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Aerophilatelic Remembrances of 'Praga 1962' World Exhibition

By Jiří Nekvasil, Prague, Czechoslovakia

The world exhibit "Praga 1962" was one of the most ambitious undertakings of its type which ever took place under the patronage of FIP. It represented a manifestation of the maturity and organizational capability of Chechoslovak philatelists and was a continuation of a long tradition of international exhibits in Czechoslovakia, the first of which took place in 1923 in Brunn, the capital of Moravia.

The international exhibit "Praga 1962" was also a practical example of the true friendship of rhilatelists throughout the world and showed within its frames the rapid expansion of world philately. It is natural that such an undertaking would be documented by means of a series of postal items including those of an aerophilately nature, which today have become somewhat scarce.

In the first instance there was sold at the exhibit a Czechoslovak aero-



Fig. 1

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Fig. 2

gram bearing an imprinted 1.20Kes stamp depicting a "crane in flight" based on a design by the academic artist and graphicist Cyril Boyda. The engraver was B. Roule. This aerogram was officially overprinted in red with the legend "WORLD EXHIBITION OF POSTAGE STAMPS PRAGA 1962" above which, to the left, was imprinted the emblem of the exhibit. Upon folding the aerogram the legend and emblem appeared along the lower edge as illustrated in Figure 1. Two types of the aerogram exist, distinguished by unequally long legends "UPOZORNENI" on the reverse side of the aerogram. It is apparent that issues of the aerogram printed in 1959 and 1962 were both overprinted. The total number of aerograms overprinted is not known. However, at present they appear quite rarely.

The second original aerogram issued for the exhibit by Czechoslovak postal authorities is a Pigeongram, which was made by cutting down the above aerogram to a size 145x55 mm. Thus there remained only a portion of the address side including the stamp, which was overprinted by typography at the approximate center with the text "POSELSTVI PŘÁTELSTVI A MIRU NARODŮM CELÉHO SVETA". At the lower left the pigeongram was further overprinted in the same color "PŘEPRAVENO POŠTOBNÍM HOLUBEM" as illustrated in Figure 2. This pigeongram was not sold at the post offices and the size of the issue is unknown. The pigeongram is currently much sought after. It was used on the day of the opening—August 18, 1962—at which time there were released several thousands of mail pigeons as a symbol of peace and postal service. Many of these pigeons carried with them this pigeongram, which on the back bears yet another peaceloving text of Czechoslovak philatelists.

On the same day there took place the first official postal helicopter flight

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Fig. 3

which operated between the exhibit grounds in the Julius Fučík and the Ruzin airport. The helicopter took off from in front of the exhibit pavilion. This pavilion was originally erected at the exhibit grounds of Expo in Brussels. All mail which was to be transported by helicopter required a special label, without denomination, which was sold at the exhibition post offices for 50h each. A block of these is illustrated in Figure 3. On the first day of operation, mail carried by helicopter received a large triangular cachet bearing the text "VRTULNÍKOVÁ POŠTA / PRAHA / 18.VIII. 1962" (helicopter mail / Prague / August 18, 1962) in Czech, Russian, French, English and German. The cachet was imprinted in red across the helicopter label. The postage stamps were postmarked using a special exhibition cancel. In addition, mail which was actually flown by helicopter was also provided with a receiving post mark of post office Praha 022, 18. VIII. 62-17 containing the identifying symbol 6b as well as a horizontal two line cancel bearing the text "URAD POŠTONÍ PŘEPRAY PRAHA 022 / PKEKLÁDKA LETIŠTE (office of postal transportation Prague 022 / airport transfer point). The number of pieces transported by helicopter on the first day were less than 400 and hence such first flights are currently extremely scarce. Following the maiden helicopter

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Fig. 4

flight the cachet was altered by removal of the two dots in the upper corners of the cachet. A genuine first flight cover is illustrated in Figure 4 with an arrow pointing to the dots later removed. The cachet post mark with the removed dots was later used to fabricate totally worthless "covers" which of course were never flown and therefore do not have the additional postal markings described above. Collectors are therefore warned to look for the dots on their first flight covers. Helicopter mail service was continued throughout the exhibit except on days on which it was excessively windy. Such later mailings bear only the previously mentioned helicopter label which



Fig 5

was post marked by means of a rubber framed post mark of the dimensions 49x27 mm in violet bearing the text "VRTULNIKEM—PAR HELICOPTERE". Between the lines of the text there is a picture of a helicopter and to the right an emblem of the exhibit. Even though in succeeding days a goodly amount of mail was transported by helicopter, even those pieces have recently become scarce. One such piece is illustrated in figure 5. The illustrated card was sent on the Day of Aerophilately and was addressed to the capital of the Soviet Republic Azerbaijan. Thus ends a small yet rather interesting segment of the history of Czechoslovakia aerophilately which owes its existence to the PRAGA 1962 international exhibit.

About Theresienstadt and Rose Street

by Jaroslav šíp, translated from Filatelie

If you were once to search for someone in the "garden district" of Prague I would recommend that you muster all your remaining knowledge of botany. Otherwise you would get lost in the maze of Strawberry Street, Gladiola Street, Peony Street, and others named after plants and flowers. The poetic citizenry of Prague thus brought a bit of flowery aroma right into the inner city. Consequently, not far from the Main Post Office on Jindřišská you can enter a side street which is named Rose Street, where the air is thick with an aroma very unlike that of roses but which also has a certain poetic impact . . . for here in the state printery they have for decades been manufacturing Czechoslovak bank notes.

A large number of engravers who participated in the creation of Czechoslovak stamps worked in this bank note printing plant. During the pre-Munich republic these included foremost Jindra Schmidt, later Ladislav Jirka, Jaroslav Mráček and contemporily also Miloš Ondráček. Superficially this building looks very much like those that surround it. But inside its thick walls are hidden many interesting stories, dramatic events and dangerous episodes.

Among these one must consider one which occurred in the course of World War II. Then—in 1942—the Nazis decided to manufacture seven bank note denominations for use in the Theresienstadt Ghetto. The occupants were at the pinnacle of power, and now seemed the right time for their plan of systematic annihilation of the Jewish population. During the second half of 1942 they changed Theresienstadt to serve as a ghetto for European Jews, and Theresienstadt became the first stop on the path towards death in the notorious death camp of Auschwitz.

The printing plant on Rose Street received an order. They summoned Jindra Schmidt and ordered him to prepare the graphic design for the aforementioned bank notes. Naturally, Schmidt was not enchanted with this Nazorder but decided nevertheless to proceed with the task. However, he proceeded to create a design which would picture the Jews in a sympathic manner Going counter to the flood of distorted caricatures which at the time were popular in German antisemitic journals and motion pictures as well as in certain collaborationist publications, Schmidt prepared the drawing illustrated in Figure 1. It pictured Moses holding the Ten Commandments and gave him a dignified and beautiful countenance.

When Schmidt's design reached the responsible Nazi official of the Reichsbank who had cognizance over the bank note printery, the official became furious and returned the design. Moses appeared exceedingly noble and soulful. "Tell Herr Schmidt that he must picture THAT Jew as a REAL Jew"

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Fig. 1

Fig. 2

he ranted. "This means with long side burns and bent nose. Moses must be ugly and revolting!".

The engraver found himself in a difficult situation, knowing that fooling with the Nazis could easily mean concentration camp. But neither did he feel that he could create an insulting caricature of Moses. The result was a certain honorable compromise. He added a few wrinkles, the soft expression became coarser; but that was as far as he would go. The new design (figure 2) was again presented to the Nazis but they were not satisfied. They insisted that Moses did not appear sufficiently "Jewish" and was too handsome. But since they were in a hurry and wanted to demonstrate to the world their "concern" over the wellbeing of the Theresienstadt Ghetto, there wasn't sufficient time to redo the design and it was therefore accepted.

However, shortly before the printing of the bank notes was begun, there sounded an alarm concerning the writing on the tablets. Someone among the Nazis decided that the Hebrew writing might contain a secret message, and they therefore consulted a number of experts who rendered a precise translation. When they received the translated text which came from the Prague University Library (which along with all institutions of higher learning was closed and guarded by the Nazis), it was confirmed that the text was indeed nothing but the Ten Commandments and only then did they give permission to proceed with the printing.

Somewhat later the bank note printing plant produced another Theresienstadt issue. The graphic artist BEDRICH FOJTAŠEK, who worked there, received as an assignment the preparation of a design for a Theresienstadt forwarding label for packages. The design, engraved in copper, pictured in the foreground a broadly branched tree and in the background a few houses and clouds (figure 3). The labels were printed in sheets of 20, in



Fig. 3

green. Only those packages bearing this label—and the Nazis sold it for 10K each—could reach the ghetto. It is natural that even during the occupation these labels were scarce. A very small number of them were printed, and labels mounted on postally delivered packages were altogether unavailable.

Toward the end of the war a high ranking German officer suddenly appeared at the printery. He searched for the printing plates of the Theresienstadt labels which he claimed he had the order to carry away. Such a request had never been made before. There took place some argument, but the Nazi insisted and the management eventually gave him the plates. But befor the plates were surrendered, Jindra Schmidt had the presence of mind to quickly and secretly alter the engraving. "I wanted to identify the stolen plates" he recalled after many years "in order to prevent their use for a subsequent run."

The Theresienstadt "stamps" were copied several times after the war and forgeries are in circulation in Czechoslovakia as well as abroad. We were therefore interested in just how the plate was altered by Jindra Schmidt and how they could be identified. We asked "what specifically did you do to the engraving." He replied: "In the background of the stamp there are several houses. From one of these I removed 2 windows so that the original printings can be identified accordingly, i.e. that the little house has all windows. The stamp from which 2 windows are missing is therefore made from a subsequent or postwar printing."

The Nazi thief in uniform was obviously oblivious to Jindra Schmidt's little fix.



Fig. 4. Arrow points to the two windows supposedly removed. (Windows in the above illustration darkened for emphasis)

Editor's Note: Unfortunately, the original article does not illustrate the post-war reprint with "2 windows missing" and we have never seen one. Any information from our readers in this regard will be appreciated and published in a subsequent issue.

52nd MAIL SALE

Once again we offer for sale a fine collection of CZECHOSLOVAKIA. The prices given below represent MINIIMUM bids, and no lots will be sold below this price.

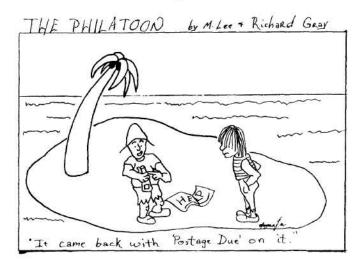
1918 8 stampless covers. All czech towns
56 cards and some covers, all Cz towns
Ab. 100 Austrian stamps all cancelled on Cz territory
SCOUT stamps, Zumst 1 and 2 *
Same used
Stamps with SCOUT cancels, ab 10
Budejovice set up to 1K
Statni Vlada set comp. to 1K *
HRADCANY set to 1000 *
Hradcany, some values perf, also some blocks
Hradcany, 10, 20h and 30h the good values IMPERF in vf quality
Hradcany, 10 covers
Hradcany, 3h tete beche *
Hradcany with Hungarian cancel most on pieces, ab 100, nice lot
Hradcany, lot of ab 1500 all used
Hradcany, 150 waste prints (makulature)
Hradcany, ab 15 with "D" and "T" as Doplatits
COVERS and cards all periods, some dupl., about 300
Postovni ustrizky ab 1000 stamps, all periods
28 folders with cancels, special events
250 special event cancellations all on pieces, nice lot
Collection of Czechoslovakia in album, nicely collected
Another collection in an album
Posta 1919, a set of 59 different, al! *
3 filler and 60 f Turul *
complete sheet of the 15h sheet of 100 stamps
2 covers with Posta stamps
Levec cover
Masaryk 1920 set *
1925 set of 7 *
vertical watermark, compl. used
Scott No. 102 *
set of 1923 *
same used
Congress set *
Same used
Slet *
Same used

40.	Picture postcards mostly with Masaryk	10.00
41.	Praha and Tatra stamps with watermark *	6.00
42.	Same with NO watermark *	6.00
43.	Holubice and Csv Republika tete beche *	20.00
44.	Same with gutters *	20.00
45.	S.O. long set up to 1000h plus all the postage dues set of 40 diff * .	7.00
46.	S.O. Masaryk stamps * Scott \$120	50.00
47.	AIRMAILS C1 to 6 compl both sets *	30.00
48	C1-3 vf *	12.00
49.	C4-6 vf *	17.00
50.	C7-9 *	2.00
51.	Same used	
52.	Modern airmails, about 20 * and used	3.00
53.	Airmail covers and cards	
54.	1938 Sudeten, all kinds of stps * and used from this time, ab 30 dif	15.00
55.	20 cards and covers, all kinds	20.00
56.	Collection on pages, many Hindenburg stamps, all with SUDETEN	
	cancels, all on pieces 2	
57.	BohMoravia, first set Sc 1-19 *	6.00
58.	Same used	6.00
59.	8 values with gutters	
60.	Highly specialized collection with tabs and gutters, complete	
	country * in album	
61.	SLOVAKIA, first set *	40.00
62.	Coll. on album pages, NOT compl.	28.00
63.	10 cards and covers	
64.	Jehlicka stamp in block	7.00
65.	1945 overprints on Hitler stamps	10.00
66.	DIFFERENT CZECHO: Ab 400 cards and covers, some duplication	20.00
67.	Posovni uztrizky all kinds about 1000 stamps	10.00
68.	100 FDC from all periods after 1945	
69.	Ab. 200 essays and makulatura and proofs and labels	20.00
70.	100 Praga Exhib. sheets 1938, Scott \$125	
71.	100 Masaryk sheets with child, Scott \$250	
72.	100 Csv republika 1938, sheets, Scott \$250	
73.	25 complete sheets, all *	25.00
74.	60 covers and cards, Boh Moravia	20.00
75.	Ab 60 cards all POLNI POSTA 1938 (from the Sudeten crisis)	25.00
76.	Box with covers and cards, ab 300	15.00

ALFONS STACH

From the Editor's Stock Book

Those of you who are aware of the most recent change in USPS regulations covering delivery—or rather non-delivery—of underfranked mail will appreciate the timely "PHILATOON" submitted by artist (Ms.) M. Lee and perceptive postal patron Richard Gray.



I'm sure some of our readers are aware of "THE STAMP LOVER," Journal of the National Philatelic Society (44 Fleet St., London EC4Y 1 BN England), which has been in business for over 75 years, and for many of these has been compiling and publishing an "Index of Current Philatelic Literature"—one of the finest contributions to our hobby. The man responsible for this comprehensive task is Mr. J. J. S. Goss, who has recently written us: "... Your journal, the CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST is one for which I always keep an eye open as it appears—I always enjoy each issue and the crudition of your contributors, who, it seems to me, seem always to display a rare talent for presenting highly detailed information in a most acceptable manner ..."

With all this flattery we must humbly apologize for omitting the name of the author and source of last month's lead story "Reports from the Beginnings of our Philately," though we expressed our appreciation to both in this column. The author was Jan Kraus, and the source was FILATELIE, and to both we again say "THANKS."

Though our 1975 publication program plan may be a bit less voluminous than was 1974, it is nevertheless just as ambitious and challenging. We hope to include a serialized translation of Prof. Roger Richet's "Les Émissions, Surcharges, Oblitération et Vignetter des Sudétes (1880-1970)" and are in urgent need of translators. The book is in relatively easy French and is profusely illustrated. Anyone willing and able to translate even a few pages should get in touch with me right away.

Charley's Corner

Box 237, Willow Springs, Ill. 60480

Several months ago we talked about varieties of the overprint "Pošta Československá 1919". As you know, this series is almost endless in varieties. You have offsets of the overprints, inverted overprints, double and triple overprints, overprints reading down, reverse overprints, reverse inverted overprints, shifted overprints, copies without overprints, overprints applied to the gum side regular and inverted. Foldovers where part of the overprint is applied to the gummed side, paper folds which cause split overprints, partial overprints with some letters or numbers missing.

Of course if one adds the various errors and varieties of the basic stamps themselves, one can come up with an almost endless list of varieties of this

issue.

Figure 1 shows the large numeral Austrian postage due 6 heller with a double overprint. Although not shown, this block also has an offset of the overprint on the gummed side.

Figure 2, from the same set, shows the 30 heller value with the two top stamps without the overprint. This is one of the rare varieties in the series



Fig. 1

Fig. 2

Fig. 3

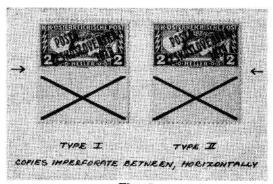


Fig. 4

of Pošta 1919.

Figure 3 shows the 25 heller postage due (small numerals) with copies without the overprint, and with the overprint strongly shifted.

Figure 4 shows the Austrian 2 heller special delivery stamps with the St. Andrews Crosses. This variety is imperforate between the stamp and the coupon. This variety exists also, of course, with two stamps imperforate between horizontally.

Just in these 4 photos one can readily see how so many varieties can exist. More on Pošta in the months ahead. Hope all of you enjoyed a happy holiday season and that 1975 brings forth all your wishes and of course some good stamps also.

Good hunting!

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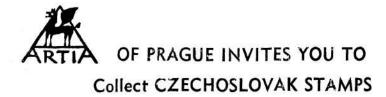
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- 7) You'll love their motion-like illustrations of the colorful world of sport
- You'll see why Czechoslovakia has gained international recognition for its advanced techniques of stamp reproduction, harmony of color and outstanding artistry
- 9) They represent the work of their finest artists and engravers
- 10) Czechoslovakia's stamps are neither too large or small—triangular or imperforate—just stamps as stamps should be!

ASK YOUR FAVORITE DEALER!

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New Issues

On October 9, 1974, the Czechoslovak Federal Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications issued a set of commemoratives entitled "100th Anniversary of the Universal Postal Union" comprising the following six stamps. The stamps were designed by the painter and graphic artist František Hudeček and were printed at the Post Printing Office in Prague by rotary recess print combined with one-color photogravure in sheets of 50.

The engraving of the 30h (pink, violet), 40h (pale blue, orange), 60h (yellow, violet), and 80h (green, pink) was carried out by Josef Herčík, and that of the 1 Kčs (blue, orange) and 1.60 Kčs (violet, yellow) by Jan Mráček.

The dimensions of the stamp pictures are 49x19 mm.

Issued with the set are two First Day Covers with the following illustrations by František Hudeček: mail box and letters, and Molnya communications satellite and postal labels.

On November 27, 1974 a five (5) stamp "ART" set was issued based on works located at either the National Museum (Prague), the National Gallery (Prague) or, in the instance of the 1.80 Kčc denomination, the Slovak National Gallery.

The 1 Kes value was engraved by Milos Ondracek, and its colors include yellow, blue, red, blue-black and green. The 1.20 Kes was engraved by Josef Hercik in colors including black, yellow, green, brown and red. Jiří Švengsbír is the engraver of the 1.60 Kes, which is in yellow, violet, red, green and brown. The 1.80 Kes was engraved by Milos Ondracek and the colors are blue, red, yellow and brown. Finally, the 2 Kes was engraved by Ladislav Jirka and the colors include brown, gray, and pale ochre. The full set is illustrated here.



The set is printed by multicolor flat recess printing in sheets of four. The dimensions of the stamp design is 40x50 mm.

Issued with each stamp is a separate First Day Cover with drawings by the corresponding artists.

NEW MEMBERS

1065 John R. Gentile, 1018 Bradford Ave., Charleston, S. C. 29412

1066 Dominick J. Riccio, 235 W. 76th Street, Apt. 4D, New York, NY 10023

CHANGE IN ADDRESS

688 Henry Lasch, 110 E. 9th St., Suite B 1088, Los Angeles, CA 90015

462 Mrs. K. F. Goodman, "Ingledene," 5 Oakwood Rd., Higheliffe, Hants, BH23 5 NY, England

61 W. B. Bryant, Paseo de la Reforma 107-12, Mexico 4, D. F., Mexico

RESIGNATIONS

814 Henry Stollnitz, 24 Rockrose Place, Forest Hills, NY 11375

1017 Boris Joffe, 367 Starin Ave., Buffalo, NY 13216

1023 Tom Gore, Box 5207 Victoria, B. C., VIR 6N4, Canada

OTHER CORRECTIONS TO MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

1058 Maurice LaBrie. Should read LaBrie rather than LeBrie, 9554 Telegraph Rd., Downey, CA 90240

594 Charles Stehlik, change from "Master Sgt" to "CWO4"

YOUTH MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN NEEDS YOUR HELP!

The SOCIETY is currently planning an aggresive program to increase its Youth Membership and to provide meaningful guidance to collectors of school age. As part of the forthcoming Bicentennial Celebration, several towns having citizenry of Czechoslovak descent will institute courses in Czech culture, history and even language. One such town is Tabor, South Dakota, in which 220 young people are already enrolled in such a program. About 100 have indicated an interest in our hobby, and the SOCIETY plans to respond by sending them information on our Society, a copy of the SPECIALIST, and a gift envelope of Czechoslovak stamps. An application form will, of course, be included.

Here is how YOU can help:

- a. If you know of such a program or any potential source of Youth Members, please let us know.
- b. Send us packets of 25 Czecho stamps, preferably commemoratives in a glassine envelope. These can either be plain, or have your name on them with a message such as: "My name is Karel Novotný, and I have enjoyed collecting these stamps for 20 years. If you'd like to share in this hobby, write me and I'll give you some help."

All contact concerning the above should be directed to our Youth Chairman, Henry Samek, Jr., 138 Burlington Ave., Paterson, N. J. 07502.

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