



THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

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IN '95 IT'S BALPEX

The Society for Czechoslovak Philately's convention and exhibit is scheduled for BALPEX in 1995, as President Lou Svoboda's report indicated in the last issue of THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST. BALPEX is scheduled for September 1-3, Friday through Sunday. As in the past, BALPEX will be held at the Hunt Valley Inn located just off exit 20A of Interstate 83 just a few miles northwest of Baltimore, Maryland.

We are pleased to again have our meeting scheduled for BALPEX. This is generally acknowledged to be one of the best regional stamp exhibits in the country, both in the quality of exhibits, the dealers present, and the organization of all arrangements for the event. BALPEX has traditionally been scheduled for Saturday through Monday on the Labor Day week-end. In an attempt to balance out the attendance over the course of the show, the organizers have changed the days to Friday through Sunday. As yet, the organizers have not fixed all exhibit activities, such as the awards event, which will impact on the final schedule of our Society activities. These will be published in the next issue of THE SPECIALIST.

We have asked the organizers to reserve 50 frames for the exhibits of our members. There is considerable demand for frames at BALPEX so we urge our members to request frames early. Due to technical difficulties, the exhibition applications did not arrive in time. Therefore, they will be included in our next issue.

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THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

The annual meeting of the Society is scheduled for Saturday, September 2 starting at 1 PM. There will be a short business meeting followed by a speaker. We have invited Ivo Kvasnička of Prague to speak on Czechoslovak Scout mail. Ivo is the recognized authority on this area, not only for Czechoslovak collectors, but also for collectors of Scout mail in general. In this regard we are working with the Scouts on Stamps Society International, which has also scheduled their annual convention at BALPEX, to arrange a joint meeting on this topic. Ivo's presentation will undoubtedly prove informative to all of us, but also a highlight of this year's convention.

There will be many other activities of interest to our members. The Society will have a table at BALPEX where we will have information on our group, publications for sale, and which will function as a meeting point, information center, and "home base" for our members. A Society presentation dinner or breakfast is being planned. Finally, as has become a custom at our conventions, informal social meals will be arranged as well as a cocktail party - if financing can be arranged.

Our hope is that members of the Society who have not exhibited before will seriously consider entering this show. Exhibits of Czechoslovakia and related material will get a knowledgeable and sympathetic judging because Henry Hahn has been named to the Board of Judges. Experienced exhibitors agree that the exhibiting experience can be both challenging and exciting. To encourage beginning exhibitors to take the plunge, we are willing to advise members on their exhibit if they wish to submit photocopies to us for that purpose. Such photocopies, or any inquiries of the BALPEX show, may be sent to me at 8602 Ewing Drive, Bethesda, MD 20817-3846.

Jaroslav J. Verner

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GERMAN CENSORSHIP HANDSTAMPS IN SLOVAKIA 1941 - 1944

by John S. Miskevich

In a Directive on Communications Service issued on April 2, 1940, by the then German Field Marshal Herman Goering and published in THE REICHSGESETZBLATT (National Law Bulletin) on June 1, 1940, the official mail surveillance system employed by the Third Reich was established. The "Oberkommando der Wehrmacht" (Supreme Command of the Armed Forces) was authorized to issue all necessary orders concerning the regulation of communications services and to create a comprehensive censorship apparatus. The legal edict accomplishing this purpose was published in THE AMTSBLATT DES REICHSPOST-MINISTERIUMS (Bulletin of the National Postal Ministry) in Nr. 55 on June 8, 1940, along with two other clarifying orders of May 13 and May 28, 1940.

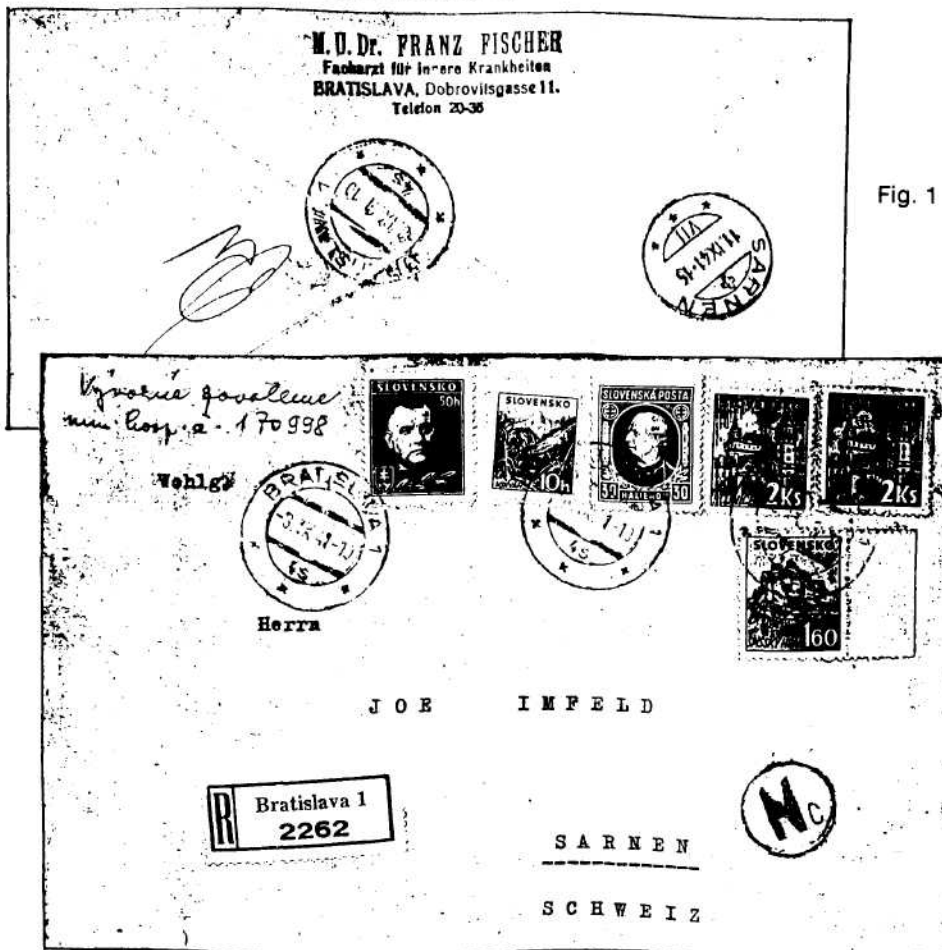


Fig. 1

German censor handstamps were produced pursuant to regulations and orders issued by the Supreme Command of the Armed Forces (OKW) beginning in 1940 for the purpose of executing the Directive on Communications Service. The handstamps illustrated in this article were used by a German Censor at Bratislava in the ostensibly independent country of Slovakia.

THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

A censor handstamp with the letters "Nc" standing for "Německá Censura" (German Censor) is the only marking so far identified which can be attributed to this German censorship office. Robert J. Houston in a Handbook of the Third Reich Study Group of the German Philatelic Society, "Mail Surveillance Under the Third Reich", at page six, says that the handstamp used in Slovakia is a "seldom seen marking". This is because a good deal of the foreign mail from Slovakia was processed by their own censorship offices. Much of this mail was also examined by the Germans at their "Auslandsbriefprüfstelle" (Foreign Letter Examining Office) in Vienna, which used a code letter "g" on many handstamps and sealing tapes.

The "Nc" is listed in the standard German catalogue on the subject, DIE ÜBERWACHUNG DES AUSLANDSBRIEFVERKEHRS WÄHREND DES II. WELTKRIEGES DURCH DEUTSCHE DIENSTSTELLEN by Karl-Heinz Riemer. There was a second German censor handstamp which was in use in Slovakia that is so far unlisted in Riemer's catalogue. This marking is therefore described in detail. The handstamp also reads "Nc" but is of a different size and style than the one illustrated and described by Riemer and shown on cover by Houston.

The "Nc" handstamp listed in Riemer as "SL-1" is black and measures 20mm in diameter. The "N" measures 6mm wide by 12mm high. The "c" measures 2.5mm wide by 5mm high in thin type. The handstamp unlisted in Riemer is red and also measures 20mm in diameter. The "N" measures 5mm wide and 11mm high, giving the letter a narrow appearance. The "c" measures 2mm wide by 3mm high in thick type.



Fig. 2

The registered cover illustrated at Figure 1 was used by a doctor practicing in Bratislava and was sent to Sarnen, Switzerland on November 3, 1941. The "Nc" handstamp is black and measures 20mm in diameter. The "N" measures 6mm wide by 12mm high. The "c" is 2.5mm wide by 5mm high in a rather thin style type. According to the Riemer catalogue (SL-1) this German censor handstamp was in use in Slovakia from 1941 through 1943 in black ink. It has been enhanced here for publication.

Fig. 3

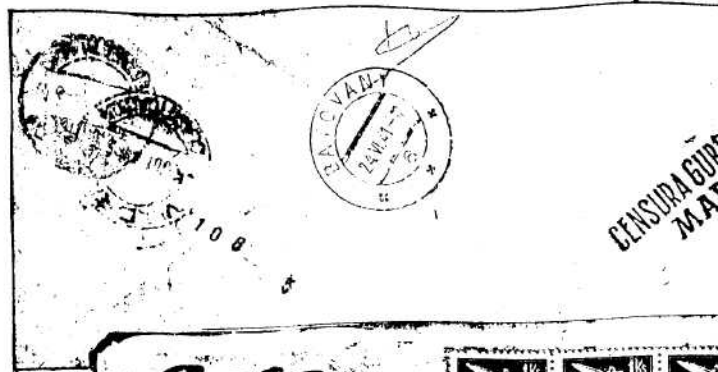
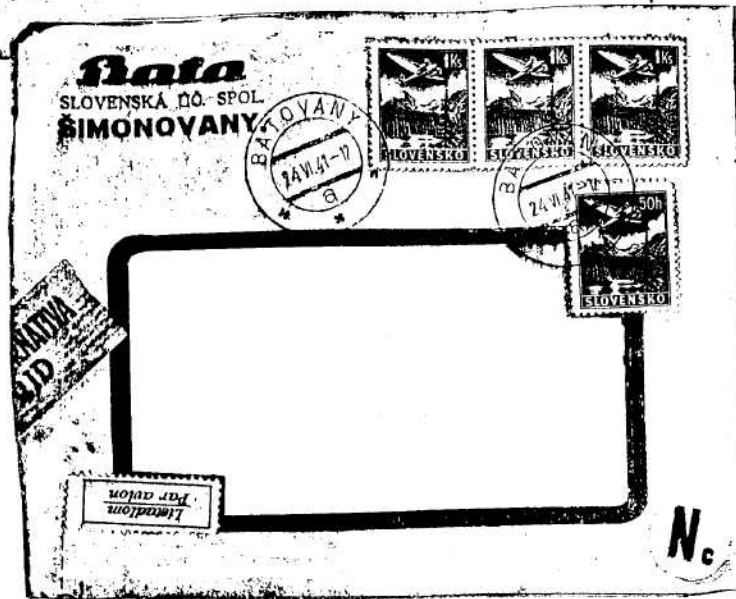


Fig. 4



Shown at Figure 2 is a cover from the Slovak Ministry of the Interior at Bratislava mailed to Geneva, Switzerland, on November 4, 1944. Addressed to the International Red Cross, it bears the unlisted "Nc", in red. This handstamp also measures 20mm in diameter. However, the "N" in the circle is 5mm wide by 11mm high, giving this letter a narrow look. The "c" measures 2mm by 3mm high in thick type. (Shown in Figure 4 are the two different "Nc" censor marks side by side for contrast, and darkened for the sake of visual reproduction.)

The airmail commercial cover displayed at Figure 3 was sent from Batovany to Spain on June 24, 1941. (This is a window envelope without address, but has a Spanish censor tape that was applied in Madrid.) At the lower left corner is a very faint "Nc" in red (enhanced for publication.) It's the same marking as on the cover at Figure 2. It appears that the censor handstamp was utilized from 1941 to at least 1944.

Do other members of the Society have examples of these markings used by a German censorship office in Slovakia? Are there any additional handstamps? Do any censor tapes exist from this examining office. The covers which I have illustrated were all sent from Slovakia. Does anyone have a cover or postcard with the "Nc" applied to mail sent to Slovakia?

PRAGA MUSICOPOLIS EUROPEA

Part III - The National Theatre

by Gerald M. van Zanten



**NÁRODNÍ
DIVADLO**

"By the Nation for the Nation"

Plans for the National Theatre had been in progress even prior to the opening of the Provisional Theatre in 1862.

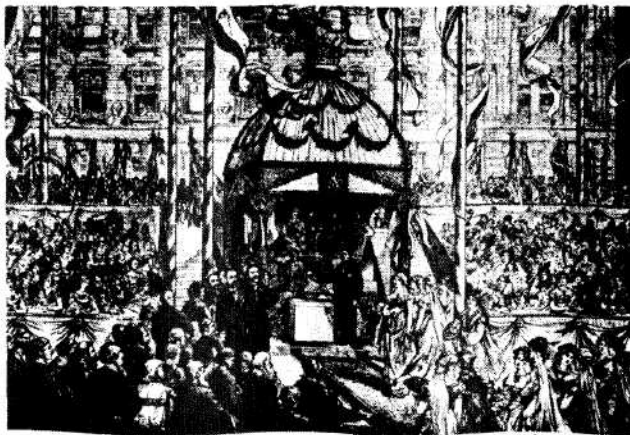
In 1852 the embankment site, which at that time was the old warehouse for storing salt, was purchased for 45,000 zlatník (zl) (roughly equal to the Austrian Gulden or Florin; ten Gulden = 1 pound Stirling of that period)).

Two years later a competition for building plans attracted seven entries; however, nothing further was done due to lack of funds.

In the meantime the Provisional Theatre was built on the site and plans for the National Theatre had to be scrapped.

In 1865 a new committee was elected and in 1867 a contract was signed with Josef Zíték (1832-1909), who was also the winner of a new competition (he trained under the architects of the Vienna Opera and was one of the finest Czech architects of the nineteenth century, a Professor at Prague Technical University).

So it was that on May 16 - the feast of St. John of Nepomuk - (see May/June 1993 Specialist) the foundation stone was laid by Smetana in the presence of many dignitaries, among them the historian František Palacký (1798-1876) (fig. 1). This event was commemorated in 1968 with one stamp, issued on March 25 and designed by K. Svolinský. It shows a girl's head and an outline of the National Theatre in dark red and gold colors. Printing amounted to 5,050,000 (fig. 2).



Smetana laying the foundation stone, May 1868

Fig. 1

As Smetana performed the symbolic act of driving the stone into the earth with a ceremonial trowel and mallet, he delivered the slogan: "In Music There Lies the Life of the Czechs."



Fig. 2

Other stones brought from celebrated places in Bohemia and Moravia were also set into the foundations, making it a truly National Theatre. The event became the center of a three day festival and was regarded as the Czechs' greatest national demonstration between the 1848 revolution and their ultimate independence in 1918. Additional trains had to be scheduled for the 60,000 guests from other Slav countries to Prague - a huge procession representing many walks of life: 148 choral societies, 1500 Sokol groups (fig. 3), as well as many high officials. Finally on the evening of May 16, the premiere of Smetana's new opera "Dalibor" was performed in the Provisional Theatre.

Meanwhile funds for the building were coming in slowly and work was temporarily halted in 1874 and again 1877, although by 1875 the building had at least reached roof height. In 1881 work was almost complete and the fact that Crown Prince Rudolf's (1858-1889) marriage to Stephanie of Belgium (1864-1945) was to take place that year, the opening had to be brought forward to June 11.

The wedding and visit to Prague never took place on that date. They were married on May 10, 1881 in Vienna; but the opening of the Theatre did take place on June 11 with a performance of the opera "Libůse", again by Smetana.

Eleven more performances of "Libůse" took place in the still incomplete theatre, the last on July 23, after which it was closed for further work and an anticipated re-opening on September 28, the day of Bohemia's patron Saint, St. Vaclav. However on the evening of August 12, a fire broke out in the roof of the theatre. Soon the whole building was engulfed, leaving only the walls, foyer, grand staircase and some ante-rooms still standing (fig. 4). Throngs came to watch the fire, but not the city firemen, who happened to be attending a funeral at the time. (In the same year on December 8 the Ring Theatre in Vienna burnt down.) The effect was so shattering that by the end of the year 745,000 zl had been raised through private donations plus 275,000 zl from insurance. Plans were approved in May, 1882, and work commenced immediately.

In the end, the total cost of the building was 3,204,219 zl - thirty times the cost of the Provisional Theatre, which had survived the fire and was now incorporated into the new complex. The man responsible for this unification was Josef Schultz (1840-1917), a pupil of the original architect (see illustration in Part II).



Sokol mounted cavalcade in procession for the celebration of laying the foundation stone for the National Theatre, May 16, 1868.

Drawing by: H. Schullingera

Fig. 3



Fig. 4 Destruction by fire, 1881

decision was made to build a new and modern theatre adjacent to the historical National Theatre. It became known as NOVÁ SCÉNA (The New Scene) and was planned for dramas, chamber operas, ballet performances as well as for the *Laterna Magica*. (fig. 7)

The building is suspended on a steel bridge structure with two vertical columns of reinforced concrete and has an all-glass facade. Special insulating glass was used for the entrance, staircases, foyers and the parterre. This *Nová Scéna* was built in record time of less than two years.

On November 18, 1983, the National Theatre once again opened with "*Libuše*," in which closing scene *Libuše* makes her prophecy: "MY BELOVED CZECH NATION SHALL NOT PERISH." Two days later the *Nová Scéna* was opened with a performance of "*The Bagpiper of Strakonice*" by Josef Kajetan Tyl (1808-1856).

Fig. 8 shows an aerial view of the entire complex - the National Theater fronting the River *Vltava* with the *Nová Scéna* directly behind it - a dramatic contrast between the old and the new.

Commemorating 70 years of the founding of the National Theatre, a set of three stamps was issued on November 18, 1953, of which the 60h value depicts the National Theatre.

The building was completed in time for the gala opening on November 18, again with a performance of Smetana's "*Libuše*".

In its finished form, the National Theatre enables Prague to boast as having one of the most imposing Opera Houses in Europe - replete with bronze chariots of the Goddess of Victory mounted on pylons modeled by Bohuslav. (fig. 6)

On July 8, 1981, a

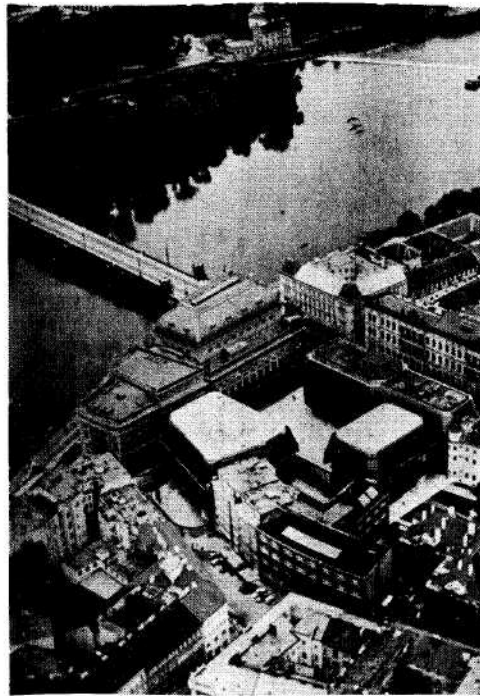


Fig. 5 The opening of the National Theatre



Fig. 6

Bronze chariot



Aerial view of National

Fig. 8 Theatre and Nová Scená
with courtyard in center

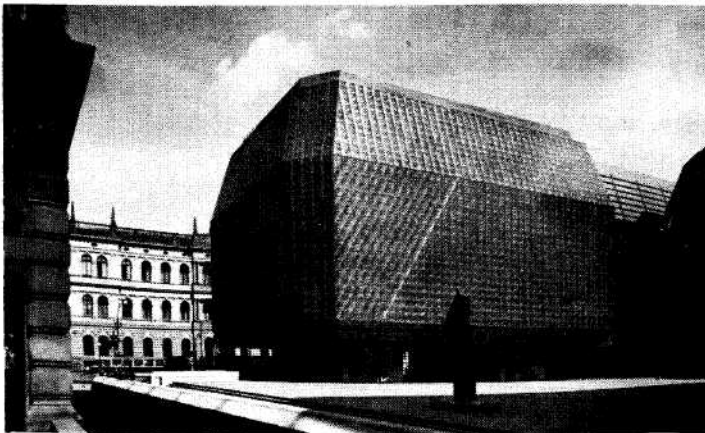


Fig. 7
Nová Scená from
courtyard looking
towards Narodni
Street



Fig. 9



Fig. 10

Designed by J. Švengsbir, a total of 3,798,000 copies of this stamp were printed in brown color. (fig. 9, Scott No. 625)

In the series "Prague Bridges" issued for the PRAGA '78 Exhibition, another prominent view of the National Theatre across the then "1st of May" bridge is shown. Design was again by J. Švengsbir of the 1Kčs value, of which a total of

4,905,000 stamps were issued. Besides the Theatre and bridge, it also shows the Libuše part of the statue by Josef Vaclav Myslbek of "Libuše & Premysl", sculptured in 1881-1887 and situated on the grounds of Vysěhrad (fig. 10, Scott No. 2181).

The two above mentioned stamps show the National Theatre to good advantage.

Philatelic Magnets For Sale

Our Society is offering a pair of colorful sheet magnets designed with two Czechoslovak stamps, the 3h Hradčany (no. 1) in red-violet and the 200h Agriculture & Science (no.93) in blue. Each magnet, 2 inches square, features the bright stamp image above the S.C.P. name. The goal of this outreach project is to provide high visibility of Czechoslovak philately while at the same time promoting our Society. Purchase these philatelic tokens for family and friends, collectors and colleagues, and put stamps of Czechoslovakia on display!

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(figure additional postage at one ounce per magnet pair.)

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MORE ON VOJTECH PREISSIG

by W. Alec Page

The interesting article on Vojtech Preissig by J.J. Verner (Jan/Feb 1995 SPECIALIST) prompted me to look at my own collection of the postcards attributed to his propaganda activities. As a result some further details can be added.

Although it has not been possible to ascertain exactly how many cards were issued by the Czechoslovak Recruiting Office in New York, it would appear that there were at least 16, that being the highest number in the collection.

Of the 16, I am aware of 13; also that they exist in two different styles. Additionally some, if not all, were reprinted in Czechoslovakia. (Or were the ones issued in America copied from them?)

The two different styles printed at the Wentworth Institute in Boston vary in the legend appearing on the face of the cards. One has the various addresses as described in the previous article whereas the other has a short text, with the address details on the reverse. (Figs. 1 & 2 show Card No. 11 with the two types of faces.)



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

The cards printed in Czechoslovakia, while identical in picture and main slogan, have only the printer's and publisher's logo on the reverse. (Fig. 3 shows an enlarged version of the logo.) The quality of the card is poor in comparison and the colors are weaker. Likewise they are un-numbered. One card, the equivalent to No. 3, has part of the design missing. (Fig. 4 shows both cards).



Fig. 4

OFFICIELNI DOPISNICE TYTOU KLADU VE VEŘEJNÉ KANCELÁŘI
MINISTERSTVU NÁR. OBRANY PRAHA I., 60.

Reverse



Fig. 5



Fig. 6

Whereas most, if not all, of the designs are attributed to Preissig, some do not bear signatures. Nevertheless seven of the designs were published in two early magazines, though I do not know when. The journals are "Reflex" and "Slovo Historii" No. 14, which was a special "Masaryk" issue. The designs that are numbered 3, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13 & 14 are said to be by Preissig.

A further design was also illustrated in "Slovo Historii" attributed to Preissig, but was issued by the Czechoslovak Ministry of Defense in Prague (See Fig. 5) as a postcard.

The following table lists cards known in the three types:

No.	New York Issue with addressed on face	New York Issue with slogan on face	Czechoslovak Issue
1	X		
2			
3	X		X (see Fig. 4)
4	X		X
5		X	
6	X		
7		X	
8			
9		X	X
10			
11	X	X	
12		X	
13		X	
14		X (no slogan)	X
15		X	
16		X	

From the above it will be noted that cards numbered 2, 8 & 10 have not been seen.

Finally, two other designs which resemble Preissig's art are illustrated. These were published by The Czechoslovak Army in Russia Educational Unit, as indicated by a small imprint on the reverse. (Figs. 6 & 7)

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Fig. 7

CZECHS ON THE ADRIATIC

by Miroslav Vostatek

translated by Henry Hahn

During the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy its Navy was based along the Adriatic coast. In recent times we saw many of the towns and harbors in the news as places where battles in nationally divided Yugoslavia have taken place.

According to reports of the WWI period, the Austro-Hungarian Navy (K. i K. Kriegsmarine) included 10.6% Bohemian sailors. More interestingly, the Czech lands provided 20% of the officers, of which 30% were ships' doctors. Furthermore, 50% of the boat-building engineers were Czech, as were 60% of the gunnery engineers.



Fig. 1

The illustration shown here is a cover which originates from the war year 1915, and was dispatched by the Czech sea doctor MUDr. Adolf Schubert (See Fig. 1). He had originally been the doctor on the steamship line operating among the Adriatic ports, but during the war he served as a doctor on the battleship S.M.S. (Seinen Majestat Schiff) Tegetthoff. It was from this ship that he addressed his letter to Prague (I also have a field post card) to the Club of Czech Philatelists. The latter passed censorship and includes a censor marking as well as a regular ship cancel, which is on the reverse of the cover. Also interesting is the address "Marinenfeldpostamt Pola", i.e. Marine Office of the Fieldpost at the port of Pola on the Istrian Peninsula.

In August 1994 I took a vacation in this part of the world, which I found delightful. There was no sign of war. Only an occasional vehicle of the UN - UNPROFOR gave evidence that war was not far away (See Fig. 2). In reading period literature, I found that the building of the Marinenfeldpostamt was near the arsenal (near its eighth gate). So I began to search for the arsenal, but could not find anyone who was aware of its whereabouts. I was only able to learn that the building of the field post had been destroyed. And then I left for the shipyard

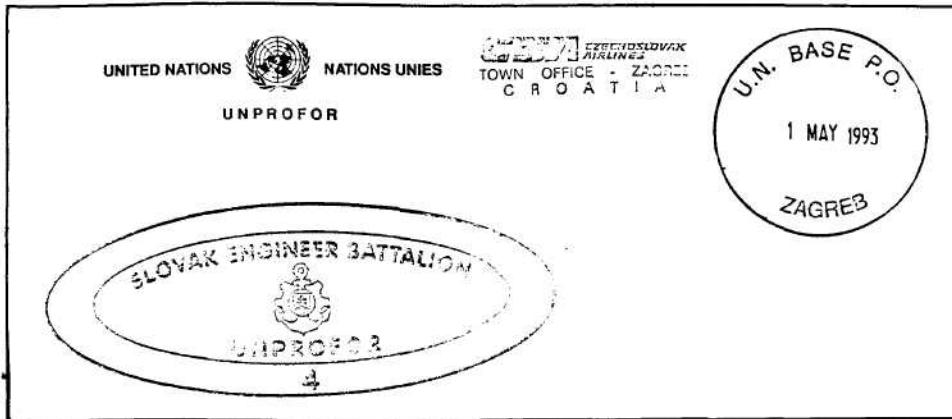


Fig. 2

ULJANIK. There I found the gate and next to it a memorial plaque. From this I learned that in January, 1918, it was from there - the arsenal building - that a strike and protest march took place against the war and shortages. At a slight distance from there was a white new main post office for the town of Pola. Hence I did find the location of the original building in which the Navy located its field post that provided the mail with the collectible cancel reading "Pola".

Thus I was able to use my vacation to verify a significant aspect of our postal history, which is interesting throughout and provides ever more discoveries along the Adriatic.

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Fig. 1

MILITARY STATION FOR INFIRMED AT PARDUBICE

by Dr. Miroslav Vostatek

translated by Henry Hahn

Before construction of the present military hospital, the largest in the Czech Republic holding 10,000 patients, the infirm and wounded were treated in school buildings. The new hospital complex was begun in 1914, and in less than a year it was in operation. And thus the facilities housed in schools and other improvised hospitals were abandoned, as were the postmarks used in some of these temporary facilities.

The war-time military hospital for which ground was broken in the fall of 1914 was filled to capacity by the end of 1915. It had its own post office which operated through the civilian post office in PARDUBICE 2. Mail from there also bears numerous unit markings.

It is interesting to note that the hospital complex was built at the site of the former military exercise grounds, which is also the place where the famous flyer of Pardubice, Ing. Jan Kaspar, began his flights. Part of the area became a new residential neighborhood, named "Dukla". Yet even now, one can observe on Milheim Street some of the original buildings that comprised the hospital complex of the pre-World War I era. One of these is a provisional infirmary illustrated in Fig. 1.

These are the last remains of the "Karanteta" (Quarantine) which was the name given to it by the local population. But soon these last reminders will disappear.

In October 1959, two (2) stamps were issued showing the former exercise ground and the aircraft belonging to Ing. Kaspar and other aviators. (See Fig 2a & b, Scott no.C47, C48.) Both stamps show smoking chimneys in the background, which belonged to the refinery for mineral spirits owned and operated by the firm, Fanta.



Fig. 2a



Fig. 2b

SIBERIAN TRAVEL VOUCHER

by Jaroslav J. Verner

One of the delights of research into the history of the Czech Siberian Field Post is the insights one gets on the daily lives and problems of the legionnaires. Many echoes of one's own experiences can surface when one reads the post cards or the occasional letter that is still included in a cherished cover in one's collection.

Another, less personal, aspect of the familiar can be found in official documents of the Siberian Field Post. Below is a translation of a report by a postman assigned to one of the Siberian Field Post's mobile post offices. The postman describes the difficulties encountered on a mail run and requests additional payment of per diem. It is essentially a "travel voucher," something that should be familiar to anyone who has ever traveled for a company or government agency. The text of this "travel voucher" reads as follows:

Cheljabinsk, 9/10/1918

REPORT

The undersigned had his effects at his unit and requested the administrator of the Field Post Br. (brother) Novotny for permission to collect his things personally. Br. Novotny objected that he needed me to travel officially with another "tepushka". In the interest of the service, I agreed to this and said that if the occasion presented itself during the trip I would collect my things. It was not possible to do this between runs. I made my request of Br. Novotny again and again was only allowed to gather my things during an official trip. Finally, during 4½ days, including official travel days and my rest days in that number, I was able to collect these things.

My official trip began on 28/9 and ended on 7/10. At the same time I was supplied in Cheljabinsk with 2 cans and bread for 2 days. However, as things turned out, the situation at the front had changed and on 1/10 it was not possible to reach Syzran where I was supposed to obtain my return trip. I went on to the Samara field post. I reported to the Staff of the Division for board, where I was told at the office that I should have been better prepared for the trip and should have been given a per diem of 8 rubles a day according to the latest instruction of the Army Corps. Thus they put me off and I ate on my own for four days until 3/10, when the next mail run arrived with which I returned. Thanks to the intervention of Br. Likar of the 1st Artillery Brigade, I received the following: on 4/10 I received dinner and 3 cans and 4½ pounds of bread to last me until 7/10.

Therefore I request that four days compensatory travel allowance be paid me.

(signed)
Karel Syrový
Mobile postman of the Field Post

The records available do not indicate the disposition of this request. As for the use of the word "tepushka" in the first paragraph of this "voucher", it is a Russian colloquial expression referring to heated freight cars used to carry people. It was such cars as these that were transformed by the Field Post into mobile postoffices.

LIBERATION OVERPRINTS OF PLZEŇ 1945

by Karel Holoubek

In May 1945, Czechoslovakia was liberated from Nazi occupation. As Czech postal service resumed, the existing supply of German and Protectorate stamps was overprinted with Czech inscriptions. These overprints symbolized freedom and were enthusiastically welcomed by the newly freed citizens.

There were three separate categories of overprints. The first was of Czech overprinting on Austrian stamps in 1919 (Scott B1-123). This was a historic reminiscence. The second occurred in 1938 when Germany celebrated the liberation of Sudetenland from Czechoslovakia and its annexation to Germany by overprinting Czech stamps. The overprints announced "Wir sind frei," (We are free.) (Michel Specialized Catalog - Sudetenland) and "Heim in Reich," (Michel Specialized Catalog - Moravská Ostrava).

The memory of these issues were still painful to the Czechs in 1945. Therefore, in an attempt to settle the score, Czech designers of the 1945 revolutionary overprints sought to document that Czechoslovakia had regained its status as a free nation. Hence the third category.

It has been widely believed that the use of these overprints occurred only during the first two weeks of May 1945. However, prior to the liberating invasions, the first revolutionary overprint was created on April 18 in Wildstein.

Liberating Allied Armies advanced into Czechoslovakia in April 1945 from three directions. The area around Brno was liberated by troops arriving from the south on April 26. The industrial region near Ostrava was liberated from the north on April 30 by the Soviet Army. The American Army commanded by General Patton entered Czechoslovakia from the west. The 3rd U.S. Army arrived in the area of Aš (Asch) on April 18, and on April 26 the city of Cheb was liberated. After this, U.S. troops advanced eastward to a separation line which had been established by the Allied Powers during the Yalta Conference. Finally, on May 6, units of the 2nd U.S. Army Corps entered the city of Plzeň (Pilsen).

Post offices on Plzeň had overprints of their own prepared. These were available for purchase the morning of their liberation. Most of the overprints bore the text "Czechoslovakia". However some proclaimed liberation by the U.S. Army. It is interesting to note there was one overprint which proclaimed the national renewal of Čechy a Morava (Bohemia and Moravia). That overprint is perhaps a first glimpse at today's situation, the separation of the nation into the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

The overprinting of stamps in Plzeň and in other Czech localities as well began on May 5. The action was prompted by a radio message from Prague which announced the general uprising against the German occupation. In the first days of liberation, printing blocks were used for the overprinting of all stamps in stock. Along with the overprinting of existing Protectorate stamps, all mail collected from mailboxes was stamped. Postcards and covers posted before the revolution, but not yet delivered, were also overprinted.

In the years following the Communist takeover in 1948, no reference was allowed to the role of Western Allies in liberating Czechoslovakia. The existence of all 1945 overprints was officially suppressed. As a result, there was no philatelic record of the hundred different overprints that were a part of Czech postal history. Because there was no official record, speculators created many phantom overprints.

Today there is evidence of 16 different overprints originating in Plzeň. The authenticity of some is questionable. In order to determine authenticity, the liberation date of the city must be considered. Plzeň was liberated on May 6, 1945, but it took until May 16 for the Czech postal administration in Prague to issue a directive prohibiting the sale and usage of all

Protectorate stamps. However, due to postwar confusion, the directive did not reach all post offices immediately. Some localities were not advised until late in June.

Further evidence comes from a letter from the Plzeň Philatelic Club dated Sept. 30, 1945. The letter states that only five different overprints were issued after the liberation of Plzeň. The letter, however, does not give a description or include an illustration of the overprints.

Additional written evidence comes from the postmaster of Plzeň. In a letter dated June 13, 1945, he advised a stamp collector that overprints were no longer available because the supply was exhausted. By law, new overprints could no longer be issued. As a guarantee, the primary blocks with the text "Osvobozené Československo" (Liberated Czechoslovakia) were destroyed.

From these documents and dated postal covers, five authentic overprints have been identified. After much collaboration between Czech and foreign stamp collectors, there is now general agreement that five Plzeň overprints can be recognized as officially genuine. All others are categorized as phantom and therefore have no official validity.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

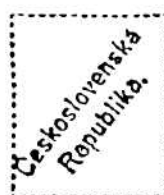


Fig. 3

Cancellations on covers dated May 5, 1945, are still bi-lingual. Covers overprinted at the postoffice bore the text "OSVOBOZENÉ ČECHY A MORAVA 1945" (Liberated Bohemia and Moravia 1945). (See Fig. 1). Another such valid overprint states "OSVOBOZENÉ ČESKOSLOVENSKO 1945". (See Fig. 2). It depicts the national symbol of the double-tailed lion like the other one except that the overall design is different. Both of these overprints were created with a printing block using black ink.

A third overprint has the text "ČESKOSLOVENSKÁ REPUBLIKA." (Fig. 3). The rubber stamp comes in two sizes and in two colors, black and violet. It was used for overprinting Protectorate stamps as well as some definitive stamps of the Third Reich.

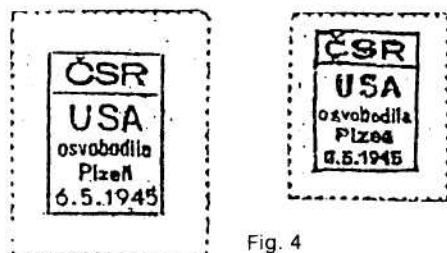


Fig. 4

The last two overprints contain the text ČSR and USA OSVOBODILA PLZEŇ 6-5-1945 (USA liberated Pilsen May 6, 1945). (See Fig. 4). The overprints came in two sizes - the smaller one for Hitler head definitives and the larger for commemorative stamps. It exists in many colors including gold. Also included in the Plzeň liberation overprints are 30 different two colored postal cards. These were sold at all Plzeň postoffices along with the overprinted stamps. The address side of the postal cards also shows the insignia of the 2nd U.S. Army.

President's Corner

A WORD ABOUT THE SOCIETY CIRCUIT

I want to take a few minutes to discuss the great success that Al Hoover has produced in the resurrection of the Society Circuit. Through his efforts we have realized an additional revenue source that means **NO** dues increase for the foreseeable future. It may also mean that the Society will be able to provide its membership with some additional free benefits. The Board is currently debating what these free benefits might be.

As with any system, there are some "rusty wheels". I will bring two to your attention.

It is very important that recipients forward the circuit within 10 days. Most people satisfy this requirement, but some are consistently delinquent. I have told Al that while he is to use his best judgement to deal with the inadvertent exceptions, **he is to hold recipients to this deadline**. We owe this to the owners of the material and to the other recipients. Using his judgement, Al has the right to charge a 50 cent per day late fee.

The second problem area deals with recipients claiming they are not responsible for missing materials when the next recipient receives the circuit. To make sure that you are protected, your first action when receiving a new circuit should be to check that all appropriate missing items have been accounted for by a name/membership number in each vacant block. This step is probably often overlooked by recipients in their hurry to see what material is available - this could be a costly mistake. If you forward the circuit unchecked, **whatever is missing is your responsibility**. Any discrepancies that you find as your first step with the circuit should be immediately brought to the attention of the circuit manager and the previous holder of the circuit.

Remember, as with any such system, the integrity and success of the circuit concept is completely dependent upon the honesty and diligence of the recipients - this is why the circuit **is only** sent to members of our Society. If you allow a non-member to peruse and buy from the circuit, **YOU** are responsible for items taken or missing.

Setting aside these issues, I want to sincerely thank you for participating and making this area of the Society the great success that it is.

Ludvik Z. Svoboda
Pres., S.C.P.



AN APPEAL TO OUR PATRON MEMBERS

We got caught short! Due to various circumstances, we printed a limited supply of last year's May/June and July/Aug issues (whole numbers 525 and 526). With our membership steadily increasing, we have now run out of them.

If you are willing to part with those two unbound issues, please return them as soon as you can to: Mirko Vondra, 2363 McCleary Drive, Chambersburg, PA 17201.

The SPECIALISTS are being bound for our patron members as far as the above two issues last out. We need at least a dozen more copies. Your prompt cooperation to this urgent appeal will be gratefully appreciated.



Letters to the Editor

I. Dear Mr. Vondra,

I'd like to report the existence of additional airmail services not covered in Richard Beith's article "Transatlantic Air Routes for Czech and Slovak Mails" (November/December 1993). These additions would have been beyond the scope of Beith's excellent treatment of the subject.

Beginning on September 1, 1940 using the South Atlantic Route traveled by the Italian airline LATI, it became possible to send airmail from Bohemia & Moravia to the United States via South America. After reaching Rio de Janeiro the route Buenos Aires, Lima, Cristabol, Mexico City, and Brownsville, Texas. The route permitted mail from B & M to bypass British censorship at Bermuda (North Atlantic Route), Jamaica, or Trinidad. The rather expensive airmail surcharge of 21.50k per each 5 grams was collected plus the international letter fee of 2.50k up to 20 grams. Letters will bear 24.00k postage. (See Fig. 1a & b, 2a & b).

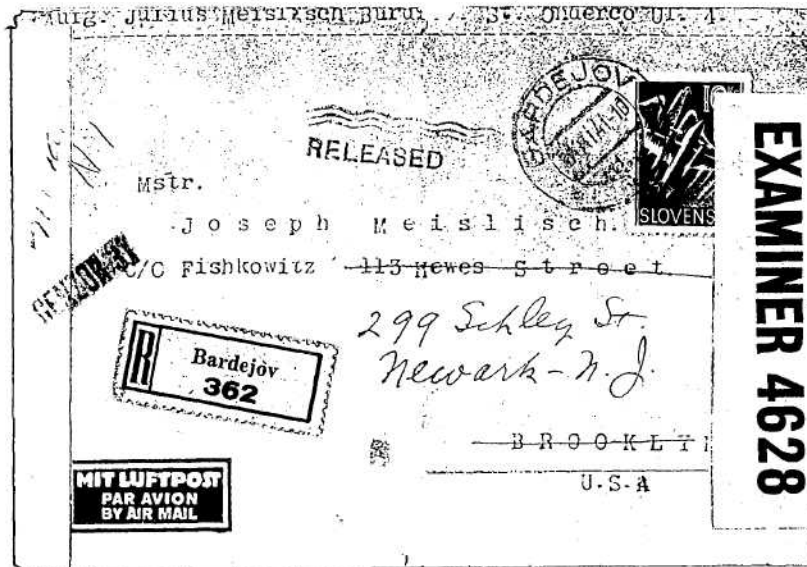
Various airmail connections could be had pre-paid after September 1, 1940. One could send a letter to Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Puerto Rico, or the Virgin Islands through South and Central America to New York City and then on to the Carribean. The airmail charge was 23.00k for each 5 grams in addition to the foreign letter rate.

It cost 29.00k for each 5 grams to send an air letter via South America, through Central America, and by Pan American Airline's China Clipper to Macao (28.50k to the Philippine Islands) plus the international letter fee.

Additional information can be found in "The Rates for Airmail from Germany to the United States 1924-1945" by Rainer E. Lutgens in THE AIRPOST JOURNAL of August 1994, in "Air Mail Through South America to the United States" by John Miskevich in the GERMAN POSTAL SPECIALIST of March 1994, and in DIE LUFTPOSTGEBUHREN FUR DEUTSCHE BRIEFSENDUNGEN NACH DEN AUSLAND (1926-1945) by Reinhold Schwarzer, a catalogue published at Osnabruck, Germany in 1989.

Sincerely,
John Miskevich

Fig. 1a



Registered cover posted on November 24, 1941 from Bardejou and held at Bermuda. Back stamps indicate delivery on March 8, 1946.

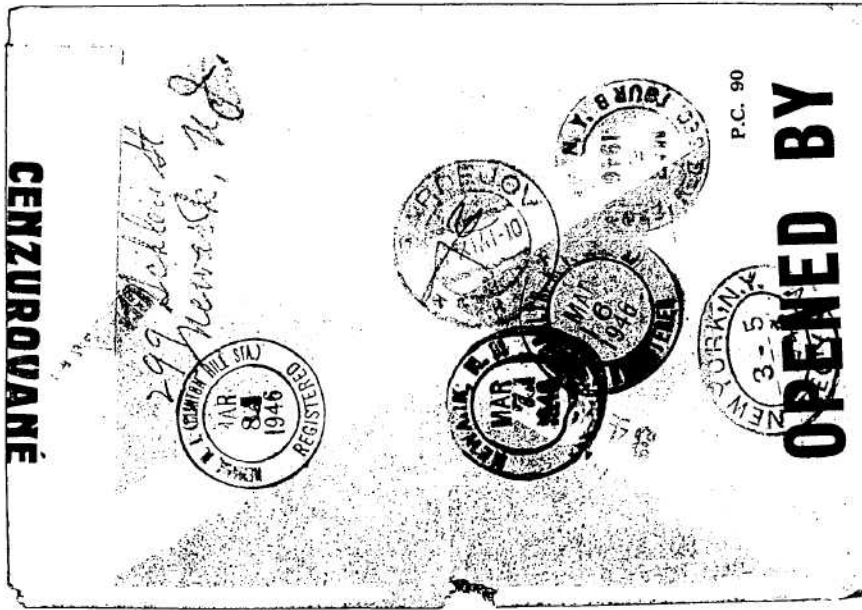


Fig. 1b



Fig. 2a
Pneumatic Post Mark
Via South America and north via west coast of hemisphere

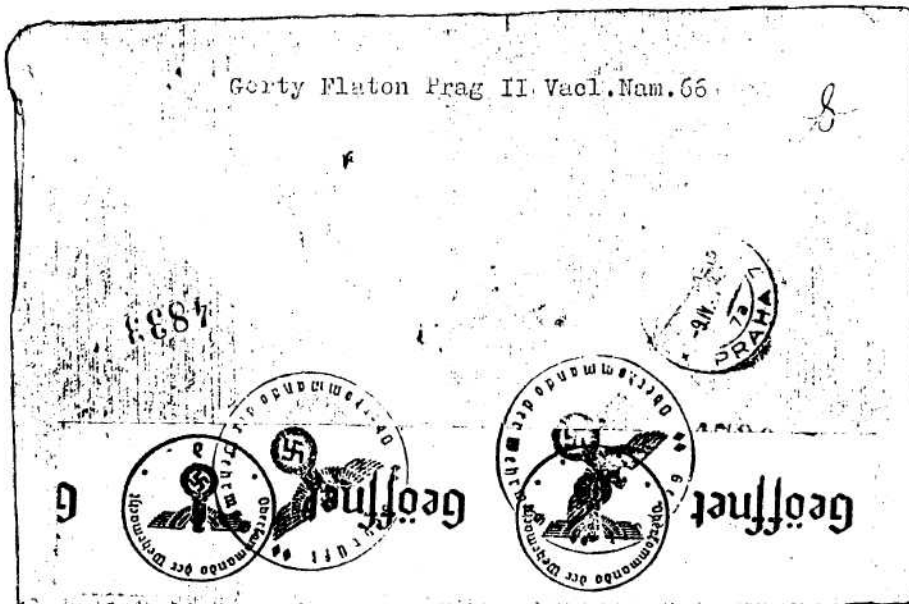


Fig. 2b
Pneumatic Post Mark
Germans censored at Munich, no evidence of British censor

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2. Dear Mirko:

I enclose for our reader's examination an example of a cancel made at Luhačovice on July 12, 1937. Translated, the words between the CDS's say: "Frank postal shipments as much as you can with a single stamp." On either side of the two cancels I have copied as much as I could read of the word that ran between the next cancels. The vertical line delineates the edge of the postcard. (See Fig. 3)

My questions are: Why encourage people to only use one stamp? Was there a shortage of stamps in 1937? Does anyone know what the words were between the next set of CDS's?

Sincerely,
Lou Svoboda



Fig. 3

3. Dear Mr. Vondra:

I do want to share a bit of good news with you. Earlier in the week, I received a letter from Scott publishers, via Global Stamp News. Apparently the next set of Scott stamp catalogs will contain an extra volume. Volume I is to be divided into IA and IB. Anyway, Volume IA will contain a special section called "Scott Annual". To use their words, "The most entertaining and informative philatelic articles to appear over the last several years will appear in this section." Well, my article on the Lidice stamps was chosen to appear in this section! Naturally,

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I am quite flattered to be listed among the best philatelic writers, but what also makes me feel truly wonderful is that, since the Scott Catalogs are sold to millions of people worldwide, all will be reading and learning about Lidice and Czechoslovakia.

I definitely will try to be at BALPEX next year and I plan to continue to contribute articles on Czech philately. Again, thank you for your kind letter and your words of welcome.

Best wishes,
Michele Patrick

4. Dear Mirko:

Enclosed is a photograph of "The Three Musketeers" taken by my wife, Val, on the recent visit of our distant members, Alec Page and Vladimir Králíček to my home here in Napier, New Zealand. For those readers to whom we may be strangers, Alec is on the left, Vladimir is on the right and yours truly is in dead center. (See Fig. 4)

A very pleasant time was had by us all. A walk in a native bush reserve where we had lunch under the trees and where we visited one of New Zealand's best loved songbirds (the tui) consumed an entire day. The following day we had a walk through the estuary at low tide and observed wading birds.

Rest assured, however, that the subject of Czecho philately and particularly the SPECIALIST were not overlooked during the visit.

Best wishes,
Gerald van Zanten



Fig. 4

5. Dear Mirko:

Confirmation of the original expertization by Henry Hahn of the 5K. Masaryk (Scott No. 101) arrived recently from Ing. Jan Karasek of Brno. In it he agrees with Mr. Hahn that this new variety is one resulting from a worn or damaged printing plate. As such it is not a new plate variety but a relatively inexpensive stamp of the 1925 series.

It is nevertheless one of a kind and remains an object for a viable search. None have been reported since the original publication of its existence (Sept/Oct 1994 and Jan/Feb 1995). With this in mind, members are again requested to be aware of its existence and report additional discoveries promptly. Additional copies can very well yield more definitive data relative to plate position, etc. Its postal validity was relatively short lived expiring on August 15, 1928. It is rather unlikely that it should appear only once on one sheet of a reported print run of 7700 sheets.

As a previously unreported variety deserving publication, it also deserves a space in a specialized Masaryk collection. My copy will have its own album page framed with a photograph and the miniaturized copies of the letters of expertization by two member Commissioners of Czechoslovak philately, Henry Hahn and Jan Karasek.

Frank A. Garancovsky

PLAN OF CZECH REPUBLIC STAMPS TO BE ISSUED IN 1995

Month Day	Title of Set	Number of Stamps	Face Value Kč	Number of FDC's
1/2	20th Anniv. of the Founding of the World Tourism Organization	1	8,-	1
	The Association Agreement between the Czech Republic and the European Union	1	8,-	1
1/20	Tradition of Czech Stamps Production	1	3,-	1
2/1	Anniversaries of Personalities - - Johannes Marcus Marci 1595-1667 - Ferdinand Peroutka 1895-1978 - Přemysl Pitter (UNESCO) 1895-1976	3	2,- 5,- 7,-	1
3/15	Foremost Personalities of the Liberated Theatre - Jan Verich 1905-1980 - Jiří Voskovec 1905-1981 - Jaroslav Ježek 1906-1942 - 1 sheet with 1 stamp (W+v+Ježek)	3	3,- 3,- 3,- 22,-	4
4/12	European Nature Conversation Year - Endangered Insects of the Country - Mantis religiosa - Bombus terrestris - Calopteryx splendens	3	2,- 3,- 6,-	3
5/2	EUROPE - Peace and Freedom	2	9,- 14,-	2
5/3	Beauties of Our Country - Rock Formations - Panská skála, Kam. Šenov - Pravčická brána, Hřensko	2	8,- 9,-	3
6/1	International Children's Day	1	2,-	1
6/21	150th Anniversary of the Arrival in Prague of the first train from Vienna via Olomouc		3,- 8,-	2
9/6	Czech Cartoon Humor - - V. Renčín - V. Jiránek - J. Slíva	2	2,- 3,- 5,-	3
9/6	World Championship in Greco-Roman Wrestling, Prague 1995	1	2,-	1
10/11	Centenary of the Discovery of the X-Rays by C.W. Röntgen (1845-1923)	2	4,-	1
10/11	50th Anniversary of the the Founding of the United Nations Organization	1	14,-	1
11/8	Works of Art on Postage Stamps - Luděk Marold (1865-1898) - J.K. Hirschely (1695-1743) - Antonin Machek (1775-1844)	3	7,- 9,- 14,-	3
11/8	Christmas	1	2,-	1

New Issues

CZECH REPUBLIC

1. On Nov. 23, 1994, the Ministry of Economy issued another definitive stamp in its City Architecture series - this one of the Antonin Dvořák Theatre in Ostrava. This city has a population of about 350,000, approximately the size of Rochester, N.Y., making it the third largest city in the Czech Republic. It boasts a Philharmonic Orchestra and its May Music Festival is a popular event. Through its iron and steel industry, it is sometimes called "the Steel Heart of the Republic."

The stamp had a denomination of 7kč. Designed and engraved by Jiří Bouda, the stamp was printed at the Post Printery in Prague by rotary print combined with photogravure in sheets of 100. With a picture size of 19x23 mm, it appears in black-brown and green colors. (See Fig. 1). There is no accompanying first day cover. (Thanks to Gerald van Zanten for this contribution.)



Fig. 1

2. On Nov. 23, 1994, the Ministry of Economy issued a new postcard with a 2kč imprinted stamp selling for 2.30kč. The offset process was employed for its print. The stamp is in brown and green colors while the address lines and the logotypes of the Czech post are in black. The picture shows a village motif by Alfred Fuchs which has been generally accepted as a

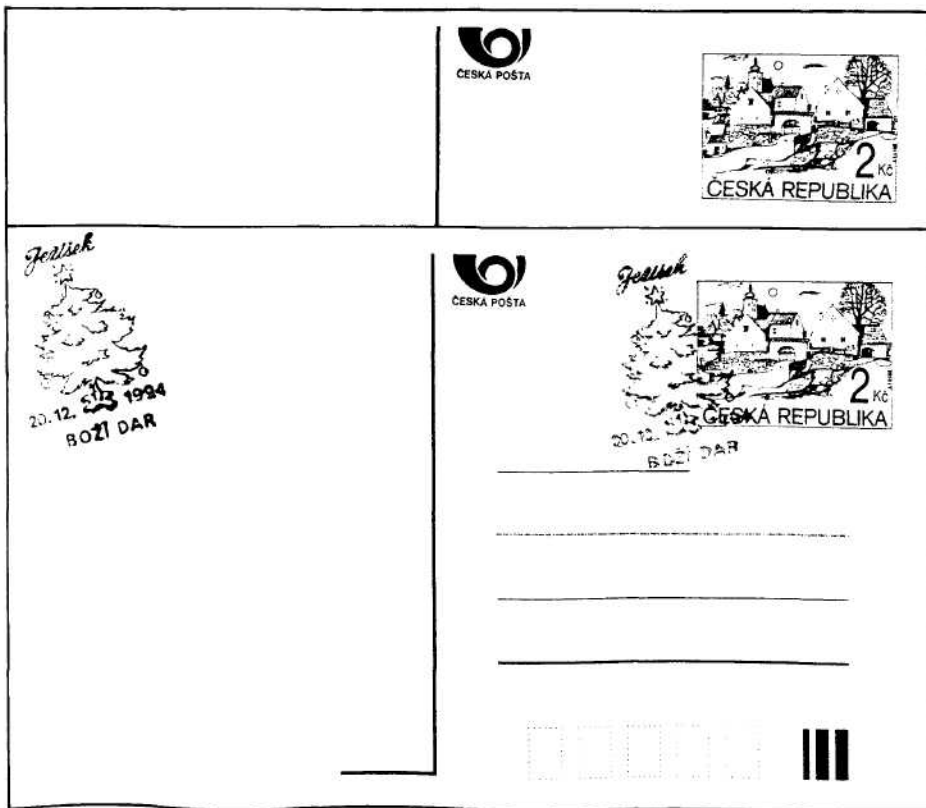


Fig. 2

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Christmas postcard by the public. For the first time in its history, the Czech Postal Service prepared this card especially for those interested in the so-called Christmas mail in Krušné Hory (Erzegebirge) in Northern Bohemia at the Czech-German frontier near the famous radio-active spa of Jáchimov. This was accomplished at the postoffice of Boží Dar where the commemorative postmark "Ježíšek" (Infant Jesus, Father of Christmas) with a Christmas tree emblem was used from Dec. 15 through Dec. 24. (See Fig. 2). (Thanks to Miloslav Vlček for this contribution.)

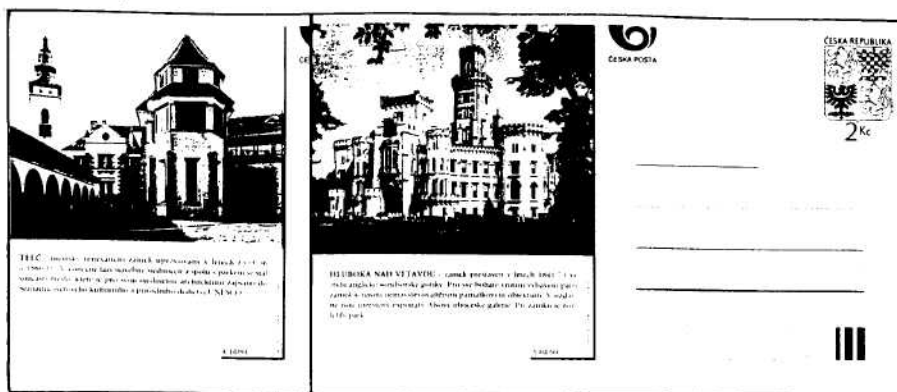


Fig. 3

3 On Dec. 21, 1994, The Ministry issued a series of sixteen pictorial postcards with an imprinted stamp of 2kč denomination. Designed by Bedřich Housa, the picture bears the Republic's national emblem with colored reprints of famous castles and chateaus on the left half of the address side of each card. Printed by Victoria Security Printing in Prague by multi-colored offset print, it sells for a price of 3.50kč per card. (See Fig. 3). The following landmarks are illustrated in these cards:

- | | | | |
|---------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| a - Buchlov | b - Český Krumlov | c - Frýdlant | d - Hluboké nad Vltavou |
| e - Karlštejn | f - Konopíště | g - Kroměříč | h - Lednice |
| i - Loket | j - Náchod | k - Pernštejn | l - Pražský Hrad |
| m - Slavkov | n - Telč | o - Zámek Trója | p - Žleby |

These are truly beautiful cards and the price for the entire set is 56kč.

Concurrently a variety of the same set was issued - this one with an advertising overprint in the lower left corner. The price of the overprinted single card is 3.8kč. For the entire set of sixteen, the price is 60.80kč. (Thanks to Miloslav Vlček for this contribution.)

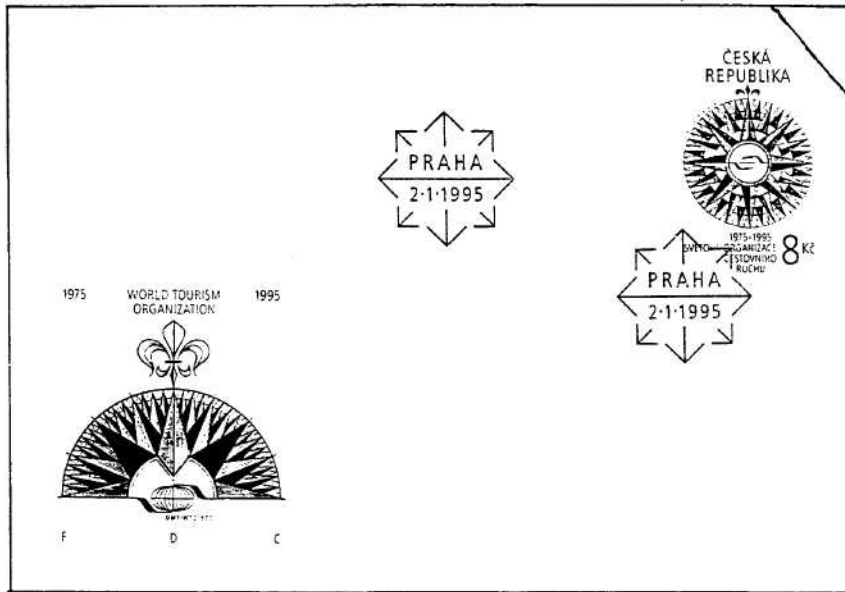


Fig. 4

4. On Jan. 2, 1995, the Ministry issued an 8kč stamp to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the founding of the World Tourism Organization. The design shows a wind rosette with the emblem of the WTO in the center and bears the text "Světová Organizace Cestovního Ruchu" (WTO). Printing was by rotary recess print combined with photogravure (See Fig. 4). Designed by Jan Solpera and engraved by Bohumil Šneider, the stamp is in blue-green; the denomination 8kč in red. Printing was done by the Post Printery in Prague in sheets of 50; the picture size is 23x40 mm.

An accompanying first day cover was recess printed from flat plates with the cachet in green-blue, depicting half of the wind rosette and the emblem of the WTO text in English. (See Fig. 5). (Thanks to Gerald van Zanten for his contribution.)

Fig. 5



5. On Jan. 20, 1995, the Ministry issued an 8kč stamp commemorating the Association Agreement between the Czech Republic and the European Union. Pictured in the stamps is the Czech flag in the foreground, the flag of the European Union to its left and the text "Evropská Dohoda o Přidružení České Republiky k Evropská Unie". Designed by Jaroslav Fišer and engraved by Pavel Kovařík, the stamp was printed by offset in blue, yellow, red and black by Victoria Security Printing in sheets of 50. The picture size is 30x23 mm. (See Fig. 6).

The accompanying FDC with commemorative cancellation was printed by recess print from flat prints in blue by the Post Printery in Prague. Engraved by Pavel Kovařík, the cachet shows a composition of twelve stars forming a circle completed by the text "European Agreement" in Czech, Spanish, Danish, German, Greek, English, French, Italian, Dutch, and Portugese languages. (Thanks to Henry Hahn for his contribution.)



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

6. On Jan. 20, 1995, a stamp was issued to commemorate the anniversary of the first stamp of the new Czech Republic on Jan. 20, 1993. Designed by Jan Solpera and engraved by Bohumil Šneider, the stamp bears an engraver's transposition of Alfons Mucha's newspaper stamp of 1920. To the left of the denomination 3kč is the text "Tradice České Známkové Tvorby" (Tradition of Czech Stamp Production) and below the 3kč is the text "Alfons Mucha - Návrh na novinovou známku Sokol v letu - 1918" (Design for a newspaper stamp Falcon in Flight - 1918). With a size 23x40 mm, the stamp was printed by the Post Printery in Prague by rotary print in blue-violet combined with two-colored photogravure in grey and red in sheets of 50. (See Fig. 7).

An accompanying FDC with a commemorative cancellation was printed by recess print from flat plates in blue-violet. the cachet

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bears an engraver's transcription of Mucha's design of his Special Delivery stamp completed by the text "Tradition of Czech Stamp Production" in Czech. (Thanks to Henry Hahn for his contribution.)

All of the above stamps and postcards are valid for domestic and international mail from date of issue until officially withdrawn from circulation.

(Due to lack of space, the New Issues of SLOVAKIA will be reviewed in our May/June issue.)

ANNOUNCEMENT

To support specializing societies such as ours, Stanley Gibbons offers a discount price on their stamp catalogues. They have offered to allow our members to purchase Part 5 of their 1995 catalogue which covers Czechoslovakia, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bohemia-Moravia and Poland, for 12.95 Pounds, a three Pound discount. This price includes free surface postage. If members wish to pay in dollars, the cost is \$24. The extra amount covers banking costs. To receive the discount, members must use a special Stanley Gibbons request form. Members may obtain the forms by writing the Society secretary, Tom Cossaboom., Box 25332, Scott AFB, IL 62225-0332. You must be a member in good standing to receive the discount.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

The following persons have joined the S.C.P. since we published the last list of new members in the Nov/Dec 1994 SPECIALIST. We are pleased to welcome the latest contingent of new members and wish all the very best in their philatelic pursuits within our Society. If they avail themselves of the benefits listed on Page 2, we who are on the Board, the Editorial Staff and heads of the various committees stand ready to assist them in whatever way possible.

Member No.	Name	Address
1707	Patrick, Michele M.	13049 Stevens Rd., Philadelphia, PA 19116
1708	Juren, Mike	2291 McKessock Ave., Richmond, B.C. V6X2NB Canada
1709	Webb, Glenn	135 Fern Hollow Rd. #1601, Moon Twp., PA 15108
1710	Bouчек, Dushan	7780 Fairmount Rd., Novelty, Ohio 44072
1711	Valcik, J.A.	1512 Donegal Rd., Bel Air, MD 21014
1712	Hvisdak, M.G.	385 West Como St., Struthers, Ohio 44471
1713	Milner, D.	619 Talbot Ave., Albany, CA 94706
1714	Hayes, R.	R.R. #1, Box 117, Dike, IA 50624
1715	Coviello, Christine F.	10615 Oak Place Fairfax, VA 22030
1716	Rocky Mt. Philatelic Library	CS 27, Box 906, 8007 W. Colfax Ave. Lakewood CO 80215
1717	Dolak, Charles A.	12403 Appleby Ct, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772
1718	Wyslowsky, Olech W.	29 Grove Ave., Verona, NJ 07044
1719	Berger, Dan	643 Upton St., Redwood City CA 94061
1720	Lawson, Ronald	7906 Woodfern Way, Louisville KY 40291
1721	Kennedy, J.W.	124 Clemwood Parkway, Hampton, VA 23669
1722	Soukup, W.L.	R.R. 1 Box 83, David City, NB 68632

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