

# THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

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## Types of the "Praga 1962" Commemorative Sheets

By Eduard Herout

Translated by J. J. Verner



On August 18, 1962, the final series of stamps and sheet commemorating the World Stamp Exhibit PRAGA 1962 was issued. The series consisted of

5 values and the sheet had a face value of 5 crowns. The sheet was issued perforated and, in limited quantity, imperforated.

The sheets appeared with various consistent differences which allow us to divide the sheets into four basic categories, each with one sub-variety. The sheets were printed from five steel engraved color plates, that is one each for green, blue, black, yellow, and red. A separate plate had to be prepared for each color. Four stamps were engraved on each plate. On the fifth plate, the one used to print black, the branches and caption were engraved under each stamp separately. So, in this manner differences appeared in all four sheets printed from these plates. The differences in the marginal design as well as the dimensions and other varieties in the text under the stamp are our guides to distinguishing the types of the commemorative sheets.

The entire emission of the commemorative sheets was printed from the same plates, but in two separate printings. The entire issue consisted of 290,900 sheets, 90,300 of which were imperforated. After approximately half the printing the plates were re-chromed. This process eliminated some of the identification points. For instance this happened with the dot above the S in SVETOVA which did not appear in the second half of the printing. Therefore about half the sheets appear with this mark above the S and half without.

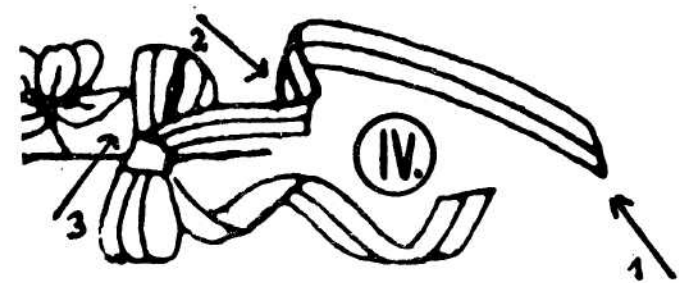
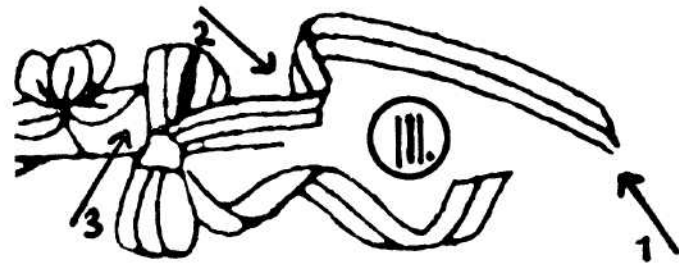
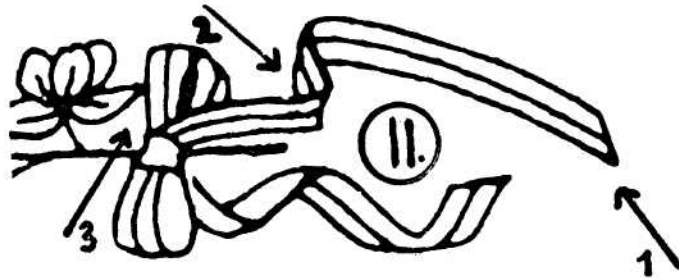
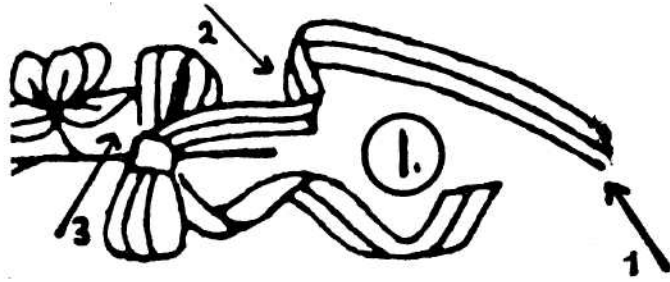
In the following table we have included only the main identity marks which are necessary to enable every collector to exactly identify the type or sub-type that he has.

#### Types of the Praga 1962 sheet

Type	Identifying marks in caption	Marks in marginal decoration
I	a) a dot between V & N in POŠTOVNÍCH	1) end of right top ribbon open
	b) dot about 2mm above S in SVETOVA	2) upper border of right top ribbon normal thickness
Ia	dot above S missing, remainder as in I	3) break in outer left line of bow in ribbon
II	a) dot between O and Š in POŠTOVNÍCH	1) end of ribbon closed
	b) dot about 2mm above S in SVETOVA	2) upper border of ribbon thicker
IIa	dot above S missing, remainder as in II	3) no break in left line of bow
III	a) dot above O in POŠTOVNÍCH	1) end of ribbon closed
	b) dot about 2mm above S in SVETOVA	2) upper border of ribbon thicker
IIIa	dot above S, remainder as in III	3) no break in left line of bow
IV	a) nick in E in SVETOVA	1) end of top ribbon closed
	b) dot above S in SVETOVA	2) all 3 lines in ribbon bend are thicker
	c) dot above first V in SVETOVA	3) no break in left line of bow
IVa	dot above S missing, remainder as in IV	

It should be mentioned that sometimes, though rarely, the dots connected with the text "SVETOVA VYSTAVA POŠTOVNÍCH . . ." are not visible. In those cases the differences in the border design enable the collector to distinguish the type. A more detailed examination of the border design would reveal a whole series of other typical features, but the characteristic marks indicated above are entirely adequate for distinguishing the types.

Since five color plates were used to print the sheets, shifted color can not be considered a distinguishing feature of any of the types, but rather a printing coincidence.



### EDITORIAL

Acceding to our request, Ing. Ladislav Dvořáček, President of the Federation of Czechoslovak Philatelists, will arrange for us to receive all the cuts for our illustrating the special articles translated from Filatelie. This will be of mutual benefit since we shall be able to publish all those articles due to smaller cost and Czechoslovak philately will be greatly advanced. In the near future we shall mail two sets of our Padělky translation to the Library of the Federation. These sets will be placed into permanent binders by our president Horechny.

Many things have transpired since we wrote our last editorial for publication in the April issue. First of all we had one of our worst automobile trips to the south which was compensated for only by our pleasant visits with our son, the George Blizils in Hollywood and later by a four days' stay in the Washington area. There we had an opportunity to spend some time with the Hahn family and with a number of members of the Washington branch. We had an appointment at the Voice of America for taping an interview regarding our interests in philatelic societies and our collecting of postal history items. We were very happy to be asked by Mrs. Hahn to attend a performance of the Washington National Symphony orchestra at Fairfax and spent another afternoon and evening at the home of Henry Hahn. There was an unscheduled meeting of the branch and we had a fine time showing them our collection of 1918-20 field posts which we had taken along for that purpose. The 64 pages shown, representing a very small fraction of the specialized collection already worked up, were subsequently exhibited at INTERPEX and were awarded the first prize in the War Cover section.

Frank Kosik, always interested in broadening the group of members participating in the betterment of our Specialist, sent us a short list of responses from a few of his correspondents. We were very much impressed by one suggestion that members should be urged to send the editor information about their collecting interests for publication as well as items about their activities regarding philately, etc. We are all for this and such items would make our monthly more newswy. What about it??

Another member suggested that some photos of interest be submitted to the editor who could utilize such items for the writing of a short article. We are in favor of this in principle but in practice it would not work out since your editor has been so busy with numerous philatelic activities that he could hardly find time for writing additional articles. We feel that members could write up such notes and your editor would be happy to edit them.

A very interesting suggestion came from a member regarding the possible publication of the Pofis catalog in English by the Federation. We doubt that the Federation would support such a venture or that our society could guarantee the sale of copies.

So far we heard from no one concerning the sending us of an article for our August Linn's issue. We cannot do it alone!!

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### OLDRICH L. FISER

We regret greatly to have to inform our membership of the passing of Mr. Fiser, roster No. 158. Some years ago we had the pleasure of meeting him during our visit in Cleveland. The officers wish to express their sympathy to the family. His widow requested that his membership be perpetuated and hence Mrs. Fiser retained this roster number as a member of our society.

## 36th MAIL SALE

	Suggested Minimum Bid
1. 115 picture postcards of Praha and other cities with stamps -----	\$11.00
2. 122 cards and covers with Austrian stamps used on Czech territory	12.00
3. 150 postcards only Prague with stamps -----	13.00
4. 3 stampless covers Czech towns -----	3.00
5. Lot of 200 postal stationery, used or unused -----	18.00
6. Box with about 3,000 Hradčany stamps, some on piece -----	6.00
7. Set of Hradčany to 1000 h *, many blocks of 4 -----	8.00
8. 45 Hradčany covers, nice lot -----	5.00
9. Scout stamps, never hinged -----	2.00
10. Same, used -----	2.00
11. Covers of the 2 stamps -----	5.00
12. Provisional Vlada I signed, to 10 K, no spec. Delivery -----	20.00
13. Same Vlada II -----	20.00
14. Provisional newspapers, some blocks, total 11 copies -----	3.00
15. Siberia, rare, perf. 11½, in blocks -----	40.00
16. Siberia, Lion, color trials (6 different) -----	18.00
17. Complete set Lion to 1 R., signed -----	18.00
18. Cover, nice -----	25.00
19. Large lot of printer's waste (about 300) -----	28.00
20. Pošta 1919, 10 K violet, signed and VF -----	22.00
21. Austrian Airmails overprinted VF (Sanabria about \$400.00) ----	100.00
22. 11 different overprints, some used -----	11.00
23. Masaryk, compl. set, vertical watermark, mint, VF -----	100.00
24. 2 K vertical watermark with plate number -----	50.00
25. 200 cards and covers with special cancels, some duplicates -----	6.00
26. Congress, complete set -----	20.00
27. Same used -----	20.00
28. Slet complete * -----	16.50
29. Same used -----	16.50
30. 250 Czech covers, all periods -----	8.00
31. 80 covers and cards of Bohemia-Moravia -----	8.00
32. Theresienstadt signed, perf. -----	5.00
33. Same imperf. -----	5.00

END OF SALE

Books Close June 15, 1967

# Alfons Stach

P. O. Box 387

Lenox, Mass.

## Czech Emergency Cancellations in Former Austrian Silesia 1945-46

By Dr. H. Tzschaschel

(Translated from "Die Sammler Lupe," August 5, 1965)

At the end of the war in 1945, postal administrations, especially of those areas separated from Germany, had come into a difficult situation. Only in rare instances did the postal officials of the successor states come across inventories of the German postal system. Beyond that, for understandable reasons, even the continued use of not only German postage stamps but also German postal cancellations was forbidden by the central administrations.

An especially attractive field of provisionals necessitated by that resulted in the sphere of the Polish postal system in the newly obtained western territories. My collection, restricted to Polish Silesia, shows numerous auxiliary cancels from manuscript through auxiliary cancels all the way to altered German cancels. In one of the earlier circular letters I have already published on this and also ascertained an interest in this field among Polish collectors.

Up to now, however, still no publication concerning the Czech emergency cancels from the period after 1945 has become known to me. That may lie in that, the Czechoslovak postal administration very rapidly supplied all post-offices with a uniform double cancel formed as a double circle and bridge cancel, bearing only the town name in the bridge, so that already in 1945 most cancellations were applied exclusively with these uniform and monotonous auxiliary cancels. In contrast to the Polish postoffices in Silesia, which operated until far into 1946 with numerous forms of cancels differing in each postoffice, therefore, the emergency cancels of the Czech postal system seem everywhere uniform, and therefore to be without particular interest.

However, this picture is considerably deceptive. When one has the opportunity to examine cancels from the first weeks after the war's end, one will ascertain that even in Czechoslovakia, even if for only a very short span of time, genuine auxiliary and emergency cancels occurred with locally prepared cancels. The above mentioned cancel only concluded the period of auxiliary cancels much sooner with this uniformly introduced form of provisional cancel in contrast to Polish-occupied Silesia.

The purpose of this article is to trace out the earliest emergency cancels. Herewith I may refer to the fact that my observations are limited exclusively to the Czech area of old Austrian Silesia, consequently to the area of the old principalities of Troppau-Jaegerndorf and Teschen-Bielitz. Moreover, in view of the very difficult procurement of material the statements made so far are certainly very fragmentary. No definitive cataloguing of these cancels should be attempted, but only a reference made to a few discoveries, the expansion of which for the Silesian area I would be very grateful for. If these lines moreover induce collectors to make suitable lists for the other areas of Czechoslovakia, be it of the Sudetenland, be it all of Czechoslovakia or individual portions, the Sudeten Study Group could produce a valuable task for later investigation.

1. There already existed a strict prohibition on the part of the Czech postal administration regarding the continued use of postage stamps and cancels. The stamps of Germany, which circulated in the Sudetenland, and the stamps of Bohemia-Moravia, in the Protectorate, could be used just as little as the stamps of Slovakia. Their use was not permitted even with obliterations or overprints. A few local postal administrations produced overprint issues not recognized by the Czech postal administration. Occasionally, at auctions,



alleged overprint issues, for example, of Maehrisch-Ostrau, were treated as private issues and in view of the very strict regulations of the postal administration at that time, should be treated as such. Genuinely used covers with overprint issues are not known.

The same occurred even with cancellations. The continued use of unaltered German or Protectorate cancels was forbidden. Nevertheless, occasionally mistakes passed, so that in isolated cases cancellations occur with the former German cancel. Basically, however, so far as German cancels were found and used, these were "altered." Either the German words were removed and the cancel used as a mute cancel or the Czech postal designation was inserted in the German cancel. With bi-lingual cancels, continued usage after removal of the German language portion is frequent. All these cancels, however, have a certain rarity, since they were replaced by the provisionals cancels of the central administration.

The registration label is an interesting exception. Here obviously no special order of the central postal administration was issued. For one can very frequently establish the continued use of the old German registration without the German name being changed in German language labels. So with the registration label there results an interesting picture, that the cover is to be sure cancelled with an altered German cancellation, the registration label however bears the German town name unaltered. On the other hand, with the registration labels we find all variations, which are at all conceivable. With bi-lingual registration labels the German name is crossed out, with German language registration labels it is replaced by the Czech name partly rubber stamped, partly in manuscript. German registration labels from large towns had been continued in use in other towns, thus the Oderberg registration label in Deutsch-Leuthen and Reichwaldau. Missing registration labels were substituted by manuscript rectangles, so that in this area alone, a varied collection of emergency expedients can be brought together.

2. I could ascertain the following types of cancellations with special auxiliary cancels:

- a.) Unaltered German cancels continued in use, for example, in Friedek 1 (presumably a favor cancel!)
- b.) Altered German cancels, continued in use as mute cancels. The location is indicated by rubber stamps, for example in Orlau, Jauernig, Freudenthal, Jaegerndorf, Poruba, Navsi, Studenka, Karlsthal, Niklasdorf, Wuerbenthal, Weidenau, Friedek 4.
- c.) Altered German cancels after the removal of the German and the insertion of the Czech town name, for example, Freiwaldau, Hennerzdorf.
- d.) Altered German bi-lingual cancels after removal of the German town name, for example, Briedek 2, Schlesisch-Ostrau, Rattiman, Radvanitz, Michalkowiz.
- e.) One-line rubber handstamps with the Czech name, and the addition of a date in manuscript or by a second rubber handstamp, for example, Oderberg (Bohumin), Jaegerndorf (Krnov), Spalov, Friedek 2, Trinec, Teschen.
- f.) Postoffice stamp in the form of a two-line rubber handstamp.

Test:

Postovni urad  
town name

For example, Ober-Leuthen, Teschen, Odrau, Spalov, Wuerbenthal, Orlau, Freistadt (also single-line), Lazy, Navsi, Darkau, Peterswald, Trzinietsz.

g.) Postal stamps in the form of large round or oval official seals with emblem and various texts, for example, Londau, Graetz (Hradek), Friedberg, Wendrin, Karwin.

3. Moreover, in quite rare cases local liberation cancels are known. These were only used for a very short time and are extremely rare on genuinely used covers. Here before me I have only one fancy cancel of the Silesian area, from Hultschin, which bears a rampant lion and was used commercially in combination with cancel 2f (date: 8.6.45), in addition a Bohemia-Moravia postal card with thimble cancel "Osvobozeni" on the Hitler imprint and red German cancel Friedek 1 (2.5.45), obviously a favor cancel.

4. Further varieties result from the uniform double circle rubber stamps supplied by Prague being used for the alteration of registration labels, but more frequently the auxiliary label was continued in use.

Moreover these cancels occur in all colors—black, violet, and red. I hope that with this survey interest in the field of Czechoslovak auxiliary cancels of 1945 is awakened or encouraged.

—B. R. B.

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## Alphonse Mucha

### THE DESIGNER OF FIRST CZECH STAMPS

by Jiří Nekvasil

Alphonse Mucha's artistic work, both in paintings and graphics, is very large and includes also his designs for all the first stamps of liberated Czechoslovakia. However it is very difficult to ascertain now all the pertinent facts connected with this aspect of Mucha's artistic work which of course is so interesting to an historian. Let us look briefly at the era and situations during which the first stamps of the new Czechoslovak republic were born. The new Czechoslovak Postal authorities had no experience whatsoever with the issuance and printing of stamps because all stamps and other postal material in use in the Czechoslovak territory since 1850 until October 1918 were under the jurisdiction of central Austrian postal authorities in Vienna. Thus the new Czechoslovak Post did not have at its disposal a suitable printing shop with all the special equipment and experienced personnel. The shortages of supplies during World War I resulted in a complete lack of good quality paper, inks, and other material so necessary for the successful production of stamps. According to the original idea the first Czechoslovak stamps were to be made by overprinting the then current Austro-Hungarian stamps and these overprints were to express a new political status of rebirth of the modern Czechoslovakian state.

Already on October 29, 1918, the well known Czech philatelist and expert, Jaroslav Lešetický began preliminary negotiations with a Prague print shop about this possibility. He even ordered trial printings with these overprints. The overprint with the text "Provisional Czechoslovak Government 28.X.1919" was, however, tried out on thin paper only but not on Austrian stamps. Dr. J. Rašín, who was appointed the first Finance Minister of the new republic, objected strongly against this plan and procedure. Instead, he suggested that a completely new series of stamps be issued and a design of some known Czech artist be used.

It is not fully clear how Alphonse Mucha was selected for this task. There exist several versions of this event as recalled by his contemporaries. Ac-



According to one of them, it was the then Chairman of the Czech Philatelist Club of Prague, a Mr. Šula, who gave Mr. Mucha the idea to prepare designs for the Czech stamps. Allegedly it happened even before the overthrow of the Austro-Hungarian government. According to another version, it was postal inspector Mr. Eliáš whose name and phone number were jotted down by hand on the back of Mucha's design for the first Czech special delivery stamp—incidentally, a sketch which Mr. Mucha made on a torn page of a wall calendar. According to this story, Mr. Mucha was allegedly asked to prepare and submit—in one day—designs for all the new, regular, Czechoslovak stamps and also to furnish “in the shortest possible time” designs and ideas for all other new series of Czechoslovak stamps, which the postal authorities intended to issue. Somehow these authorities thoughtlessly complicated the situation for themselves by their decision to follow the postal pattern of Austria-Hungary which issued—in addition to the regular stamps—postage dues, newspaper and special delivery stamps, of which the last two classes were useless in Czechoslovakia after its liberation in October 1918. The Austrian newspaper stamps perpetuated themselves by the sheer momentum of seventy years of tradition; many countries did not issue these stamps at all. The special delivery newspaper stamps were an Austrian specialty originating during the First World War when due to the scarcity of postal personnel, a log-jam was created in the deliveries of newspapers sent to the soldiers in the field. Two special delivery newspaper stamps were then issued with the head of Mercury to cope with this problem. However, they did not fulfill their purpose.

In the basic design for the regular issue, Mr. Mucha used as its main motive a silhouette of Hradčany Castle with the rising sun in the background and the church of St. Nicholas and the old Prague quarter in the foreground. He obviously worked from some older sketches, but made it without any preliminary preparations; the new stamps were born rapidly with the closest cooperation of artist, postal authorities and printer. According to the information from Mary Mucha, wife of the artist, it is very probable that Mr. Mucha made his first preliminary sketches for the design of the Hradčany stamps during the summer of 1918 while vacationing at the Zbirah Castle in Central Bohemia and there allegedly drew some sketches of Hradčany Castle. According to the official documents currently available, the definitive designs of Hradčany stamps materialized probably between October 30, 1918, and November 3, 1918. Mr. Mucha used mostly pencil sketches on strips of a regular drawing paper used in Czech schools. However, some designs were drawn by him on the backside pages of a wall calendar.

The dominant feature of Mr. Mucha's design is Hradčany Castle (the seat of Czech kings in Prague) and on top the picture is framed with stylized sprigs of linden tree (*Tilia parvifolia*, Basswood) leaves—since this tree is traditionally a Slavic symbol—the denomination is placed in an elliptic circle below the picture with the lower part enframed with drawings of stylized hearts and doves in a harmonious composition. This design caused—for obvious and diverse reasons—quite a few difficulties for the printer once the actual printing of stamps had started, one of them being the typography method used for the printing. Also many corrections in the original design were necessary, thus resulting in several different types of these stamps (Types A to E).

In addition to his Hradčany stamp designs, Mr. Mucha also submitted another design of a stamp with a Hussite theme. This design, however, was rejected by postal authorities. Hradčany design was accepted as “politically neutral.” First of the Hradčany stamps were issued very soon; on December 18, 1918, the 5 haleru green and 10 haleru red stamps were in circulation. To these two stamps other denominations were gradually added until the com-

plete series of stamps from 1 haler up to 1000 haleru were created. The last stamps of this issue were not off the press until the beginning of 1920. Some of these stamps were printed in 100 million copies.

Frequently Mr. Mucha was asked by editors of philatelic magazines and other interested parties about the genesis of his designs of those first Czechoslovak stamps and the considerations which led him to the choice of Hradčany as the main theme for them. His answer was approximately as follows:

"Every nation (he used to say) has its Palladium—a sacred symbolic abode—to which it entrusts its future destiny. For me, there is no theme more solemn than our Hradčany Castle. Since my childhood I saw and cherished it in its solemn edifice of St. Vitus Cathedral. The physical embodiment of this sacred symbol would not allow me to choose anything else for our first stamps which represented the first free steps of our nation after centuries of servitude. I know that in reality the sun never rises behind Hradčany Castle, but the rising sun was to be the symbol of resurrection of our nation, when after the long period of darkness arose a new day of our freedom. Likewise the sprigs of the linden tree in the design are to represent the separate branches of Slavic people of our nation. They are symbols of the Czechs, Moravians, Silesians and Slovaks. And the small hearts and doves interwoven in the designs are symbols of our peace-loving and tolerant mentality."

Also for postage dues and special delivery stamps designs Mr. Mucha chose ornamental and ethnic elements which were used for these stamps from the original sketches with only small alterations requested by the printer.

For the newspaper delivery stamps, Alphonse Mucha designed—again after recommendation of Mr. Jaroslav Lešetický—a stamp with a falcon. This was a singularly unfortunate proposition. This bird is neither the symbol of postal services nor the symbol of newspapers. It is, however, the symbol of the Czech gymnasts, the Sokols. And, Mr. Mucha originally used in the design for this stamp a man in the Sokol uniform which was good evidence of the frantic conditions and pressure under which he was forced to work on his stamp designs to complete them in the shortest possible time. There were eight newspaper stamps and some of them were issued in fantastic numbers. For example, there were 3,606,330,000 copies of the 5 haleru green newspaper stamp.

The last and artistically the best in Mr. Mucha's designs undoubtedly is his Hussite stamp. He submitted it to a stamp design competition February 1, 1920, under the code name of "Droit a la coupe" (The right to the chalice). The design portrayed a Hussite priest holding a chalice in his hand. The stamps were printed by recessed typography. However the printing was done very carelessly and the colors used in printing had very dark shades. Very soon after their introduction, the stamps were, due to the intervention of the Catholic Church hierarchy, recalled.

The day of issue of the first two Hradčany stamps—December 18th 1918—is now commemorated annually in Czechoslovakia as the "Day of the Czechoslovak Stamp." The Czechoslovak post commemorated the 30th anniversary of this day with a special souvenir sheet by the leading engraver of Czech stamps, Mr. J. Schmidt, a re-engraving of the original design of Mr. Mucha's stamp. Likewise in 1958, the 40th anniversary of the Czech stamps was commemorated with a special stamp by the late Czech famous artist, Mr. Max Švabinsky. At the centennial of Mr. Mucha's birth, the commemorative stamp with his portrait was issued. An interesting First day of issue envelope for this stamp included reduced picture of one of Mucha's placards, designed by him for his friend, the famous French actress Sarah Bernhardt.

—Translated/adapted by lhv

## A Report On New Issue Costs

By George A. Blizil

The 1966 issues of Czechoslovakia cost a total of \$9.81. Yes, if one was to purchase a single mint copy of every Czechoslovak stamp last year, he would have to spend that amount. This figure is based on face value and the official rate of exchange which is approximately 14c per Krown (Kcs).

This compares quite favorably with some of the Iron Curtain countries, especially East Germany and Hungary. The current postal administration in Praha condones the practice of blocked values and "special collectors'" imperforate stamps. While figuring the total amount of the 1966 issues, we decided to include the previous three years' issues to make a more solid comparison. It appears that Czechoslovakia has a stamp-issuing policy that is fairly consistent.

### Czechoslovak New Issue Costs

	1963	1964	1965	1966
Total Face Value	61.00 Kcs.	60.50 Kcs.	87.65 Kcs.	70.10 Kcs.
U. S. Currency	\$8.54	\$8.47	\$12.27	\$9.81

The popular art souvenir panes have increased costs slightly for 1965 and 1966. These are the Titian Woman, Bartered Bride, Praha Castle and Brno Stamp Exhibition panes. It is to be the policy of the postal administration to continue occasional miniature sheets inasmuch as they are popular with topicalists—both domestically and abroad. Besides they are good sellers.

The higher cost of the 1965 issues is due, in part, to the issuance of nine definitives. Four more definitives are included in the 1966 figures.

No collector in Czechoslovakia today is deprived of the opportunity of buying at least one copy of all new issues. It is true that some commemoratives are in limited supply, but the post office has a policy of preventing speculative buying. They have no way of knowing just how certain issues will be accepted. This is true of the art issues, namely the Picasso Guernica and the five 1 Kcs. famous paintings issued last December. Because of dwindling supplies at Artia, the Picasso stamp is now being sold at a premium—\$2.25 per sheet of 15 (face value \$2.10). The five famous paintings are now being sold in sets for \$1.50—and are only available via Artia.

That beautifully engraved 1.60 Kcs. Praha Tourist Year issue, released February 13 of this year, may be a speculative issue, inasmuch as the postal administration has announced only 22,000 sheets of 15 were printed. This means 330,000 were produced. Why this low number? Is this a possible "semi-blocked" value in a set of four? At the time of this writing I have received three copies so far on commercial mail, so it is not a premium item as a new issue, but late comers will probably regret not buying shortly after date of issue.

The actual cost of new stamps to U. S. collectors is another set of figures because import costs, wholesale and retail mark-ups are to be considered.

It so happens that East Germany (Deutsch Demokratische Republik) had an average new-issue year for 1966. Last year the DDR released 79 special stamps, plus a fairy tales souvenir sheet of six. Goodness knows what this crop actually cost in dollars and cents because of numerous intended blocked values. However the face value comes to 17.45 East German Marks (Ostmark), which is equivalent to \$26.18 U. S. on the official rate of exchange. However in order to get all the new issues in DDR, one has to carry a card from the proper party. It is estimated that only 60% of the special stamps issued in East Germany are available over the counter for general sale—and most of these commemoratives are only obtainable at large city post offices. This

condition exists in a country that is still in the depths of a depression. Their stamp issuing policy is designed to make money—but that's another story.

Still another story is the imperforate issues of Hungary, which consistently are the target of American Philatelic Society editorial Black Blots.

In conclusion, I think it is only fair to report that Czechoslovakia is reasonable in its policy on new issues at the present time. I do not necessarily agree with all their policies. The Postal Administration is influenced, more or less, by recommendations of the Federation of Stamp Clubs, but it also heeds international demands when sets of birds, butterflies, flowers, etc., hit the market. This is not an "Old Bohemian Custom," but good business—they think. Right now Czechoslovakia is on a middle-of-the-road policy on new philatelic issues. It is fortunate that most national collectors do not have too much difficulty in keeping up to date.

## The New Type of Siberian Lions

By Jan Mrňák  
From "Filatelie"

About sixteen years ago, the late Frank Roznovsky of Brno sent a photo copy of his new find: a Siberian legion "lion" stamp of Type II (long saber) which was different from all known types of these stamps. On the body of the lion appeared three distinct ribs under the upper left leg and the end of the lion's mane reached out in nearly direct uninterrupted line with the line of the body. In comparison, the "normal" lion of Type II variety has his mane streaming out from the body directly right, forming sort of a sharp cut. In addition, fangs on lion's paws were clearly delineated. Since I had only the snapshot of the stamp, and not a too good one at that, and since Mr. Roznovsky had but one copy of this odd stamp, I decided to rely on the old Czech proverb, which said that "one swallow does not bring the Spring" and to embark on a continued search for this variety.

Mr. Roznovsky exhibited his rare find at the Praga 1955 International Exhibition but no other philatelist came forward with a similar discovery. In the meantime I continued my search and scrutinized each Siberian lion stamp most carefully and, frankly, after some time, I started to doubt my ever finding it. However in 1963 I succeeded in finding another stamp which had its lion with three ribs. But this was a stamp of Type I (small saber) thus slightly different from the Brno find. However the long sought "clue" about this variety was at last at hand. Naturally I informed Mr. Roznovsky about my lucky find and at the same time recruited my philatelist-colleagues Messrs Kvasnicka and Paulicek to help me in further search for these mysterious lions.

Until recently we were able to discover a small amount of these different stamps of both types (small and large saber) which allowed us to proceed with detailed analysis. On all these stamps we found lions with three distinct ribs on their bodies. Since these lions are in the center of a red oval encircled with a blue frame, our next step was to turn our attention to this frame for any possible difference. Sure enough, I discovered an accent missing above the second letter "I" in the word "SIBÍŘSKÉ". But on all other known types of these stamps this accent was NOT missing. Thus the problem now was to establish the origin of these differences. However a new difficulty arose. The time of printing of these stamps was already far too removed—48 years ago—to allow us finding out the details directly from those individuals who actively cooperated on this issue. All are deceased now. So the only way to get to the truth was to employ simple reasoning and logic. After some care-



ful thinking, my colleagues and myself came to the following conclusions: The printing of these stamps was interrupted for perhaps one day and the product was submitted to its designers for a review and the error of missing accent over the second letter "I" in the word "SIBÍRSKÉ" was discovered and repaired. Since the designers very likely did not enjoy the sight of the lion with protruding ribs, they also requested the engraver to remove the offending ribs. This he probably did by filling up the ribs with some metal alloy because a small trace of the upper rib remained on die and was visible on later copies of this stamp. The fact however remained that the missing accent was corrected FIRST and the removal of ribs followed SECOND. This was evidenced by finds of several stamps with added accent above the letter "I" but still with ribs on the lion's body.

I wish to point out that these are fully justifiable conclusions—mine and my colleagues—as well as those of Mr. K. Kolman, son of the former owner of the shop in which these stamps were printed. He is an expert, engaged in the same occupation and thus eminently able to furnish us with detailed information about the printing methods and processes needed for such a task. In addition, we should too note the names of all those who participated in this venture. The stamp was designed by Messrs Rybak and Rössler-Ořovsky.



The cliches and dies were the work of an engraver, Mr. Panenka, and the stamps were printed by the printing shop of Mr. K. Kolman. Unfortunately, no one of these is alive now, so he would be able to confirm our theory about these different types of this stamp. However, we think that in the least, our hypothesis is theoretically correct. Let's give now our closer attention to the newly discovered types of these stamps.

We consider these new types as the FIRST PRINTING of these stamps. As we already stated, very soon after the start of the printing run, the dies were repaired and then printing renewed. According to previous reports, some 60,000 copies were printed. All these stamps, including the first printing, were sent to Siberia. This is evidenced by the facts that stamps with lions with ribs and the missing accent on the second letter I in the word SIBÍŘSKÉ are found mostly among the stamps of 1920 series with overprinted values from 2 kopeks to 1 ruble and these overprints were made in Siberia. Also several stamps of this type without these overprints were found. Now let's analyze the differences as well as the similarities of these stamps with the aid of their enlargements.

Picture No. 1 (small saber) and picture No. 2 (large saber) show us the latest types of these stamps, while picture No. 3 (small saber) and picture No. 4 (large saber) are those of the previously known types of this stamp. The white numbered markers point out the main differences as well as the common similarities of both printings. Marker No. 1 points to the missing accent above the second letter "I" in the word SIBÍŘSKÉ in pictures No. 1 and No. 2, and to the repaired (re-engraved) accent in pictures No. 3 and No. 4. Marker No. 2 in both UPPER pictures points to clearly delineated three ribs on lion's body. In two LOWER pictures the same Marker No. 2 shows that these ribs were removed. Then Marker No. 3 points to the shape of lion's mane which is practically same in pictures No. 1 and No. 3 but different one on the fourth stamp (Type II of later printing). The proof that these were the original engravings of both printings is shown by Marker No. 4 which points to the lion's ear. On both pictures of TYPE I (small saber) stamp, the lion's ear sort of protrudes out of mane, while on both TYPE II (large saber) the ear forms a continuation of the top of lion's head. Next, Markers No. 5 and No. 6 respectively, confirm also that the original engravings were re-used after the necessary correction and repair. Marker No. 5 shows that the base line of the crown on lion's head is inclined slightly to the right on both TYPE I stamps, while on both TYPE II stamps is horizontal. Marker No. 6 points to lion's mane, which is wide on both TYPE I stamps, while on both TYPE II stamps is narrow. Marker No. 7 and Marker No. 8 could lead to the belief that claws on lion's paws were somewhat "over-engraved." In first two pictures we note very clearly engraved paws with sharp claws, while on the next two pictures these claws are not distinct and look like some miniature balls. This difference though was not due to some differences in engraving but to natural deterioration of the brass engraving which gradually eroded the original sharp details of engraving and made it flatter. We discovered some stamps which were printed with the repaired die and their lions had the same distinct and sharp paws and claws as were the stamps from the first printing. It would be possible to find some more similarities between these two types than those already registered. But these are sufficient for the considered conclusion that we have to deal—in this case—with repaired dies only. The amount of stamps printed with the original basic die could not be now ascertained. Obviously it could had been only a very small amount. Then we have a problem how to register these newly found types of this stamp in catalogs. We suggested that these newfound types be classified and registered as "first prints" and the new POFIS catalog included this classification in its section.



devoted to this series of the Siberian legion stamps. We would appreciate it if any philatelist who discovers in his collection any stamps of this first printing—with or without overprinted denomination—would kindly loan them to us for inspection. The address is Jan Mrňák, Praha 2, Polska 46, Czechoslovakia.

In conclusion we wish to note that some collectors either have or may yet discover the stamps of this issue WITHOUT the accent above the second letter I in the word SIBŮSKÉ and WITHOUT visible ribs on the lion as well. This discovery would not change anything and the collector would still have the "first printing" of Siberian lions in his collection. This oddity was caused by insufficient support under the die. I do thank in advance all philatelists who will—with their loans of their copies of these stamps—aid in supporting our theory about the origin of this first printing of this issue.

—Translated and adapted by lhv

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