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A SLOW RECOVERY

Summer has been different for humans this year, while around us the natural world seems to be unaffected. Butterflies still flutter around thistles on the trails I walk. Deer and bobcats stroll through the neighborhood where I live. Other creatures survive living around us and we have to trust that we learn how to live with a destructive virus. The philatelic world is still reeling from the effects of COVID-19. Stamp shows are canceled until well into autumn. I am sure that show organizers, together with the authorities that control the conference centers and buildings that hold shows, are feverishly working together to find ways of allowing shows while adhering to any regulations that require social distancing inside the venues, as well as restrictions on the number of people allowed in rooms at any one time. In the most part the hustle and bustle of the areas where stamp dealers ply their trade is one of the enjoyable parts of attending stamp



Yellow Swallowtail Butterfly,
Pofis 883, Scott 3669

shows. Sanitizing the dealer's stock is going to be one concern, as well as how many people can sit in front of their booths at one time. Many dealers prospective customers sat shoulder to shoulder previously, will we see this again relatively soon? Another problem to solve affects the safety of tables where societies like ours try to attract new members, sell our catalogs and reference books, and talk to anyone who shows interest in our stock, or perhaps want to pick the brains of the people at our table. The biggest problem might be persuading attendees that they feel entirely safe within the show environment. Luckily the human race is known for its ingenuity and I am sure that ways will be found to allow us to continue enjoying philatelic events while feeling protected from this or other viruses. A vaccine of course would really help us, and we have to trust that something will be available in 2021. In the meantime I hope that all of you have managed to stay healthy and remain so.

- Keith Hart

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THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

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AN OLD MYSTERY SOLVED BY A NEW MYSTERY

by Mark Wilson, FRPSL

In an article for the *Specialist* (Summer 2013, page 8) about the Mucha newspaper stamps I asked: when creating the 1934 OT overprint, why did they print new four-pane sheets rather than using existing stocks for the overprint? I repeated the same question in *Czechout* (June 2013, page 11) in another version of the same article. Until now I had not found an answer, but today, by quite a circuitous route, it revealed itself to me. To explain:

I recently completed a task I began several years ago - the writing of plating manuals for all three denominations of the 1919 express (spěšné) stamps. The final installment in the series describes the two plates of the issue's 10 haler stamps. Although I had completed the 2 and 5 haler plating manuals some time ago, I had put off dealing with the 10 haler because I had been unable to find a copy of its Plate II that had not received a 1926 provisional newspaper overprint – the word **NOVINY**. I finally decided I had no choice but to use the overprinted Plate II pane to illustrate the 10 haler book, a decision that led directly to this article.

As I wrote up the description of Plate II flaws, I was struck by something very odd near Position 30. At the lower right edge of the stamp – the rightmost stamp in the pane's third row – I noticed a hole punched in the pane. At first I thought someone had damaged the sheet. But when I looked for an undamaged stamp on the other three

panes in my possession, I discovered exactly the same situation: a hole on or near the lower right corner of every Position 30 stamp (Figure 1).



Figure 1: On three different panes a hole appeared at the lower right corner of Position 30.

The mysterious presence of these holes provoked my curiosity. Along with the three complete panes I also owned the bottom half of another. I decided to see if there were holes elsewhere on these pieces. Sure enough, on each pane another hole appeared in the bottom row of stamps. But the four new holes were not placed as regularly as had been the case with Position 30.



Figure 2: Position 93, lower right.



Figure 3: Position 92 right, Position 93 left.

Two of the stamps had a hole punched, just like Position 30, in the lower right hand corner of Position 93 – the third stamp in the bottom row (Figure 2). However, for the other two panes the holes were in very different locations. One had a hole in the lower right corner of Position 92 – the second

stamp in the bottom row – and the other in the lower *left* corner of Position 93 (Figure 3).

In search of an answer I first looked at the description of the 1926 **NOVINY** overprint in *Monografie IV*, pages 199-202. The holes were not mentioned. The *Monografie* also reported that the overprint plate was archived by the Postal Museum. I thought if the holes were related to the plates, by examining them I might find the answer. Unfortunately, as I am writing this article at the height of the pandemic, the Museum is closed, so I could not ask.



Figure 4: Express stamp overprinted SP 1920 with a hole in the decimal point.

Instead, I went back to my album of newspaper stamps to examine a few other panes. I found a large block, the left half of a pane of express stamps overprinted **SO 1920**. I wondered if perhaps the holes were an artifact of overprinting and carefully examined the stamps. I found no holes in the bottom row of stamps or anywhere else. On an impulse I turned the half-pane over to look at the gummed side. Imagine my surprise when I immediately saw that the paper had been punctured, not near a stamp, but in the decimal point of the tally number under Position 91 (Figure 4).

Now I was truly curious. What were these holes and why had I not noticed or heard of them before today? Thinking about what I had found so far, I decided to discard my theory that the holes might be related to the overprint plates. After all, their placement in three different positions in the bottom row of the express **NOVINY** overprints would have required at least three overprint plates. I was confident that fewer than three overprint plates had been used. There had to be something else at work.

I decided to ask a Czech expert I had worked with on other projects. I emailed my question about the holes. The first expert asked another, who in turn asked another. Eventually four Czech experts became involved. Three were unaware of the holes but the fourth expert had an answer. He was interested in the 1925 newspaper surcharge overprint that preceded the 1926 release that launched this mystery.

He quoted *Monografie IV*, page 197 (only two pages earlier than the **NOVINY** section I looked at that had given me no useful information at all). I translated his quote as:

To aid in the overprinting of 100-stamp panes [the printer] used pins which naturally defaced the impacted stamps. These puncture points may be found in the bottom row of stamps and alongside the right edge of the pane next to Positions 20 or 30.

The particular stamps being described by the *Monografie* are illustrated in Figure 5.



Figure 5: Positions 30 and 93 of the 1925 newspaper surcharge overprint.



Figure 6: SO 1920 punctured stamps.

Since I had now found these holes in stamps overprinted and surcharged for newspaper use in 1925 and 1926, as well as in an express stamp overprinted **SO 1920** (Figure 4), I began to suspect that all of the overprinted stamps of the period had these holes. I started to investigate and was amazed by what I found.

I began with **SO 1920** stamps. I found, just as in Figure 4, most of the stamps had punctured decimal points in the tally numbers below Positions 91 and 100 (Figure 6). An exception was the first postage due issue where the holes were located on the left side of Positions 1 and 91 (Figure 6, far right side).

I have in my collection a couple of sheets from the 1922 provisional postage due issue consisting of overprinted and surcharged Hradčany stamps. Sure enough, these also had holes punched in them. For the 10/3 Hradčany overprint the holes were located at Positions 20 and 93, and for the 60/50, they were at Positions 30 and 93 (Figure 7).

By now I was convinced that the printer had set up some sort of single-pane printing contraption with pins to align the panes for overprinting. What this device was or how it was used escapes me. I do suspect it was much like the machines used to perforate panes. For that process pins were attached to independent arms which could be pressed against a pane to hold them in place. (For a complete description of the perforating process and machines, see pages 12-15, *The Dove Issue*, CPSGB, 2019). The accurate punctures in the decimal points of the **SO 1920** stamps suggest the pins entered from above the pane.



Figure 7: Punctured 1922 provisional postage due stamps.

Obviously, unlike perforating multiple panes simultaneously, only one pane could be overprinted at a time, so some means of removing an imprinted pane had to be used. Anybody have an idea as to how such a device would have been configured? I am completely baffled.

However the overprint was carried out, it must have been this complex and labor intensive process that finally provided the answer to my question, the one I raised in the first paragraph: why did the firm produce brand-new four-pane sheets of stamps for the 1934 **OT** overprint when there were undoubtedly plenty of single panes of the stamps at hand? Clearly the printers wanted to avoid what they had experienced in overprinting the single panes of the issues just described. It was

just easier and cheaper to print full four-pane sheets of new stamps that could be overprinted by a standard four-pane printing press forme.

One might ask why so little has been said about the holes in the literature since once noticed they are quite prominent. I think the answer is rather simple. First, the most detailed descriptions of stamps are in plating manuals. Just as I was reluctant to use an overprinted pane in my 10 haler study, most other authors of plating guides avoid using overprinted stamps as well. Second, and this is likely even more to the point, the stamps are ill-suited as collection pieces. Think of it: they are by definition disfigured and any ten-year old could easily counterfeit them. Why would anyone, unless they were as mystified as I, spend any time thinking, never mind writing, about these holes?



THE HUSSITE ISSUE OF 1920

by Keith Hart

One hundred years ago, in June 1920, two stamps were issued with the figure of a Hussite priest. A simple subject perhaps, commemorating Jan Hus and his reformist adherents, a historic period from 500 years prior to this. Not so. The issue proved to be controversial both before and after the issue date.

A brief background to the historical significance of the subject matter is presented here. Jan Hus was a Catholic priest, ordained in 1400. He became the leader of a faction of the church who believed, among other things, that a church's congregation should be able to take part in communion, not just priests. At this time it was considered that lay-members of a congregation could not be trusted to consume the communion bread or wafers with the reverence required. Hus was also an early leader of the reform movement that eventually led to the Protestant Christian faith more than 100 years later. His teachings led to his excommunication by Pope John XXIII, followed by imprisonment and finally a trial in 1415, after which he was burned at the stake. This led to the Hussite Wars, a series of crusades against the Hussites by the combined forces of the Papacy and the Holy Roman Empire. This conflict went on from 1419 until 1434. At first the Hussites were overwhelmed and Prague was abandoned. They reformed and a series of counter-attacks led them to regain almost all of the land they had lost. After the war ended the Hussites were allowed to practice their variants to the official rites of the Catholic Church.

The stamps show a Hussite priest offering up a chalice during communion. Presented in such a way that the intense eyes of the priest seem to be offering the chalice directly to the viewer of the stamp. The design was by Alfons Mucha and originally only a single value 100h stamp was proposed. Mucha's black ink sketch of the unreal-



Figure 1

ized stamp is shown in Figure 1. At the bottom of this design, between the value numerals, is the text “Droit á la Coupe” which means ‘The Rights of the Chalice’, a foremost cause of the Hussite movement. When this design came up for approval at the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications there was some opposition to this text as it was thought that only wording in the Czech language should appear on stamps. Remember that when this took place we were less than two years into Czechoslovakia’s existence. Nationalist feelings ran high and the reticence in having another language on a stamp is perhaps understandable. It was decided that this text would be removed, as was the rather curious bar above the text which caused a separation in the image of the priest. Another change obviously asked for was that the text around the sides and upper edge be changed from “Česko – Pošta – Slovenská” to “Pošta – Česko – Slovenská”. A final amendment involved the value of the stamp itself. 100h postage stamps were one of the most highly used values at that time and the Ministry was worried that issuance of this stamp in large numbers would alarm the Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia, which at that time was controlled by an extremely conservative hierarchy. It was decided to issue two values instead, 80h and 90h (Figures 2 and 3). These were lesser used values and were therefore more unlikely to be purchased. What might be seen as a final weakening of the original design was the choice of printing colors, a pale purple for the 80h and black for the 90h. Considering the small size of the stamps ($1\frac{3}{16}$ ” x 1”) the dowdy monochrome neo-type printing by The Czech Graphics Union (particularly in the 90h stamp) reduced the aesthetic value of Mucha’s design.



Figure 2



Figure 3

Over four million copies of each stamp were printed, yet the political problems with this design had not ended. A conservative political party objected that the stamps should not be issued at all. The dispute was resolved by the Ministry who ensured that the issue was only available at an extremely limited number of post offices throughout Czechoslovakia. In addition the validity of the stamps would only be 11 months, until April 30, 1921. Despite these constrictions, a large number of the stamps were available at the main post office in Prague until 1935. Covers bearing these stamps are comparatively rare, but individual copies of MNH quality can be obtained relatively easily.

What must have begun as an issue celebrating the Hussite Period, a reminder of one of the most significant periods in Czechoslovak history, ended with Alfons Mucha’s design being relegated to a rather unappealing small stamp which, unfortunately, is still under-appreciated today by many philatelists.

SOURCES:

1. Moliš, Hahn; *The Czechoslovak Specialist*, May 1986- The Hussite Issue, Some recent observations.
2. Freer; *The Czechoslovak Specialist*, July/Aug 1992- The Hussite Priest
3. Dewey; *The Czechoslovak Specialist*, July/Aug 2003- Letter to the Editor
4. Kašpar, Holoubek, Kralicek; *The Czechoslovak Specialist*, winter 2014- Objectionable stamps.

IMAGES:

- Fig. 1 – Black ink wash drawing by Alfons Mucha: Collections of the Czech Postal Museum, Prague.
 Figs 2 & 3 – Postage Stamp Library for Czechoslovakia and Czech Republic; www.cpslib.org.

CANCELLED CZECH: THE REGERMANIZATION OF SIX TOWN CANCELLERS IN INTER-WAR CZECHOSLOVAKIA

by Robert Lauer

Starting in mid-1919, the new Czechoslovak postal authorities began replacing the cancelling devices issued by the Austrian administration with newly issued Czechoslovak cancellers. In this process, the Czechs took the opportunity to replace most of the unilingual German cancellers with either bilingual Czech/German cancellers, or in some cases, unilingual Czech devices. Many of the previously bilingual cancellers were also replaced with unilingual Czech cancellers. The new bilingual Czech/German cancellers had the Czech name for the municipality in the top of the canceller, with the German name in the bottom portion. This differed from the Austrian convention, which initially was to give prominence to the German version of the town name (either in the top or to the left), but then increasingly to the language of the linguistic majority of the population of the place in question.¹ Given the deep, historically rooted, political, ethnic and cultural conflict between the Czech and German communities prior to Czechoslovak independence, none of this should be surprising; now that the Czechs had control of the government apparatus, they were going to enforce the primacy of the Czech language over German.²

At Czechoslovak independence, there were roughly 970 post offices where there were only unilingual German cancellers.³ After the new Czechoslovak postal authorities had finished the task of replacing the old Austrian cancelling devices with newly issued cancellers, there were only 53 towns left with unilingual German cancellers. The process of emphasizing the primacy of the Czech language did not stop here. Over the 1920-1938 period, 20 of these unilingual German cancellers were replaced by bilingual Czech/German cancellers. Further, another 20

bilingual Czech/German cancellers were replaced by unilingual Czech devices during the inter-war years. Again, none of this should be surprising given the political dynamics of the new Czechoslovakia.

However, what is surprising is that there were in fact a

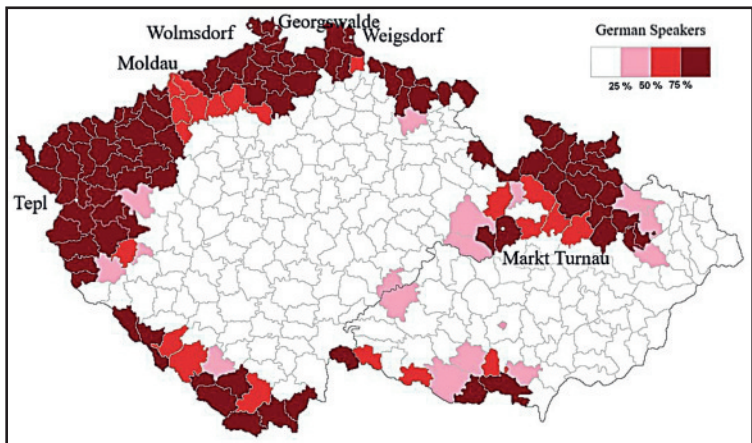


Figure 1: Czechoslovakia 1930: Distribution of the German-speaking population of the Czech lands (Source for original map: Wikipedia Commons)

small number of towns where the reverse of this general process occurred. There were three towns, Georgswalde, Weigsdorf and Wölmsdorf, where unilingual German devices replaced the initial bilingual cancellers issued by the new Czech postal authorities, as well as three towns, Moldau, Tepl and Markt Türrau, where the initial unilingual Czech cancellers were replaced by bilingual Czech/German devices.

In Figure 1, I have done my best to try to locate all six of these towns on a 1930 map of the Czech Lands, indicating the proportion of the population that spoke German. It would appear that all six towns were located in areas of the country where over 75% of the population was German speaking. Georgswalde, Weigsdorf, Wölmsdorf, Tepl, and Moldau were all located very close to the German border. Markt Türrau was located in a heavily German speaking district in the northern part of Moravia.

The table in Figure 2 gives the population of each of these six towns from the 1921 Census, along with the percentage of the population of the town that was Czech or German. In five of the six towns the population was overwhelmingly German. Only in Markt Türrau was the population mixed with a Czech majority.

Town Name 1918: German	Current Town Name	1921 Population	% Czech	% German
Bilingual – Unilingual German				
Georgswalde	Jiřikov (Děčín District)	7,482	2%	95%
Weigsdorf	Višňová (Liberec District)	912	1%	94%
Wölmsdorf	Vilémov (Děčín District)	1,242	2%	94%
Unilingual Czech- Bilingual				
Markt Türrau	Městečko Trnávka (Svitavy District)	914	72%	27%
Tepl	Teplá (Cheb District)	2,597	1%	98%
Moldau	Moldava (Teplice District)	930	5%	93%

Figure 2: Population of Georgswalde, Weigsdorf, Wölmsdorf, Markt Türrau, Tepl and Moldau from the 1921 Czechoslovak census (Source: Czech Statistics Office)

At the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, five of these six towns had unilingual German cancellers: Only Markt Türrau had a bilingual German/Czech canceller, which was consistent with the mixed German/Czech nature of the town's population. Strikes from the Austrian "survivor" cancellers for Georgswalde, Weigsdorf, Moldau, Wölmsdorf, and Tepl that were in use at Czechoslovak independence in 1918 are illustrated in Figure 3.



Figure 3: Strikes from the Austrian “survivor” cancellers for Georgswalde, Weigsdorf, Moldau, Wölmsdorf and Tepl (All strikes, except for Moldau, from the collection of Robert Pinet)

In 1920, the Austrian cancellers for Georgswalde, Weigsdorf and Wölmsdorf were replaced by new bilingual Czechoslovak cancellers with a Czech version of the town name, where the “w” was replaced with a “v”, in the top of the canceller and the German town name in the bottom, and the letters Č.S.P. in the space over the date line. Strikes from two of these new bilingual cancellers for Georgswalde are illustrated in Figure 4.



Figure 4: Strikes from the new “a” and “b” bilingual Georgswalde cancellers issued in 1920 (The “b” cancellers strike from the collection of Robert Pinet)

In 1924, when many of the original Czechoslovak cancellers with the Č.S.P. identifier above the date line were replaced by cancellers without this identifier, these three towns received new devices with just the original German name at the top of the canceller and 3 small ornaments in the bottom arch of the canceller. Strikes from these new unilingual German cancellers are illustrated in Figure 5.

The unilingual German cancellers for Georgswalde had three different arrangements of ornaments in the bottom arc of the cancellers, depending up-



Figure 5: Strikes from the unilingual Czechoslovak cancellers for Georgswalde, Weigsdorf, and Wölmsdorf issued in 1924 (Georgswalde strike from the collection of Alan Soble. Weigsdorf and Wölmsdorf strikes from the collection of Robert Pinet)

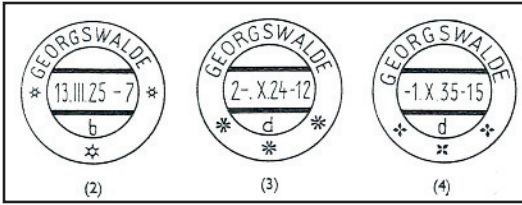


Figure 6. The three different types of unilingual cancellers from Monografie, volume 17, part I

on when they were placed in service during the years 1924-1938. The three different types of these unilingual German cancellers are illustrated in Figure 6. Strikes from the first two types are shown on cancelled stamps in Figure 7.



Figure 7. Strikes from the first two types of Georgswalde unilingual cancellers (From the collection of Alan Soble)

The histories of the cancelling devices for Moldau, Tepl and Markt Türnau are slightly more heterogeneous. Despite the linguistic makeup of the areas in which these towns were located and the almost completely German populations of Tepl and Moldau, all three towns were issued unilingual Czech devices when the Č.S.P. cancellers were distributed in the 1919-1920 period. These cancellers contained the Czech names Moldava, Teplá and Městečko Trnávka respectively in the top arc and Č.S.P. in the bottom arc.

In 1921 the unilingual Czech Moldava Č.S.P. canceller was replaced, first with a bilingual canceller with Moldava in the top arc, Moldau in the bottom arc and Č.S.P. above the date line, then with a new bilingual Č.S.P. canceller with Moldava v Chechách in the top arc. In 1934, a second canceller (the 'b' device) was issued with the same renderings of the town name, but without the Č.S.P. identifier. Finally, in 1937, the original bilingual Č.S.P. canceller (the 'a' device) was replaced by one without the Č.S.P. identifier.



Figure 8: A strike from a bilingual Teplá v Chechách/Tepl cancellers issued in 1919

Tepl did not have to wait until 1921 to get a new bilingual canceller. In what must have been late 1919, the town's new unilingual Czech canceller was replaced with a number of Č.S.P. cancellers with Teplá v Chechách in the top arc and Tepl in the bottom arc. A strike from one of these new cancellers is illustrated in Figure 8.

In 1924, these cancellers were in turn replaced by a series of devices without the Č.S.P. identifier, and with Město Teplá in the top arc and Tepl Stadt in the bottom arc. These new bilingual cancellers came with two different types of ornaments on each side of the date bridge, as illustrated in Figure 9.

A postal stationery card cancelled in 1925 with the first type of this last series of cancellers is illustrated in Figure 10.

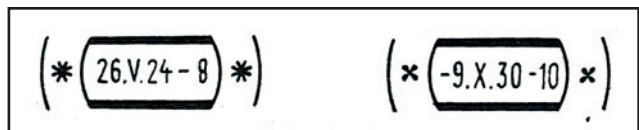


Figure 9: The two different types of bilingual Tepl cancellers from Monografie, volume 17, part II

In the case of Markt Türnau, the town's original



Figure 10: A postal stationery card cancelled March 7, 1925 with a bilingual Město Teplá/Tepl Stadt cancellers

unilingual Czech Č.S.P. canceller was replaced in 1925 by a couple of devices with Trnávka in the top arc and Türnau in the bottom, but without the Č.S.P. identifier. In 1929, these cancellers were in turn replaced with a batch of cancelling devices with Městečko Trnávka in the top arc and Markt Türnau in the bottom as illustrated in Figure 11.



Figure 11: A strike from a bilingual Městečko Trnávka/Markt Türnau canceller issued in 1929 (From the collection of Robert Pinet)

The particular reasons why the cancellers from these half dozen towns represent such an aberration to the prevailing process of removing German and adding Czech to the postal cancelling devices during this period are almost certainly lost in the sands of time. Five of these six towns had almost completely German populations, were in overwhelmingly German-speaking areas and were close to the German border, but these factors do not distinguish them from hundreds of other German-speaking communities in inter-war Czechoslovakia. All of these five towns were relatively small communities. It strikes me that all of the larger German-speaking centers in inter-war Czechoslovakia had bilingual cancellers regardless of

the linguistic makeup of the municipality. Markt Türnau is the anomaly amongst the anomalies – a small town with a majority Czech population in a largely German-speaking area. Having a bilingual Czech-German canceller makes sense until one looks at the prevailing trends in the rest of the country. This was the only town in the country with a Czech majority where a unilingual Czech canceller was replaced with the bilingual Czech-German one during the inter-war years.

Notes:

1. Zdeněk Kvasnička, "Austro-Hungarian Postmarks Used in Czechoslovakia"; *The Czechoslovak Specialist*, January 1954, p.13.
2. Both Mary Heimann's book, *Czechoslovakia: The State That Failed* and A.J.P. Taylor's *The Habsburg Monarchy, 1819-1918* have good sections on the conflicts between the Czechs and Germans in Czechoslovakia prior to independence.
3. Here, I say roughly 970, because on a first count through Volume 16 of the *Monografie*, I arrived at 969 towns with only unilingual German cancellers. I have not verified this number with a second counting.
4. Many thanks to Michal Wagner at the Czech Statistics Office, who extracted this data from the 1921 Census and sent it to me in an Excel spreadsheet two days after I sent an e-mail request to infoservis@czso.cz – a level of public service which is highly commendable for any government organization in any country.

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This is a revised and updated version of an article originally published in the CSPGB journal *Czechout*. It is printed with the permission of the author and the editor.



PHILATELIC NEWS AND VIEWS

From Keith Hart

1. As the Society was not able to be present at the recently cancelled BALPEX 2020 Stamp Show, our President, Ludvik Svoboda, has decided to rearrange our meetings for the next few years. **Our next convention and Board meeting will be at BALPEX 2021**, to be held from September 3-5, 2021 at the normal venue of the Delta Baltimore Hunt Valley Inn. More details on this will be published in the next few issues of the Specialist. In 2021 Lou Svoboda and myself will be checking out the new location for the **Rocky Mountain Stamp Show in Aurora, CO**. Dates for this show are May 28-30, 2021. We will probably have a table there. Even if we do not I am sure any members wanting to see us can contact us and we could meet them at a mutually agreed time.

After 2021 our next conventions and Board meetings are scheduled for **Rocky Mountain Stamp Show**, Aurora, CO in 2022, at the **Garfield-Perry March Party**, Strongsville, OH in 2023, and **NAPEX**, McLean, VA in 2024.

The Board is also discussing having a presence at other major stamp shows each year, similar to what we had hoped would happen this year at BALPEX. In particular, we could be looking at future venues for the **APS Great American Stamp Show**. For the next few years the venues are Rosemont, IL (August 12-15, 2021), Sacramento CA (August 25-28, 2022), and Cleveland, OH in 2023 (for which no confirmed dates are available at present). I plan to definitely be in Sacramento.

2. The **Czech Automat Stamps** that are available from vending machines are not often mentioned. I will rectify that by saying that the Amiel vending machines are currently to be found at only two locations – the Prague 1 main post

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office at Jindřišská 14, and the PostFila Shop in Prague 7, Ortenovo Náměstí 542/16. The stamps feature Jindřichův Hradec Castle and are available in the following values – 19, 23, 26, 27, 30, 33, 34, 39, 40, 45, 47, 54, 55, and 62 Kč. Until the postal rate changes that occurred on February 1, 2020 the additional values of 44, 52, 58, 60, 65, 66, and 98 Kč could also be obtained.



3. A reminder that there are a number of websites that provide detailed information about Czechoslovak stamps and are free. The website maintained by the **Czechoslovak Philately Society of Great Britain (CPSGB)**, www.czechout.org, provides links to digital copies of *Czechout* from 2002 until the present. However, for considerably more interesting information go to www.czechout.org/pages/monographs for a list of the indispensable Monographs that have been published by CPSGB. Some of these publications can be obtained through our book sales manager, James Buckner. If we do not have copies available you can acquire them from the treasurer of the CPSGB. You can also go to www.czechout.org/pages/on-demand which shows which publications are available in a read-only flipbook form. The list is considerable, covering comprehensive studies of early Czechoslovak stamp issues, including **plating guides to the Hradčany issue**. There are also two read-only books which have not been published in print form yet and have been placed on this website by Mark Wilson. These two books have studies of stamps from the **Liberated Republic issue**. A 40 page study covers the 20h stamp, together with a comprehensive 125 page study of the 25h stamp. All these free read-only guides provide essential information for novice collectors, who if they are really interested can purchase any of these books to peruse at their leisure. I have also just learned of two new print-on-demand titles from the CPSGB. **The Express Stamps: A History** by Johan Sevenhuijsen and Mark Wilson is a 32 page study which tells us that the name by which we know these stamps is definitely misleading. **The Jubilee and Charity Issue of 1919** is a 20 page study by Zdeněk Molíš, translated, edited and illustrated by Mark Wilson, which provides a history of these stamps which were only available for a short time during the first year of the newly established Czechoslovakia.

4. **Mark Wilson** also maintains an excellent online postage stamp library www.cpslib.org which can be searched to find nearly every Czechoslovak stamp from 1918-1992 and Czech Republic stamps from 1993-2018. The illustrations for each stamp are excellent, and I regularly use images from this site in the *Specialist*. Lastly, but certainly not least, go to Mark's other website www.knihtisk.org for the most complete information that can be found online about the issues of Czechoslovak stamps produced by the Czechoslovak Typographic Union.

5. Finally, you will find a discrepancy in what is actually included in this issue compared with what was mentioned in the July newsletter. Robert Lauer's **Cancelled Czech** article is included here and his **3h Hradčany** article will now appear in the Fall issue.

THE ENDURING MYSTERY THAT LED ME TO COLLECT CZECHOSLOVAK STAMPS

by Sam J. Tangredi

It was a mystery that led me to start collecting the stamps and covers of Czechoslovakia. I have yet to solve this mystery despite considerable speculation. Perhaps some of my fellow members and readers can help me solve it.

The mystery consists of a paper fragment (Fig. 1), probably 24 weight paper, bearing two and (what is now) one-half 50h postage dues, *Scott J8*, *Pofis DL8*, and also *Minkus 34* for those, like me, who prefer the old Minkus Czechoslovakia album. The stamps are all individually cancelled, but indistinctly. All that can be read of the town name in the center cancel looks like "...ERETIO..." with "22" in the center of the date (which I assume is for 1922). The fragment has been folded approximately in half.

The reverse (Fig. 2) appears to be a voucher or coupon from the Cunard Steamship Co., Ltd. I have never had Czech or Slovak language lessons, so my translating is merely word-to-dictionary, but even I can make out "Confirmation for Cunard, Prague ... I received the amount ...", as well as "Voucher (Ústřížek) 203.712."



Figure 1

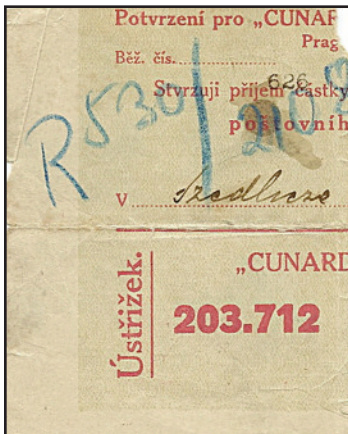


Figure 2

Obviously it is connected to travel on a Cunard ship (in this case emigration to the United States). But why the postage due? Is it fiscal use? The paper is too thin to be a card that could be put in the mail and it does not seem to be a government form.

Background

My grandfather, John Fedor, immigrated to the United States via Ellis Island in 1922. (I assume via Cunard). He had been born in 1896 in a village near Košice, then known as Kassa, where his family farmed and raised horses. Though his native language was Slovak, much of his schooling was in Hungarian, as per the government's Magyarization program of that day. He settled in Bridgeport, Connecticut, where he had distant cousins who farmed in Easton and Monroe, CT. He married a Carpatho-Rusyn woman (my grandmother), had two daughters (my mom and aunt) and worked for some 40 years at the General Electric factory where he built small appliances. He also worked on his cousins' farms on evenings and Saturdays. Although baptized a Roman Catholic, he attended the Eastern Orthodox Church; my grandmother had a surprising number of cousins who were Eastern Orthodox priests.

Like many Eastern European immigrants, he was very reticent about his past life. However, two facts were evident. He had served in the Austro-Hungarian Army in World War I and had been awarded a medal for heroism in capturing a



Figure 3

Russian machine-gun nest. This is attested by a colorized photo portrait (Fig. 3) of him in uniform bearing the medal. Figure 4 is a closeup of the medal, which I have been unable to identify in pictures of Austro-Hungarian military awards, but that may be due to the ribbon color being washed out in the portrait. If any readers also collect military medals, please steer me to the correct resource.

Greater and even more vivid evidence was the multiple healed bullet-hole scars he bore in his neck. He did not retain the medal since it was in the possession of his officer during the confusion at the war's end.

It is unclear what he did immediately after the war, but he was called

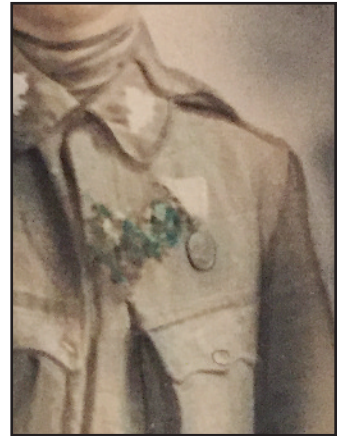


Figure 4

to serve in the Czechoslovak Army in 1920 and stationed at a camp in Moravia just south of Eastern Silesia during the aborted plebiscite and Allied division period. This is indicated by a document later permitting him to leave service and return home, the equivalent of discharge papers or perhaps return to reserve status. Clearly it was something to which he needed to hang onto. It is unknown whether he actually served in Eastern Silesia itself, in Slovakia against the Hungarians, or elsewhere.

Other information remained hidden. It was not until after he died in 1973 that my mom and aunt discovered – in his very small amount of personal papers – evidence that he had been previously married in Czechoslovakia and his wife had died in childbirth, along with the child. Likely, that was one of the reasons he decided to seek his new life in America.

After his death, I – as a known stamp collector – received the postage due fragment. I was also given the military portrait and found the discharge paper taped behind it.

Entry into a Lifelong Endeavor

I started collecting stamps as a boy in the 1960s, primarily U.S. stamps of course. In love with reading, I devoured books and magazines on history, particularly on the American Civil War which was at its centennial. I came across an ad for a first day cover of the 1963 Battle of Gettysburg stamp, convinced my mother to order it for me, and henceforth presented myself at local post offices on a routine basis to purchase the latest commemorative. In those days a child could actually acquire practically all new U.S. stamps with a modest amount earned from mowing neighbors' lawns, etc.

For successive Christmas gifts, my parents gave me a Minkus “All American” stamp album and a Minkus “World Wide” album. My mother had collected stamps when she was a girl in the 1930s, the days (before television) when the vicarious travel-in-one’s-mind resulting from stamp collecting could take one to ends of the earth otherwise never seen. She retained a few stamps from such romantic entities as Tannu Tuva, which formed the basis for my packet-by-packet foreign collection. Although aware of my maternal Slovak heritage, Czechoslovak stamps were not a priority because the infrequent letters from distant relatives still in Czechoslovakia bore only the same definitives over and over. I remember only one commemorative arriving. A country can seem pretty boring to a child if he has 20 or so of the same modern stamp. Also, communist Czechoslovakia sounded like a pretty gray place.

I did start to acquire older Czechoslovak stamps, recognizing designs by Alfons Mucha, whose poster art had something of a revival in the late 1960s, particularly the posters of Sarah Bernhardt. Thus I learned some of the history of Czechoslovakia; but I was also learning the history of all nations, so collecting Czechoslovakia still was not a priority- I was interested in so many other things: naval covers, polar covers, zeppelin covers (which were financially out of reach), World War II stamps, and more.

Then I received the postage due fragment as a legacy from my grandfather, and I was intrigued by the stamp design, the history, and the mystery. I bought a 1972 edition Minkus Czechoslovakia album (I think that might have been their last edition) and then yearly supplements until they ended in 1983. I still collect to some extent in other areas, but Czechoslovak philately became a priority.

Collecting the History of a Nation (or Two)

With the Minkus album as the core, my collection has expanded and I design my own pages, having acquired most stamps between 1918-1993 except for the most rare and expensive. Along the way, as an adult I did indulge myself in purchasing both “Kde Domov Můj ?” (We know how many were printed but how many survived the war I wonder?). I decided to collect both mint and used for issues up to the communist CTO era; from then on I gradually replaced CTO with MNH, with a sprinkling of postally used stamps, FDCs, errors, and oddities.

In acquiring other types of philatelic material, I decided not to specialize in studying a particular issue, such as Hradčany. Nor do I collect in terms of postal history, per se. Rather, I collect material illustrating the history of the nations. My interest is in philatelic material that illustrates the political, cultural and military history, with the posts as an element integrated with events. For example, my collection includes such material as a few covers successively representing the Austrian Empire, Austro-Hungarian Monarchies, and Austro-Hungarian Empire and its military forces in war; examples of revolutionary overprints of both World Wars; Siberian Legion proofs; mixed franking in the 1918-1919 period; Czechoslovak government-in-exile material; and individual events such as Hungarian regent Admiral Horthy’s entrance into a recaptured Kassa (Košice) on November 11, 1938.

Collecting this way is a trade-off in the sense that I know I will never win an award at a stamp exhibition since there is no “completeness” for any particular issue or topic. Despite having published books on military strategy and international relations as part of my naval and academic careers, I will never have enough specialized knowledge or research to complete a monograph on Czechoslovak

stamps. My contributions to discussions between SCP members will always remain modest. I cannot detect forgeries without great help.

However, through my collection I have learned a great deal – far beyond what can be learned from English-language histories – about the lives, conflicts, courage, disappointments, betrayals, spirituality and aspirations of the Czech, Slovak and Carpatho-Rusyn peoples, along with their relations with Germans, Austrians, Poles, Hungarians, Russians, and Americans. And, at its core, isn't that the fundamental purpose of stamp collecting? It is a window on history.

But I would still like to solve the mystery of my grandfather's fragment!
Any ideas?

[Ed. note: As you can see Sam Tangredi would like to hear from you with any suggestions at all that might enable him to finally solve the mystery of the intriguing fragment in his possession as well as identifying the medal his grandfather was awarded. He can be reached at samjtangredi@gmail.com.]



HRADČANY POSTAL STATIONERY CARDS (PART 2)

by Robert Lauer and Johan Sevenhuijsen

(A continuation of the article commenced on page 4 of the Spring 2020 Specialist)

Third Regular Issue: 15 h Cards with the ČSR Monogram

From May 15, 1919, the domestic tariff for postcards was raised to 15 *haler*. Cards bearing an indicium for this new tariff were issued only about 5 months later using the Fifth (Abstract) Design. These cards are listed in the Pofis catalog as:

Pofis #	Denomination	Use	Date of issue listed
CDV14 I	15 h orange-red	Domestic	October 1, 1919
CDV14 II	15 h orange-red	Domestic (Figure 19)	October 1, 1919
CDV15 I	15 h orange-red	Domestic double card with paid-reply (cards bear +15 h orange-red numbers I, and II.) (Figure 20)	October 1, 1919
CDV15 II	15 h orange-red	Domestic double card with paid-reply (cards bear +15 h orange-red numbers I, and II.)	October 1, 1919

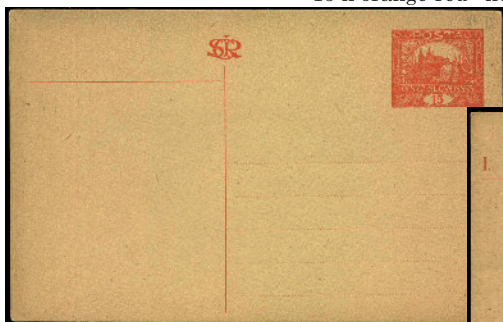


Figure 19

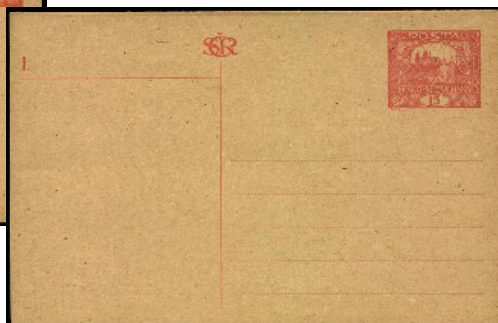


Figure 20

Actual use of these cards appears to be substantially later. The earliest date of use we have found for CDV14 is November 26, 1919 and for CDV15 it is January 14, 1920, the remaining 10 h cards being uprated with 5 h stamps and sold to the public first as per the above-referenced postal regulation.

As indicated in the listings in the Pofis catalog, indicia on these cards can have either a Type I (Open) Spiral or a Type II (Closed) Spiral; the difference in the 4th spirals on these two dies is illustrated in Figure 21. The dies for the indicia of these cards come from the seventh and eighth plates for the 15 h



Figure 21

Design V stamps that were made from the same negative as the plates used to print the 15 h postage stamps and that were then cut up to print these postal stationery cards. Plate VII was briefly used to print stamps before it was cut up for use in stationery. A complete pane of stamps from this plate has survived and all positions have been described. This makes it possible to ‘plate’ postcards from this issue in that one can determine the exact position on the original Plate VII from which the indicium of a card is derived. However, these cards also have indicia that come from a different plate, Plate VIII, for which no further information is available. Two positions in Plate VII and all 14 known positions from Plate VIII have the Type I (Open) Spirals, with the balance (all from Plate VII) having Type II (Closed) Spirals. Hence the existence of both types of spirals on these cards, though cards with Type I (Open) Spiral indicium are much rarer than those with a Type II (Closed) Spiral.

These cards have another interesting variation; they can be found with two different types of monogram (Figure 22), which we will refer to as Type A and Type B to distinguish them from the spiral types.



Figure 22

Type A: the serif on the top of the ‘C’ cuts through the top loop of the ‘R’ and the *háček* is more over the middle of the vertical of the ‘R’.

Small space under the ‘R’ and the left leg of the vertical stroke of the ‘R’ is straight. **Type B;** there is no serif on the top of the ‘C’ and the *háček* is more over the left of the vertical of the ‘R’. Larger space under the ‘R’ and the left leg of the vertical stroke of the ‘R’ is curved.

In the Postcards section of the Survey of Postal Stationery in the *Monografie* (p. 258), there are two variations of the 15 h cards listed which appear to refer to characteristics of the monogram: “I. Leg of letter R crosses over (Type II spiral)” and “II Curved leg on the letter R (both spiral types)”. While these descriptions are not particularly helpful in identifying the two types of the monogram, the description of the second variation does describe a feature of the Type B Monogram, so, we are confident that these two variations are indeed references to these two types of the monogram.

The Type A Monograms are found in all the 10 h *haler* cards (CDV7-9); the Type B Monograms appear for the first time in CDV14 and CDV15. In all probabil-

ity, the first batch of CDV14 cards was printed with the Type A Monograms used for the preceding 10 *haler* cards. The cards show early use (from late November 1919 to the end of 1919) all have Type A Monograms; the first card we have seen used with a Type B Monogram was cancelled December 30, 1919. The Type A Monograms are not restricted to early use cards, though, as we have seen them used as late as October 1920, so the use of this monogram in later printings cannot be ruled out.

Fellow collector Patrik Lexmann has been doing some detailed research on these 15 *haler* cards. Up to now, he has found cards with a Type A Monogram from 52 different positions on Plate VII. This supports the idea that the initial printing plates for these cards were fitted out with Type A Monograms, with subsequent printing plates for these cards containing the new Type B Monogram, but some Type A Monograms must have been used in a later printing as well. This requires more research. Nearly all 52 positions found have the Type II (Closed) Spiral, which is consistent with the listing of the Variations for these cards in the *Monografie*, but recently one was found with an open spiral die from Plate VII, position 49. So cards with a Type I (Open) Spiral and Monogram A do exist, although they are very rare. The Open Spiral dies made from Plate VIII only came into use in later printings. The first date of use found for a card with an indicium from Plate VIII is February 12, 1920.

It may well be that the first printing run (with Type A Monograms) was in fact made at the end of September 1919, before the official release date of October 1, 1919, but that the postal authorities only started distribution to the post offices in November 1919, after the existing stocks of uprated 10 *haler* cards were depleted. The second printing (and the printing of the reply cards) would then have taken place toward the end of December. That would mean the new monograms were made between September and December 1919. In total 97 dies from Plate VII and 15 from Plate VIII were used on these cards. Some of those were used in different printings, with Monograms A and B. In total (up to now) 162 different cards have been found, which almost fits with 5 different printing plates (5 x 32=160). These findings need to be checked and more cards need to be studied to establish if there have been 5 or 6 printings of this card.

Some of the CDV14 cards were also printed in a distinctly more “reddish” color, which seems to be less common, than the orange-red (or *cihlově červená*/ brick-red) noted in Pofis, which seems to be the most common color. These more “reddish” cards are closest to “vermilion” in the Stanley Gibbons Colour Guide, as opposed to ‘red-orange’ or ‘orange-red’ for the more common cards, and to “*orangerot*” in the Michel *Farbenführer*, as opposed to “*ziegelrot*” or “*zinnober*.” The color of these ‘reddish’ 15 h cards is, however, not the same as the 20 h cards, which are closest to “red” on the Stanley Gibbons color scale and to “*rot*” or “*karminrot*” in the Michel color scheme.

The cataloging in Pofis for the 15 h double paid-reply cards (CDV15) is also a bit misleading as these double cards each have two indicia – one on each card – that can have either a Type I (Open) Spiral or a Type II (Closed) Spiral, making (in theory) four possible combinations of spiral types on these cards. All the cards seen by us and also by Patrik Lexmann have Type B Monograms on both cards. Up to now, 12 different types of double cards have been found with a specific combination of positions from Plate VII, as well as two part I and one part II cards with

positions which must stem from other, different combinations. This approaches the expected number of 16 combinations (one printing plate). One of the cards has an open spiral (Type I) indicium (VII-49) on part I, the others all have Type II (Closed) Spirals; the 27 positions identified all come from Plate VII. This means that the Pofis catalog is indeed misleading; cards with Type I (Open) Spiral indicia on both parts do not exist and only one of the cards found has a Type I (Open) Spiral indicium on one of the parts. Pricing both versions with a similar price (400 vs. 300 Kč) is clearly not reflective of the true ratio. For the time being, it appears that the double paid-reply cards were produced in one printing, using only dies from Plate VII and Type B monograms. The first recorded use of a CDV15 card is January, 14, 1920. This confirms that these cards were printed before the Plate VIII indicia came into use (in February 1920) and that it is very improbable that more than one open spiral die was used on these cards.

Special Issue: The SO 1920 Cards

A certain (unknown) number of the regular 15 h postcards (CDV14) were overprinted 'SO 1920' for use in the plebiscite area in Eastern Silesia at the same time as the regular Hradčany, Express, Newspaper, and Postage Due stamps were overprinted for the same purpose. These cards are listed in the Pofis catalog as:

Pofis #	Denomination	Use	Date of issue listed
CDV17 I	15 h orange-red	Domestic, in plebiscite area	February 13, 1920
CDV17 II	15 h orange-red (Figure 23)	Domestic, in plebiscite area	February 13, 1920

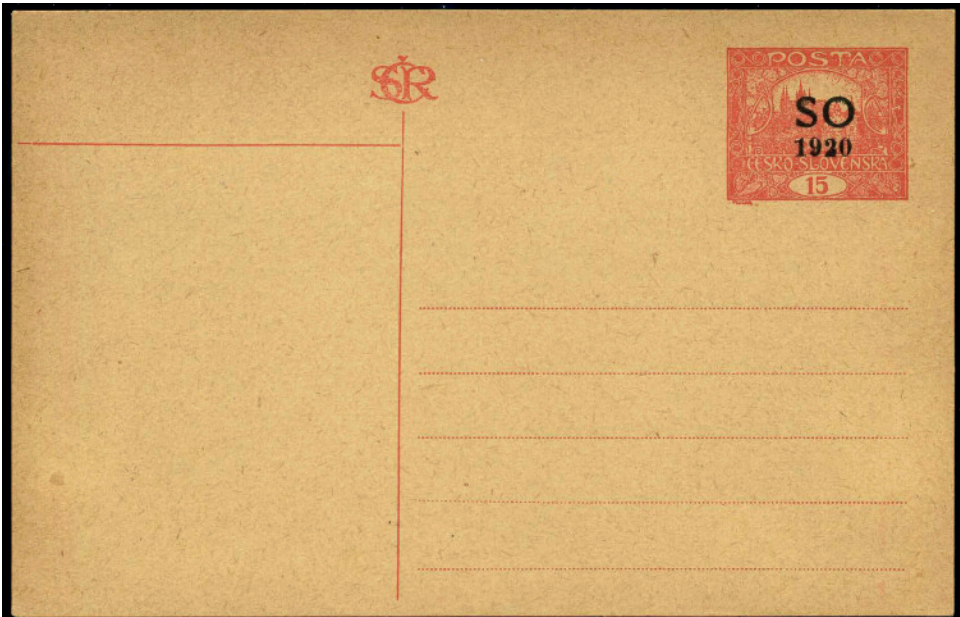


Figure 23

These overprinted cards can be found with indicia having both Type 1 (Open) Spirals and Type II (Closed) Spirals. All the cards we have seen have Type B Monograms. The overprint was probably printed on uncut sheets of 15 h cards. If these sheets of cards were newly printed and from one printing run, that would

Figure 24



Figure 25



Figure 26



Figure 27



mean that these SO 1920 cards could be found with indicia from 32 different positions on Plates VII and VIII. However, up to now, 36 positions have been identified for these overprinted cards, of which 10 are from Plate VIII; this would suggest that these overprinted cards come from sheets from two different printing forms.

Fourth Regular Issue: 20 h Cards with the ČSR Monogram

On March 15, 1920, the domestic postcard rate was raised to 20 *haler*. The Pofis catalog indicates that cards bearing the new 20 *haler* tariff for domestic mail were issued that same day. These cards bear the regular size ČSR monogram and an indicium of the Fifth (Abstract) Design. Cards destined for international mail were issued on the same day, even though the international tariff for postcards had already been 20 *haler* during the preceding 10 months of the second tariff period. That tariff remained unchanged for the third period. These cards are listed in the Pofis catalog as:

Pofis #	Denomination	Use	Date of issue listed
CDV18	20 h red	Domestic (Figure 24)	March 15, 1920
CDV19	20 h red +20 h red	Domestic double card with paid-reply (cards bear numbers I. and II.) (Figure 25)	March 15, 1920
CDV20	20 h red	International card with text in Czech and French (Figure 26)	March 15, 1920
CDV21	20 h red +20 h red	International double card with paid-reply with text in Czech and French, also indicating 'with paid response' and 'response' in text on the cards (Figure 27)	March 15, 1920

The first date of use for the domestic cards (CDV18) that we have seen is May 10, 1920. The other cards are reasonably scarce in used condition, but we did see one CDV19 card dated April 31, 1920, which is obviously an impossible date as April only has 30 days, but which seems to indicate use in April or May. Recall that all the cards from previous issues were uprated with additional stamps to reflect the new postal rates and sold before the new cards came to the post office counter.

As Morovics and Cernohlavek point out in their article, different indicia were used for the domestic cards and the international cards of this issue.

Unlike the Hutchinson Cards, the indicia on the *domestic* cards are clearly printed from a plate or plates made from the same negative as the 20 h Fifth Design postage stamps (Design V, as opposed to Design Va or Design Vb) and cut up to print the postcards. The size of the indicia is the same as the stamp, the shading is the same and the indicia on the cards show the same negative flaws as the stamps. Morovics and Cernohlavek indicate in their article that they had found cards with the negative flaws for positions 6 and 52, as well as a shared flaw for position 76 or 96 (shaved bottom to the zero). We have also found cards with the negative flaws for positions 6 and 52, as well as for positions 8 and 73.

It is also clear that the plate or plates used to print the domestic postcards were not the same as those used to print the stamps. On Plates I and II that were used to print the postage stamps, almost all positions have a Type II (Closed) Spiral and the flaw in the top of the right dove's tail corrected. Neither of these 'corrections' were made to the plates used to print the postcards, they all have Type 1 (Open) Spirals and both the flaws in the upper portion of the right dove's tail.

In the Postal Museum in Prague, there is a black print of a complete pane of one hundred 20 h dies all with Type 1 (Open) Spirals and uncorrected right dove tail flaws. Since it was first shown to the public at the PRAGA 1988 exhibition it was speculated that this was a black print of the plate that was cut up to print the postcards. Let us refer to this plate as Plate III. Further study of this Plate III shows that the pane displays all the negative flaws present in the stamps as well, but the other specific details in these positions differ from those seen on the postcards with those same negative flaws. It remains unclear what the status of the plate producing this black print was, but it seems certain that at least one additional different plate was made to produce the dies for the postcards.

All these *domestic* cards appear to have been printed with a Type B ČSR Monogram; we have not found any examples with the Type A Monogram.

For the *international* cards, on the other hand, the Design Vb dies that were used for printing the Hutchinson Cards (CDV16) were used again. In contrast to the domestic cards, both Type A and Type B Monograms are to be found on the regular international cards (CDV20). The few international reply cards (CDV21) that we have seen all have Type A Monograms on both sides but, given the small number of reply cards studied and the use of Type B Monograms on regular international cards, use of Type B Monograms on the international reply cards cannot yet be ruled out.

Fifth Regular Issue: 20 h Cards with a Coat of Arms

A few months after the issuance of the new 20 h cards with the ČSR Monogram for domestic and international use, a new card for regular domestic use was issued with the ČSR Monogram replaced with a small coat of arms over the vertical line in the middle of the card (Figure 28). This card is listed in the Pofis catalog as:

Pofis #	Denomination	Use	Date of issue listed
CDV22 I	20 h red	Domestic	May 1920
CDV22 II	20 h red	Domestic	May 1920

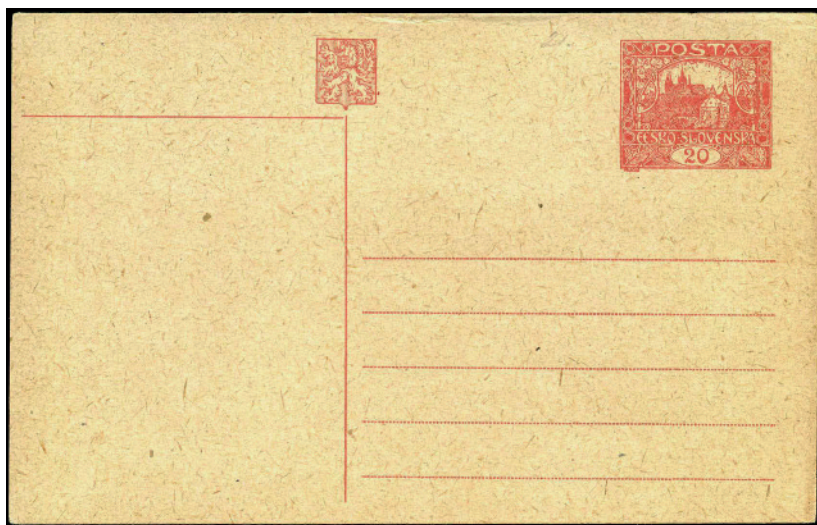


Figure 28

The first use of these cards that we have seen is June 26, 1920.

The position of the coat of arms relative to the line below it varies, mostly within small margins. The *Monografie* lists two variations (I and II) of this card

with the vertical line either to the left or to the right of the center of the coat of arms. In fact, most cards we have seen have the line under the middle or very close to that.

The listing in the Pofis catalog indicates that these cards exist with both Type I (Open) Spirals and Type II (Closed) Spirals. However, the indicia on these cards were clearly printed using the Design V dies used to print the indicia on CDV18 and CDV19; all the cards we have seen have the Type I (Open) Spiral, the flaws in the right dove's tail uncorrected and show the negative flaw for different positions from the original plates used to print the regular postage stamps of this denomination. Morovics and Cernohlavek came to the same conclusions and further agree that the same printing set-up was used to print the CDV18 and CDV22 cards with only new dividing lines and the coat of arms replacing the dividing lines and monogram. We can only conclude that the listing in the Pofis catalog for CDV22 II with a Type II (Closed) Spiral is just not correct; we are sure that this card does not exist.

The fourth tariff period started on August 1, 1920, introducing the new 40 *haler* tariff for postcards. As a result, the vast majority of these cards were used with additional franking in this next period.

All the postcards discussed here lost their validity on April 30, 1921 at the same time as the Hradčany stamps. One remarkable exception is the lettercard CZL1 discussed above; it retained its value until August 15, 1928, as did the other postal stationery forms with Hradčany indicia.

This article has tried to give a reasonably detailed overview to this fascinating field of Hradčany collecting. As is obvious from the above, there is still lots of room for further study, particularly in terms of the determining the initial date of use of all these cards, the number of positions from Plates VII and VIII used to print the 15 h cards, the plate positions of the 15 h cards that were used for the 'SO 1920' overprints, the number of combinations of monograms and spiral types on the 15 h cards, and the number of plates used to print the 20 h cards. The authors welcome comments and additional information! Please contact us at robertlauer59@gmail.com and johan7h@gmail.com. Our thanks to Patrik Lexmann for sharing his extensive knowledge of this subject.

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[This article is an updated version of one that was published in *Czechout*, March 2019 and is printed here with the permission of the Editor and the Authors.]

SCP PERFIN STUDY GROUP

by Richard G. Palaschak

As mentioned in the Spring 2020 issue of *The Czechoslovak Specialist*, our Society is organizing a Perfin Study Group under the leadership of Jerry Hejduk. Thus far we have seven members who have expressed an interest in participating in the group.

Several of us have also joined the “Společnost sběratelů perfinů” (Czech Perfins Society) in order to take advantage of the information contained in their quarterly publication, *PERFINY*, and to participate in their “members only” auctions of stamps with perfins on and off cover. These auctions occur four times a year. Two are conducted by the Czech branch of the club and two are run by the Slovak branch. The current cost for online membership is \$8 USD that can be paid via PayPal. The publication *PERFINY* can be downloaded onto your computer and can be translated using Google Translate. If you are interested in receiving a sample copy of *PERFINY* via email, please contact me at rjpalas@gmail.com. If you are interested in joining the Czech Perfins Club, you can request an English language membership application from me.

We have already undertaken several efforts in order to establish a better knowledge base of the perfins that have been used in the territory of Czechoslovakia. Because the Czech Perfins Society has been in operation for decades, their past periodicals contain much information that would be useful to members. Accordingly, we reached out to their Society and found out that they have an effort underway to capture the past copies of *PERFINY* and place them on their website. We will continue to monitor and report on their efforts.

Mr. Vladimír Munzberger, Vice Chairman of the Czech Perfins Society, together with his colleagues, are preparing a new handbook of the perfins used in the lands of Czechoslovakia. The handbook will be about 250 pages and will be published by POFIS as a part of the *Monografie* series of books. According to the author, we can expect the handbook to be available sometime during the first half of 2021. At our request, POFIS has agreed that an English language translation of the introduction, which contains guidance for using the handbook, will be available. Our Book Sales Manager will be placing a pre-publication order with POFIS. Accordingly, if you intend to purchase a copy, please advise James Buckner, at wellseats@hotmail.com so that you can be assured of obtaining a copy when it becomes available. We do not know what the price of the catalog will be, but you can expect the cost to be similar to past volumes of the *Monografie* series. If you would like to see a sample page of the new handbook via email, you can request a copy by contacting me at the above email address.

Jerry Hejduk is eager to get our Study Group functioning and determine those efforts that our Group should undertake. As those efforts materialize, we will keep our Society members informed through the *SCP Newsletter* or future articles in *The Czechoslovak Specialist*.



HOW I BECAME A COLLECTOR

by Vera Devlin

I was born in New York City to first generation Americans of Czech and Moravian descent. Being the eldest child I was totally immersed in Czech language and culture from the moment I was born. The neighborhood we lived in had many Czech families and businesses, even a Czech undertaker, a butcher's shop and a Church with services in Czech. My parents enrolled me in the local Sokol (Czech gymnastic association) unit at the age of 5. This took place at the Bohemian Hall in Astoria, right around the corner from where we lived.

I started collecting stamps when I was 10 after I became interested in the envelopes and postcards that we received from relatives in Czechoslovakia. Proof of this is that I still have about 30 postcards from that time that are "stampless" since I soaked them off to put in my album. At that time I spent many hours on my bed learning the geography of faraway lands and supplementing my Czech collection.

I went to Czech school for 8 years. This took place on Saturday mornings, also in the Bohemian Hall where I learned traditional national dances, songs and Christmas carols. I also learned to read and write in Czech, supplementing the language I already spoke at home. I also performed in Czech plays and learned how to cook and bake traditional meals and holiday treats.

Both sets of my grandparents came to the USA during the early 1900s when it was common to immigrate for job opportunities and a better life. Three of them were invited to come to the States by relatives, the fourth came as a result of marriage. My grandfather married a Czech woman he met in New York City, but she died within a year. He traveled to her place of birth and asked for her sister's hand in marriage. They married there in 1912, came to the States, and did not return for a visit until 1960.

Both my grandmothers came from Bohemia, Jemnice in the South and Malšova Lhota in the East. One grandfather was from Poruba, in Northern Moravia and the other from Malkov in Southern Bohemia. In 1985 I had the opportunity to travel with my parents to all four hometown/villages in Czechoslovakia and meet relatives which sparked a deepening interest in Czech philately. Thanks to my roots, my mother's archival nature, and my aunt's association with Jan Masaryk in the diplomatic service, I am fortunate to have a number of Czech documents with tax stamps - family school diplomas, marriage and death certificates, etc.

My family was active in Czech organizations around the time of the World's Fair in NYC in 1939-40 and I was able to do the same during another World's Fair in Queens, New York in 1964-65. I have tied my American and Czech heritage to my stamp collecting interests. I enjoy accumulating and sorting through the various printings of the Hradčany series looking for flaws and errors. I am also trying to get a complete set of these with nice Prague cancels.

I am a fairly recent member of the SCP, also a founding member of the new Perpins Study Group within our society. It was a pleasure to meet some of the other members at the Sarasota Stamp show in February.

THE FIRST FLIGHT THAT NEVER FLEW

by Richard G. Palaschak

On 15 September 1967 Aeroflot put the Ilyushin-62 (IL-62) aircraft into civilian service with a direct flight from Moscow to Montreal, Canada. Czechoslovakia was the first country to order an IL-62 from the USSR for its Československé Státní Aerolinie (ČSA). The two covers that are shown in Figures 1 and 2 share an interesting history that reflects the history of the Prague Spring and the subsequent Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia.



Figure 1

The specially designed First Flight cancellation in light blue shows the intended date of the flight (6 May 1968), the flight number (ČSA 45), the flight path (Praha-Havana), and the plane (the IL-62) that was making its first flight under the Czechoslovak national colors. The flight never occurred. The cancellation in red ink, *Z TECHNICKÝCH DŮVODŮ LET ODLOŽEN*, states that “For technical reasons the flight is postponed”. In reality, for some reason (the Prague Spring ??) the USSR did not provide the aircraft.

Interestingly, the Praha 120 cancellations tying the postage stamps to these covers are dated 6 May 1968 (-6.V 68-17) also. Clearly these covers were submitted well before the scheduled flight and the cancellations were applied in anticipation of the flight. With both covers addressed to the same individual and identified with the typed word “Tiskopis” (Printed Matter), they reflect the efforts of a philatelist to obtain some attractive first flight covers.



Figure 2

In August 1968 the Warsaw Pact invaded Czechoslovakia. The IL-62 plane purchased by Czechoslovakia had still not been provided to the ČSA. The cancellation in black ink, *V důsledku mimořádných událostí v srpnu 1968 let IL-62 neuskutečněn*, states “In consequence of the extraordinary events in August 1968 the flight of the IL-62 is unrealizable”. The second Praha 120 cancellation applied by postal authorities is dated 12 November 1968 (12 XI 68-9). This was probably applied when the letters were being sent back to the individual who placed them in the mail originally, as evidenced by the cancellation from Praha 51 dated 13 November 1968 (13 XI.68-18) on the reverse of both covers (Figure 3). And thus, politics and a national crisis combined to provide an interesting philatelic history to these First Flight covers that never left the ground.



Figure 3

INSURED LETTERS OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK LEGION IN RUSSIA

by Lubor Kunc

The Czechoslovak Field Post in Siberia shipped among other things the official insured letters containing cash or valuables transported among their military units. Because of its official status, no postage was charged for the insured letters. Let's have a look at two examples of such correspondence.

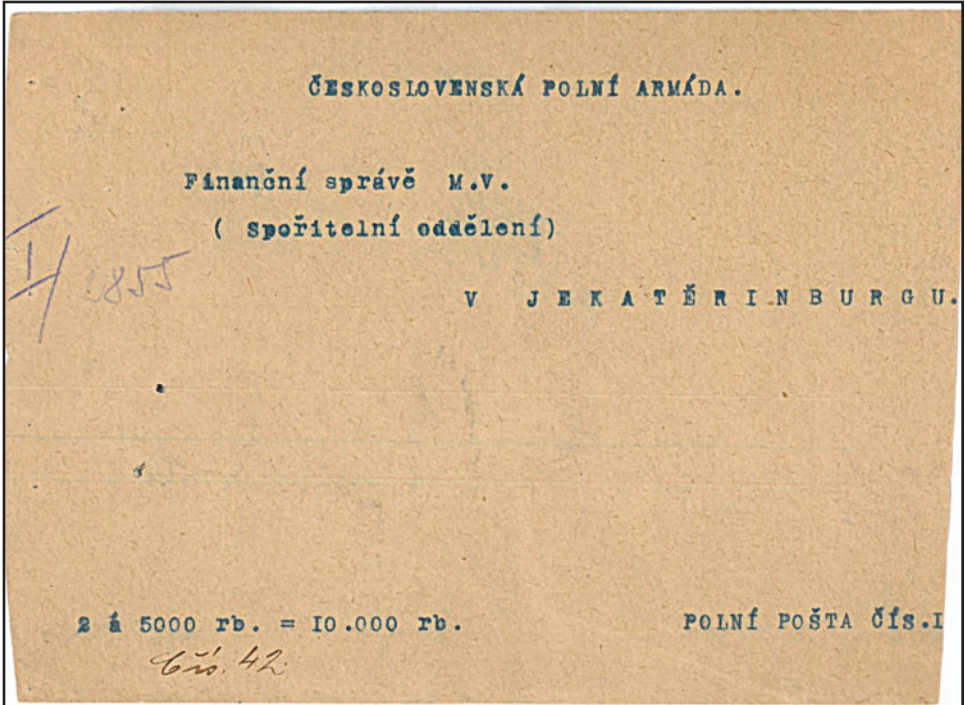


Figure 1

The first letter (Figures 1 & 2) contained two 5000 ruble Russian banknotes (Figure 3). It was sent in 1919 by the Technical Company of the 1st Rifle Division to the Legionary Savings Bank at Yekaterinburg. The letter was mailed at Field Post Office (FPO) #1, where the postal clerk registered the item with the number 2855 and he marked the envelope with the code "1/2855", where the first digit shows the FPO number and the digits behind the slash show the registration number of the letter.

The second insured letter (Figure 4) was sent by the cashier of the 3rd Rifle Regiment to the Legionary



Figure 2



Figure 3

Savings Bank at Irkutsk (probably in summer 1919). The insured letter contained Russian Bonds and also several Austrian banknotes which in total amounted to 190 Kčs. The insured letter has been marked with “IX/4621”, we therefore know it was mailed at FPO #9 with the registered number 4621. The FPO office is identified by the postmark in the right upper corner of the envelope.

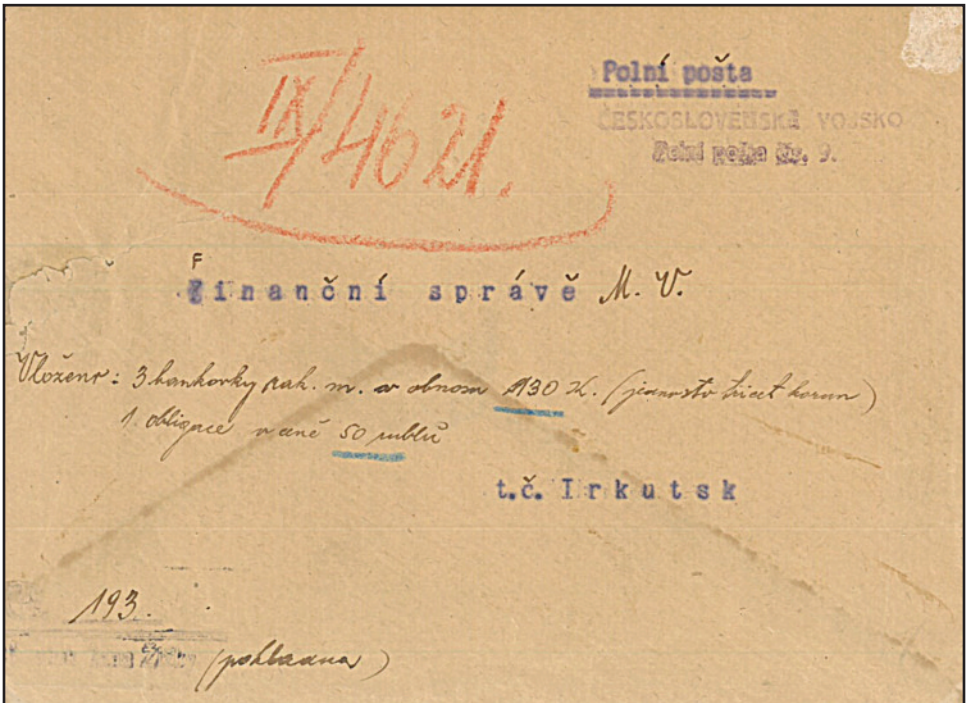


Figure 4

CZECH REPUBLIC NEW ISSUES

by Keith Hart

1. On April 22, 2020 the Ministry of Industry and Trade issued a stamp booklet with two different self-adhesive definitive stamps illustrating **Poisonous Mushrooms**. The booklet [Pofis VZS 32], designed by Mikuláš Kavan, contains four copies of each stamp (Fig.1), with a value identified by the letter “B” (19 Kč). The booklet was produced by Poštovní tiskárna cenin Praha, a.s. (PTC) using multi-color offset technology. One stamp depicts a **fly agaric** mushroom [Pofis 1071], which is one of the better known poisonous fungi. It is commonly found in wooded areas. Fatal poisoning is thankfully infrequent and usually occurs when it is confused with a *Cæsar’s* mushroom, which is an edible but rare protected fungi in the Czech Republic. The other stamp depicts a **Satan’s bolete** [Pofis 1072], part of a group of red-pored blue-staining fungi. It is an infrequently found in deciduous forests. This issue is a follow-up to the **Edible Mushroom** issue from 2018 [Pofis VZS 26 booklet, Pofis 984-5 stamps].



Figure 1

2. On May 13, 2020 the Ministry issued a 47 Kč stamp in the series: **Works of Art on Stamps- Jiří Kolář (1914-2002)**. The stamp [Pofis 1073] shows the artist’s 1980 work *Objekt/Chiasmáz* (Fig. 2) which is from a private collection. The stamp was designed by Milan Jaroš and engraved by Martin Srb. It was produced by PTC using recess printing from flat plates combined with multi-color offset in a miniature sheet of four stamps, with a blank central label. Kolář was originally a poet who transitioned to visual arts in the late 1950s. He called his art “concrete poetry” where words were replaced with objects, collage, or pictures. During the ‘normalization period’ following the Soviet led invasion of 1968, he became a strong supporter and publisher of samizdat, the clandestine voice of the opposition. As a signer of *Charter 77* he was forced to emigrate, first to West Berlin, later to Paris.



Figure 2

Returning to his homeland after the return of democracy in 1989 he renewed a friendship with Václav Havel and again became a leader in supporting contemporary art. The cachet of the FDC shows a collage from Kolář's *Hommage á Baudelaire* series from 1972 (Fig. 3) and the FDC cancellation is a series of letters based on Kolář's surname.

[Ed. note: For now at least this is the last Czech stamp to be printed by PTC and subsequent issues will be produced by Tiskárna Hradištko, s.r.o.(THS) who also print the majority of Slovak stamps].

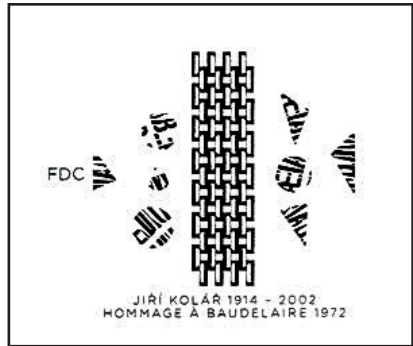


Figure 3

3. On May 13, 2020 the Ministry issued a commemorative postage stamp in the series **Personalities: Václav Neumann (1920-1995)**. The 19 Kč stamp [Pofis 1074] shows the upper part of Neumann while conducting an orchestra (Fig. 4). It was designed by Pavel Sivko and produced by THS using multi-color offset in printing sheets of 50. While Neumann was principally known as a conductor, he was also a violinist and violist who was one of the founders of the Smetana Quartet in 1945. After joining the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra as a viola player, by 1948 he had become their conductor. From 1950-1958 he worked mainly in



Figure 4

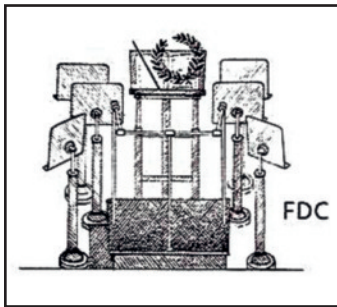


Figure 5

Germany where he became famed for his interpretations of Mahler and Mozart. In 1968 he rejoined the Czech Philharmonic and worked mainly with them until 1990. During this time he championed the works of Czech composers. In particular he made the works of Janáček and Martinů more commonly known throughout the world. The digitally printed FDC cachet shows a conductor's music stand, surrounded by other music stands (Fig. 5) and the FDC cancellation has a conductor's baton in motion.

4. On May 13, 2020 the Ministry issued a miniature sheet to commemorate **The Prague Archbishopric** [Pofis 1075]. The 30 Kč stamp depicts a portrait of Archbishop Franz Ferdinand Khünburg from a painting by Petr Brandl which is from the collections of the archbishopric (Fig. 6). The stamp was designed by Václav Fajt and produced by THS using multi-color offset in printing sheets of four with a blank central label. A bishopric had been established in Prague in 973 and this was elevated by Pope Clement VI to an archbishopric in 1344. The seat of the Archbishop of



Figure 6

Prague is the Cathedral of St. Vitus, Wenceslas and Adalbert within the grounds of Prague Castle. The Archbishop's Palace lies just outside the main entrance to the castle in Hradčany Square. Archbishop Khünburg was appointed in 1710. He founded the Order of Celestines and the Order of the Sisters of St. Elizabeth. He also prepared and completed the beatification and canonization process of St. John of Nepomuk. The digitally printed cachet of the FDC shows the Archbishop's Palace as seen from the adjacent square



Figure 7



Figure 8

(Fig. 7) and the cancellation contains a decorative architectural element from the Archbishop's Palace.

5. On May 13, 2020 the Ministry should have issued a commemorative stamp to celebrate **Summer Sports**. The stamp had a value identified by the letter "Z" and was designed by Zdeněk Netopil. It featured summer sports athletes in dynamic motion (Fig. 8) but was not issued, probably because the conditions enforced by the COVID-19 virus did not allow any sports to be practiced for most of this summer. As the design was no doubt completed before the virus emerged, it does seem accidentally prophetic that the athletes shown on the stamp do seem to be wearing protective face masks. It is not known whether the stamp will be issued at a later date.

6. On June 16, 2020 the Ministry issued two commemorative stamps to celebrate **Songbirds In Our Neighborhood** [Pofis 1076 and 1077]. Both stamps have a value identified by the letter "B". They were designed by Jaromír and Libuše Knotek and produced by THS using multi-color offset in printing sheets of 50. A Cartes Maximum for each stamp was also issued on the same day. The first stamp has depictions of **Magpie, Jay and Raven** (Fig. 9), members of the Corvidae (Crow) family. The Eurasian Magpie, shown at the top of the stamp, loves open countryside with scattered trees and is rarely seen in treeless areas or dense forests. They are known for their relatively large nests atop a tree in parks and gardens. The constant chit chat between the birds is heard throughout the spring and summer. The Eurasian Jay, occupying the central position on the stamp, prefers to live in oak woodlands and is known as a prolific hoarder of acorns, which it buries in the hundreds. This allows it to propagate and enlarge its own habitat. Its main cry, a harsh screech, can be heard for miles. The Common Raven, the lower figure on the stamp, is the largest and most widely distributed member of the crow family and be found throughout the Northern hemisphere. With one of the largest brains of any bird species they are well known



Figure 9

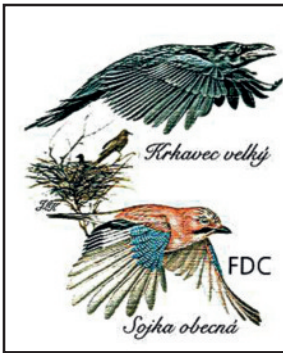


Figure 10

for their problem solving abilities. The digitally printed cachet of the FDC shows a raven leaving its nest and a jay in flight (Fig. 10). The FDC cancellation has outline drawings of two magpies.

The second stamp has examples of **Robin, Redstart and Fieldfare** (Fig. 11), members of the Turdidae (thrush) family. The European Robin, shown as the upper stamp, is much smaller than its American relative. It is relatively unafraid of people and is often drawn close to gardeners tending the soil, hoping that a juicy worm awaits. The Common Redstart is the central figure on this stamp. It is physically similar to a robin but is normally found away from towns. Breeding can be somewhat hazardous as their nests are a prime target to be pirated by cuckoos. However, the chicks of different species do seem to coexist with each other. The Fieldfare is the lower figure on this stamp. This migratory thrush is found throughout Europe. They usually nest in small colonies, forming larger flocks when migrating. Larger than the robin and redstart, it has similar coloring for both male and female, including its famous speckled breast. The



Figure 11

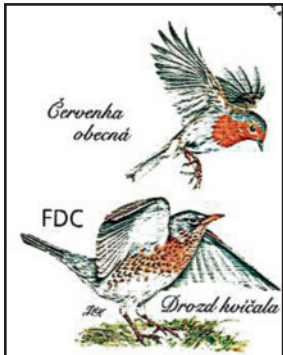


Figure 12

FDCs digitally printed cachet depicts a flying robin and a fieldfare coming in to land (Fig. 12). The cancellation of the FDC has outline drawings of two redstarts.

Postal Stationery

7. On June 24, 2020 the Ministry issued a definitive prepaid postal card with an imprinted stamp depicting a **Historic Mail Coach on Charles Bridge** [Pofis CDV 130CH]. It has a value identified by the letter “E” (39 Kč). The card has a blank left hand side (Fig. 13), available for commercial or promotional purposes.

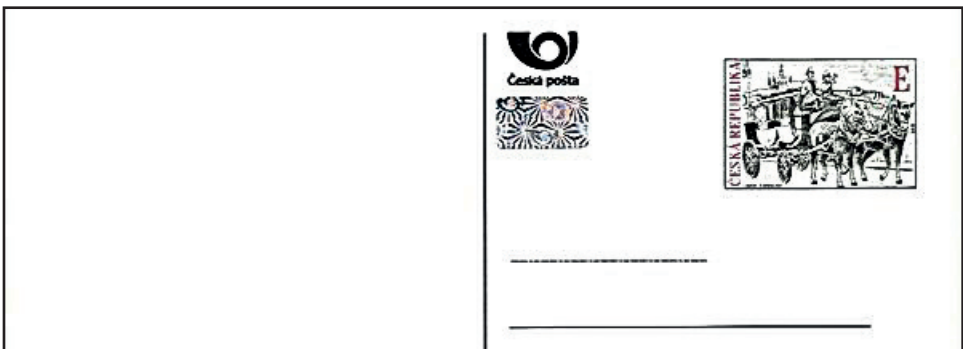


Figure 13

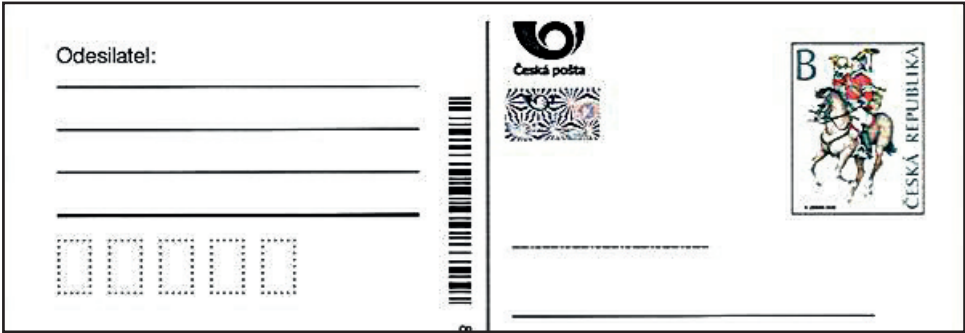


Figure 14

8. On June 24, 2020 the Ministry issued a definitive prepaid postal card with an imprinted stamp depicting a **Mounted Mail Courier** [Pofis CDV 188B]. It has a value identified by the letter “B” (19 Kč). The upper left hand side of the card (Fig. 14) is reserved for the sender’s address.



SLOVAKIA NEW ISSUES

by Keith Hart

1. On May 18, 2020 the Ministry of Transport and Construction, as a joint issue with Poland, issued a miniature sheet to celebrate the **100th Anniversary of the Birth of Pope John Paul II (1920 – 2005)**. The 1.70 € stamp [Pofis SK 713] shows the Pope with a familiar thoughtful expression. The house in Wadowice,



Figure 1

Poland, where he was born, is shown in the background. The stamp was designed by Maciej Jędrzyk and produced by Tiskárna Hradištko, s.r.o (THS) using multi-color offset, in a printing sheet containing six stamps and six coupons (Fig. 1). The coupon shows the Pope with Cardinal Konec, during his visit to Nitra in 1995. The edges of the sheet are decorated with images of Rome and Poland. Karol Wojtyła secretly began to study theology during Poland's occupation by the Nazis during World War II. He was ordained as a priest in 1946, becoming Archbishop of Krakow in 1963, and a Cardinal in 1967. During the conclave in 1978 he was



Figure 2

elected as the 264th Pope, choosing John Paul II as his designation. He was the first Slavic Pope and his pontificate lasted more than 26 years, the third longest. He made 104 international journeys (including three to Slovakia) and met more than 20 million people at 1200 general audiences. He was a tireless promoter of peace, the observation of human rights and human dignity. Pope Benedict XVI beatified him in 2011 and Pope Francis canonized him on April 27, 2014. The FDC cachet, engraved by Lubomír Žálec, depicts the Pope kneeling at

prayer (Fig. 2) and the cancellation has the motif of a dove. A commemorative sheet [Pofis SK 073 PaL 713/20] was issued on the same day.

(Ed. note: My thanks to Monseigneur Ján Vallo for his original notes in Slovak from which this is a translated and edited form).

2. On June 5, 2020 the Ministry issued a 0.65 € stamp to celebrate **The Philatelic Olympics** [Pofis SK 714]. The stamp depicts a whimsical owl who is infatuated with collecting stamps (Fig. 3) and was designed by Marianna Žálec Varcholová. It was produced by THS using multi-color offset in printing sheets of 50. This is from a continuing yearly series that commenced in 2017 and celebrates non-sporting "Olympic" events. The Philatelic Olympics (PO) were first held in 1973 and was designed specifically for members of Young Philatelist Clubs (KMF) throughout Czechoslovakia. Since 1993 the Slovak competition has had the major sponsors of the Slovak Post Office and the Ministry of Transport and Construction. Unlike the Olympic Games the PO takes place every year, usually in May and June. The initial round starts at the individual club level, the winners of which advance to the national finals. Each year a specific topic is announced, and the competition is split into five different age categories, from 8 to 21 year-olds. The competition has two parts. First - the principles regarding the particular topic in question, and secondly - the creation of a mini-exhibit relating to this topic. Unfortunately there will be no winners this year as the competition was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The stamp, however, was issued and will find its way into the albums of the young collectors who hopefully will already be looking forward to next year's competition. The FDC cachet depicts several other playful



Figure 3



Figure 4

a flat plate combined with offset. The sheet, with a single stamp, also shows the main greenhouse (Fig. 5). The Košice Botanical Garden started out as part of the new University of Agriculture and Forest Engineering in 1950. It is now part of Pavol Jozef Šafárik University and covers an area of 74 acres (30 hectares), making it the largest botanical garden in Slovakia. It has more than 4000 plant species and is well known for its 1200 different cacti. It is a scientific and teaching center for the university's Faculty of Science, as well as pupils from elementary and

owls (Fig. 4). The special cancellation (which should have been a feature at Bratislava Collector Days, also postponed of course) shows a basic outline of Bratislava Castle above the waters of the Danube. A collection sheet [Pofis SK 133 NL714/20] was issued the same day.

3. On June 17, 2020 the Ministry issued a miniature sheet in the series **Nature Protection: The Botanical Garden in Košice – Magnolia Grandiflora** [Pofis SK 715]. The 2.80 € stamp shows the distinctive flower and red seed pod of a Southern Magnolia tree. The stamp was designed by Igor Benca, engraved by Rudolf Cigánik and produced by PTS with recess printing from

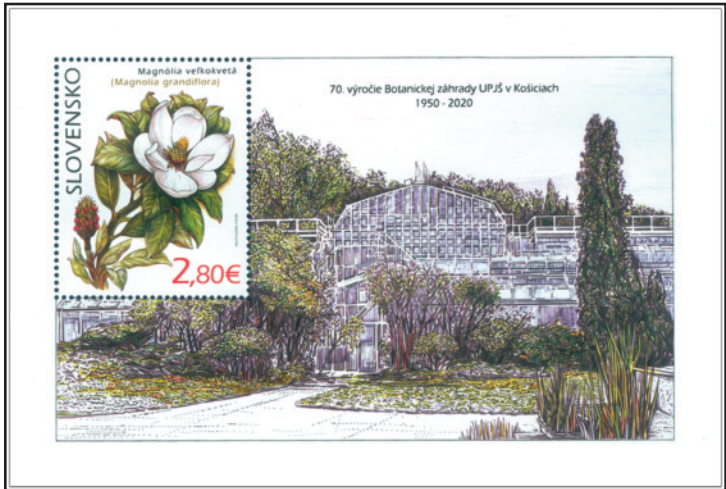


Figure 5



Figure 6

secondary schools. The entrance to the botanical garden is dominated by a stately Magnolia Grandiflora. This evergreen tree is indigenous to the south-eastern United States and is the state tree of both Louisiana and Mississippi. When it blooms the massive white flowers stand out as a vivid contrast to the extremely dark green leaves. The species now has more than 70 cultivars including several that are frost tolerant, allowing it to be grown in a much wider range of temperature zones. The cachet of the FDC depicts four stages in the development of a magnolia seed pod (Fig. 6) and the FDC cancellation shows a magnolia leaf. A Cartes Maximum was also issued on the same day.

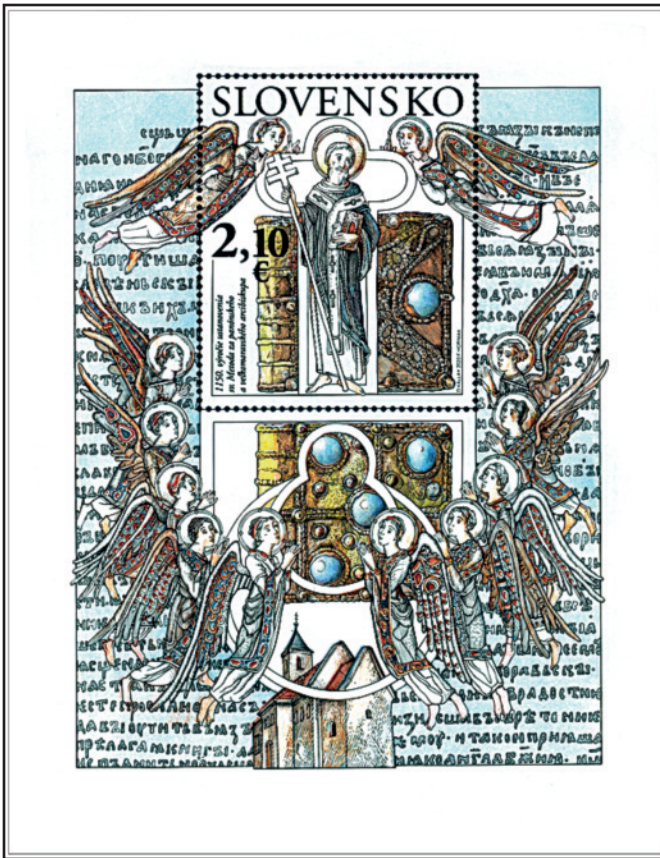


Figure 7

ture sheet. Above him is a floor plan of the Great Moravian church in Devín. On either side and below the saint is a metal belt clasp in the form of a religious book. The clasp was found in a grave at the Great Moravia settlement site of Valy, near Mikulčice. The lower part of the miniature sheet shows a Great Moravia rotunda, discovered at Kostolec hill fort, near Ducové. The FDC cachet illustrates the back of a belt clasp with the image of a bishop (Fig. 8) with a background of a Cyrillic manuscript. The FDC cancellation depicts a lead cross with a crucified Jesus. A black proof of the miniature sheet was issued the same day. This is the third and final miniature sheet in a series celebrating the lives of Sts. Cyril and Methodius. In 2013 the first sheet celebrated the 1150th anniversary of the arrival of the saints in Great Moravia [Pofis SK 542]. This was followed in 2018 by a sheet celebrating the 1150th anniversary of the recognition of the Slavic liturgical language [Pofis SK 660].

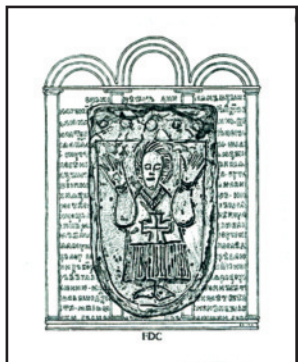


Figure 8

4. On July 4, 2020 the Ministry issued a miniature sheet to celebrate the 1150th Anniversary of the Consecration of St. Methodius as Archbishop of Great Moravia and Pannonia [Pofis SK 716]. The sheet was designed by Dušan Kállay and engraved by František Horniak. It was produced by THS using recess printing from a flat plate, combined with multi-color offset. The 2.10 € stamp's depiction of St. Methodius is based on a fresco in the Basilica of St. Clement Lateran in Rome, considered to be the earliest image of the saint (Fig. 7). The angels flanking St. Methodius are from the same fresco, their images spread beyond the stamp into the miniature sheet.

Postal Stationery

5. On June 1, 2020 the Ministry issued a prepaid postal card with additional imprint to celebrate the winner of the competition for **The Most Beautiful Postage Stamp of 2019** [Pofis SK 303 CDV 267/20]. The imprinted stamp with the designated value T2 50g shows the logo of “Good Idea Slovakia”. The additional print shows the miniature sheet issued to commemorate the 100th anniversary of General M.R. Štefánik’s tragic death (Fig. 9). It garnered 22% of the votes cast. In second place, with 19% of the votes was the miniature sheet for Nature Protection, and third was the Europa – National Birds stamp with 7% of the votes. 2600 cards were issued.

6. On July 2, 2020 the Ministry issued a prepaid postal card with additional imprint to celebrate **St. Jacob’s Path**



Figure 9



Figure 10

[Pofis SK 304 CDV 267/20]. The imprinted stamp, with the designated value T2 50g shows the logo of Good Idea Slovakia. The additional print, designed by Adrian Ferda, shows a winding path leading away from the church of St. Jacob in Levoča (Fig. 10), together with a seashell, an image associated with St. Jacob. Around 1000 years ago devout Catholics from all over Europe began pilgrimages to the tomb of St. Jacob (*St. James*) in Santiago de Compostela, Spain. One such path started in Levoča. Nowadays only sections of this trail remain. It is also known as the Way of St. James in English and Camino de Santiago in Spanish. This Slovak section, which is about 65 miles (105 Km) long, commences from Levoča in a south-westerly direction, crossing into the Low Tatras National Park. It then meanders its way to the village of Donovaly at the top of a pass through the Tatras.

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