

THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

Official publication of the



Czechoslovak Philatelic Society

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EDITORIAL

In this issue members will find their ballots. Please cast your vote for the candidates for office especially at this time when you should thereby show your approval of the work your elected officers have performed in the past years. The larger the voting membership the greater is satisfaction in realizing that all the efforts for the good of the Society have been appreciated.

You will also find a message from our outgoing president as well as one from your editor. We suggest that you carefully read them through in order to become better acquainted with the problems not of their making at all which officers of our society have unnecessarily encountered during their past term.

We wish to inform our members that James H. Baxter, editor and we as associate editor of the Postal History Journal were happy to learn that that journal had received the highest award given to a journal in the United States and altogether the highest award presented to any journal entered in Amphilex, the International Exhibition in Amsterdam in May of 1967. It received a silver gold (vermeil) diploma. We are indeed happy to note that our efforts have been recognized internationally to such an extent. We have been actively engaged in that work for the past nine years.

Members please note the advertisement of Robson Lowe auction in this issue. The highly respected English auction house has some outstanding items to offer and we suggest that anyone interested contact the firm for a catalogue of that particular auction. We usually do not write about any specific auctions in our editorials but are doing this to emphasize the opportunity for securing some fine material for your collection.

We need not tell you how much member Janecka has put in to forwarding interest in Czechoslovak philately. All of you must be aware of this and we can assure you that when the Nominating Committee selected him for the office of president it recognized his great efforts of many years standing. Member Janecka spent quite some time on the then proposed U. S. Masaryk stamp. We saw a number of drawings on the suggested Sokol stamp and we know he spent many hours, maybe some sleepless nights, on the most recent project, the 1968 commemorative stamp. All of us should stand at his side and help him to accomplish this latest goal and that of his committee.

Our members will be interested to hear that we have just received the first shipment of cuts from the secretary of the Federation of Czechoslovak Philatelists to illustrate the articles translated from Filatelie. This is the result of our request to president Ladislav Dvořáček who has been most cooperative.

NEW YORK BRANCH MAY AND JUNE MEETINGS

In May we enjoyed a most interesting presentation by B. R. Beede on the subject of different postal services of the Third Reich in the Protectorate. He showed us some very unusual covers and we were amazed to note the complicated methods which were employed by the Third Reich in its handling of postal material in that area. There was some further discussion regarding the planned dinner meeting in June. At this meeting new officers for the Branch were elected, Joseph Stein, Chairman; Edwin J. Hanish, Vice Chairman and Benjamin R. Beede, Secretary-Treasurer.

The dinner was held on June 24th at the restaurant selected by Mr. Stein which proved to be a very good one. There were 29 members and guests present but Mr. Stein had been finally able to secure some hotel reservations at Expo 67 and therefore was not able to attend the dinner party. The speeches were brief. Mr. Flynn the outgoing chairman greeted the guests and members. Unfortunately member Horechny was unable to be there. It was a pleasure to have Captain Benchik with us who according to his admission was only 14 years old when he joined the society. We still cannot figure out how this was possible but apparently the member who handled the application blank neglected to note that very important information. If all goes according to probabilities, Capt. Benchik will become the oldest member of the society some 40 years hence

WASHINGTON BRANCH MEETINGS

At our meetings in May and June we studied material of Mrs. Woodbury and Alfons Stach. The discussion on the possibility of the issuance of a U. S. commemorative stamp on the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence of Czechoslovakia in Washington was quite lengthy. We all hope it will materialize. Our meetings are always very informal and we usually have no set programs. Our major interest is in getting together, looking over some material mailed to one of us and the discussion of some interesting problems in philately.

—WAS

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY

I am not up for re-election. The two terms of my office were spoiled by unpleasant activities of some members in Chicago. I tried very hard to understand them. I did my best to convince them that their actions are not only detrimental to our society but are entirely in contradiction to all accepted procedures in a membership association. My attempts were quite fruitless. Their animosity toward everyone who tried to do only the proper things for the good of the society remained at a high pitch all through these years. It culminated in the following event which is the major reason for my message of today.

A certain member mailed a letter to our national secretary, Frank J. Kosik, dated June 20, 1967, from which I quote:

"In spite of promises made to me in Washington last year by Dr. Reiner-Deutsch and Mr. Horechny, nothing has been done to re-instate the former Chicago Chapter in the Society. The members here are convinced that the present administration has no intention of ever admitting us back to the Society. We are therefore submitting the enclosed slate to be included in the Specialist ballot. I hope it conforms to the by-laws."

Members please note that I flatly contradict the statement which implies

that I promised to take care of the "re-instatement" of the Chicago Chapter when I spoke with him in Washington last year. I said only that I would be really happy if the branch designation could be restored to the members there but that they must first assure the council that the members as a branch will mind the legitimate business of the branch and will not act as if the branch were the national society. I told him that then I would take the matter up with the council members. Our editor will go into details as to why this was made impossible.

There are three members who signed the document who ARE ALSO ON THE SLATE. This is not only unethical but it shows utter disrespect and even a patronizing attitude toward the membership thinking is could be easily hoodwinked and of course a clear mockery of the democratic processes of free choice since the Constitution's meaning was to give some backing to the nominees beside their own. The slate is invalid because there are only four members not represented on the slate who have been signatories to it and not five as prescribed by the Constitution. I asked the secretary to write the following letter to this member.

Dear Mr. _____

I am writing you at the direction of Mr. L. M. Horechny, President of the Czechoslovak Philatelic Society.

Kindly be advised that the slate submitted does not meet the prerequisites as set forth in the Constitution of the Society. There are only four valid signatories to the proposed slate. The three other names cannot be considered as those names appear also as candidates for office.

President Horechny, after careful consultation with authorities as well as with the chairman of the constitutional committee of 1957 also consulted an appointed executive council committee to finalize the decision regarding said document and concluded it is not in conformity with the Constitution of the Czechoslovak Philatelic Society.

It is quite unfortunate that you were unable to secure in time a minimum of five signatures for a slate to be presented in nomination since the one mailed to the secretary is invalid.

Signed Frank J. Kosik

His response was most shocking, as follows:

Dear Mr. Horechny,

I received a letter today from the Secretary of the Czechoslovak Philatelic Society advising me that the slate of officers proposed by the members of the Chicago area for the coming election in the Society does not meet the prerequisites of the Constitution of the Society. My copy of the Constitution reads: "Additional nominations may be made, but such nominations shall be valid only if presented over the signatures of at least five members in good standing and if received by the Secretary before the first day of July." There are no other conditions stated. If there had been we would have met them. Neither the 10 year old constitutional committee nor any appointed committee can change the Constitution. It can only be changed by following Article X.

Since our slate was presented by following the Constitution to the letter, it MUST be accepted and I have been notified by the Secretary that it was.

Unless you inform me within 10 days from the above date that our slate will in fact appear on the ballot, we will notify the entire membership of the unconstitutional method in which the election is held and will declare it null and void.

Very truly yours,

Presiding Officer
Former Chicago Chapter
Czechoslovak Philatelic Society

Before going into the questionable merit of the letter itself I wish to state that I did not answer it. The letter purports to be an official communication written by him as an imaginary officer of an imaginary society. I could not respond to it as president of a genuine society.

Let me say here that Mr. ——— must have been quite hysterical to write such a letter which has the distinct implication of an attempt at blackmailing me into presenting an invalid slate to our membership. Just understand his purpose:

1. To eliminate one of the best secretaries the Society has ever had.
2. To eliminate a treasurer who has a respectable sum of money in the bank, a fairly unusual situation in the past.
3. To eliminate an editor who has undoubtedly raised the standards of the Specialist to a high level, an editor who has only recently received the highest possible recognition at an International Exhibition in connection with his journalistic activities for another publication.

May I describe his purpose: To destroy what has been built up for many years just because of animosity toward the working people of the society. This is a unique and unheard-of action in a philatelic organization and you are each asked to show your rejection of it definitely by voting for the official slate.

—L. M. Horechny, President

FURTHER INFORMATION TO THE MEMBERS

I wish to assure our membership that it is most distasteful to me to have to bring all the following to your attention. However I must admit that I have always felt that members are entitled to know what is going on in their society. Of course there is no need to report on minor conflicts but this particular matter is a major affair and I shall try to limit myself to describe important aspects of the case.

Member ——— as chairman of the nominating committee for officers in 1963 proposed a foreign member for office of international secretary. Upon receipt of the slate I wrote him asking for replacement of that name with that of someone else since according to our Constitution a foreign member has no voting power. I have here his response in which he stated that the Constitution did not say a foreign member cannot hold office but only that he cannot vote. Apparently he did not wish to realize that anyone who cannot vote cannot possibly hold office, through a very elementary deduction indeed. Subsequently an amendment to the Constitution spelled out details regarding the matter.

That year eight members from Cleveland also put up a slate for every office and of course NO SIGNATORY TO THAT DOCUMENT WAS ALSO RUNNING FOR OFFICE. A large number of members voted and they voted overwhelmingly for one candidate, that of the secretary, Mr. Kosik, whom Mr. ——— did not wish to see in that office for purely personal reasons in spite of the fact that Kosik has been one of the finest secretaries this society has ever had. At that time Mr. ——— expressed his opinion against the Cleveland slate to Mr. Horechny in writing that in the past the official slate had always been unanimously elected, which according to him was "tradition."

In 1965 Mr. ——— forgetting all about the above "tradition" attempted to put up a slate proposed by members from the Chicago area but did not look at the Constitution and did not remember that the deadline for this was July 1 of the election year. When finally he ascertained that he wrote me the following sarcastic letter.

Dear Dr. Reiner-Deutsch,

Congratulations on retaining control of the Czechoslovak Philatelic Society for another two years. Moving registration date for a slate of officers to July 1 was a master stroke. The politically naive Chicago group missed this completely. We had hoped to present the membership with a choice on the ballot in the traditionally American way.

However since we are mainly interested in collecting stamps it doesn't make much difference who is in office except that we resent the dirty deal you gave the Chicago Chapter and especially members ———.

Signed ———

Kindly note that I omit also the names mentioned by him since I do not feel it to be essential in this case. I did not answer this but sent copies of the letter to two members who wrote strong letters to him about his most unwarranted accusations of me. I had not moved any date anywhere. The 1964 Constitution clearly described the process. I do not control anything and I gave dirty deal to no one. However he was annoyed that he had asked a number of members to serve on his slate and then had to apologize to them. Can anything be more unfair than these outbursts?

I wish our members to read the following carefully. On page 49 of the 1967 Compex Directory the Chicagoland Czechoslovak Philatelic Society is described. (According to an announcement in the Jan. 9, 1965 issue of Stamps, this new society was organized on December 13, 1964). I note that the Presiding Officer is given as this certain member. I also note that this society was supposed to have been incorporated in 1964. On the other hand a letter from Wm. H. Chamberlain, Secretary of State of Illinois, to our secretary states . . . "The Chicagoland Chapter of the Czechoslovak Philatelic Society was incorporated under the Not For Profit Act of this State on July 2, 1964." It is obvious that the members led by Mr. ——— apply the incorporation of the now nonexistent branch of the Czechoslovak Philatelic Society to that of the Chicagoland Czechoslovak Philatelic Society. The branch designation was revoked from the Chicago members in 1964 by the council of the Society for actions unbecoming a branch. They should have acted for their own members in their area on local affairs as is the case with any branch of a society. Instead they went ahead and without the knowledge of the officers of the Society they dealt with agencies of a foreign country and proceeded to translate and publish a booklet. They even had the effrontery to copyright it "1964, by the Chicagoland Chapter of the Czechoslovak Philatelic Society" and were selling it as such even after the revocation of the branch designation.

Now I shall proceed to comments on the letter this member wrote to the secretary a few weeks ago submitting a slate which he also signed as a nominator with his name as candidate for the office of president and from which our president quoted in his message. I categorically deny that I had ANY CONVERSATION PERTAINING TO THE SOCIETY with him in Washington in 1966. It is an UNTRUTH that I talked with Mr. ——— about anything of significance. One of our Washington members had a long talk with him who gave that member the impression that the Chicago members finally do "see the light" and were willing to abide by the routine and common rules that a branch (chapter) is not the society itself and that they would limit themselves in the future to branch affairs alone. Based on this information and upon a request by that Washington member I promised to communicate with Mr. ——— upon my return home. I wrote him a long letter on June 1, 1966, stating that if I should get their assurance of appropriate behavior in the future I would present the case to our president and the council of the society with my favorable view of the matter. His response was entirely unexpected. I will not quote it because it again involves other individuals. He stated THE

CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH THE CHICAGO MEMBERS WOULD ACCEPT THE BRANCH DESIGNATION AGAIN but did not guarantee anything at all. His reply should be framed!! One of his CONDITIONS was that a certain expelled member be "REPLACED ON THE MEMBERSHIP ROSTER." Members, at that time Mr. ——— again did not look at the By-Laws of the Society, which clearly state that an individual expelled from the society shall be deemed unacceptable for readmission. Anyone may note that only when he thinks he can argue a point does he look at our Constitution and By-Laws. He says so often that he is really interested only in "collecting stamps" but when it comes to vicious attacks and outrageous accusations of which he is a master he forgets all about "collecting stamps." I was unable to reply to such a letter.

Now the last but not least item to mention is his present activity. He would need everything spelled out word by word if and when he reads the Constitution whether he wished to induce the officers just a year ago to act definitely against the By-Laws of the Society or not. What happened last year does not count, according to Mr. ———, I assume. What counts is that the Constitution does not specifically say that one cannot put oneself up for office. Very 'naive' indeed is the least I can say. If he had one more valid signature to make five signatories not also running for office for the proposed slate it would have been placed on the ballot. But to have the arrogance not to have even five members without those running for office, could not be accepted whichever way one wishes to take it. The national secretary acknowledged the receipt of the slate which does not constitute the acceptance of it.

Naturally the president could not answer a supposedly official letter by a nonexistent officer of a nonexistent society. Whoever gave Mr. ——— THE GRAND IDEA THAT IF YOU ARE NOT A (BRANCH) CHAPTER THEN CALL YOURSELF A FORMER CHAPTER!!!

Members note that all my statements can be documented. I would never state anything unless I have it either in writing or in print. In fact I have much more on hand than I would spoil the pages of our Specialist by presenting. Suffice it that the officers have had to suffer with it.

We have taken much space in this issue but it was a must. You are entitled to know what is going on and how egocentric a member can be without the slightest regard for the WELFARE OF THE SOCIETY!

—YOUR EDITOR

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION

Pursuant to article X of the Constitution of the Czechoslovak Philatelic Society the council members unanimously propose the following Amendment to Article XI of said Constitution.

Add the following sentences:

Exception to this rule shall be that an Amendment of paragraphs 8 and 8a of the By-Laws shall require the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the entire membership eligible to vote. This Amendment shall be deemed to require the same procedure if to be amended.

The Constitution specifies that this proposal be published in the Specialist and that members shall vote on it. Send your vote to Mr. Frank J. Kosik, National Secretary, Route 4, Box 286, Delavan, Wisc. 53115. The amendment will become part of the Constitution 30 days after the receipt of this issue, unless a majority of the voting members disapproves.

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ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 1968-69

The Nominating Committee appointed by President Horechny during the first week of May, 1967, consisting of Benjamin R. Beede, Chairman, Francis J. Auermuller and Thomas Meeks certified the following slate for officers for 1968-69.

President	Joseph J. Janecka
Vice President East	Dr. Otakar Kutvirt
Vice President Central	Mark G. Snow
Vice President West	George J. Dolezal
National Secretary	Frank J. Kosik
International Secretary	George A. Blizil
Treasurer	Joseph Stein
Editor	Dr. Wm. Reiner-Deutsch
Councilor East	Edwin J. Hanish
Councilor Central	Melvin F. Klozar
Councilor West	John Knollmueller

This issue contains the ballot and members are requested to promptly return this to the national secretary with their votes. Furthermore members are asked to place their name and address on their envelope and not sign the ballot. Ballots must be returned by October 31, 1967.

THE BEST AND THE WORST CZECH STAMPS OF 1966

Like Linn's annual philatelic poll on the best and the worst U. S. stamp of the year, the Czechoslovak daily "Mlada Fronta" sponsors—since 1962—a similar poll about the Czech stamp production. However it conducts it on an international scale; any philatelist anywhere in the world can participate. Recently the above mentioned Czech daily announced the results of its poll of the best and the worst Czech stamps of 1966. Altogether it received 14,426 answers of which some 8754 were from the Czech philatelists and 5672 came from abroad. The first place winner was the 5 crown souvenir sheet St. Wenceslas Crown by J. Švengsbír with 3182 votes. The second place was again the Švengsbír engraving of "Lady Wussin," a portrait of a Prague lady by the Czech late renaissance painter Kupecky. This stamp is one of a series of five stamps with reproductions of old and modern Czech painters. It received 1714 votes. The third place was won by the 30 heller stamp of the Prague Castle set (the first place winner, the souvenir sheet with St. Wenceslas crown is part of this set) "Garden of the Summer Palace," by Cyril Bouda. This received 1603 votes. And the fourth place was won yet by another Švengsbír stamp—for his engraving of the painting "A bouquet with Tulips" by modern Czech painter V. Špála. This stamp received 1453 votes. In fact, Mr. Švengsbír nearly ran away with all the honors, since one more of his stamps, an engraving of the famous XVII Century Czech exile-painter engraver Vaclav Hollar's "Spring" followed closely with 1182 votes as fifth of the most liked Czech stamp of 1966.

Now in the other departments: the least liked stamp was adjudged by 3154 votes to be the 60 heller stamp commemorating 20 years of UNESCO. And 1353 collectors registered their disapproval of the stamp commemorating the 13th Congress of the Czech Communist Party. Finally some 986 philatelists decided that the worst Czech stamp of 1966 was the stamp Ostrava.

Regarding the participation of philatelists from abroad, some 1889 were from the Soviet Union, 678 from the Federal German Republic, 624 from East Germany, 582 from Austria, 463 from the United States and Canada and 141 from Great Britain.

The above mention Czech daily will again organize a similar international poll for the best and the worst Czech stamp of 1967.

—lhv

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 828 Zitney, Mrs. Lily M., 195 Albatross Ave., Livermore, Cal. 94550

NEW SET OF CZECH POSTCARDS FOR ITY

This year's "International Tourist Year" was marked by the Czech postal authorities with two special issues. The first one is a set of four stamps which was already described in the Specialist. In addition to this set, a special set of 32 picture postcards have been published by the Czech postal authorities. These postcards show some well-known and lesser-known Czech nature spots and historic towns among them, for example the town of Plzeň (Pilsen) the birthplace of the famous Pilsen beer; likewise the famous international spa Karlovy Vary (Carlsbad); one of the most beautiful Czech castles, the Karlštejn; also the Tatra Mountains of Slovakia and many other old historic towns of Slovakia, Moravia and Bohemia. The postcards have a pre-printed 30 heller stamp—a "Praha" stamp is used for postcards with Bohemian and Moravian towns and a "Bratislava" stamp for postcards with the Slovak motives. Both stamps were designed by Frantisek Hudecek. —ihv

WORLD PHILATELIC EXPOSITION — PRAGA 1968

By Rudolf Fischer

From Filatelie

The Czechoslovak Postal Administration has recently decided to issue during the years 1967-1970 no more than 75 stamps per year, with face value not exceeding 70 Kčs. This is a sound and valid decision, fully supported by the Federation of Czechoslovak Philatelists. It was not by chance that the members of the Planning committee (which prepares plans for issuing new stamps) recommended the approval of another request of the Federation: that in addition to the regular series a special series of stamps be issued for the World Philatelic Exposition—PRAGA 1968. The reasons are the same as those of 5 years ago. This exposition is to be financed from the sales of stamps issued outside the regular plan. Therefore, in the years 1967 and 1968 more stamps will be issued than normally.

The selection of subjects for the PRAGA 1968 Exposition was the work of a special group of experts, officers of the Federation, stamp dealers, and artists who were charged with the execution of sketches for these special stamps. And it were these artists who came up with original and concrete subjects for a new concept of exposition stamps. The challenge was specific: to create suitable, and technically and esthetically more perfect stamps than the regular commemorative ones.

On June 22, 1967, that is exactly one year before the PRAGA exposition, the Postal Administration will issue the first 2 Kčs stamp. It will represent a work of art, executed by Jiří Švengsbír. It will be issued in 4-stamp sheetlets, with gutters. (Similar to the recent art series.)

Contrasting with this first issue, a series of 7 air-mail stamps, interesting by its topical originality, will be issued in October 1967. The design is the work of Jaroslav Lukavský. Then in the first quarter of 1968 a third series of exposition stamps will appear (60 h., 1 Kčs, and 2 Kčs). These will be the work of Josef Liesler. For this multicolor steel engraving from flat plates, the author has chosen all the available and useable technical means. The theme of this third series will also be from the field of aviation.

The last of the PRAGA 1968 Exposition series will comprise of 10 stamps and a souvenir sheet. The realization of this project was given to Jiří Švengsbír. He will not be limited in the selection of the topic, but we are certain it will be Prague, with its exquisite architectural treasures, and a dash of modern times.

The first series, to be issued June 22, 1967, is very symbolic. It is indeed the first philatelic invitation to Prague. Its design may elicit surprise in many people, since never before has a philatelic exposition been introduced on a postage stamp by a work of art. For this purpose a modern, well known self portrait of Henri Rousseau from the National Gallery in Prague was selected.

—Translated/adapted by OK

ANOTHER ERROR ON A RECENT CZECH STAMP

The Specialist already referred to the misspelled Latin name of a hare on the stamp of the "Hunt animals" series. Another engraver's "goof" was recently discovered on the 60 heller stamp of this year's Czech set "The exploration of universe." This stamp among other things has the mathematical equation used for calculating orientation on the Moon, and in this equation the Greek letter PHI is engraved upside down. This error appears on ALL the 60 heller stamps.

—lhv

THE NEW CZECH MOBILE POSTAL SERVICES**By Karel Rossy**

from Filatelie

The Czechoslovak stamp collectors, sports fans and general public frequenting various exhibitions, big sports events and other similar gatherings are familiar with a big yellow autobus of the Czechoslovak Ministry of Posts and Telegraph which serves as a mobile post office whenever necessary or by request of the respective organizing committee of such an event. This "auto-post" as it is called in Czech, takes care of the mail sent from these events, affixes special cachets or cancellations on all the submitted mail and in addition takes care of outgoing telegraph messages or telephone traffic from these events. It is obvious that the character of these services was only temporary and that no delivery of mail from this "auto-post" was ever effected.

Now since last June 1st, a new mobile postal service was established in one Bohemian district. This is in the north Bohemian mining region of Most (Brüx) and this new service is a departure from the previous type of the temporary and occasional "auto-post" because it not only received but also delivers all classes of mail, including among other things, money orders. Thus while the first type of the Czechoslovak mobile mail served basically to a philatelist or a visitor of sport and other events, the new "auto-post" of the Most region serves the general public.

Why this particular region had been chosen for this new mail mobile services? It should be noted that this is one of the largest Czech coal mining and industrial regions which at the present time is a stage of far-reaching development and changes, caused by the considerable expansion of mining activities. In this process many hamlets, villages and suburbs are completely liquidated and their inhabitants resettled. Simultaneously new communities continually spring up all over this region. This development continues in stages causing considerable disruption of postal services in the area because the industrial and other needs are of prime consideration in this process and have the precedence over everything else.

All these changes placed the local and regional postal authorities in very difficult position as how to find the best solution and how to arrange for the smooth and uninterrupted delivery of mail and other services. The decision finally was made to replace the stationary postal offices with a mobile one along one clearly established delivery route. Two discarded autobuses were adapted to special needs of the mail service and the new experimental mobile auto-post went in service at 7:20 a.m., June 1, 1966.

Presently this new mobile mail service is several months old. It starts daily at 7:20 a.m. from Most (Brüx) and returns at 18:35 local time same day. During the trip this mobile post office visits 11 villages with stops from 30 to 40 minutes in each. The total distance travelled by the bus is nearly 40 miles (54 kilometers). It replaced completely two former post offices and in addition it makes stops at several villages which never had their own post offices before and their inhabitants had to bring their outgoing mail elsewhere and their incoming mail used to be delivered with frequent delays. The mobile post office also saved many hours of mail deliveries along its route. All its mail is presently being processed with a Most 1 cancel. Another mobile post office is being planned along another route in the district and the existing first route services will be extended with the aid of special equipment to facilitate the direct telephone connections and the telegraph service from this mobile post office.

—Translated/adapted by lhv

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CZECHOSLOVAKIA'S HISTORY TAUGHT BY POSTAGE STAMPS**Dr. John H. Jakes**

For many years I have been a general stamp collector, spending numerous leisure hours with efforts to complete sets and fill my album pages. This activity took a special upswing after World War II. Knowing how to read and write several languages, I enjoyed a lively exchange with a dozen pen-pals from all over the world.

Several of these men sent me stamps not only in exchange for those of the United States and of the United Nations but also in return for special favors I could do from here. For example, when friends and relatives of a correspondent in Czechoslovakia were expelled from there and had to live in Germany as refugees, I sent them CARE packages and parcels of clothing. In return I received from my friend an almost complete collection of Pre-War Czechoslovakia, Bohemian-Moravian Protectorate, and Slovakia stamps.

One day I decided to transfer that country's collection into a special blank-page album of its own since the International Scott Albums were getting crowded to the bursting point. The layout of the new collection was to consist of more than just pages after pages of little colored pieces of paper. Since I was absolutely unfamiliar with the personalities and events which the stamps were commemorating, I wanted to embellish the collection with a write-up that would explain what each stamp meant, why it was issued, and what story it had to tell.

I proceeded to gather all the information I could from the text of various American and foreign stamp catalogs. I asked my friend in Czechoslovakia long lists of questions, and he did his best to explain the history of his country and the subject matter which the stamps were commemorating. I became a member of the Czechoslovak Philatelic Society, and through the courtesy of its librarian and its editor I was permitted to worm my way through all the back copies of their publication "The Czechoslovak Specialist." I studied many other philatelic publications to gather data about the events that led to the issue of Czechoslovak stamps. A great many philatelic articles, I found, concern themselves principally with the production technique of the stamps, with type varieties, error, plating, watermarks, and differences in perforation and paper.

Indeed, it seems that an historical approach to philately like mine is outside the mainstream of American philatelic endeavors. There may be many, but the monographs by Marion Zinsmeister and "The Historical Album of France," a Swiss publication offered by P. Ruinart of Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, are the only ones I have encountered which take an interest in the historical background of postage stamps.

Occasional events and stamp issues have roused the special interest of philatelic writers. The pages of "The Czechoslovak Specialist" tell repeatedly the Saga of the Czechoslovak Legion in Siberia, the tragic fate of Lidice, and the story of the Battle of Arras. On the other hand, there are a number of other battles in World War I which we find commemorated by Czechoslovak issues but which are hardly mentioned in the philatelic literature. I had to review the files of the "New York Times" of those years to find details on the exploits of the Czechoslovak legionnaires in France and Italy in 1918. Thus after the philatelic literature, the search for information led to libraries, to books on the history of the lands and peoples there, to the "Encyclopedia Americana" and "Encyclopedia Britannica." Where those failed, I turned to continental encyclopedias, mostly German works. The Czech language encyclopedia "Ottův Slovník Naučný" served as my last resort because it often contained biographies of men who were honored on Czech stamps but were

apparently unknown abroad. Since I do not know the Czech language, I had the respective pages reproduced and sent them to friends who kindly translated them for me. The task to which I set myself has turned out much bigger than I had expected. Probably it will take me many more months before all album pages will be completed even though I have assembled almost all the necessary information.

The rewards of this type of collecting, however, have been very rich ones. I have learned a tremendous amount about the history of Central Europe, as well as about art, literature, architecture, music and other fields.

Reference to Czechoslovakia's earliest history is found on Scott No. 427. It shows the mythical personalities Czech and Lech who are said to have been leaders of the Slav tribes during the Era of the Great Migrations in the fifth century.

The ninth century saw the rule of Slav princes whom we find portrayed on Slovakia's stamps (95-102). They built the Great Moravian Empire (1180) and initiated the Christianization of their subjects by Cyril and Methodius (192, 209-211). In Bohemia, during that time, ruled the first princes of the Přemysl dynasty. They had their residence in the Vyšehrad Castle (251a), later moved to a new fortress-castle on Hradčany Hill (1, 119).

The first great Christian ruler in Bohemia was St. Wenceslas (Scott 159-163) who reigned in the tenth century. Churches, monasteries, and castles built during the twelfth century were shown on stamps 719a, 118, 184.

During the thirteenth century, under the Přemysl dynasty, Bohemia was one of the most powerful monarchies in Europe. Many cities which were founded then have celebrated their 700th anniversary recently (220, 785-790, 1282-1287). At the same time, great stone castles were constructed in Slovakia to permit defense against the invading Mongols and Tatars (115, 192, 218, 920, 970, 976, Slov 58-61). Many of Slovakia's important mining towns originated during that era (143, 219, 393, 786, 974).

The dynasty of the Přemyslide Kings was replaced in 1310 by the House of Luxemburg, at first John (BM B17) and then Charles (346, BM B15). During that time Bohemia reached the Golden Age of her national history. The Charles University was founded (346), after the model of the Sorbonne University in Paris, and the Charles Bridge (619) was constructed across the Moldau River. Silver and coal mining flourished (240, 394). Numerous beautiful Gothic churches and castles were erected during that period (151, 230, 240, 109, 272).

(To be continued)

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

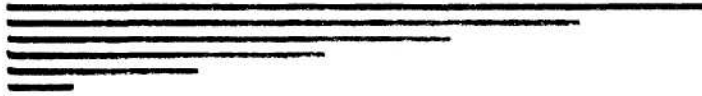
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