

THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

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POSTMARKS OF THE INTERMEDIATE STATE SEAL DESIGN OF 1927 - NEW FINDINGS

*By Tomáš Morovics and Jaroslav Černohlávek
Translated by Mirko Vondra and Henry Hahn*

Introduction

Some new findings have come to light that involve the postcard of 1927 with an imprinted 50 h. olive-green stamp showing the nation's intermediate coat of arms. The card is the subject of an important statement contained in Monografie: "The printed sheet had 32 postcards. The printing plate was made up of identical dies. Therefore there are no position varieties of the imprinted stamp or of the lines in the frame. The card exists in two types which differ in the number of lines in the right half of the cross inside the coat of arms."

Unfortunately the authors of Monografie made no effort to bring their otherwise correct findings to logical conclusions. Instead they simply summarized them with this closing remark: "The preparatory study of how these 50 h. correspondence cards were produced is still shrouded in mystery."

At the outset it became necessary to make a clear distinction between types I and II in case postal cancellations may have concealed certain identification marks in the area of the cross. We were successful in finding distinguishing marks (see fig. 2) which not only helped us to accurately pinpoint the differences between the two types even though we were dealing with postally used cards, but hopefully aided us in reconstructing the manufacturing process used in producing these very interesting philatelic items.

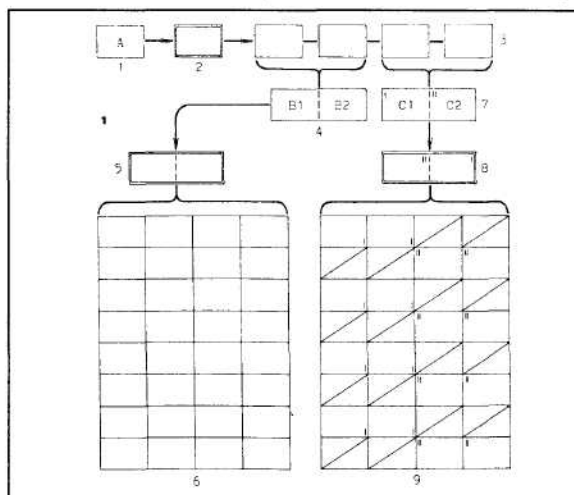


Fig. 1

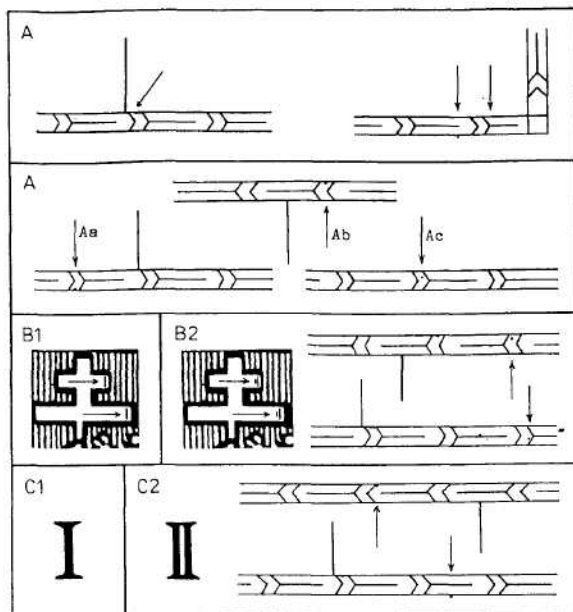


Fig. 2

Making the Printing Plates

A schematic outline for production is shown in fig. 1. The starting item is an etched die in actual size of the card designated as (1). From this, recessed impressions were developed (2) which contained several faults that were transferred onto the working dies.

(3) Faults or flaws on these recessed impressions can be separated into two groups (see fig. 2). First there are those that were carried over to all four working dies. They include the following: "A" - damaged ornament below the vertical dividing line, a thin line and damage at the first lower ornament on the right side. Then there are those that were carried over from the recessed impressions onto the working dies with irregular intensity and, in some cases, were not carried over at all. These include: "Aa" - a speck at the lower frame of the fifth ornament

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THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST, 1511 Clearview Ave., Lancaster, PA 17601

Editorial Staff

Managing Editor: Mirko L. Vondra, 1511 Clearview Ave., Lancaster, PA 17601

Assistant Editor: Gerald van Zanten, P.O. Box 159, Napier, New Zealand

Technical Editor: Adolf Hujer, Polska 3, Prague, Czechoslovakia

Manager-Slovakia Study Group: Jack Benchik, P.O. Box 555, Notre Dame, IN 46556

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from the left; "Ab" - a dash in the upper frame ornament just to the right of the vertical dividing line; "Ac" - a dot at the lower frame of the fourth ornament from the right. Flaw "Aa" appears on working dies B2, C1 and C2. Flaw "Ab" appears in three varieties: as a shorter dash in block B1 and C2, as a longer dash and dot in block C1 and as a longer dash in block B2. Flaw "Ac" is found in dies B1, C1 and C2. However, we are also aware of postcards from the C2 dies without this flaw. The combination of working dies B1 and B2 created a cliché, "B".

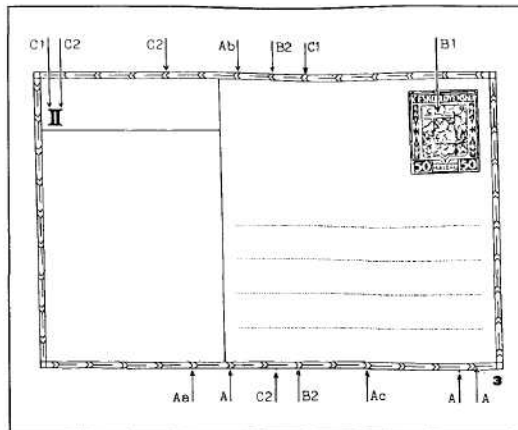


Fig. 3

(4) A correction was made in the coat of arms on plate position B1, namely removal of small lines using an engraving tool in the cross. As a result, a typical variety came into being which has been classified as type II. On cliché position B2, the coat of arms remained unaltered. Other marks in position B2 have been found as follows: a dot at the upper frame of the seventh ornament from the right and a dot at the lower frame of the sixth ornament from the right. A second recessed impression was made from cliché "B".

(5) With the aid of this impression, the required number of dies were prepared for the construction of a printing plate from which the single cards were printed.

(6) Working dies C1 and C2 were combined and used as a raised cliché "C".

(7) They were then completed by the soldering of Roman numerals I and II into them so the two parts of the double correspondence card could be distinguished. The individual plate positions on cliché "C" are distinguished as follows: Position C1 is marked with Roman numeral I and reveals a flaw - a short line at the sixth upper frame ornament from the right. (This is noted on fig. 2). On position C2 bearing Roman numeral II, the following marks are noted: a speck at the upper frame of the fourth ornament from the left, a dash below the lower frame of the seventh ornament from the right.

(8) A third recessed impression was derived from cliché "C" which was used in preparing the required number of dies for printing the double cards (I and II).

(9) During the production of the double cards, both sides had to be printed. Occasionally some of the plate positions in the makeup of the printing plate were filled in with blanks which printed nothing. The schematic outline in fig. 1 shows the most likely arrangement of the printing plates used in the production of the double cards. The blank positions are designated by diagonal lines drawn through them. The arrangement of plates could even be reconciled with the plate positions containing unprinted space on the basis of prescribed requirements for the combination of dies. For visual purposes, the flaws identified on fig. 2 may be located by referring to their positions on fig. 3.

Plate Faults

There is a plate fault known to most specialized collectors as a narrowing in the upper right part of the "0" in the "50" denomination located on the left side of the stamp. (see fig. 4). As a recurring plate fault, it appears only once on a single printer's plate. I had the opportunity to view several correspondence cards with that fault and found them to contain others faults as well. The narrowing "0" plate fault appeared surprisingly often leading me to suspect that in the makeup of the printing plate, it must be present more than once. This suspicion is confirmed by the reconstruction of the process used in printing up these single cards, as shown in fig. 5.



Fig. 4

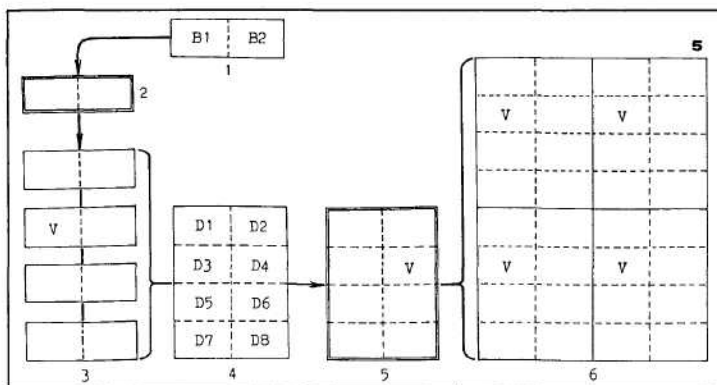


Fig. 5

Let us first return to cliché B. As I previously mentioned, a correction was made in the cross of the coat of arms on plate position B1 as seen in (1). From this cliché was then produced the recessed impression at (2) which, in turn, developed the four working dies of two subjects each at (3). One of those dies resulted in the above mentioned flaw

appearing on the left-framed numeral. This flaw was carried over onto the plate. D - (4) constructed from those dies. The D cliché served to produce a fourth matrix at (5) which aided in putting together the 8-block dies for the printing plate. As is evident from the schematic, the numeral flaw could then appear not once, but four times, with each strike of the printing plate. As a result, not only does this explain the more frequent appearance of this common flaw, but also accounts for other minor faults on those particular cards. The illustrated sequence at fig. 5 tends to accelerate the time needed to produce the printing plates, making it more efficient and lending credence to my explanation.

The position of the dies containing the numeral flaw seems to be compatible with the makeup of the printing plate. This of course is based on the assumption that the plate was constructed from the working 8-block dies exactly as they were produced. However the final phase in the construction of the plate might have involved the dismantling of the 8-block dies into individual blocks. If that were so, each block may have been corrected separately. The positioning of the dies with the flaw would then not necessarily correspond with their positions on the printing plate. That possibility could be explored later after a thorough examination of the metallic material used in this process and now stored in the Postal Museum.

The schematic illustrated in fig. 5 presupposes the use of the 8-position plate. I am not contending that the plate used actually had 8 parts. So far the study of these postcards has neither confirmed nor refuted that fact. The D plate may have had only 6 parts - or possibly as many as 12. The illustrated 8 part plate seems to be the most plausible, considering printing techniques, especially those of a photographic workshop. It is possible that just as D plate was made for the production of these single correspondence cards, so an E cliché may have existed which comprised more parts from the fourth matrix. With the aid of E plate, a printing shop could simplify its production of double correspondence cards.

Philatelic literature tells us that exceptions exist where the single type I correspondence card appears with text and art work in a bright red color. If we are to assume that cards in this shade of green were printed by the same plates that printed the other single cards, then it stands to reason that the same shade must also be found on the type II cards. Eventually two other cards were discovered with bright green text and art work which were evidently type II. These two items show their respective coats of arms as noted in fig. 2. On the basis of these findings, it is safe to supplement the assertions made in Monografie by pointing out that type II exists in bright green even in the single cards.

Summary

I am hopeful that these findings will help collectors distinguish between the two types of single cards. Our research can be more complete through verification. To do that, a larger assortment of cards and assistance from other collectors would help. A combined effort can uncover the mystery that enshrouds this subject in Monografie vol. III, page 387.

READY FOR BALPEX ?

As usual, we gave all our members and friends ample advance notice of our Society's participation at BALPEX 90. We even enclosed the BALPEX prospectus with our May SPECIALIST. By the time you receive this issue (U.S. members), the show will be upon us.

Those of you who attended past BALPEX shows are aware how successful they have been and, whenever the Society participated as it is doing this year, the turnout has been excellent and a grand time was had by all. Whether you are exhibiting or not, let us resolve to make this year's participation the greatest yet ! Our Society's exhibition chairman, Henry Hahn, has provided us with a set of remarkable cachets (see page 8) and has arranged a busy program for the three days of philatelic events at the Hunt Valley Inn in Cockeysville, Md., near Baltimore.

And here it is:

Saturday, Sept. 1st - 10 a.m.	Society booth opens and remains open throughout the show.
11 a.m.	Hospitality Suite (McCormick Suite) opens and remains open throughout the show. (Shared with the Austrian Phil. Soc. of NY and the Society for Hungarian Philately)
3 p.m.	Board of Directors Meeting
Sunday, Sept. 2nd - 2 p.m.	Lecture series, Parlor A Speaker to be announced. As many as three speakers from Czechoslovakia will present specialized topics.
4 p.m.	Society for Czechoslovak Philately's Open Meeting, Parlor A
5 p.m.	Cocktail Party, McCormick Suite. Hosted by the ladies of the three Societies. Members of the Royal Phil. Soc. of London will be our honored guests.
7 p.m.	BALPEX Reception
8 p.m.	Awards Banquet
Monday, Sept. 3rd - 8:30 a.m.	Three Societies Awards Breakfast
10 a.m.	Seminar on Philatelic Ethics - M. L. Vondra, Moderator
11 a.m.	Judges' Critique
4 p.m.	Show closes.

Editorial Hinges

1. THE SHOWS AND TRIPS YOU MISSED

As this issue of the SPECIALIST goes to press, another summer is coming to an end.

While in Rochester, N.Y. to attend a family wedding, your editor took the opportunity to visit our Society's circuit manager, Wolfgang Fritzsche, at his home in Canandaigua, N.Y. His wife, Louise, is convalescing following a serious and disabling illness. Wolfgang asked to be remembered to all our members and gave us a photo of himself and his wife on their last trip prior to her incapacity. It was a cruise they took to Bermuda in April 1989 (see fig. 1). On behalf of the entire membership, your editor wishes her an early recovery.

Meanwhile a contingent of our U.S. members attended the London International Stamp Show from May 3 to May 13. Our Society was hosted at a fabulous dinner by the Czechoslovak Philatelic Society of Great Britain. The dinner took place at the Czechoslovak Club and was attended by 46 persons. Our own Society was represented by our secretary, Jane Sterba; by our book sales manager, Ed Lehecka and his wife, Evelyn; and by our member from Mexico, Phillip Freer.



Fig. 1

THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

We have been informed that by international exhibition standards, attendance at the London show was below average and far below the impressive attendance figures that marked PRAGA 88.

Just prior to London, WESTPEX held what was called a well-organized show at the Cathedral Hill Hotel in San Francisco, California from April 27 to April 29. Attendance was one of the lightest WESTPEX had experienced in years. Representing our Society was Henry Hann who captured the Reserve Grand Award for his "Czechoslovakia Before Number One". (see fig. 2) In addition, he gave a talk on "Early Mails in the Austrian Monarchy" before a respectable audience. He commented that recent events in Europe have generated renewed interest in Czechoslovak philately and several attendees completed application forms for membership in our Society.



Fig 2

Officially our Society did not participate actively either at the international show in London or at the national show in San Francisco. However, this should not have deterred our members from entering exhibits or attending wherever possible. If our Society hopes to expand its membership (which it must if it hopes to continue publishing the SPECIALIST every month, ten months a year), it can only do so through individual participation and notoriety at numerous shows throughout the country that are conducted either on a regional or national level. The present political climate in Europe lends itself ideally to this kind of philatelic exposure and publicity. With the fall and winter calendars crowded with more shows, our members are encouraged to do their part in entering exhibits competitively. This will give them a chance to reach a broader audience, acquire more experience in exhibiting and give them a better opportunity to win. It will also call attention to our Society and help foster greater interest in Czechoslovak philately. Remember - the more shows you miss and the less you exhibit, the poorer your chances of winning. And to those who claim they collect stamps only for their own gratification, your editor suggests putting those collections either into the Society's circuit or auctioning them through Tribuna. Surely the proceeds from such a sale can buy you something more meaningful than gratification.

2. TRIBUNA AUCTION RESULTS

President Charles Chesloe reports that Tribuna's first auction, held at Sokol Tabor Hall in Berwyn, Illinois on Sunday, May 6, saw brisk, active bidding which resulted in sales of all lots, many of which exceeded both catalog and estimated values. He attributes the tremendous success of the auction to collectors' apparent disregard for values placed on many philatelic items by experts. As in the case of art like paintings by the masters and antique furniture, buyers have enough interest in quality items and rarities to bid whatever it takes to acquire them. Simply put, there are enough people with plenty of money to bid up the prices. If they like the merchandise and are willing to pay the price to make it their own, catalog and expert estimates can go out the window. Today it is market price that prevails.

Tribuna's auction brought these developments: a 20h Hradčany imperf (Scott no. 45a) fetched \$147.50 against a catalog value of \$75.00. The Hradčany airmail inverted overprints (Scott no. C1a to C3a) sold for \$525 compared to a catalog value of \$210. An inverted overprint of the Hradčany comb perf 13 3/4 x 13 1/2 (Scott no. C6a) realized \$480 against an estimated value of \$350. The double overprint on Scott no. C7b sold for \$210, almost seven times its catalog value of \$32.50.

All told, \$3,848 worth of elusive philatelic material brought a total of \$6,345, exclusive of commissions. Remember - commissions are paid on top of the price realized; they are not deducted from the price.

Mr. Chesloe informs us that Tribuna will sell the balance of the C.J. Pearce collection this fall (see ad on page 15, June/July issue). Bud Pearce's exhibits have won many silver, vermeil and gold awards both nationally and internationally. He is one of our Society's founding members (see

March 1988 SPECIALIST, page 6) and a staunch supporter of the organization.

Also included in the fall sale will be a complete set of the SPECIALIST publications starting with issue no 1 right up to the present.

Prices realized from the first Tribuna sale are now available for \$1.50 postpaid or for \$2.50 postpaid including a copy of the catalog for this fall's sale. Please write to Tribuna Stamp Co., P.O. Box 100, Willow Springs, ILL. 60480 and enclose your check for the proper amount.

3. A NOBLE DEDICATION

In our June/July editorial on page 11, we announced the dedication by member Fred Hefer of his entire collection of Karel Seizinger's original drawings and die proofs to the Postal Museum in Prague. We quoted the laudatory remarks of our Pres. Chesloe on that occasion.

At this time, the SPECIALIST takes pride in quoting the complete text of Fred Hefer's dedication as addressed by him to Olga Havel, First Lady of Czechoslovakia, and to R. Martinko, Minister of Posts and Telecommunications:

"Ladies and Gentlemen, dear friends,

"Thank you for your presence in witnessing the handing over to the Postal Museum of my family's collection of original Czechoslovak stamp designs done by Professor Karel Seizinger and Bohumil Heinz, 1923 - 1938.

"Stamps are collected by millions of people around the globe. Motifs on stamps reflect the cultural and political happenings of the issuing country.

"Unfortunately in the past 42 years, many of the political and cultural historical facts of the Czechoslovak First Republic, as shown on its stamps designed by Professor Seizinger, have been suppressed, distorted or forgotten by order of irresponsible politicians.

"It is the purpose of this gift to Czechs and Slovaks and especially its youth to be a permanent reminder at this Museum and at other exhibitions of their great heritage. Part of this heritage shown in the collection are personalities like T.G. Masaryk, M. Stefanik, Dr. Tyrš with his national Sokol movement, The Czechoslovak Siberian Legion, the Legion in France and Italy and also the natural beauty of this land; the towns and castles of Bohemia and Moravia; as well as Bratislava, Nitra and the beautiful landscapes of the Tatras in Slovakia; and finally, lost but not forgotten, Jasina, a small wooden church in the Carpatho-Ukraine.

In essence, no one in this world has the right to tamper, distort or suppress the truth in history.

"As a representative sample, I would like to hand over to you, the Minister of Posts, my personal preference from the collection: two designs of the First President, T.G. Masaryk. My wife, Jana, is one of the more than 500,000 Czechs and Slovaks living abroad and away from their homeland. She wishes to hand over you, Mrs. Havel, two symbols our immigrants are carrying in their hearts: "Svatí Václav" and "Kde Domov Muj", drawings by Seizinger after paintings by Manes. Our son, David Václav, wishes to hand over to you, the Minister of Posts, his preference from the Seizinger collection: A design of the Czechoslovak Siberian Legion and a design of Dr. Tyrš and his national Sokol movement.

"I thank you very much."

In the photograph which appears on page 10 taken at the dedication ceremonies, Fred Hefer appears on the left. Next to him stands R. Martinko, the Minister of Posts. Mrs. Havel is the second from the right. The other three ladies are unidentified.

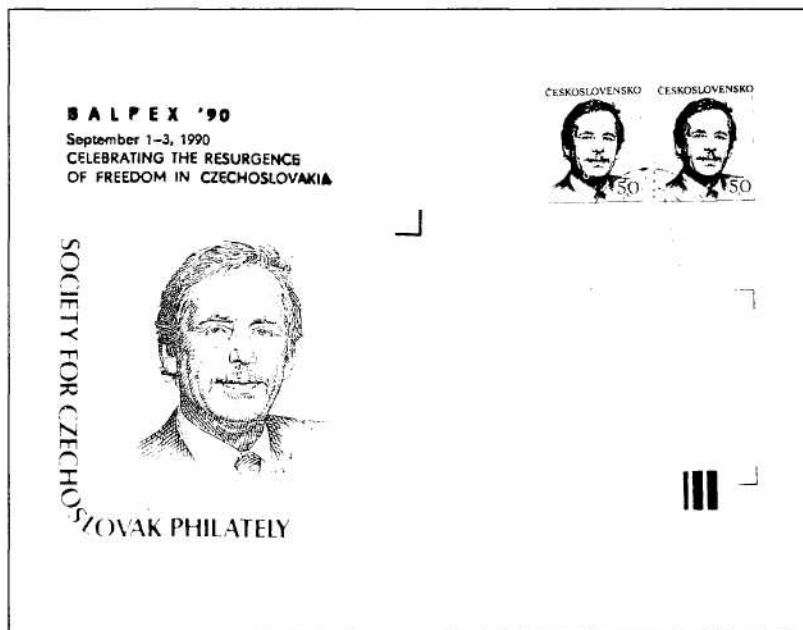
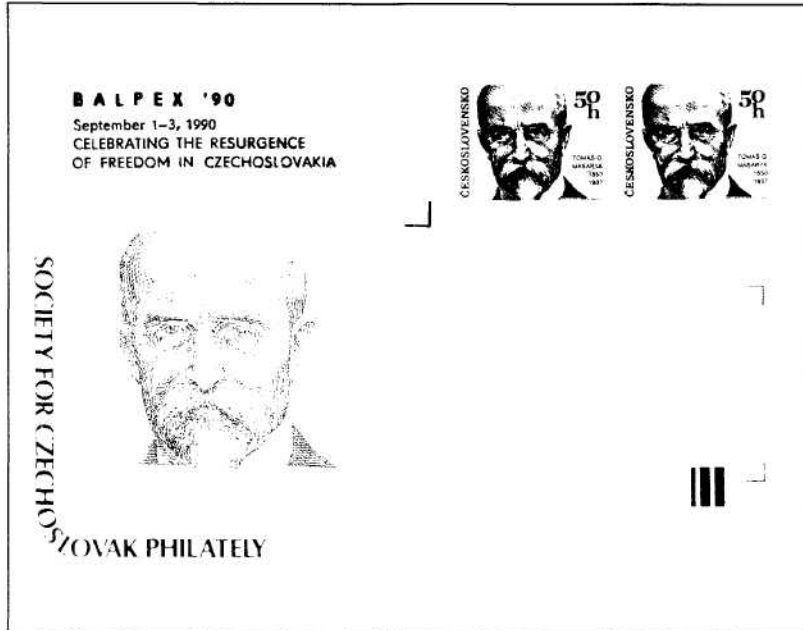
4. ABOUT MEMBERSHIP

Our secretary, Jane Sterba, advises us that the Society now has a supply of new membership cards. Anyone who either did not receive a card or lost the existing one, please contact Mrs. Sterba at 6624 Windsor Ave., Berwyn, Ill. 60402. She will issue you a replacement card.

While on the subject of membership, we must again remind those of you who allowed your membership to lapse by not paying your dues prior to the Feb. 28, 1990 deadline that you may still reinstate your membership by paying a 3 dollar reinstatement fee. No matter when payment is

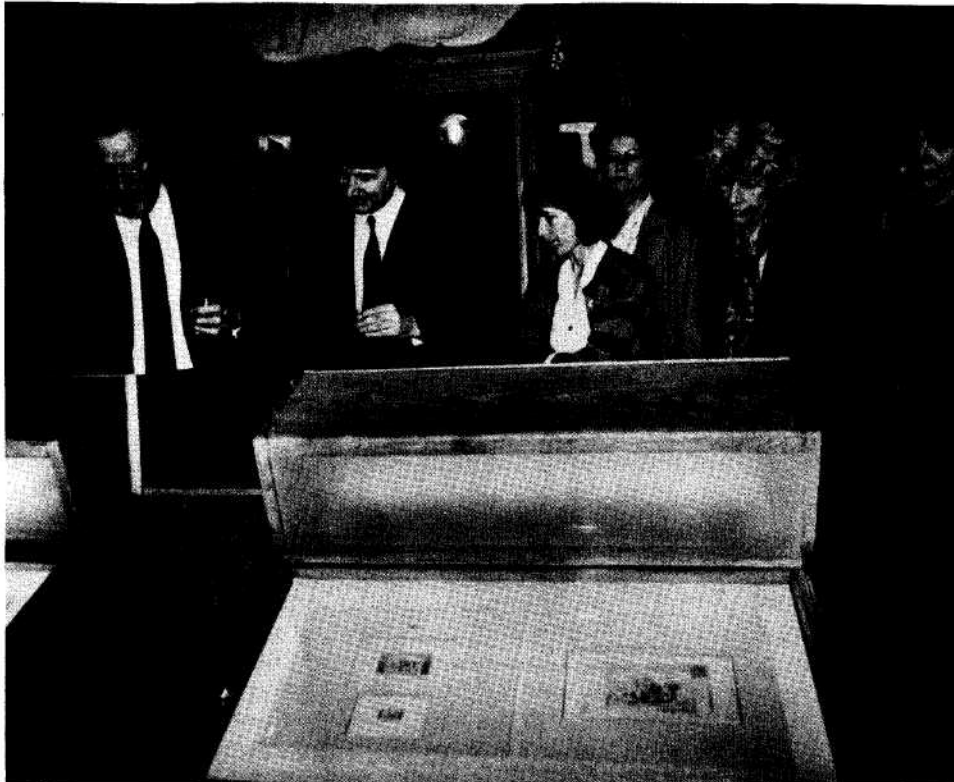
From Prague to BALPEX 90 To You !

These two unusual cackets are being printed in Prague and shipped to BALPEX 90 in a limited edition. They will be available for sale to collectors at our Society's lounge table during the Show on September 1, 2 and 3 on a first-come-first-serve basis.





Refer to page 12, A Look At The 1000 H.Hradčany



made during the year, membership is retroactive to January 1 and you will receive all issues of the SPECIALIST for that year. This also applies to new members. Membership applications submitted anytime during the year entitle a new member to receive all SPECIALISTS issued since January 1.

5. A NEW TOPICAL?

Six new United Nations stamps are to be issued as a set on September 13 on various subjects scheduled for discussion at the upcoming U.N. Congress on the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders. So you ask: what does that have to do with Czechoslovak philately? Not much, except that they were designed by Josef Ryzec of Czechoslovakia! Since more and more stamps of foreign countries are being designed by Czech and Slovak artists, wouldn't this make an interesting new topical for those seeking something different and more original than birds, bees, flowers, trains and musicians?

STAMP WORLD LONDON 90

1. As Seen By Edwin W. Lehecka

As a boy I had attended the 100th anniversary celebration of the Penny Black. It was the first stamp show I ever witnessed and due to the War, it was held in the British Pavilion at the 1940 New York World's Fair. And so it was that fifty years later, Evelyn and I were in London to observe the 150th anniversary of the beginning of our hobby. Stamp World Expo 90 was held from May 3 to 13 at the Alexandra Palace in a park-like setting in North London, easily reached by underground from center city. The exhibition halls were spacious and well lighted with adequate seating and other facilities. There was an impressive array of exhibits and a Court of Honor featuring the Penny Black with items from the Royal Collection and the British Library.

There were six exhibits relating to Czechoslovak material, although none were by an American exhibitor. A number of our members did, however, exhibit in other categories. They included Ladislav Fischmeister, Dr. Frater and Ernst Theimer. A number of our foreign members were represented, notably Fred Hefer whose exhibit was in the Championship Class.

On Saturday, May 12th, Evelyn and I were privileged to attend the meeting and dinner of The Czechoslovak Philatelic Society of Great Britain. This was held at the Czechoslovak National Club in the West Hampstead section of London. Well over forty members and numerous guests were present. Other American guests were Jane Sterba, Fred Lawrence and Phil Freer. It was a gala social evening helped by a plentiful supply of Pilsener beer and enabled us to meet personally those British members that we had only known thru correspondence. A brief business meeting was followed by exhibit time when members showed various highlights from their collections.

Our principal speaker was Jan Karasek from Brno. He dealt mainly with various forgeries but did get into an intriguing discussion about a recent discovery that the 1925 Masaryk issue had been trial-printed by an American printing company. Following this very interesting program, we had a choice of traditional Czech dishes, all very well prepared and enjoyed by all. In true British style we toasted the Queen and then President Havel. The room, incidentally, was decorated with Civic Forum posters from Prague.

What we recall most from our trip is not so much our first international show, but the friendliness and hospitality of our British colleagues. These include Yvonne Gren, hard-working secretary of Britain's Czechoslovak Philatelic Society; Alan Knight, editor of their publication CZECH OUT, and a host of others. We also remember fondly the fascinating conversation with one of the BRNO guests whose English was better than my Czech even though what English he spoke he learned from watching television. Finally, we think with gratitude of George Connolly who so kindly fetched us a mini-cab so we could get back to our hotel.

2. As Seen By Phillips B. Freer

In May I spent two weeks in England where I did some personal research at the British Museum Library and at the Bodley Library in Oxford. In my train ride from London to Oxford, I marvelled at the lovely English countryside. I also went by train to Salisbury to explore the region of the mid-Victorian novelist, Anthony Trollope. But most impressive of all was London and my visit to Stamp World 90.

One of the highlights of my visit was the dinner meeting on May 12 of the Czechoslovak Philatelic Society of Great Britain. The dinner was held at the Czechoslovak Club in London and 46 people attended. Prior to the dinner, several small groups of members gathered around tables for informal "show and tell" sessions, trading and just good conversation. The dinner itself was most enjoyable with many toasts being proposed; the first, of course, to the Queen. Being unfamiliar with some the Czech items on the menu, I had chosen roast duck - it turned out to be the most delicious roast duck I had ever eaten.

Seated on my right was a man I did not know but on hearing him mention something about the United States to someone across the table, I introduced myself. It was Edwin W. Lehecka who was there with his wife. The Secretary, Jane Sterba, was also in attendance. On my left was Brian Parker, Auction Secretary of the British Society, a most cordial and enthusiastic person, who told me much about the activities of the British Society which was first formed in 1942. I will not forget having spent such a pleasant evening with a group of hospitable, friendly, enthusiastic Czech philatelists. Accompanying photograph



shows our Society's contingent. Left to right: Jane Sterba, Evelyn Lehecka, Ed Lehecka and Phil Freer.

I spent one day at Stamp Show. It was most interesting but a bit overwhelming. There were six Czechoslovak exhibits and the one of most interest to me was the early airmails by Gösta Hedbom. It received a Large Vermeil.

The Czechoslovak Postal Service had a booth at the show and seemed to be doing a brisk business. Among other items they were selling was an envelope honoring Vaclav Havel, with an imprinted 1K Havel stamp which, they said, was limited to 5000 copies.

A LOOK AT THE 1000 H. HRADČANY *by Charles Chesloe and Mirko Vondra*

The 1,000 h. Hradčany (Scott no. 40) is a most interesting stamp. First, it bears a high denomination (100 hellers equals one koruna), making this actually a 10 kčs. stamp. Therefore, if used, it will generally be found on parcels rather than letter envelopes. Second, because of its high face value, it has been the subject of numerous attempts at counterfeiting. Third, color varieties are usually scarce, as are the overprints like the "S.O. 1920" (Scott no. 21 under Eastern Silesia) and the airmail C3 and C6, especially its invert.

There are two known money covers bearing a multitude of the 1,000 h. Hradčany - one in the possession of each of these authors. The first was mailed from Prague on May 3, 1921 to Hanušovice in Moravia and contained 700,000 kčs. in bank notes. It has 50 copies of the stamp on the front side and 20 copies on the back side as well as a 600 h. and 200 h. Agriculture and Science stamp and an 80h. Hussite stamp. The postage totals 708.80 kčs. In addition, the reverse side bears five large waxed seals with this text: "Česká Eskomptní Banka a Uvěrní Ustav - Výpravna Peněz v Praze".

The second money cover was mailed from Prague to Utěkač "přes Lučenec" in Slovakia and contained 196,000 kčs. in bank notes. Illustrated on page 9, it has 39 copies of the 1,000 h. stamp on the two sides plus the 400 h. and 200 h. Agriculture and Science stamp along with the 5 h. carrier pigeon, making the total postage 396.05 kčs. In addition it also bears the five large waxed seals described above.

These types of covers are very desirable and collectors in Czechoslovakia have been known to pay upwards of 10,000 kčs. for ones like them.

On the subject of counterfeiting, there is in existence a small quantity of miniature sheets of the 1,000 h. Hradčany in blocks of eight. What brought them into existence was a rumor in 1935 that the Postal Printing Office in Prague was about to print up a limited supply of the 1,000 h. in blocks of eight. A ring of counterfeiters got busy and expertly manufactured several thousand of these miniature sheets, fully gummed. Postal agents confiscated all but a few and destroyed them. The few that survived are among the rarest counterfeit items in Czechoslovak philately. An illustration of this sheet can be found on page 45 of "Padelky" or on page 45 of its English translation.

Incidentally, the government never ordered the printing of any 1,000 h. miniature sheets. If you possess a block of eight, it is probably one of the counterfeited sheets in which case it is a gem in itself.

UMĚNÍ A ZNÁMKA - ART AND THE POSTAGE STAMP **L'UDOVIT FULLA - 1902 - 1980** *by Gerald M. van Zanten*

It was just ten years ago that L'Udovit Fulla died at his home in Slovakia. In the course of Slovakia's fine arts history, Fulla emerged as one of its outstanding modern painters, if not its leading one.

Born on February 28, 1902, Fulla spent his early years at Ružomberok in the Liptová Valley, a town founded at the beginning of the 14th century. He attended the Applied Art School in Prague as a pupil of František Kysela, himself a well-known personality in applied arts in Czechoslovakia.

In the early thirties, he went to Bratislava where, together with his friend, Mikuláš Galanda, he issued the so-called "Private Papers", a program exhorting the Slovaks to pursue their artistic goals.

Fulla was greatly inspired by domestic folklore of which there was an abundance, ranging from embroidery to decorative ceramics to painting on glass. Chagall and Paul Klee had a strong influence on his work. All this combined to give him his own highly individual and creative style, resulting in boldy-colored, brightly-



Fig. 1

depicted modern themes. In 1937, he was awarded first prize for his gobelin "Song of Labor" at the Paris World Exhibition.

The first stamp depicting Fulla's art appeared in a set of five art stamps issued in December 1966. Shown on a stamp of 1 k. denomination is his "Recruit" of 1948. Engraved by J. Herčík and listed in "Specialized Handbook" (Specializovaná Přiručka) as no. 1578 (Scott no. 1439), its dominant colors were yellow and red. (see fig. 1).

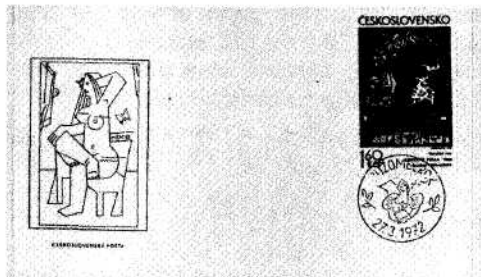


Fig. 2

1972 saw the second of Fulla's works on a Czechoslovak stamp, namely a 1.60 kčs. in another set of five on graphic arts. Titled "Toaleta, 1961", it depicts a woman grooming herself before a mirror. Effectively the dominant color is black. Printed by rotary recess combined with photogravure, the stamp is listed in "Specialized Handbook" as no 1952 (Scott no. 1810). (see fig. 2). The engraving was done by M Ondráček. The original is housed in the Ružomberok Gallery. (see May 1983 SPECIALIST, page 4).

His definitive style came through in the fifties and sixties with a predominance of reds and yellows, giving the overall impression of joy and freedom of spirit. He was then working as a stage designer and did book illustrations depicting folk songs and dances and colorful folk costumes during village festivities. Examples of these works are shown on a delightful set of six stamps on the subject of Slovak National Fairy Tales. They are taken from illustrations contained in the book "Slovak Stories" based on the collection of Pavol Dobšinský (1823 - 1885). (see fig. 3). The set was issued in 1968 and is listed under nos. 1734 - 1739 in the "Specialized Handbook" (Scott nos. 1582 - 1588). (see fig.. 4). The set illustrates the following stories:

- 30h. Popelář (Cinderlad) is in its way the boy counterpart of Cinderella.
- 60h. Hrdá Panička (The Proud Lady) is one of the many forms of the proud princess who was punished for her inordinate pride and became a modest and happy girl in the end.



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

- 80h. Světovládný Rytíř (The World-Ruling Knight) points out the right course to good people and helps them attain happiness.
- 1Kcs. Pamodaj Štastia, Lavička (Good Day Little Bench) tells the story of the little orphan who was driven out of the house by her stepmother and, owing to her own kindness and modesty, succeeded in life.
- 1.20 Zakliatý Zámok (The Spell bound Castle). There are many haunted castles and many versions of this theme. This particular castle was set free by the best of three brothers who went abroad in order to gain experience and to whom the king of the neighboring country gave his daughter in marriage.
- 1.80 Divotvorný Lovec (The Miraculous Hunter) joined a group of ingenious young men whose adventures brought them happiness and prosperity and who lived happily ever after . . .

The last stamp publicizing Fulla's art is found on one of a set of three issued in November 1978 celebrating thirty years of the Slovak National Gallery. Called "The Dream of Salas" or "The Dream at Shepherd's Hut", it was painted in 1973 and is probably the best example of a stamp issued shortly after the subject painting was completed. Here the dominant colors are red and blue. The stamp has a 3 kčs. value and is listed as no 2348 in "Specialized Handbook". (Scott no. 2210). The engraving was done by M. Ondráček. (see fig. 5).

THE "REAL" FIRST DAY
By Henry Hahn.

In the June '984 SPECIALIST, page 13, we reported on a discovery in the city of Ostrava of a First Day cancel of the world's first postcard (October 1, 1869), the Austrian 2 kr Žlutásek", as well as on a First Day Minus One card (September 30, 1869). Both were discovered by Jiří Kučera and reported to the noted postal historian and writer, Jaroslav Ježek of Prague. Mr. Ježek referred to the First Day as the "Postal Stationary Mauricius."

My reaction was "Where will all this end?"

In fact the story is far from being over. It is now reported that Austrian expert Schweiger has found the First Day "discovered" in Ostrava in 1977 to be a forgery. On the other hand, a "true and unique" First Day (at least for the moment) is now in the possession of Ernst Theiner, who has been kind enough to provide us with a picture of this great rarity (see right). The card was mailed at Perg on October 1, 1869 and shows an arrival postmark at Kirchdorf on the same day. The magnificence of the strikes tends to arouse my suspicions, but it certainly is pretty.

As for the First Day Minus One, also discovered in Ostrava, it seems to remain genuine for the time being or at least until proven otherwise.



Fig. 5



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