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CZECHOSLOVAK FIELD POST IN THE SOVIET UNION By Dr. Walter J. Rauch

(This article appeared in the June 1988 issue of YAMSHCHIK, no. 22 which, translated, means "The Post Rider". It is the official journal of the Canadian Society of Russian Philately. Its editor, Andrew Cronin, had received it from the author for publication. Permission for its reprinting was granted to our assistant editor, Gerald van Zanten, through Dr. Ross Marshall, editor of ANZAC, the official journal for the New Zealand Society of Russian Philately. In this article, the author details the contents of his holdings in this little known area of postal history. An important part of



his collection was exhibited at CAPEX 87 and gained for the author a well-deserved large vermeil medal. This is the second of two articles dealing with Czechoslovak philately which is being reprinted by our SPECIALIST so far this year. The first one - "The Wooden Church at Jasina" - appeared in the April issue starting on page 9. Because of its length, this second article is being reprinted in two parts).

Part I

With the establishment of the Protectorate of Bohemia & Moravia on 15 March 1939, the Czechoslovak Armed Forces lost their homeland and many servicemen fled across the border into Poland. On 30 April 1939 The Consulate in Kraków became the germinating cell for a Czechoslovak Volunteer Corps, with a training camp established at Lešna-Koło-Baranowicz (then in the Wojewódstwo of Nowogródek, now Leshnya in the Minsk Province of the Belorussian SSR, postal code 223931). This Corps took part in the aerial defense of Tarnopol during the final stage of the Polish Campaign in September 1939. On the 18th of that month, the 1000-man Czechoslovak "Polish Legion" came into contact with the advancing Soviet forces and was temporarily interned in camps at Oranka and Suzdal.

The 20 kopek Soviet card shown in Fig. 1 was sent by Jaroslav František Hala from Suzdal, P.O. Box 5 on 30 July 1940 to Hlynsk Cheshskii, Rivne Province, Western Ukraine to sl. Olga Oličova. The abbreviation "sl." stands for "slečna", the Czech word for "Miss".

Upon initiative of the Czechoslovak Government-in-exile in London, the Czechoslovak refugees were evacuated from the Soviet Union in 1940-41 in 12 transports, partly to France but mainly to the Near East. Upon the outbreak of war against the USSR, there were still 93 men stationed there, mainly at Kvasyliv, Rivne Province, Western Ukraine.

Post Office Box No. 11/I-60 at Moscow GPO was assigned in the Spring of 1940 as a central address for Czechoslovak military refugees in the Soviet Union. There was also a rectangular

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Fig. 2



Fig. 3

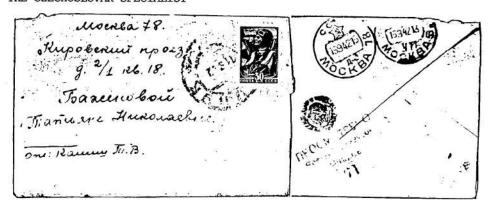


Fig. 4

marking applied there, reading in Russian POCHTOVYI YASHCHIK No. 11 (P.O. Box 11). It was applied at upper left of card shown in Fig. 2, again sent by Jaroslav Hala and addressed this time to "Comrade" Olga Oličova in Hlynsk Cheshskii. It was posted at Moscow GPO (1st Ekspeditsiya) G-11, 26 Dec. 1940 and passed through Zdolbuniv in Rivne Province three days later.

After an agreement was concluded on 18 June 1941 between the USSR and the Czechoslovak Government-in-exile in London, the remaining Czechoslovak soldiers transferred from former Eastern Poland to Oranka and Suzdal were to be officially reorganized. Dr. Eduard Beneš was still leaning towards a mere "symbolic" unit in the East, while the Czechoslovak Communists in Moscow were pushing for an Independent Corps. Its establishment finally took place in February 1942 at the military camp in Buzuluk. This is documented in Ludvik Svoboda's book "From Buzuluk to Prague", Army Publishing House, Prague 1963. Fig. 3 shows a 20-k. Soviet card sent from Moscow 9 P.O. in 1942 by František Perný (Černý?) to Vladimir Perný (Černý?), Buzuluk, Chkalov Province, Military Unit No. 2. Note the censorship marking No. 15251 applied in the centre of the card. And in Fig. 4 we see the front and back of one of the few surviving covers from the Czechsolovak Training Base Camp at Buzuluk, sent on 11 Sept. 1942 to Moscow, where it was received five days later. Note the censorship marking No. 71 of Chkalov on the back.

PHILATELIC ITEMS RELATING TO THE FIRST CZECHOSLOVAK INFANTRY BATTALION IN THE USSR

Fig. 5A shows a pair of one of two values (20h. & 2kčs.) issued by Czechoslovakia on 18 August 1945 to honor Lt. Otakar Jaroš, posthumously promoted to captain, Hero of the Soviety Union and awarded the Order of the Golden Star. He was killed at the battle of Sokolovo on 8 March 1943; Fig. 5B shows a Czechoslovak stamp which commemorated the 25th anniversary of that event. Fig. 5C is a 4-k. Soviet stamp honoring Lt. Jaroš and issued on 9 May 1969.



Fig. 5

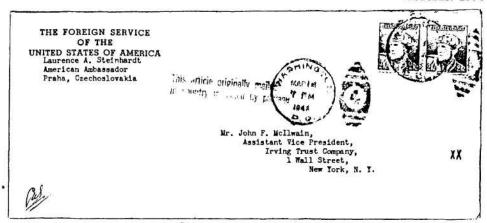


Fig.5d

In Fig. 5d is a cover sent through the diplomatic pouch with a pair of the 2kcs Jaros stamp by L.A. Steinhardt, the American Ambassador in Prague, and received in Washington on 14 March 1946.

Illustrated in Fig. 6 is a registered cover, sent to Dr. Rauch on 3 Nov. 1976 and franked with a 10kčs miniature sheet, issued on 5 May 1975 to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the libera-



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

tion of Czechoslovakia. It shows Lt-Col. Ludvik Svoboda (1895 - 1979), later promoted to General and named President of the country, against a background of the march from Buzuluk to Prague. Below his bust there is a Czech quotation from him, saying: "We should never forget how easily we lost our freedom and with what difficulty and at what price effort and great sacrifices by us and especially the Soviet people we got it back again!"

THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

The first Contingent of Czechslovak troops was deployed along the front on 30 January 1943 and went through its probationary test in the battle against the 4th SS-Panzer Division to the south of Kharkov and especially at Sokolovo. In Fig. 7, a Czechsolovak card shows the banner of the First Czechoslovak Military Unit in the USSR and is inscribed "VĚRNÍ ZÚSTANEME" (We Shall

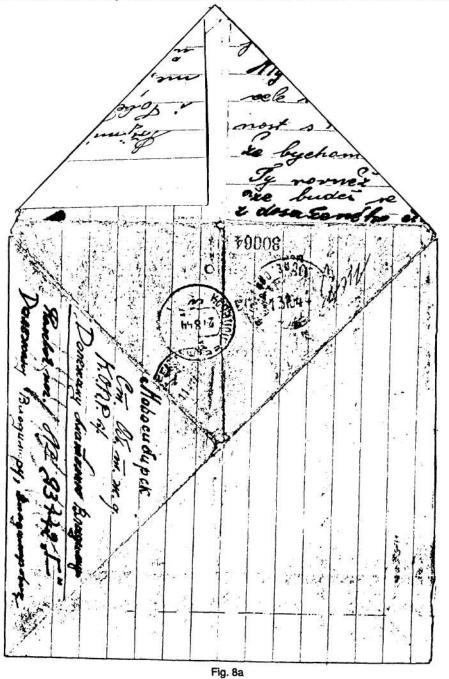




Fig. 8b

Remain Faithful) and "5th Anniversary Of The Battle At Sokolovo 8. III. 1948".

There are less than 1000 surviving field post letters in triangular form (šáteček) from the Czechoslovak Corps in the Soviet Army. They are almost always from the mail of Czechs in Volhynia who, together with deserters from two Slovak divisions deployed against the Soviet Union and Carpatho-Ukrainians and deserters from Hungarian army units, made up the bulk of the Svoboda Army. An example of such mail is shown in Fig. 8, as well as the cachets found on official documents, since the latter could also have applied to military mail. A "Šáteček", when opened out, forms a triangular letter. The word "Šáteček" is derived from "Šátek", Czech for "handkerchief. The letter in Fig. 8A was sent on 2 August 1944 from Field post No. 93442 G of the 3rd Czechslovak Tank Battalion by Vladimír Doležal to his brother in Novosibirsk. The letter was written in Czech.

Fig. 8B shows an opened-out šáteček, or triangular letter, sent on 10 November 1944 by Jaroslav Lipovský at Field Post No 12037 (Intelligence Battalion) to Vladimír Filček at the Town Council in Noviny České, Mlyniv District of Rivne Province in the Western Ukraine. This was just after the heavy fighting that took place in crossing the Carpathians through the Dukla Pass, with the Czechoslovak border being reached near Vyšní Komárník on 6 October 1944. This drive was coor-

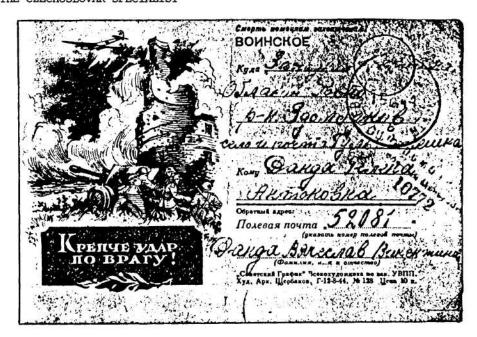


FIG. 8C

dinated with a projected Slovak uprising, which failed because of lack of local support, resulting in serious casualties for the Soviet Army and the Svoboda Army units as the Germans were able to rush reinforcements to the mountians.

Fig. 8c a patriotic military card sent from Field Post No. 52081 (Artillery Workshops of the 5th Artillery Regiment) by Vjačeslav Danda to his relative Helena in the village of Huljča Cešska, Zdolbuniv District in the Western Ukraine.

The Second Czechslovak Parachute Brigade was formed in January 1944 at Efremov and consisted mainly of deserters from Slovak divisions deployed on the Eastern Front. It took part in the Slovak Uprising of the Spring of 1944 with a landing at Tri Duby and battles on the Hron and around Zvolen in Slovakia and returned to Soviet territory on 25 October 1944. Soviet Field Post No. 39242 with various letter suffixes was assigned to this Parachute Brigade.

(To Be Continued)

MORE ON THE BRATISLAVA SOUVENIR SHEET

by Tomáš Morovics

Translated by Adolf Hujer

(In the February 1989 issue of SPECIALIST we featured an article by Tomáš Morovics on the "Plating of the Bratislava Souvenir Sheet." His concluding paragraph suggested a supplemental article might be forthcoming. Now it has arrived and we are pleased to publish the results of his additional research on the subject).

The miniature sheets that were issued in Czechoslovakia during 1934-1938 continue to be the subject of intensive study. Of these, the Bratislava Exhibition Sheet of 1937 merits particular attention. Even though there have been some interesting writings on the subject, the basic issues still are not clear. Dr. Sablatura accurately characterizes the problem this way: "To this day it has not been possible to properly identify the various types". (See ref. 3).

In fact, the recently published Handbook indicates that the sheets exist in three types which are actually different, considering the printing plates used for the red color printing. (see ref. 5). These

CELOŠTÁTNA VÝSTAVA POŠTOVÝCH ZNÁMOK 1.TYP

Fig. 1

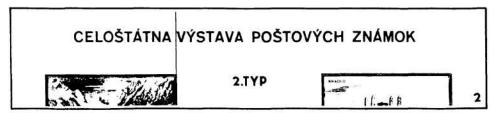


Fig. 2

differences are directly related to the production plates used in the rotary offset printing on the Johnston press. The printing plates for this machine were made either by molette only or by molette in combination with partial grooving or etching of some parts of the printing elements. This is why we are finding a complete series of differences, especially in the Bratislava coat of arms, on the plates for the red color dye. To the extent that we are able to separate these plates into types, we would also have to consider the differences of other plates made for the blue color dye as to types because their production proceeded in the same way.

I concentrated on the plates for the color blue (see ref. 4). The fact is that the analysis of most plates of this color is no simple matter. Some plates - and therefore the miniature sheets printed by those plates - can be distinguished easily; others only with great difficulty. It would not be fair to concentrate only on the easy ones and not take note of the others. It is necessary to treat all the miniature sheets - and therefore all the printing plates - equally to reach a fair and definitive conclusion.

In this case, maximum specialization is needed to present an in-depth study of the individual plates. A collection of the sheets analyzed should include established combinations of printing plates used. In my previous article (ref. 4) I identified combinations of which I was aware - meanwhile admitting that their number will probably be higher. Dr. Sablatura stated in ref. 3 that special



Fig. 3

Fig. 4



Fig. 5

collections should include no less than thirty types or combinations, assuming that ten plates were used for the blue color printing and three plates for the red. That would of course mean that every plate used for the red color dye was also used for the blue. Keeping in mind that the individual plates had to be replaced after their use, I consider 30 types or combinations to be somewhat



Fig. 6

unlikely. As I was able to find eleven combinations myself, then realistically the number could be between 15 and 18 combinations.

From all of the above findings, I recommend that when distinguishing between the three plates for the red color dye and the eight or more plates for the blue, we refer only to "differentiation of printing plates" and their succeeding combinations. One should realize that a regular collector without access to a great deal of study material will not be knowledgeable enough (or maybe even willing) to consider as types those plates or miniature sheets which are too difficult to distinguish. Therefore let us discuss printing plates that are closer to reality and can be more readily set apart, one from the other. By analyzing the plates themselves, we can better appreciate and understand the complexity of these miniature sheets.

In the first place, it is necessary to focus on the positions of individual parts. We find an interesting difference in the position of the main inscription on the 50 h stamp. As already mentioned, during the various kinds of plate production, there occur variations the significance of which cannot be measured nor do they have important meaning to collectors. An exception is a plate identified as "A" where the imprint is shifted so that the axis of the right edge of the stamp's picture is touching the letter "V". (see ref. 4). This obvious and easily discernible feature crosses the boundary line of "differentiation of printing plates", making it a type. This is why I suggest designating these miniature sheets (printed from this plate) as type II (fig. 2). The remaining sheets have a similar position of the imprint and could then be marked as type I (fig. I).

It is very important to give some attention to the inscription "Československo" on both stamps. Personally I have a suspicion that the original Vika drawings (figs. 3 and 4) were more appropriate in that their design, styling and type made a unique composition. Pursuing the rest of Vika's work is not without its reward. Ref. 3 contains an excellent documentation of this. For example, it is interesting to note that for the 1 k value, Vika originally considered the view of Bradlo from the right side. As it turned out, he chose the view from the left.

As a definitive example of an illustration for a stamp (including the making of the inscription "Verzalky") is a work by Karel Seizinger. Seizinger's engraver mark "S" is found near the 50 h. value on the slope above the water and near the 1 k. value in the picture of the tree on the left. This is clearly seen in the engraved pictures of my previous article published in the SPECIALIST on page 53 (see ref. 3). The rest of the engraving - both the imprints and the inscriptions - is the work of Jaroslav Goldschmied, whose share in creating these and later Czechoslovak stamps is extraordinary. After comparing all of the trial printings which were produced by Karel Seizinger with the original engravings (see photos 5 and 6) as well as the stamps shown on the published miniature sheets, I confirmed my original finding (mentioned in ref. 4) that the inscriptions in the lower part of the picture of both stamps were retouched. This was done on each plate separately. Obviously a plate could not be darkened first, because then it would be impossible to make any revisions. So it was clear that all the retouching had to be done before the official printing. The retouching was again authored by J. Goldschmied.

If we examine the lower part of the trial print 1 k. (fig. 7), and the lower part of the stamp on a miniature sheet (fig. 8), it is possible to judge the extent of the retouching. That retouching only

becomes important if we want to add to our collection a variety without the retouch (that is, a trial print of this value) made from the original engraving. These items are rare excenptions and are found in a few important collections used primarily for research study.

The 50 h. denomination is an example of a stamp that is similar in principle to the above, yet is different in its effect. Here we can compare prints from the original engravings (fig. 9) with stamps from a printed miniature sheet (fig. 10, 11, 12). Some of the individual plates were retouched mostly the top part of the number "5" and some of the plates were rearranged. Compared with the trial prints, this is entirely compatible. An interesting situation developed after the retouching of the "Československo" inscription. Corrections on the individual plates were not done in the same manner. Clear differences are found at

ČESKOSLOVENSKO 1KČ
ČESKOSLOVENSKO 1KČ
\tilde{c} eskoslovensko 50
\ddot{c} eskoslovensko 50
$^{\scriptscriptstyle{\square}\!\!\square}$ ČESKOSLOVENSKO 50
československo $50_{\rm h}$

Figs. 7 thru 12

both letters "S" in the margins which had wider curves on the original engraving (fig. 9). There were also retouches on some of the other plates. Knowing that, we can divide those plates (and from them, the printed miniature sheets) into three groups. The first group is made up of plates (miniature sheets) where the arches of the letter "s" remain unretouched (plates B, C, D, E). These sheets I propose to designate as types Ia (fig. F, H). I propose to designate these as type Ib (fig. 11). The last group consists of plates with the corrected "S" on both ends (plate G). I propose to designate these as type Ic (fig. 12).

I suspect that the changed position of the letter "S" on the 50 h. stamp emphasizes the intent to differentiate the printing plates as such, and also to extend that distinction into the area of types. If we wish to discuss the different types of sheets in the future, we have to emphasize the position of the principal inscriptions (type I and I) and the shape of the margin letters "S" on the 50 h. stamp (type Ia, Ib, Ic, II). A generalized stamp collection would recognize the individual printing plates and their combinations. It is possible to do more research and I hope I have shown the way.

In closing I would like to thank Jan Karásek for lending me the vital study material which I used in my work. I welcome any additional findings and trust that further information will increase the interest in these miniature sheets.

Footnote References

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- 2. Karásek, J., F. Žampach, Bratislava 1937 Monografie III, pgs. 278-283.
- Šablatúra S., Bratislava 1937 Philatelic States, March 1982, prs. 44-56
- 4. Morovics T. "Plating the Bratislava Souvenir Sheet", SPECIALIST, FEB. 1989, PG. 1.
- 5. Specialized Handbook of Czechoslovak Stamps, Praga 88, pg. 88.

HELP!

Can you extend a small helping hand to your Society?

Some three years ago when your current editor assumed management of the SPECIALIST, the back issues of our publication were in total disarray. Since that time, your editor succeeded in locating at least three sources where back issues had been stored in attics and basements by former board members. These have now all been brought to a central location at the present editor's home. After weeks and months of sorting and collating, your editor is happy to report that all surplus stock of the SPECIALISTS has been chronologically arranged. Mutilated as well as damaged copies have been discarded.

We are now in a position to start binding back issues over and above the bound copies that were found and were advertised for sale. Unfortunately, in most instances, we are missing one or two issues out of almost every year since 1952.

If you have in your possession any of the following back issues of the SPECIALIST, your donation of those issues back to the Society will be sincerely appreciated. Please send your copies to: Mirko Vondra, 1511 Clearview Ave, Lancaster, PA. 17601.

YEAR OF ISSUE	MONTH	YEAR OF ISSUE	MONTH
1952	April	1961	Jan, April, Sept.
1953	April	1963	Dec.
1954	April	1971	May, June
1956	June, Sept.	1981	Sept.
1958	March	1982	June
1959	May	1983	Oct.
1960	June, Oct.	1984	June, Oct.
1961	June, Sept.	1985	March, April

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Kindly accept my sincere congratulations to you, as current managing editor of the Czechoslovak SPECIALIST, and to all former and current contributors - on the occasion of the June/July 1990 issue, ie. whole number 500! How many have observed that fact?

I have always enjoyed the SPECIALIST (being a member since 1974, in possession of all issues since 1947). I always appreciate the excellent information given there.

Best regards,

Stig Asklund

I would also like to add my compliments to the SPECIALIST. The last few months have seen a tremendous improvement in the type and quality of articles and Society news in it. I know that the editorial staff does not get enough appreciation for the work it puts into it, voluntarily and without reward, but rest assured that I for one appreciate it.

With best of regards,

Vladimir Králíček

It is a pleasure and an honor for the American Philatelic Society to be asked to join in honoring Wolfgang Fritzsche on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Finger Lakes Stamp Club, APS charpter #428. As the founder of this club, (Mr. Fritzsche) should feel very proud indeed to be able to see how successfully (his) effort has matured over the past four decades.

It is also a special pleasure to acknowledge with gratitude the donation to the Building Fund of the American Philatelic Society/American Philatelic Research Library that the Finger Lakes Stamp Club has made in his name . . .

Sincerely,

Keith A. Wagner American Philatelic Society

UMĚNÍ A ZNÁMKA - ART AND THE POSTAGE STAMP KAREL ŠKRETA - 1610 - 1674

by Gerald M. van Zanten

A contemporary of two other Czechs (Václav Hollar 1607 - 1677 and Jan Amos Komenský 1592 - 1670), Karel Škreta-Sotnovský of Závořice was born in Prague into a Protestant noble family just three years after the birth of Václav Hollar, the famous graphic artist (see Sept. 1983 SPECIALIST, page 4). Hollar's works have generally become well-known since many of them were done in England and other European countries where they were sold and exhibited.

Škreta received an excellent education. His first teacher is believed to have been Jilji (Egidius) Sadeler, the engraver of the Rudolfian period.

After the battle of White Mountain on Sunday, November 8, 1620, persecution of Protestants dispersed the Škreta family. Young Karel left Bohemia for Stuttgart probably in 1627. From there



Fig. 1





Fig. 2

he moved to Italy in 1630 where he gained considerable painting experince in such towns as Florence, Rome, Bologna, Venice and even Naples. He became acquainted with the works of Titian, Tintoretto, Fetti and other Italian Masters. From these impressions evolved his own strong and bold styles of composition. In 1638, he returned to Prague via Saxony. Converting to Roman Catholicism, he commenced sorting out his family affairs and also started his rich painting activities. In 1644, he became a member of the Painting Brotherhood, his name appearing for the first time on its membership list. He remained a member of the Guild for many years. In 1645 he married and a year later his wife bore a son, Karel Jr,. who followed in his father's footsteps as a painter. From that point on, little is known about him. He died on July 30, 1674, leaving a large collection of paintings, drawings, as well as prints and an extensive library. Words on his epitaph read: "... DOMINUS CAROLUS SCRETA FAMOSISSIMU PICTOR..."

Škreta's importance was mainly of a national character. He was the founder of Czech baroque painting. No painter in Bohemia from the end of the Middle Ages until the national revival of the 19th century was established as firmly and unshakeably as he. Unfortunately many of his works have not survived. Of those that did, his portraits in particular deserve a place next to Rembrandt's (1606 - 1669), according to Joachim von Sandrart in his glorious "Deutsche Akademie" of 1675. On the 300th anniversary of his death, a large exhibition of his works was staged in Prague in 1974. Some sixty altar compositions, about twenty portraits and as many paintings were on exhibit. It also included over 100 of his drawings and sketches.

In conjunction with the show, a 2.40 kcs. stamp was made part of the Art Series of 1974 depicting a pen drawing in sepia underdrawn with lead pencil. Dating from about 1635, the picture measures 267 x 566 mm. The original is housed in the National Gallery in Prague under number K 4871. The work is signed in the upper left corner: "Carl Screta". The picture shows a Bacchanalia, a spirited celebration in honor of Bacchus, the god of harvest and wine in Rome, expressed in music, dancing and merry-making. Accompanying the Bacchanalian procession is a drunken Silenus on a donkey. The reproduced drawing on the cover seen in Fig. 1 apparently comprises the first sketch of what was ultimately to become the final picture "Ples Satyrú" as shown on the stamp of the same cover. For some reason not known to us, the drawing on the cover seen in Fig. 2 is the complete picture of which the stamp in Fig. 1 shows the right-side portion. The two cover drawings are replicas of motifs on an antique relief from the workshop of A. Carracci, "Bacchus Triumphant". Graphic arrangement and etching for the stamp were by Ladislav Jirka.

Portraits of persons in various costume changes (Pastoral, historical, mythological) were a great favorite during the second half of the seventeenth century. Drafted portraits of young aristocracy were instruments of the marriage politic. The portrait of Marie Maximillian, 19-year-old daughter of Franz Karl Maximillian of Sternberk belongs to the most impressive of the pastoral portraits. Thanks to the delicate coloring, purity of form details of costumeing and landscape merging into the distant softer hue, the picture is a Skreta masterpiece. Graphic arrangement and engraving for the stamp was by Miloš Ondráček.

In the 1660's, Škreta's involvment with classicism peaked. He was then working on a set of pictures for the Týn Cathedral. His scenes depicting saints are especially dynamic. He clearly deserves a prominent place among the early European painters.

We are grateful that the postal authorities in Czechoslovakia acknowledged his prominence and acquainted us with two different styles of his work, both of which he signed "Carl Screta".

NEW ISSUES

On the occasion of the WORLD DOG SHOW held in Brno, a set of four stamps was issued on July 2. Design was by H. Čápová, engraving by M. Ondráček. Values and images on the stamps are as follows:

50 h. Shows four varieties of poodles.

1 Kčs. Features an Afghan Hound, Irish Wolfhound and Greyhound.

4 Kčs.. Lists the Czech Terrier, Bloodhound and Hannoverian Hound.

7 Kes. Shows the Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, Cocker Spaniel and American Cocker.

All stamps bear the logo of the show. (See Fig. 1)

The annual set of two miniature sheets honoring Bratislava Historical Motifs will appear on

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 1990









Fig. 1

August 29 in values of 3 Kčs. and 4Kčs. The 3 Kčs. shows a Keltic coin (Biatec).

An 4 Kčs. has a statue by Bohumil Kafka after a portrait by J. Mudroch of General M.R. Štefánik 1880-1919. The gutter shows him as an airplane pilot.

Engravings of both stamps was by M. Činovský. (See Fig. 2A & 2B)

The centenary of the Grand Pardubice Steeplechase was commemorated on Sept. 7 with an issue of three stamps showing horses and riders and the show's logo. Values are 50h, 2Kčs, 4Kčs. Designs were by R. Kola; engraving was entrusted to M. Ondráček. (See Fig. 3)

In 1957 a stamp was issued for the same event, the 60h, in the second sport set of that year. How dramatically stamp designs have changed in 33 years!!

- G.M. van Zanten











Fig. 2b



Fig. 2a









Fig. 3

BECAUSE OF LIMITED SPACE IN THIS ISSUE, A DETAILED SUMMARY OF SOCIETY HAPPENINGS AT BALPEX 90 WILL APPEAR IN THE NOVEMBER SPECIALIST.

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