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Society for Czechoslovak Philately, Inc.

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A.P.S. Unit 18

S.P.A. Branch 284

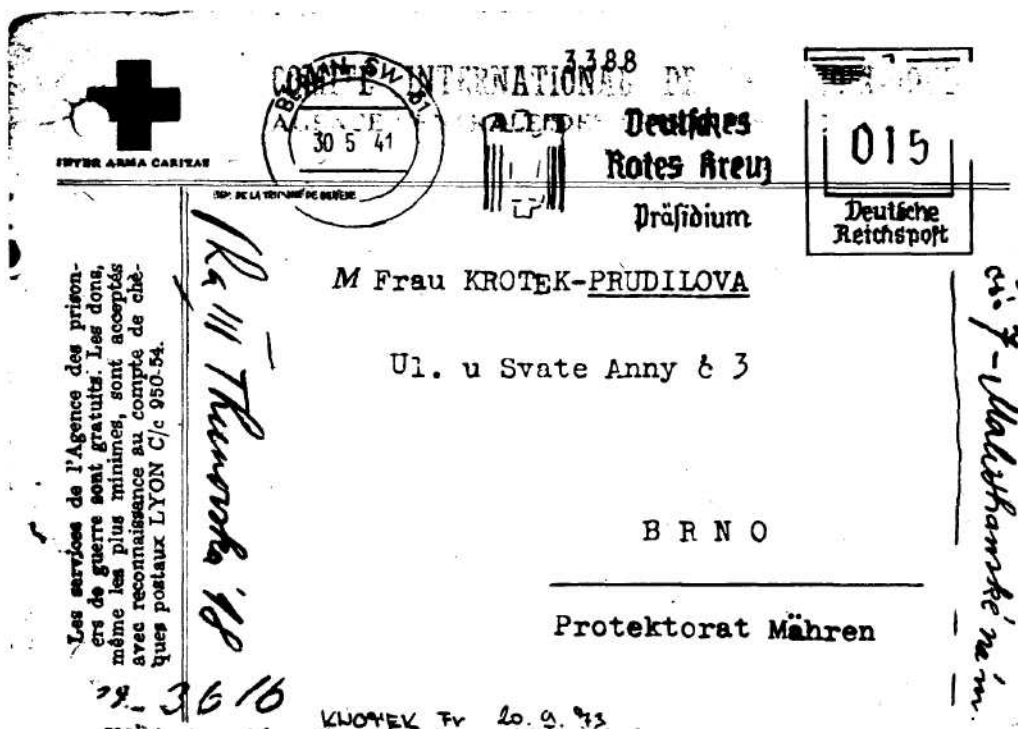
Vol. XLIV

February, 1982

No. 2, Whole No. 417

AN EARLY PRISONER OF WAR

By Miroslav Vostatek - Translated and edited by J. J. Verner



The postcard from the International Red Cross, Central Agency for Prisoners of War, Geneva illustrated above bore the news that Sergeant Frantisek Knotek was a prisoner of war. The card, according to the text at left representing a gratis service, obviously went to Berlin where the German Red Cross affixed machine postage. The letter was addressed to Brno, but apparently it was also routed via the Czech Red Cross which was located at Praha III, Thunovska 18 before it was closed by the occupation authorities.

On the back side of the card is a printed text in addition to a Red Cross file number and postal date stamp. The text says, inter alia, that the International Red Cross has the pleasure of announcing that it has received information from the soldier Krotek (misspelled), Frantisek, Sergeant, and date of birth. He is a prisoner in Germany and is in Stalag Luft II (which was located in Barth on the Baltic coast). His prisoner of war number is 315. He is in good health. His card bears the date December 3, 1941. Finally the text notes that mail to prisoners of war need not be franked, the correspondence should be legible and that the prisoner's number should not be forgotten in the address, which is again repeated.

Sergeant Frantisek Knotek spent more than 600 days in internment. Toward the end of the war a column of prisoners in which he was traveling was attacked by allied aircraft and Knotek sustained a serious bullet wound in his hand.

Frantisek Knotek was a Slovak and served in the air force in Brno before the War. After the declaration of the Independent Slovak state he was ordered into the Slovak air force and stationed at Piestany. Apparently he did not much like either the new Slovak regime or the living conditions in which he found himself. Therefore, he and seven other pilots used the All Saints holiday in 1939 to fly to Poland in four bi-planes.

His wanderings finally led him to England where he was assigned to the 311 Czechoslovak Bomber Wing. Two weeks after the establishment of this Wing Knotek was off to bomb Berlin in a Wellington number KX-EL 7788. The aircraft was damaged over Berlin and was forced to crash land near s'Gravenhaage in Holland (illustration 2). The date was September 23, 1940. The crew was able to hide out for three days before the Germans captured them. One of their number, Corporal Karel Kunda took his own life, apparently fearing the interrogations of the Gestapo. Other members of the crew were Karel Trojacke, Zdenek Prochazka, V. Kilian, Arnost Zabrs and Karel Kunda and Frantisek Knotek.

And thus the story ends with a postcard from the International Red Cross, Central Agency for Prisoners of War.

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Changes of address to the editorial office.



Fig. 2. Wellington Bomber KX-EL7788

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THE OLDER GENERATION OF PRAGUE COLLECTORS AND PHILATELIC FUNCTIONAIRES

The photograph shown on the opposite page is probably one copy of hundreds now resting in collections. It was most likely used both as a remembrance of a meeting of the Club or Czech Philatelists and as a philatelic souvenir, since the back bears a commemorative cancel reading: "PRAHA 1, 50 LET KLUBU CESKYCH FILATELISTU, 1887 - 1937, 8.XII. 37 - 10" (Prague 1, 50 Years of the Club of Czech Philatelists, 1887 - 1937, Dec. 8, 1937 - 10 a.m.) A rubber stamp shows that the photograph was made by Frantisek Hertl.

The photograph undoubtedly includes many of the best known pre-WW-II collectors of Prague, whose names appear on our treasured covers of the early days of the Czechoslovak Republic, on forerunners and on pre-1918 Austrian material posted on future Czechoslovak territory.

We would like to identify as many of the individuals in the photograph as possible, and are seeking the aid of our readers both in the U.S. and abroad.

Only two gentlemen have been identified thus far (by our good friend, Mr. Alfons Stach of Miami, Florida).

The gentleman under the left arrow is Mr. Karel Basika (1903 - 1968). According to Nebesky*, Basika was a successful exhibitor, a dynamic and energetic functionary with inexhaustible organizational ability. He collected since his youth, and joined the Club in 1926 at which time his exhibiting and organizational activities began. His first success was achieved as an exhibitor that year in Slana, where he received his first of many awards for his showing of Austria. He exhibited annually from that year on, winning first silvers and later golds for his showing of first Austria and later Czechoslovakia. Eventually he exhibited Belgium, Holland, Malta, topical Prague and the High Tatras, and, later still, air mail issues. His strongest area, however, was Great Britain, in which he excelled both nationally and in some twenty international shows. His greatest award was the Grand Prix in Bucharest. He later became a popular philatelic judge.

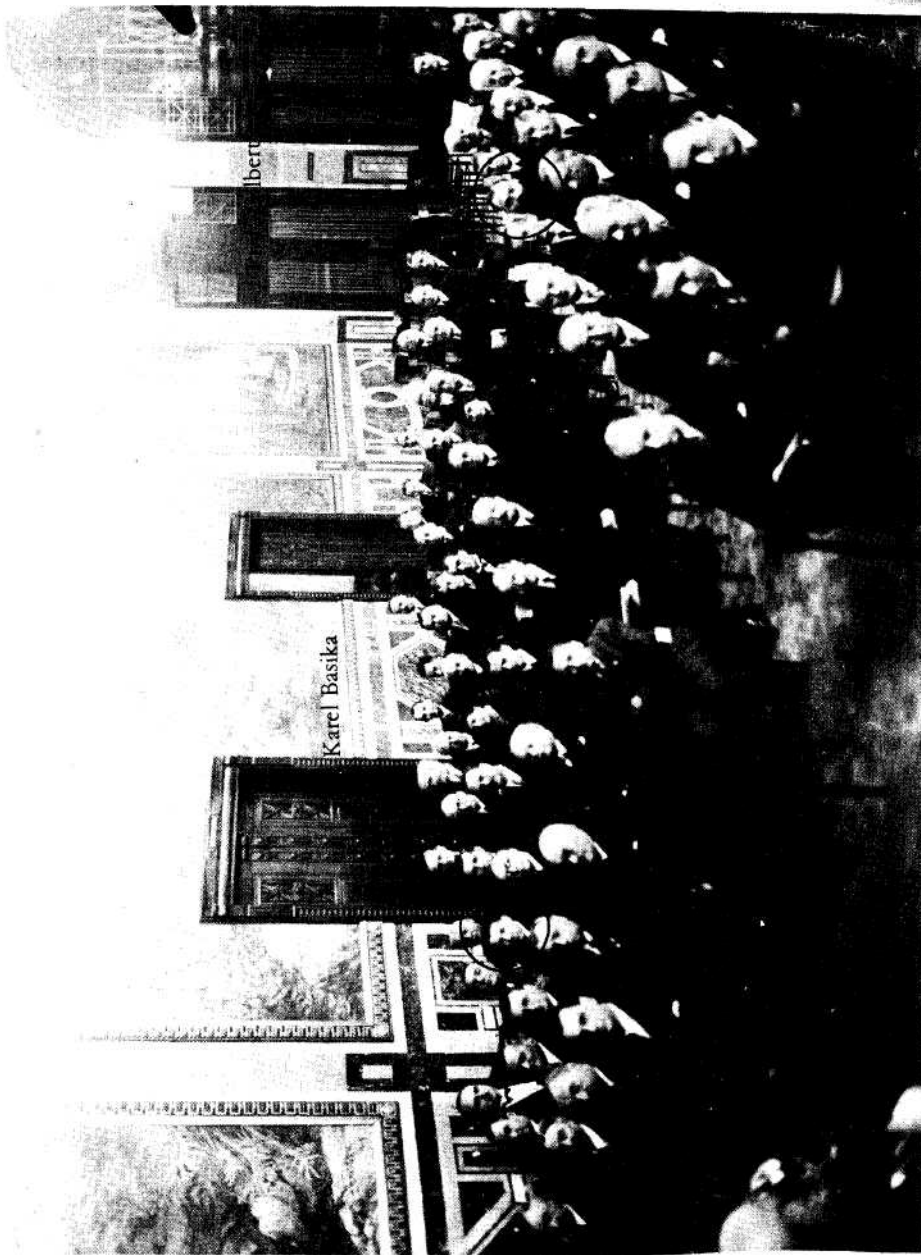
As a functionary, he first became an alternate member of the executive committee of the Prague "Independent Philatelists", in 1927. At that time he also became a frequent lecturer, covering many subjects, though Great Britain was his favorite. He was also a frequent author and recipient of much recognition for his organizational activities.

The second individual identified for us is Prof. Gilbert (arrow on right), well known graphicist and expert whose name appears on the backs of many of our expertized stamps.

Our readers are urged to help us identify others in the photo - and if a bit of biographical information is available, that too will be appreciated and published.

H. Hahn

* Nebesky, V. "Filatelistovo Podzimni Rozjimani" NADAS, Prague, 1975, p. 183



COVERS, POSTMARKS AND POSTAL MARKINGS *(Some help to those unable to read Monografie* XIII and XIV In Czech)*

Since we have in recent years received numerous requests from purchasers of the two volumes of Monografie (XIII and XIV) for a translation of the introductory and explanatory chapters, a brief effort along these lines now appears long overdue. This is particularly true since sales of these volumes to non-Czech speaking members have been excellent and the Society still has copies available for sale. In addition, the popularity of prestamp covers to Austrian and Hungarian covers originating on future Czechoslovak territory has enjoyed a significant upsurge in recent years. Whether such fine books as Ryan** and the Monografie are the cause or effect of this popularity is open to question. The fact nevertheless remains that with the severe rise in price of Czech rarities and the profusion of "philatelic junk" of recent vintage, collectors and those to whom philately serves as an intellectual outlet have developed an insatiable appetite for the subject of the above mentioned books.

On the other hand, we do not wish to imply a loss of interest or demand for those rare stamps which we still covet, which win golds at the international shows, and which still provide a relatively good investment.

A basic difference aside from the historic and intellectual challenge between stamp and cover (or postmark) collecting is in acquisition. The rare stamp is, in our opinion, the target of a good chase and capture - or at the very least the challenge of carefully separating the former owner from the stamp without the permanent damage to one's conscience or reputation. Covers, postmarks and the like are an entirely different matter. How many such items have you really taken aim on and pursued? Probably few or none. The thrill of acquiring a cover is most often derived from the application of a collector's knowledge to a pile of old accumulation. The prize may be a new discovery of fact or an item of sheer beauty - but almost never the finding of precisely what you have been looking for. Collecting covers, postmarks and marking is certainly less blood-thirsty than "going after" rarities - and therefore more consistent with our desire for relief from what we put up with all day and seek relief from through our hobby.

If the reader is now ready to turn his attention to postmarks - at least for a start - he must know a few rules concerning valuation - lest he wish to risk getting badly gypped. These rules apply not only to the recent authors, i.e. Votocek and Ryan, but also to earlier works on the subject, such as Muller* and Klein**. Klein, incidentally, treats the subject of markings on postal stationery as distinct from markings on adhesives.

The following basis for valuating (assigning point count) is summarized in Chapter 3 of Monografie XIII.

1. Full point count is assigned only to full postal markings rather than fragments.
2. Point count on local and auxiliary markings from the prestamp period applies only to complete covers.

* Votocek, E., Monografie Ceskoslovenskych Znamek, v. XIII and XIV, Prague 1975

** Ryan, G.S., The Cancellations of Hungarian Post Offices on the First Five Issues of Austrian Stamps 1850-1867 during the Austrian Administration, The Royal Society of London, 1980

*** Muller, E., Grosses Handbuch, etc., Vienna 1925, Die Poststempel 1867 von Osterreich und Ungarn, Vienna, 1930, Handbuch der Entwertungen, etc., Vienna 1961, and Handbook of Prestamp Postmarks of Austria, New York, 1960

**** Klein, W., Die Postliche Abstemplungen, etc. Vienna, 1967.

3. Point count for postmarks on stamps off paper applies only if the postmark is complete. This, of course, is possible only with very small postmarks. If on piece, the postmark must also be complete, as is the case on letters, postal stationery and other forms of correspondence.
4. Point count on imprinted stamps is the same as on adhesives. Postmarks on cut squares are not valued, and are considered to be of little value. An exception is the case, for example, when the postmark on the cut square additionally covers an adhesive.
5. Point count in the case of auxiliary postal markings applies only when these markings appear on complete covers or on postal stationery. Exceptions to the above are given in those chapters applying to particular classes of auxiliary markings.

The quality of the postmark naturally influences its value. The point count given in the book applies only to clear and legible markings. Incomplete, smeared or otherwise imperfect markings are valued at only a fraction of a listed point count. Markings "completed" by hand are worthless.

Unless otherwise given in the catalogue, the items to which the markings are applied fall into the pre-stamp period and 9 issues of stamps and postal stationery. These are catalogued as follows:

p	prestamp covers . . . . .	(		- 31.5.1850)
1	first issue, 1, 2, 3, 6 and 9 kr . . . . .	(	1. 6.1850 - 31.12.1858)	
2	second issue, 2, 3, 5, 10 and 15 kr . . . . .	(	1.11.1858 - 31.5.1864)	
3	third issue, 2, 3, 5, 10 and 15 kr . . . . .	(	15. 1.1861 - 31.5.1864)	
	imprinted envelopes, 3, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 & 35 kr . . . . .	(	1.1861 - 31.5.1864)	
4	regular issue (seal, perf 14), 2, 3, 5, 10 & 15 kr . . . . .	(	1.1863 - 31.8.1869)	
	imprinted envelopes, 3, 5, 10, 15 & 25 kr . . . . .	(	1. 7.1863 - 31.8.1869)	
5	regular issue (seal, perf 9.5), 2, 3, 5, 10 & 15 kr . . . . .	(	1.1864 - 31.8.1869)	
6	regular issue (Emperor) 2, 3, 5, 10, 15, 25 & 50 kr . . . . .	(	1.1867 - 31.10.1884)	
	imprinted envelopes, 3, 5, 10, 15 and 25 kr . . . . .	(	1.1867 - 31.10.1884)	
	post card, 2 kr (yellow) . . . . .	(	1.10.1869 - 31.10.1876)	
	post card, 2 kr (brown) . . . . .	(	14. 1.1876 - 31.10.1883)	
	return post card, 2 plus 2 kr . . . . .	(	17.7.1880 - 31.10.1893)	
	imprinted bands for printed matter, 2 kr . . . . .	(	1.10.1872 - 31.10.1883)	
	postal receipt, 5 kr . . . . .	(	1. 5.1870 - 31.10.1884)	
	postal receipt, 10 kr . . . . .	(	10. 1.1875 - 31.10.1884)	
	postal receipt, 15 kr . . . . .	(	1.1878 - 31.10.1884)	
	postal COD 10 kr . . . . .	(	15.12.1871 - 31.10.1884)	
7	regular issue, 2, 3, 5, 10, 20 and 50 kr . . . . .	(	8.1883 - 30. 6.1891)	
	imprinted envelopes, 5 kr . . . . .	(	1. 9.1883 - 30.6.1891)	
	post card, 2 kr. and return post card, 2 plus 2 kr . . . . .	(	9.1883 - 30.6.1891)	
	letter card, 3 kr and 5 kr . . . . .	(	1. 6.1886 - 30.6.1891)	
	imprinted bands for printed matter, 2 kr . . . . .	(	8.1883 - 30.6.1891)	
	telegram forms 2 kr . . . . .	(	1.1884 - 30.6.1891)	
8	regular issue, 1, 2, 3, 5, 10, 12 & 15 kr . . . . .	(	1. 9.1890 - 30.9.1900)	
	regular issue, 20, 24, 30 & 50 kr . . . . .	(	1. 9.1890 - 30.8.1891)	
	regular issue, 1 and 2 guilders . . . . .	(	1. 9.1890 - 31.1.1896)	
	regular issue, 20, 24, 30 & 50 kr . . . . .	(	11. 3.1891 - 30.9.1900)	
	regular issue, 1 and 2 guilders . . . . .	(	1. 2.1896 - 30.9.1900)	
	postage due, 1, 3, 5, 10, 20 & 50 kr . . . . .	(	1. 2.1894 - 30.9.1900)	
	postage due, 2, 6 & 7 kr . . . . .	(	6. 4.1895 - 30.9.1900)	
	imprinted envelopes, 5 kr . . . . .	(	1. 9.1890 - 31.3.1900)	
	post cards, 2 kr and return post cards, 2 plus 2 kr . . . . .	(	1. 9.1890 - 31.3.1900)	
	letter cards, 3 & 5 kr . . . . .	(	1. 9.1890 - 30. 9.1900)	

continued from page 7

imprinted bands for printed matter, 2 kr	(1. 9.1890 - 30. 9.1900)
impr. envel. for pneumatic tube mail, 15 kr	(4. 3.1899 - 30.9.1900)
letter cards for pneumatic tube mail, 15 kr	(4. 3.1899 - 30.9.1900)
postcards for pneumatic tube mail, 10 kr & 10 plus 10	(4. 3.1899 - 30.9.1900)
tax payment cards, 2 kr	(1. 9.1890 - 31.3.1901)
telegram forms, 5 kr	(. .1890 - . .19--)
9. other regular issues, semi-postals, postage due, special delivery, all other postal stationery in heller and crown denominations, valid through October 28, 1918.	

Point count for postmarks on newspaper stamps is covered in detail in the text of the book. Below is given only the designation of individual issues and corresponding period of validity:

1. newspaper issue, 0.6 kr. blue	(1. 1.1851 - 31.5.1864)
6 kr yellow	(1. 1.1851 - 31.5.1864)
6 kr red	(. 3.1856 - 31.12.1858)
30 kr pink	(1. 1.1851 - 31.5.1864)
2. newspaper issue, 1.05 kr blue	(1.11.1858 - 31.5.1864)
1.05 kr violet	(. .1859 - 31.5.1864)
3. newspaper issue, 1.05 kr	(. 1.1861 - 31.5.1864)
4. newspaper issue, 1.05 kr	(. .1863 - 31.8.1869)
5. newspaper issue, 1.05 kr	(. 6.1867 - 31.9.1900)
6. newspaper delivery issue, 0.5 kr	(11.12.1880 - 31.12.1899)
6. all newspaper issues in heller denominations valid between December 1899 and October 28, 1918.	

(to be continued)

H. Hahn

THE SPRING OF '45

(By Dr. Miroslav Vostatek - translated by J. J. Verner)

In the Spring of 1945 interesting postal markings began to appear on letters undelivered by the postal authorities of occupied Bohemia and Moravia. The markings announced, in German and Czech, that postal delivery had, for the time being, been interrupted. Our example is from a regular first class letter sent on April 18, 1945 from Zilina to Ostrava (illustration). The explanation was simple. At this time the powerful Soviet Armies were on the move and one city after another was falling to them.

The histories of the Second World War tell us that on that date the First Ukrainian Front was crossing the River Spree, the river that runs through Berlin, at several points, and the 4th Ukrainian Front was attacking in the area west of Ratibor. This Polish city lies just 30 km north of Ostrava.

The war was almost over and the six-year occupation of Czechoslovakia was about to end. But the fighting was still going on and blood was being spilled. This simple, common letter with its simple announcement attests to the chaos of the time.

Postbeförderung zur Zeit eingestellt.
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- 1332 - BARKER, William E., 3675 W. 130th St., Cleveland, OH 44111
- 1333 - GALLEGOS, Philip A., 413 Dartmouth SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106
- 1334 - HIGNETT, Archie, Rte #2 Box 137 C, Green Mountain, NC 28740
- 1335 - GERSCH, William, 4918 Sauquoit Lane, Annandale, VA 22003

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

- 853 JAMES, Doreen, 13 Westwinds Rd., Winterton, Scunthorpe
S. Humberside DN15 9RU, England
- 1170 SAZAMA, Robert M., 3717 Paula Ave., Key West, FL 33040
- 1212 KENYON, Kenneth H., 558 Hillcrest Dr., Verona, WI 53593
- 1219 VOSPER, Gary W., 1322 Hylø Rd., SE, Salem, OR 97302
- 1236 HIRDLER, Virginia F., 2206 Cypress Bend Dr., S.,
Pompano Beach, FL 33060
- 1255 MILLER, Marilyn, 2432 Hancock, Irving, TX 75061

FROM THE EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

In the January Specialist it was announced that plans are afoot for a great 1982 Convention at SEPAD in Philadelphia from October 8 to 10. Now the word has been received from the Austria Philatelic Society of New York that they will join us at this fine show, and plans are being made for joint affairs. We expect that our Society's showing will be on a par with our previous Conventions at BALPEX and COMPEX, and for this we need both exhibits and membership participation. Start getting ready now for your part in SEPAD '82.

The response for 1982 dues thus far has been quite gratifying. Obviously most of our members feel that the Society for Czechoslovak Philately is indeed worth \$15.00 a year! In fact we have even gained some new members, who are listed elsewhere in this issue of The Specialist. If you have not paid your 1982 dues yet, please do send off that check to Chuck Collins today. We will not be able to send The Specialist to members who have not paid their dues.

Speaking of The Specialist, your editor is off for another trip to far places in February. It is unfortunate that all this travel has contributed to the chronic lateness of the recent issues of the Specialist. We regret this very much, but if it were not for the labors of other members like Henry Hahn, Jerry Verner and his family, Lou Svoboda, Paul Sturman and Al Jura, it might never appear at all. We need articles for every issue - both original articles and translations of articles from the foreign language press. If you can help with either, please let your editor know. My only pay is knowing that we have a good publication.

We have also received some additions to the Memorial Fund for Dr. Reiner-Deutsch. Donations of ten dollars each were sent in by the following members:

Thomas M. Austin
Christine S. Blinn
Theo Van Dam

Of course, sixty dollars is a long way from being enough to pay for the publication of the Specialist Index (which is nearing completion and will soon be ready to be printed), so we sincerely hope that a number of other members will see fit to add to the Fund.

11th January, 1982

Dear Editor:

The Specialists for Nov. and Dec. arrived together a few days ago and I have been reading the article in December on the plating of the 100 h.Hradcany stamp. Although I have not seen Mr. Larsen's booklet I have managed to complete the plating of this stamp. For the first plate I have a full sheet and exhibited the plating at Sojex in 1979. For plate II, which I exhibited at Balpex in 1980, I had to work with blocks and strips to build up the plate, with the exceptions of positions 12 and 67 which I only identified after seeing the collection of the late John Velek in the Smithsonian museum.

When I say that I have completed both plates - and I believe there are only two plates - I just mean that I have identified the 200 stamps: I do not have all shades, papers, perfs, roulettes, for every position.

With regard to the article in The Specialist I would like to make the following brief comments:

- No. 62, plate I has the colour dot at 2 o'clock of the sun but also has a short, ½ mm line below the bottom left corner.
- No. 1, plate I I agree that the break in the frame over the C of Cesko appears on approximately half of the stamps.
- No. 1, plate II It appears that on all the copies I have, the small dot appears on the inside of the leg of the figure 1.
- No. 5 plates I & II Novotny lists a retouch of both plates with "second sun" as if this stamp was the same on both plates. However, on plate I there is an extension to the spire and a color spot on the first left leaf, whereas on plate II there is the second sun, a color spot after the S of Posta, a color spot on the breast of the right dove, and two small dots to the right of the top of the ray. Also the rays are different from plate I.
- No 23, plate II The main identification is a spot in front of Mucha.
- No. 61, plate II There is a white spot to the left of the dome; the line under the small bush has a break towards the right; the main ray is rather short.
- No. 90, plate II which I have in a vertical strip of the 80, 90, 100 and a vertical pair 80, 90. On all the copies I have, the color dot is to the right of the main ray, near the bottom: there is the break in the short tail feathers of the right dove, but no colored line above the break: there is also a break in the outline of the top left heart. The leg of the T is thin but leans very slightly to the right, about 1 degree reading from bottom to top.

The position, number, length, angle, etc. of the rays is different in every stamp: however, as it is practically impossible to describe the rays in sufficient detail, other identifying marks are generally used, but the rays are essential for plating.

Sincerely,
Tom Austin

FOR SALE THROUGH THE SPECIALIST

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