,000 (about \$900) jointly with the Fine Arts Union to the artists and engravers who were judged to be the most meritorious in producing the self-same issues of Czechoslovakia. It will be interesting to see how far the census of public opinion agrees with that of a 12-member jury (drawn from the Arts Union and Journalists' Association).

But the experts' judgement is not without interest even if it brings few surprises. For instance the chief prize of Kcs. 2,000 went to the well-known artist Prof. Karel Svoboda for his stamp released in connection with the 2 Kcs. stamp "Folk Art" of 1963. At the same time his 30-haleru stamp "60th anniversary of Moravian Teachers' Union" was taken into consideration. The engraver Ladislav Jirka provided the dies for both issues, and was additionally awarded Kcs. 1,000 for his work.

The second prize went to one of the world's most unusual stamp designs released to honor the Society for Dissemination of Political and Scientific Knowledge.

Here Jaroslav Lukavsky drew a splendidly imaginative composition of a human head which on close examination is seen to comprise symbolic representations of scientific machinery and equipment. The representation of the two abstractions of Politics and Science on one emblem must pose the most formidable problems, and the only criticism which must be levelled at this design is that it probably goes over the heads of most people who are looking at it. Engraver Jiri Svengsbir received a 500 Kcs. award for his work on the die.

Third prize (Kcs. 1,000) went to Anna Podzemna for her design "Red Cross Centenary," 30 haleru, also engraved by L. Jirka. Here the emblem is anatomically incorporated into a Red Cross nurse with a child at play in the foreground.

What are we to make of these results? The judges must have had a difficult task. Sixty-nine different designs were released by the Czechs in 1963—just one was a definitive (the 50 h., Krivoklat Castle issue).

A number of the others (all competent) are however straight-forward "pot-boilers," which perhaps receive less attention than they deserve because of the high standard of the others.

The six "Space" stamps; a number of the portrait designs, the sports and landscape items, as well as the animal thematics all come within the group of "we've seen these before, even if not quite as well done."

The symbolical stamps whose composition requires mental as well as physical ability on the part of their creator are perhaps in themselves a higher group.

And yet the "Fourth Youth Congress" stamp is straight in the succession of the "Worker-Peasant-Intellectual with revolutionary crowd" tradition which the politicians evidently cannot hope to oust altogether. The people who march in Red Square, or along the splendid streets of Prague, look much like you and me—that expression of grim determination as though the bloated cartoon capitalist was just waiting to be annihilated, seems to be reserved exclusively for poster art. Let's forget it. Ten years ago, that stamp might have gotten the prize—this year it's out of the running.

For my part, I liked the Brno Fair issues with their slightly pastiche compositions based on the old clock tower of Brno; I also feel that the Freedom

from Hunger stamp (by Svolinsky) is unusually well thought-out. Party politics—a little more imaginatively treated this time—on the set for Soviet-Czech friendship; but again fair work on the set for the 15th anniversary of "Victorious February" even though the step-graph and red star design on one value remind me of the well-known saying that there are lies, damned lies, and statistics.

You'll probably disagree with me—but go right ahead. Your letters should go to Dr. Krouman in Prague—not to me or Western Stamp Collector.

NEW MEMBERS

- 765 Anna Jacobs, 787 George St., Teaneck, N. J. 07666
 766 B. J. Cervenka, 1919 Buccaneer Dr., Saratoga, Florida.
 767 Dr. Frank J. Arnold, 416 Ninth Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y. 11215.
 768 Dr. Otto Konig, Bishop Towers, 10-A, 100 Memorial Parkway, New Brunswick, N. J.
 769 Joel B. Sunderman, 1833 De Lancey Place, Philadelphia, Pa. 19103.
 770 Norman L. Dalbey, 1901 East Main St., Richmond, Indiana.
 771 Fred Kozlof, P. O. Box 321, Blenheim, Ont., Canada.
 772 Adolf Hujer, Polska 3, Praha 2, Czechoslovakia
 773 William L. Rosol, 1536 So. St. Paul, Denver, Colo. 80210.
 774 George Wm. Schabow, Rt. 5, 12-1st Ave., Antioch, Ill. 60002.

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- 61 W. B. Bryant, 550 S. Flower St., Los Angeles, Calif. 90017.
 323 Ray A. Walther, Jewish Comm. Cent., 2631 Harvard St. N.W., Canton, Ohio
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Are Look-Alike Stamps Really Alike?

By Harry R. Thorwirth

Reprinted from the German Postal Specialist

New avenues have been opened up to collectors who are proud owners of an ultraviolet lamp. By examining both sides of a stamp under this type of light, we can experience numerous surprises—often quite surprising ones. New and unexpected colors in brilliant shades appear.

This may lead to an entirely new field in stamp collecting. In past years, few of us could afford the luxury of a UV-light. But in recent years more economical models have come on the market. They should enable even the average collector to enjoy the pleasures of our hobby more than before.

Philatelically speaking, we differentiate stamps by perforation, printing method, paper, watermark and color; the latter referring to the apparent color visible to the naked eye. Let us call this visible color "daylight color" or "DLC" as opposed to "UVC" meaning that color becoming visible only under UV-light.

It is impossible to establish one fixed rule for the behavior of stamps and their color under the UV rays. It seems, however, that three (3) categories exist as follows:

1. Stamps which do not change their DLC when viewed under UV light.
2. Stamps which retain their DLC but in a different shade, either darker or lighter, and
3. Those stamps which change their DLC altogether, thus producing what was referred to above as UVC.

However, a further complication arises in the fact that each DLC does not always behave in the same manner under UV light. For example, lilac or violet DLC may not always show a different UVC. Blue DLC may not always appear in a differently shaded UVC. A red DLC may or may not change to a UVC. In this respect, each stamp seems to have its own character.

So the question arises if a stamp, reacting in different ways under UV light, should be classified as a variety. The answer, based on thorough research can only be given in respect to a certain stamp.

As an example, let us examine Mi #345, the 125th Railroad Anniversary stamp of 1960. Michel lists as DLC for this issue light brown olive and black. However, the shade of this stamp runs from a light to a dark brown olive. Under UV light some stamps retain their exact shade—DLC. Others change to a brilliant lemon-yellow. Which of these two could be classified as the major issue and which as the variety? Normally, the scarcer one would be the variety. It appears that the lemon yellow UVC should thus be called the variety, since only two out of 100 copies examined show the lemon yellow UVC. Based on this known percentage or a possible future change due to further research, should the catalogues list the different UVC as a variety?

To resolve this problem, let us look at three questions and give at the same time the answers, both positive and negative.

QUESTION 1: Are two stamps of the same issue different stamps, because of their different UVC and DLC?

NO: Because the difference is apparently only under "artificial treatment.

YES: Because often a different watermark—acknowledged as a variety—is only visible after "artificial" treatment with a chemical.

QUESTION 2: Is the different UVC a color error and thus a variety?

NO: The DLC in both cases is alike, an error thus not in question.

YES: Even with the DLC the same, the error may be based on erroneous and accidental composition of the ink, then the scarcer intentional "error" thus

would justify the listing of the stamp as a variety.

QUESTION 3: Is the different UVC still a variety or an error, if the chemical formula of the ink was changed by official order?

NO: Because in this case, we would have two different stamps with a different catalogue number or at least an "A" or "B" number.

YES: If the official order determined only the chemical composition of the ink, then the scarcer UVC should be classified as a variety.

As of now, it is nearly impossible to say which of the answers is right and which is wrong. Nor could a collector definitely pronounce a verdict at this time. In order to further study this field, I should like to invite all interested Germany collectors to form a new GPS Study Group. Through combined efforts and research we will be able to further explore this field. Any interested persons are asked to write to: Harry R. Thowirth, 2929 "O" Street, Lincoln 10, Nebraska.

In closing, I should like to explain a few ground rules which are necessary to know for UV examination: (1) Use UV only in a completely darkened room. In daylight and normal artificial light UV reacts differently and conclusions thus obtained may be misleading, (2) Always remove stamps from glassine envelopes or from your stock book. UV does not penetrate these transparent materials, (3) The UV light should be located directly and straight above the stamp to be examined, because UV at an angle or at too great a distance will not bring out the UVC.

As 2000 years ago Caesar's armies crossed the Rubicon, entering a new area of conquest, so it seems to me that we have likewise crossed into a new area in philately.

—Translated by Thilo Steinschulte

500th Anniversary of an Important Peace Proposal Originating in Prague

Of the four personages who are being commemorated by UNESCO this year and to whom the Czechoslovak postal administration dedicated a special set of stamps issued on March 20, George of Poděbrady, King of Bohemia (1.60 Kčs stamp) is not as well known to the world at large as are the other three—Michelangelo Buonarroti (40 h stamp), William Shakespeare (60 h stamp) and Galileo Galilei (1 Kčs stamp). However, the reason why the civilized world will honor King George of Poděbrady this year is just as important as the contributions of other, frequently better-known personalities in history.

George of Poděbrady (1420-1471) was of noble birth, a member of the Bohemian Hussite aristocracy, who following the death of the Hapsburg king Albrecht II, took part in the ensuing struggle for power in Bohemia as leader of the feudal adherents of the Hussite movement. Thus in 1452-58 he became regent of the Kingdom of Bohemia, in the name of Albrecht's son Ladislaus Posthumus, in which capacity he proved his ability to rule by stabilizing the internal political conditions of the land within a comparatively short time. In 1458 he was elected King of Bohemia with even the Catholic feudal opposition casting its vote in his favor.

Because of his friendly attitude towards the Hussite movement, King George could not count on the good will of either the pope or the Holy Roman Emperor. When in 1462 Pope Pius II revoked the Basel Compacts, issued in the years 1431-49 by the Council of Basel and making certain concessions to the Hussites on the part of the Catholic Church, King George decided to reply to the pope's hostile act by launching a widespread world peace campaign which, without either the pope's or emperor's participation, would serve to ensure

peace in Europe and stay the invasions of the Turks.

On May 16, 1464—exactly 500 years ago—George of Poděbrady, after lengthy and involved diplomatic negotiations, dispatched an official delegation with a detailed legal document containing the plan for a multilateral international treaty to ensure peace in Europe. King George of Bohemia sent his proposal to Louis XI of France. The delegation also went in the name of King Kazimir Jagello of Poland as well as King Matthias Corvinus of Hungary, so that it represented a diplomatic undertaking of no small measure.

The proposal made by King George of Poděbrady, which with its exact legal formulation and purposeful political intent is the first of its kind in world history, is considered by international scientific circles to be of great historical significance. The establishment of the League of Nations following World War I and of the United Nations towards the end of World War II, proved that this proposal can rightly be considered as the ideological precursor of both these international organizations.

The graphic artist and engraver Jiří Švengsbír, designer of the 1.60 Kčs stamp, created the King's portrait from the picture by an unknown artist which hangs in Častolovice Castle in Northeastern Bohemia. He added a heraldic lion, emblem of the Kingdom of Bohemia, inside the capital letter "G" of "Georgius" and the pertinent latin inscription "Proiectus Georgii regis Bohemine — 1464-1964 — Cultus Pacis".

In connection with the issue of this stamp we should like to point out that two Czechoslovak stamps of an earlier date depict Poděbrady Castle, where the forefathers of George of Poděbrady at one time held sway. These are the 4 Kčs stamp issued in 1936 which depicts the equestrian statue of King George in front of Poděbrady Castle in the present-day spas of the same name, located 50 kilometers east of Prague, and the 40 h commemorative issued in 1958 with a view of the castle and town as seen from the Labe (Elbe).

In that same year, 1958, Prague was the scene of a large exhibition of old documents intended to show that the Czech and Slovak peoples had always fostered good relations with their neighbors and other countries and that they strove and have not ceased striving to establish close economic and cultural ties. In view of the purpose of this exhibition it was truly apt that one of the two stamps issued on this occasion, i.e., the 30 h. stamp, portrayed the peace-loving King of Bohemia, George of Poděbrady, the stamp picture bearing his portrait on the right side and his official seal on the left.

(F. J. K.)

NEW YORK BRANCH MEETINGS

At the March meeting member Horechny, president of our Society, delivered a talk with showing of his very fine Masaryk collection. This was a highly educational evening and our guest from the midwest, Mr. Palmer, expressed his pleasure at having had the opportunity to visit with the branch at this particular time.

Member Koplowitz, upon request of the local group, brought with him a very interesting collection of Scandinavia for the April meeting. We wish to state here that George has been elected President of the New York Chapter of the Scandinavian Philatelic Society and is very active in that phase of philately. His collection consisted of a number of fine items and since his write-up is quite clear, we all understood it readily and enjoyed it greatly.

The branch members decided to hold their annual get-together dinner on June 20th at the Sokol Hall restaurant where we had such a fine time last year. This may also be called our local branch 25th anniversary dinner celebration.

**RELIGIOUS THOUGHT AND PHILOSOPHY AS DEPICTED ON THE
STAMPS OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA**

by C. Hedley Osbourn

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(continued)

MARTIN RAZUS

Martin Razus was a minister of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, but he is not known for his clerical activities, but for his political ones; for just as Hlinka was the leader of the Catholic Slovaks in their fight for autonomy within the Czechoslovak State, so Razus was the leader of the Protestant population in the Slovak National Party.

His leadership dates from before the start of the Republic and goes back to the overlordship of Hungary, when he led the Slovak autonomous group. When the Republic came into being, he became critical of the Prague unitary ambitions and policies, and contended the difference was only one of degree but not of principle. He was a member of the Czechoslovak Parliament.

His life (1888-1937) was a full one, and his writings are interesting. He wrote reflective and patriotic verses inspired by the first world war, autobiographic novels and chronicles of country life with an anti-Czech bias.

(Slovakia A32)

MONSIGNOR ANDREJ HLINKA

Roman Catholic priest, vicar of Ružomberok, Slovakia. He was born in 1864, died August 16, 1938, in his parish of Ružomberok, in Western Slovakia. Ordained a priest in 1889, he became the political champion of the Slovaks, and leader of the Slovak Clerical Party (actual name: Slovak Populist Party), with the avowed aim of either autonomy within the Czechoslovakian Federation, or complete separation from the Republic.

(Slovakia A1, A2, A20, A26)

DR. JOSEF TISO

Roman Catholic priest, German puppet president of Slovakia, Slovak politician and ecclesiastic. Ordained as priest in 1909, and became interested in politics through Hlinka. After the death of Monsignor Hlinka, Tiso became leader of the party. When autonomy came in October 1938, he became the first prime minister of Slovakia. His loyalty to the Republic was variable,



although his prestige with a large number of Slovaks was so great that his political vagaries were dangerous. Probably the character of Tiso shows the difference in the character of the Slovak and Czech Catholicism, which manifested itself in the continuous and sometimes violent political aversions towards the Czechs. It is significant that the instrument of the violent rupture between Slovakia and Bohemia-Moravia which occurred in March 1939, was a Roman Catholic priest, Dr. Tiso. To attempt to detail the break is impossible, but on March 10, 1939, he was ousted by the Federal government, and significantly enough, the Federal president was a Slovak, Milan Hodza. However, four days later Tiso appealed to Adolf Hitler, and Slovakia proclaimed its independence. Tiso was reinstated on March 23rd and a treaty with Germany was signed for 25 years of friendship. On August 18th, Germany assumed military control. On October 26th, Tiso was elected President.

It has always been assumed by readers of Slovak history of this period, that Dr. Tiso, with the help of the Magyar Tucha, concerted with the Germans a coup d'etat in Slovakia and the "independence" of Slovakia was under the aegis of Germany.

As soon as the Red Army had cleared the Germans out of the eastern part of the Republic, Beneš and the London Government returned to Košice in Slovakia. There had been a previous premature, but heroic, rising in Slovakia at the end of 1944, but with the arrival of Beneš, Tiso's puppet government was taken over by the Slovak National Committee.

The end of Tiso is best left unsaid.

(Slovakia A8, A42, SP1)

PLACES

We now carry our study to its final phase. We have looked at Czechoslovak stamps historically, then at its personalities, and now we examine those places which have a religious background, either directly as a place of worship or meditation, or because of some religious significance attached.

Let us start with the City of Praha.

STRAHOV MONASTERY, Praha

This monastery is the second oldest in Bohemia. Founded by Duke Vladislav II on the Strahov Heights, it was originally called Zion. During the Hussite Wars, in 1420, it was destroyed by fire. Its second founder was the Prior Lobelius who repaired the buildings in 1570. In 1648 the Swedes laid siege to the monastery and then compelled the monks to turn over to them everything of value. The Swedes removed every silver statue, also about 50,000 gulden which belonged to the Count Schlick.

In the present Monastery's claustrum is an art gallery with valuable paintings by Rubens, Brandl, Holbein, Van Dyke, Rein, Correggio and many others. Among these the most famous is Albrecht Durer's "Rosary Celebration." This painting was brought to Strahov by Rudolph II. The Strahov Library contains literary treasures beyond the scope of monetary value. Over 60,000 volumes, manuscripts, original paintings, etc., are housed there.

At the time of the 1918 Revolution, Monsignor Methodius Zavoral, Abbot of the Monastery, was one of the leaders of the Czechoslovak People's Party (Clerical), and a director of the party organ, "Lidové Listy."

The vignette on the stamp, was reproduced from a photograph of Strahov taken from the Castle ramp, and showing Vošmik's statue of St. Václav, was issued in 1927. Designed and reengraved from the photograph by Karel Seizinger.

Type A16.

THE CHURCH OF ST. JAMES, Levoča

The ancient Church of St. James, with its Pilgrim shells, its carved and gilded altars, the work of Master Paulus of Cracow in the 15th century, is seen to the rear of the Town Hall on the stamp. The town has been called the Slovak "Nuremberg," because of its character. Its chief beauty is the 13th century Gothic Church, which is quite a museum of medieval art. In the church there is much carved and gilded work. The high altar, 60 feet high, is part of the work of "Mistr Pavel," and is all wood elaborately carved and gilded, the gold remaining as fresh as when it was first put on. On the walls are frescoes of the 14th century, the favorite being that of St. Dorothy; also the beautiful bronze font of the same period.

Above the entrance to the Chapel of St. George is a well-preserved fresco, dated 1515, representing Christ with St. John and His mother (Mary).

Type A20, A275(674).

CHURCH OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN MARY, Jasina

The stamp under study depicts the Bell Tower and Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, a church presumably of the Greek Catholic persuasion (Uniat).

Jasina is the home of a special race known as the Huculs. Their churches are typically wooden, with detached bell towers, and both have projecting eaves or verandas, wide enough to shelter a small crowd in a storm. The plan seems to suggest Byzantine influence, which, of course, it is. Usually in the form of a Greek cross, but instead of a central dome, there is a central tower, hexagonal or octagonal, the roof towering to a point.

Type A22, Carpatho-Ukraine Type A1.



Cathedral of St. Peter of Brno, on the left, and St. Nicholas of Prague on the right.

CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. PETER, Brno

The Cathedral Church of St. Peter dominates the Old Town of Brno, which though small and traversed by crooked streets, contains most of the civic and ecclesiastical buildings, as for example the Rathaus (1511) and the 15th century Church of St. James. The Cathedral was begun in the 13th century when Brno was a growing trade center on the Crusader's path, to and from Jerusalem. It was completed two centuries later in the period of Moravia's greatness. It is built of dark stone with five aisles of equal height and an iron fleche or spire which was added about 150 years ago.

The stamp depicts the Cathedral, as painted by Jaroslav Setelik.

Type A25, A34, A114, SP13; Bohemia A6.

TÝN CHURCH, Praha

This church, situated in the "Ring" or Market Place (14th-15th century), and memorable as the religious center of the Hussite movement, and for its tomb of Tycho Brahe, the Danish astronomer.



The Týn Church was built by George of Podebrod, and has an especially fine facade. A golden statue of the king, which represented him as pointing upward with his sword to a golden chalice, was destroyed by the Jesuits in 1623. The official name of the Church is the Týn Church of the Virgin Mary. It is a veritable museum, and full of the most treasured relics of Czechoslovakia.

Type A28, A36, A158, AP11(C44).

ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH, Praha

This church has a very graceful architecture, which majestically dominates the scene below the silhouette of the Hradcany. In 1704, the celebrated architect, Kelian Ignatz Christopher Diezenhofer, took over and by 1711, the central nave of the church was built.

Conceived and built by the Jesuits in the style of the Italian Renaissance, the church has an enormous green dome which is conspicuous from a great distance. The interior is dazzling with rich marble pillars, gold ornaments, colossal statues and frescoes.

Type A39, A89, SP9, A292, AP11(C44).

(to be continued)

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