



# THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST



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Official Bi-Monthly Journal of the Society for Czechoslovak Philately,  
an Incorporated Non-Profit Organization  
Winner of Numerous Philatelic Literature Awards

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## *President's Corner*

During the annual membership meeting held at PACIFIC '97 in San Francisco on June 1, I was pleased to report that your Society is in good shape. The newly constituted Board of Directors met on May 30 and re-elected your current officers for another two years, reviewed the activities of the past year, and considered plans for the future. For the information of those of you who were not able to be with us in San Francisco, I would like to repeat the essence of my report here.

Some years back, when the financial condition of the Society was rather precarious, the Board of Directors set the goal of having membership dues cover the cost of publishing *The Czechoslovak SPECIALIST*. For this to happen a high membership level is necessary. This goal was achieved several years ago and continues to be true today. With dues covering the costs of our publication, all other sources of income can be used to fund other membership services -- be it the Library, other publications, book acquisitions, and so on. Today the Society is in good financial shape and our membership continues to grow, e.g., at PACIFIC'97, two of our former members rejoined the Society and ten new members decided to come aboard.

*(Continued on Page 17)*

## Table of Contents

<i>ARTICLES</i>	<i>AUTHOR</i>	<i>Page</i>
1. Adventures of Missent or Undelivered Mail	Savoy Horvath	3
2. Austrian 60th Jubilee Postal Cards	Salvatore Rizza	12
3. Revolutionary Overprints of 1945	Karel Holoubek	20
- Overprint of Novotny - Prague 33		
- Overprints from Kostelec nad Orlici		
<i>COLUMNS</i>		
4. President's Corner	Jaroslav J. Verner	1
5. For the Beginner	Phillips B. Freer	9
6. PACIFIC '97 -- The Show and Exhibits	Henry Hahn	24
7. New Issues	(Various)	27
8. Letters to the Editor	(Various)	30

**THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST**

**MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS**

Here is a list of all benefits to which S.C.P. members in good standing are entitled:

1. A sales circuit is operated by H. Alan Hoover. The circuit itself has been fully written up in the Aug/Sept 1989 SPECIALIST, page 8. For complete details, contact H. Alan Hoover, 6070 Poplar Spring Drive, Norcross, GA 30092.
2. A book sales division is run by Edwin Lehecka. Ads listing philatelic books for sale appear regularly in the SPECIALIST. For further information, contact Edwin Lehecka, 217 Hazel Avenue, Westfield, NJ 07090.
3. A Society library is housed with Richard Palaschak, librarian. For inquiries on borrowing books, buying past SPECIALISTS or making book donations, contact Rich Palaschak, 4050 Carbury Court, Chantilly, VA 20151-2613.
4. An expertization committee operates under the direction of Ludvik Z. Svoboda. Depending on the nature or substance of the item to be expertized, he will direct you to the appropriate source for expertization. Please contact, Ludvik Z. Svoboda, 4766 S. Helena Way, Aurora, CO 80015.
5. THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST is the official bi-monthly publication of the Society. For inquiries on obtaining back issues, contributing original articles of related significance, translating articles from Czech to English, advertising rates, and bound copies, contact Ludvik Z. Svoboda, 4766 S. Helena Way, Aurora, CO 80015.

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*All officers and board members serve the Society voluntarily  
and without compensation.*

## The ADVENTURES of MISSENT or UNDELIVERED MAIL

by Savoy Horvath and Ludvik Svoboda

[Ed. Note: The illustrations and source text in this article were provided by Savoy Horvath. I have added some additional historical material and transitional text.]

Over the years many of us have experienced the "pleasure" of having a letter that we sent to Czechoslovakia disappear, be misrouted, be vandalized, or be returned for "political" reasons. Even mail sent to the Czech Republic has ended up in strange places. The following articles and translations help to put the problem into perspective. On the plus side, you should be aware that recent indications are that matters are improving in this arena.

But 37 years ago during the height of the Communist regime matters couldn't have been worse. The situation was so bad that the highest levels of our government were getting involved. The following is an excerpt from the *New York Times* and a press release from the Postmaster General Arthur E. Summerfield both of which were printed in the September 1960 SPECIALIST:

### "PRAGUE BARS MASARYK STAMPS; RETURN OF U. S. MAIL PROTESTED"

"The State Department is looking into complaints that Czechoslovakia has refused to accept for delivery letters bearing United States postage stamps commemorating the 110th anniversary of Thomas G. Masaryk's birth.



Fig. 1

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The stamps honoring the founder and first president of the Czechoslovak Republic were issued as 4 and 8-centers in the "Champion of Liberty" series on March 7.

. . . Packages carrying Masaryk stamps were delivered, but with the stamps removed and the same thing was true of registered letters, . . .

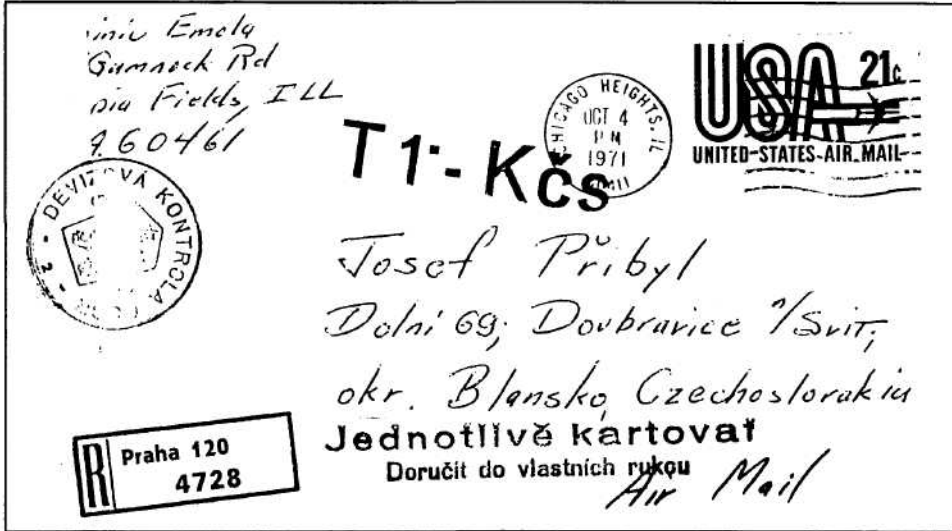


Fig. 2

. . . Postmaster General Arthur E. Summerfield "deplored" the action taken by the Czechoslovakia Government in barring mail bearing U. S. "Champion of Liberty" stamps honoring Thomas G. Masaryk, the father of the first Republic of Czechoslovakia."

Figure 1 shows a copy of one such cover mailed by the author (under a pseudonym return address to keep his relatives out of trouble since he had escaped from the country just a few years before). The arrows pointing to the TGM stamps and their being x-ed out was done by an overzealous communist postal clerk. The arrows seem to originate from the "Non admis/Nepřipustné" (not allowed entry) block indicating that it is the stamps that are not allowing the entry of the envelope.

Many other stamp issues that the communists did not consider to be politically correct met the same or a similar fate. The letters could be returned, could reach the recipient but with the stamps removed, could reach the recipient but with any objectionable or valuable contents removed, or could just disappear. Any or all complaints to the communist authorities fell on deaf ears.

\* \* \*

Now that classified documents from the communist era are beginning to be released, some insight is becoming available to understand the methods and equipment that was used.

The following translated article is being reprinted with the permission of the Czech daily newspaper "Prace".

**"TECHNIQUES OF THE CSSR'S STATE SECRET POLICE - STB"**

"The second issue of the *Securitatis Imperii*, which is printed by the Office of Documentation and Uncovering of Wrongs Perpetrated by the Communist R e g i m e , describes the techniques used during censorship and opening of ordinary mail.

One department of the STB used an

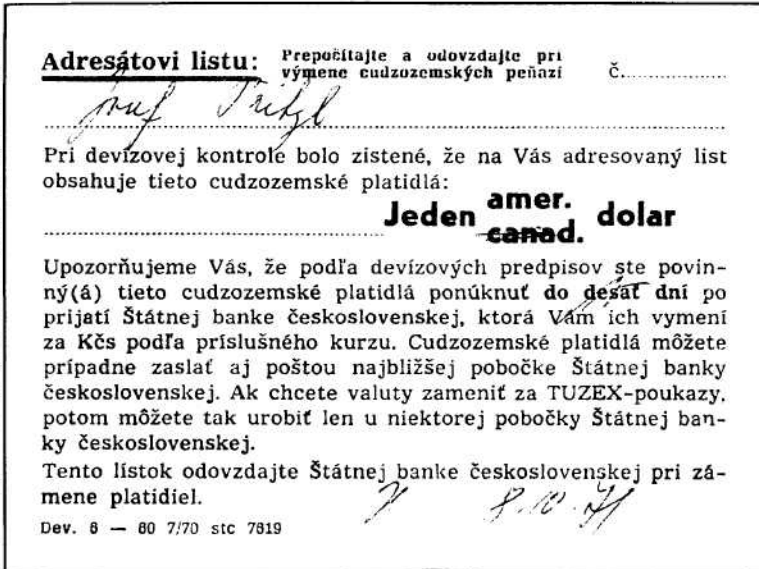


Fig. 3



Fig. 4

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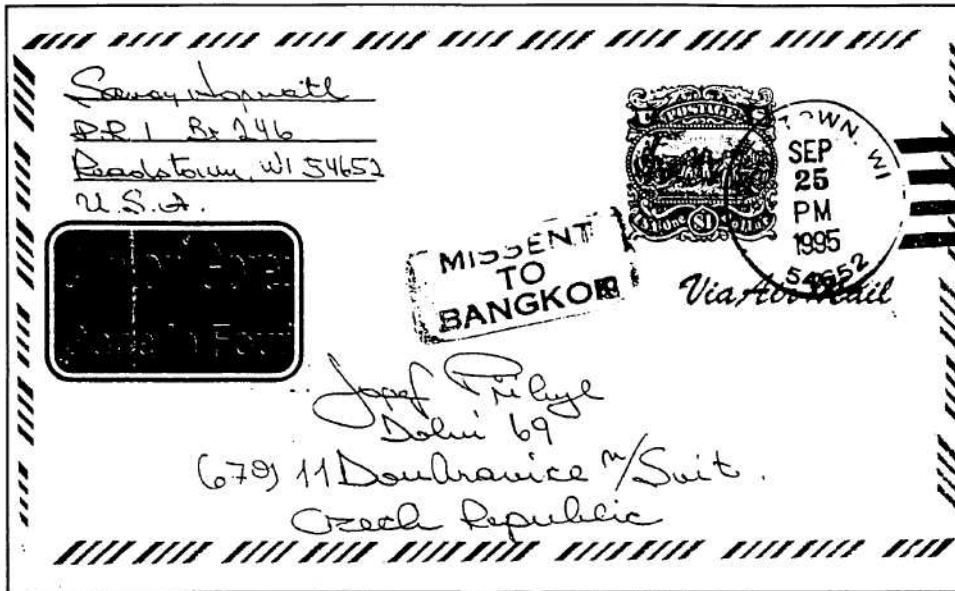


Fig. 5

instrument with the cover name of Jezero (lake). This was a large steamer which was used to open envelope flaps. Right next to it was a press that would reseal the envelopes right after inspection.

This department also had on hand an index containing the names and addresses of senders numbering in the hundreds of thousands. The censorship was done with the help of the ČSSR postal department which would reroute all suspicious mail coming into or out of the country. This function was performed at post offices PRAHA 025 and PRAHA 120 (Fig. 2), which were located at PRAHA 2 on Gorkého Náměstí (Gorky Square).

This process seems to have kept on being performed for several months beyond November 1989, when this unit was secretly disbanded. One can only wonder what has happened to the censorship devices and the people that operated them. The ministry of interior and posts never released any information pertaining to this function which began in the early fifties. Many people did hard labor jail time for being politically incorrect based upon information collected by this function."

(Our author continues) unfortunately I do not have it any more, but in 1985 I was sent a notice by a Peoples Judge from Prague Citizen's Court, that stamps I was sending to a collector in ČSSR were confiscated for the benefit of the people. Only censor cleared letters were quickly resealed and sent on. Letters containing postage stamps, anticommunist literature or articles portraying Czech life in a negative manner were sent back stamped nonadmissible. In the case of western currency, the addressee's post office was notified to deliver that letter to the addressee's hand (Fig. 2, "Doručit do vlastních rukou"). The addressee had to sign for the letter. Attached to the letter was a warning label advising him that he had

ten days to exchange the foreign currency either for Czech Crowns or for hard-currency store coupons (Fig. 3). An additional oddity here -- this warning label was printed in Slovak, but the cover was remailed/forwarded from PRAHA 120.



Fig. 6

Figure 4 shows a cover that contained used US postage stamps. The handstamp "Zásilka obsahuje známky, jejichž dovoz není dovolen" translates as "Cover contains stamps, their entry is not permitted".

Even now with the advent of the Czech Republic there have been growing pains with the mail delivery service. The following article by our author and some excerpts from a newspaper article outline some of the travails.

**MAIL SERVICE TO CZEKIA, ČESKÁ, CEHĀ, CHECA, ČEKIJE, TCHÉQUIE, TSCHECHEI, CZECH REPUBLIC and MANY OTHER NAMES A PART OF FORMER CZECHOSLOVAKIA IS CALLED TODAY**

In 1996 the Czech Republic's newspapers printed many negative articles regarding the Czech postal system and its employees. There were accusations of undelivered and even stolen mail. Most of the articles were published by SVOBODNÉ SLOVO, the Czech Republic's largest daily newspaper, and also by PRAGUE POST, which is printed in English. The articles tell stories of packages

## THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

being delivered already torn open with the choice contents removed, envelopes received in similar conditions, or postal items simply disappearing. The number of parcels reported missing doubled between 1991 and 1993. In the first half of 1994, the Czech postal authorities caught 113 employees embezzling or stealing. Because of these troubling statistics, confidence in the post office is very low, and thus few people seek out the post office's help in tracking down missing items.

The causes of this troubling situation were identified as a general loosening of society's morals, a decline in the fear of the police, the large number of employees that require monitoring (the international postal transportation function alone employs 50,000 people), losses at foreign transit post offices even before the item gets to the Czech Republic (substantiated by registered mail records), and the fact that the Czech postal employees are among the lowest paid in the Czech Republic (the average salary is 5,281 Kč (\$215) per month, about 1,000 Kč less than the national average).

Without exception, the Czech postal authorities consistently pledge that these problems are being solved and that the perpetrators are being weeded out. In the meantime, they encourage that items of value be sent by registered mail or by private courier, and that all losses be reported through the proper reclamation form. By way of the loss report forms, the authorities can focus their attention on the heaviest loss locations and make the greatest impact on remedying the problem.

My personal contact with the Czech Republic averages four letters per week -- most of it to fellow stamp collectors and some to friends and relatives. In the fall of 1995, ten of my letters were lost, but four turned up approximately a month later at their destination stamped "Missent To Bangkok" (Fig. 5).

The summer of that same year, *Linn's Stamp News* carried a story warning its readers about the largest mail thefts in the world happening in Thailand. Well, maybe that explained the loss of my other six letters.

I believe part of the problem is that the Czech government failed to give the Czech Republic an official universally used postal name. Almost every foreign country calls the Czech Republic by a different name. At times the name is in the foreign country's language, and thus often sounds quite different. Just look at the title of this article, and you will see some of the variations that occur -- but by no means all.

One has only to realize that mail from overseas is seldom delivered directly to the Czech Republic, but rather arrives in different European capitols first and is then rerouted towards its final destination. One can hardly totally blame the Czech postal workers for missent mail.

I want to add that after the Bangkok episode, I started adding "EUROPE" to my Czech Republic destination addresses, but with little benefit. One of the first letters sent this way with "EUROPE" added was missent to Damman, Saudi Arabia.

The four letters that detoured via Bangkok, Thailand, and the one through Damman, Saudi Arabia, were all opened and resealed. Three of the letters had philatelic material and stamps enclosed which were stolen.

And finally, the comedy of errors does not all occur one way. Figure 6 shows a surface mail letter packet that was very clearly sent to the U.S.A. on November 11, 1996, came by way of Guayaquil, Ecuador, and arrived to me on March 28, 1997.

*For the Beginner*

**THE REVENUE STAMPS OF  
CZECHOSLOVAKIA**  
an original article  
by Phillips B. Freer



Fig. 1

I would guess that very few members of the Society, at least in the United States, are familiar with Czech revenue stamps, let alone collect them. As a matter of fact, I personally know of only one other

U.S. member who collects these revenue stamps, although there may be others.

Revenue stamps, in general, are not as attractive in appearance as regular stamps, and Czech revenue stamps are a bit difficult to obtain. However, the issuance and use of revenue stamps pre-date the issuance and use of regular postal issues, world-wide, by a great many years.

There has been very little mention of Czech revenues in past issues of the *SPECIALIST*. In fact there have only been four articles, only one of which went into any detail. All of these were concerned mainly with the Urban Import Foodstuffs Tax issues which were overprints of the demonetized Mucha-design postage due stamps. There are a very great number of other revenue issues and their collection and study, although a bit difficult, can be a very rewarding and fascinating branch of Czech philately.

As with philately in general, a catalog is essential for the proper identification of various revenue issues, and this constitutes a problem for the collector. The only catalog that I know of was published in 1976 -- the author being Severin Gottsmich -- which was reworked and edited by M. Erler. For the most part, this catalog deals with revenue issues only through 1956. There is a copy of the catalog available to Society members in the Society library. As might be expected, many of the early revenue issues are a bit expensive, especially when they appear on documents.

The very first revenue stamps issued by the former Czech Republic were issued in 1918, although they bear the date 1919. They were issued to indicate the payment of taxes and fees. They were printed on Pelure paper which is a thin, tough, hard, brittle semi-transparent paper with a bluish tinge, although later issues of the same design were of a reddish tinge. The design on these stamps is the Bohemian lion (Fig.1).



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

The tax on wheat flour is represented by the stamp seen in Figure 2, and the tax on yeast by the stamp in Figure 3. A fishing permit stamp is seen in Figure 4. Revenue stamps bearing the likeness of Masaryk - overprinted with various values - are listed in the Gottsmich catalog "For the so-called Russian notes", and are seen in Figure 5. Figure 6 shows an example of the postage due overprints, previously mentioned, and they represent a consumption tax. I am not sure of the exact purpose of the stamp seen in Figure 7, but they are listed for "Health Funds". Finally, Figure 8 is an example of wine tax banderoles. Most of the early banderoles are very rare.

I wish the "would-be" collector of Czech revenues the best of luck. They certainly represent a challenge!



Fig. 8

*Jiří Majer and Jaroslav Thraumb Auctions  
announce their second auction  
on September 13, 1997*

The auction will contain some of the most sought after philatelic material from the territory of the former Czechoslovakia divided into more than 1200 lots, with opening bids totaling more than 4 million crowns.

**Especially strong in:**

- "Pošta" overprints (including 6h black invert)
- 1<sup>st</sup> air mail issue (including flown covers)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> air mail issue (including flown covers)
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- Bohemia-Moravia
- Sub-Carpathian Russia

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**THE AUSTRIAN 60th JUBILEE  
POSTAL CARDS OF 1908**  
by Salvatore J. Rizza

When Emperor Franz Josef of Austria-Hungary was 78 years old, he had ruled this vast Central European Empire for 60 years. The Austrian Postal Service, in order to commemorate the occasion, commissioned the gifted artist, designer, and stamp engraver, Koloman Moser (Fig. 1), to design and engrave a set of commemorative postage stamps and a pictorial postal card in honor of the aged Franz Josef.



Fig. 1

This article will relate only to the postal card (Fig. 2 and 3). The green 5 Heller imprinted stamp on the postal card portrays the 18 year old Franz Josef at the time he ascended the throne in 1848. The reverse depicts a black and sepia colored drawing of the 78 year old King and Emperor of Austria-Hungary in 1908, along with two views, Castle Schoenbrunn on the outskirts of Vienna and the Kaiser's Vienna Hofburg Palace. Eight different cards make up this set. Although the reverse pictorial side remained the same, the front of the postal card was printed in eight different ethnic languages of the inhabitants of the Empire.

These postal cards were first put on sale 18 August 1908, the Kaiser's birthday, with the official first day on 2 December 1908. This latter date was the

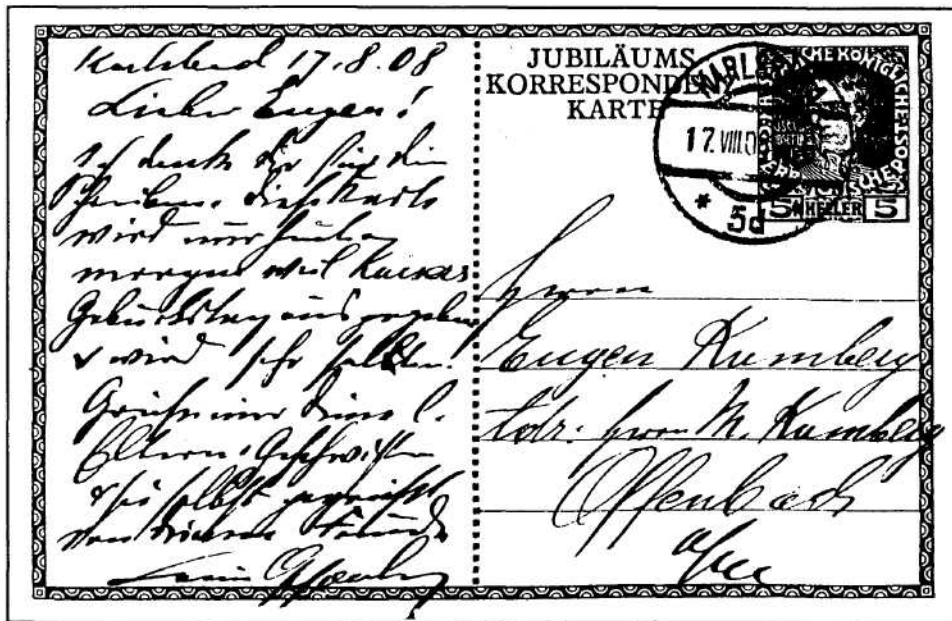


Fig. 2

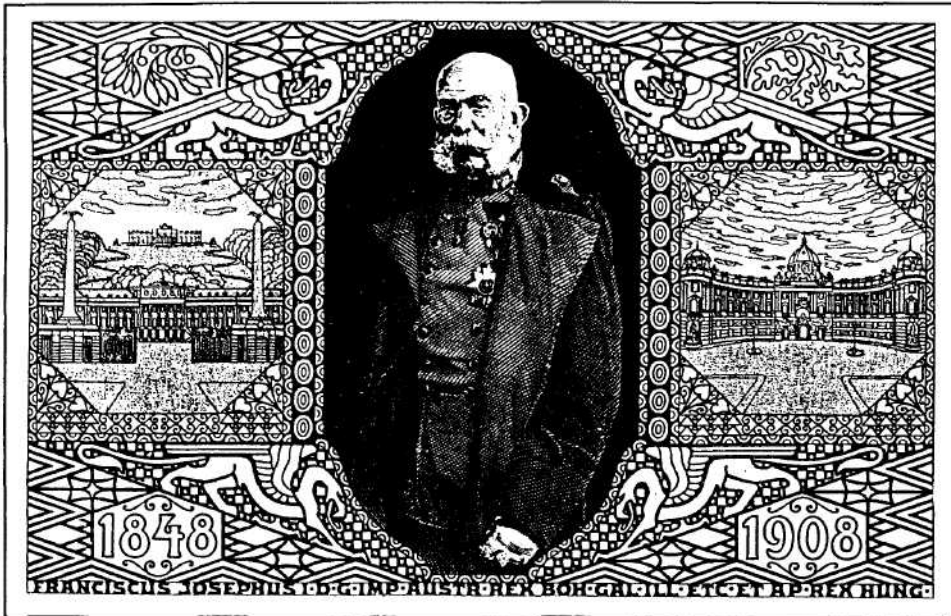


Fig. 3

60th anniversary of Kaiser Franz Josef's ascension to the Austrian throne. As with all good intentions, the issue date instructions were not heeded at the post office



Fig. 4

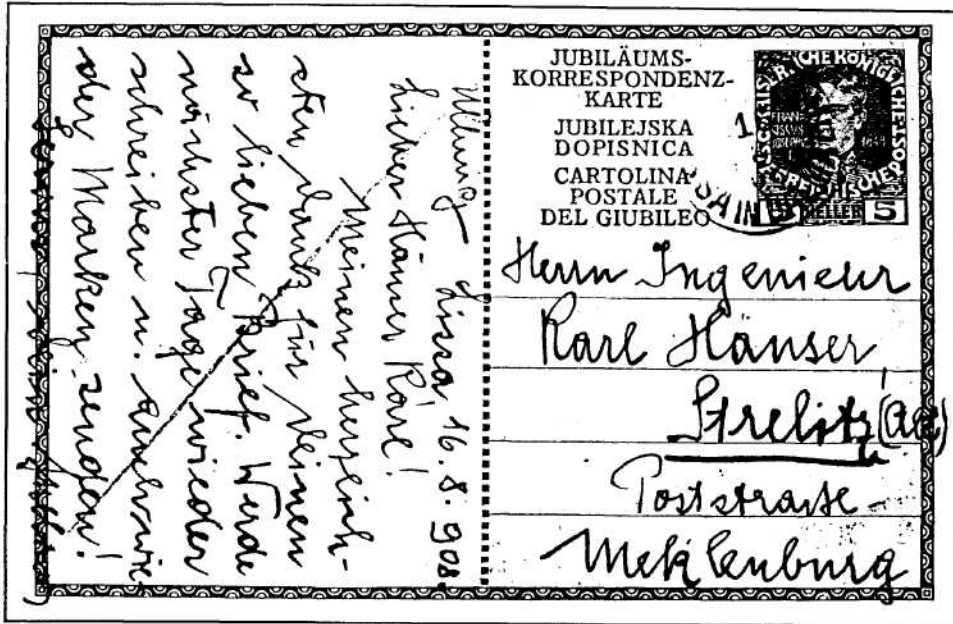


Fig. 5

in Karlsbad, Bohemia (now Karlovy Vary in the Czech Republic). Figure 2 has a postmark of 17 August 1908, which makes it an Early Known Use (EKU) for this



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

card! The sender's message reads: "Karlsbad, 17 August 1908. Dear Eugene, I thank you for your letter. This card will be sold only today and tomorrow morning

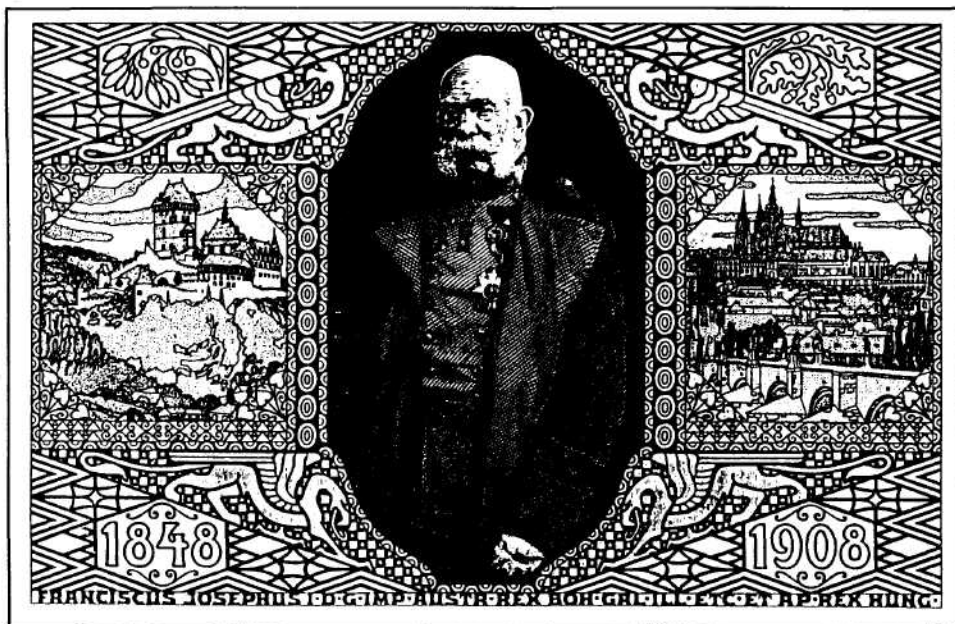


Fig. 8



Fig. 9

to honor the Kaiser's birthday, and will be very rare. Greetings to your parents, brothers and sisters, and also to you, from your friend." The card was addressed to Offenbach, Germany.

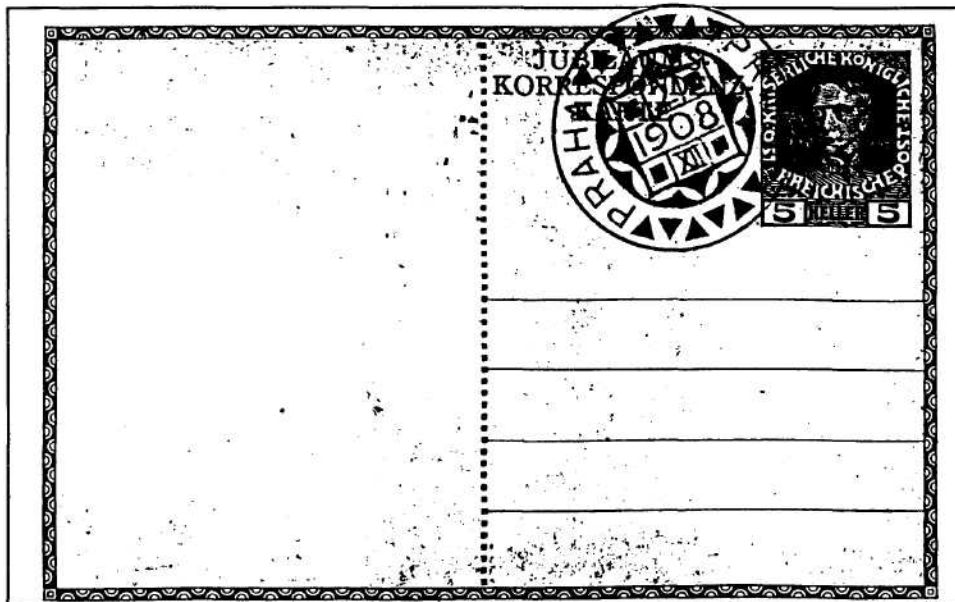


Fig. 10

This early known sale and use of this card is not unique. Figure 4 and 5 depict two similar postal cards with early cancellations. Figure 4 was postmarked on 15 August 1908 in Vienna, having been written on the 14th. Figure 5 was postmarked on 16 August 1908 in Lissa, Dalmatia.

Figure 6 is the official first day red postmarked card of 2 December 1908 from Wien (Vienna). It is interesting to note that, although canceled on the 2nd, it has a Rome, Italy, receipt stamp of 10 January 1909. There is also a small round train number cancel at the bottom of the middle dotted line, an indication that it traveled through regular postal channels. The addressee's last name is written over the first day cancel, connoting that the post office sold the cards with the postmark affixed, and then accepted them back for delivery on a later date, without further cancellation.

The writer of the early Karlsbad card was certain that this particular piece of postal stationery would later prove to be very rare and valuable, but he was wrong. The Jubilee card is readily available in most postal stationery dealers' stock, with prices ranging from one to ten dollars. In fact, the EKU card of 17 August 1908, although rare, was purchased for one dollar. This lucky buy may be explained by the dealer's lack of knowledge with reference to this issue.

A postal card with a different format on the address side -- and with two famous Prague views substituted for those of Vienna -- was printed for use in connection with the 1908 Jubilee Exhibition in Prague. Figure 7 shows that card with the special Prague Jubilee Exhibition postmark. Figure 8 is the picture side of this same card now showing the Kaiser flanked by a view of Karlstein Castle and the traditional view of the Hradčany with the Charles Bridge. It is also noted that the Prague Exhibition postal cards were available in Vienna, as is shown by the 2 November 1908 canceled item, Figure 9.

First day postmarks of 2 December 1908 were used in the province capitals of Wien, Bruenn, Czernowitz, Graz, Innsbruck, Klagenfurt, Laiback, Lemberg, Linz, Prague (Fig. 10), Salzburg, Triest, Troppau, and Zara. Franz Josef's anniversary postal cards were used postally until 1918; however, the aged Emperor had died two years earlier in 1916, his 86th year.



### *President's Corner*

*(Continued from Page 1)*

Our new editor, Lou Svoboda, described his progress in introducing high tech procedures in the editing and production of the SPECIALIST. Lou is using computer tools and electronic communications not only to speed the publication process, but also to increase editorial control and to give him better command of layout and production quality. The result will be a significant overall savings in production costs. He also asked that authors not submit text on disks in the future, but rather as hard copy. He uses entering the text into the computer as the first editorial cut of the process.

Richard Palaschak, our librarian, reported that the detailed inventory of Library holdings is almost complete. The project to bind the Library holdings of old and quite valuable periodicals is also nearing completion. Back issues of the



Fig. 1

Our very old friend, Jan Karásek making a presentation on forgeries with Henry Hahn translating.

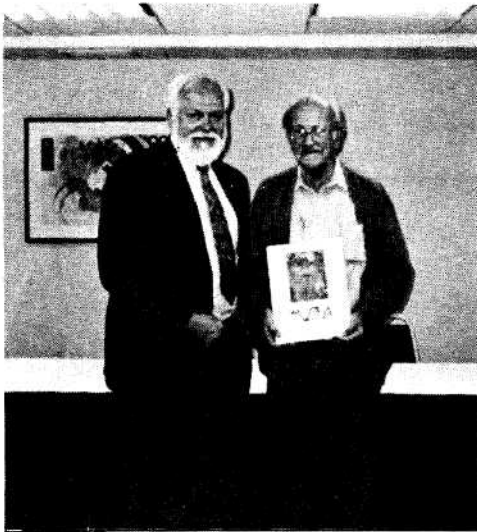


Fig. 2

President Verner congratulating Phil Freer on his appointment as honorary member and presenting him with a book on Alfons Mucha as a memento of the occasion.

SPECIALIST have been gathered from "storage sites" - mostly basements of past officers - around the country and are now available to members for a small fee.

The Society publication sales program has been very active, in good part due to new publications we have been able to offer our members. Especially popular has been the excellent Trojan catalog which is in color. Society policy is to make publications available to members at a reasonable price which covers costs, transportation charges, and leaves a small margin to help with purchases of new items. During the past couple of years we have benefitted from the willingness of our member, Jiří Majer, to supply many titles at discount and then deliver them to us at no shipment cost to the Society.

The Board voted to change the way the mailing of circuits will be handled in the future. Members of the circuit program will receive details from Alan

Hoover once our insurance carrier approves the proposed changes. The need for a change in procedures was necessitated by the loss of several circuits. Test mailings indicate that the new procedures will increase costs to members only slightly, if at all.

The Board also approved:

1) the design of new Society medals to be awarded to the best three Czechoslovakia related exhibits at our future annual exhibitions. The design is handsome and will certainly be valued by future recipients. Time to update your exhibits, folks.

2) preparation of a listing of comparative catalog numbers for distribution to all members free of charge. This should make use of various catalogs easier for all.

3) preparation and publication of a directory of members including the listing of collecting interests. The directory will be distributed to all members, for their use only, free of charge. A detailed questionnaire will be sent to members separately.

Finally, the Board approved the following annual meeting/exhibit locations. It should be noted that this listing is subject to change since we have not reached final agreement with the

organizers of all the shows. Additional information on each of the shows will be published in the SPECIALIST. We list the schedule here so you can begin making plans to attend:

- 1998 NOJEX (Memorial Day week-end)
- 1998 PRAGA'98 (September 10-13 in Prague)
- 1999 STAMPSHOW (August in Cleveland)
- 2000 BALPEX (Labor Day week-end)
- 2001 CHICAGOPEX (November)
- 2002 NAPEX (June)



Fig. 3

Society breakfast - L. To R. - Lumír Brendl, Pres. Verner, Světa Brendl (Lumír's sister), Henry Hahn



Fig. 4

Society breakfast - L. To R. - Pres. Verner, Pavel Pitterman, Henry Hahn, Dr. Peter Osuský

## THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

Of course we did not spend all our time in San Francisco conducting Society business. Much time was spent studying the many fine exhibits shown at PACIFIC'97, searching through dealer's stocks, and even bidding on material in the several auctions held at the exhibit site. FYI - prices and bids were high. And of course, we met old friends and made new ones (Fig. 1). More than 40 members and guests participated in our annual Society breakfast, including members from Germany, Holland, the Slovak Republic, and the Czech Republic. At the breakfast it was announced that the Board had elected Phil Freer to honorary membership for his service to the Society, especially in the area of young and beginning collectors (Fig. 2). We also had the honor of hosting the President of the Union of Czech Philatelists, Lumir Brendl (Fig. 3), as well as the acting President of the Union of Slovak Philatelists, Dr. Peter Osusky (Fig. 4).

Jaroslav J. Verner



## THE REVOLUTIONARY OVERPRINTS OF 1945

*[Ed. Note: We have seen several book reviews and items in the recent SPECIALIST's discussing this area. Here we present two articles that bring out some of the personal aspects associated with this extremely turbulent, dangerous, and heroic time in Czechoslovak history. The first article has added poignancy due to the personal experiences of the translator. The second brings to light the difficulties involved in attempting to get these various issues printed and then declared as official releases of the postal administration.]*

### THE OVERPRINT OF NOVOTNÝ -- PRAGUE 33

by Karel Holoubek  
translated by Peter Kleskovic

My collection was enhanced by a registered cover (including a letter) mailed from the Prague 33 post office on 5/5/1945 with a cancel distinguished by a letter "h". This addition to my collection is doubly welcomed. Firstly, as any collector who can add something worthwhile to his collection, and secondly, that the envelope still included its original contents.

This cover was franked with seven stamps of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, all overprinted by a five line text "FREE + CZECHOSLOVAKIA + IN + FREE + EUROPE" (Fig. 1). It is an overprint from Prague, named after its originator, the Overprint of Frank Novotný. Besides the day when it was mailed, what is even more interesting is the hour of the mailing -- 12 o'clock, noon! *[Trans. Note: At 12 noon on May 5, 1945, the Prague Revolution against the Germans started - it was a dangerous day. Prague Radio called all day for help - both the Americans and the Russians. The sirens all over the city were blowing. People everywhere started to build barricades in the streets to stop the German tanks, even using streetcars filled with cobblestones.]*

By way of this kind of letter, Frank Novotný sent his greetings to friends and

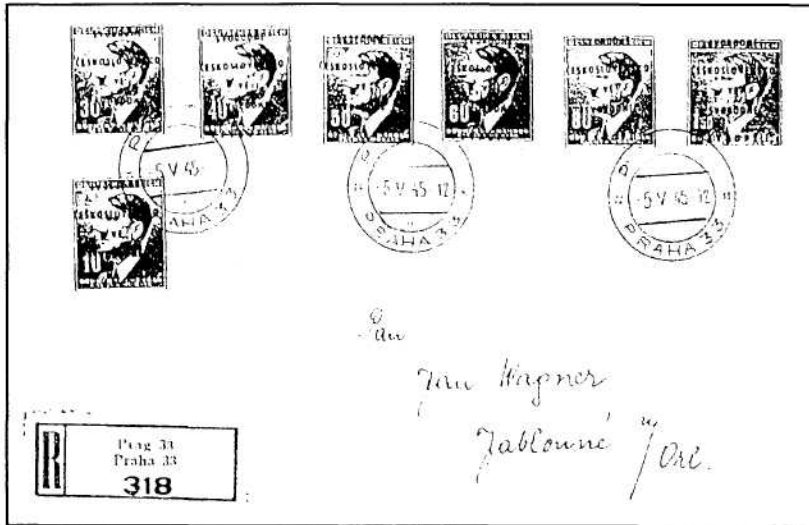


Fig. 1

to the subscribers of his philatelic news service. For the overprint collectors of this revolutionary period, the date of the mailing of the cover is always very important. The Prague Revolution was just starting, and yet these overprints were already prepared, placed on the envelopes, and at this critical hour posted at the post office for mailing. Not only were they postally processed, but they were also registered! This means that the overprint was prepared and printed in advance of this date and hour.

And note what is written in the letter:

"To the subscribers of the philatelic news service! At the early evening of the liberation of Prague, I am sending you my happiest greetings. On the cover you will find stamps which were prepared the week prior to Heydrich's death. All the details will be published in my magazine. Do not consider them as anything except as a souvenir. *[Trans. Note: Reinhard Heydrich, the Nazi Protector of Bohemia and Moravia, was mortally wounded in Prague on May 27, 1942, by several Czech patriots. The Protectorate issued a stamp in his honor on May 28, 1942, Scott B20.]* There are possibly quite a few people to whom these letters cannot be delivered, and, it is highly unlikely that the post office will return them . . . Accordingly, I am taking the liberty to ask you to pay attention to the new magazine which you will shortly receive . . . It will be the Philatelist's Reporter (ZPRAVODAJ FILATELISTU), which will serve only the serious philatelists . . ."

This is a brief excerpt from Frank Novotný's letter. Already today, it is a historic document.

*[Trans. Comments: First, the overprints must have been prepared in advance, or all of it could have been prepared subsequently. However, to have the overprinting done in 1942 -- while it was possible -- would have been very dangerous, almost foolish. This was a period of extreme Nazi oppression, and at*

## THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

*the same time the Germans were still victorious [1942]. Second, I have real difficulty in believing that any post office would have been open on Saturday at 12 o'clock noon at this 1945 period. Possibly the main post office in Prague. Maybe. I would rather think that someone had a friend at a post office or got hold of a post office canceling device -- which at the time was not very hard to do. Third, there is no street name nor house number on the envelope. I wonder if there is a back stamp/cancellation on the reverse of the envelope.]*

*[Ed. Note: The translator was born and raised in Prague. He experienced the events that he describes above. And now a question -- Was Frank Novotný's ZPRAVODAJ FILATELISTU the parent publication of today's ZPRAVODAJ Společnost Sběratelů Československých Známek?]*

\* \* \* \*

### THE 1945 REVOLUTIONARY OVERPRINTS FROM KOSTELEC nad ORLICÍ by Karel Holoubek translated by Ludvik Svoboda



Fig. 2

The spiritual father of the revolutionary overprint from Kostelec nad Orlicí is Josef Sokol (Fig. 2). He took the first steps to their development as early as 1943. At that time he informed Josef Telecký and Jaroslav Čermák (the proprietor of the printing works at Vamberk) of his plans and got their concurrence for them to be developed. Another collaborator in the plan was Karel Červenka, the postmaster of Vamberk.

All of these preparations were threatened by the death of Mr. Čermák in 1944. But after cautiously contacting his wife, Marie, they got her agreement that at the suitable time she would prepare the overprint. Nevertheless, the assistance of an expert printer would also be needed.

So that the overprinting proceeded quickly and not too many values would have to be dealt with, there were only three basic values chosen -- 60h, 80h, and 1.20K, i.e., local postage, postcard, and letter.

Josef Telecký was responsible for listening to the foreign station broadcasts for information about the situation at the fronts. As a result of his information, in the first months of 1945 they began looking for a contact in the underground movement. The chairman of the secretly formed National Committee in Kostelec nad Orlicí, MUDr. František Pups, and Ing. Hlaváček from Vamberk expressed their agreement with the plan.

In April 1945, they began the first trials. In their plans they first considered a use date of 1 May. Because of developments, this date was changed to 5 May. The overprint composition was prepared by Josef Řehák. Postmaster Kužel of Kostelec made his entire stock of introductory valued stamps available for use. At noon on 5 May, Josef Sokol, with the stamps in a briefcase, rode to Vamberk on his bicycle. At this time Prague radio was already calling for help.

Here the stamps came together with the printers: Bedřich Boček, Bohumil Čížinský, Vlastimil Čermák, and later, Oldřich Kulhánek. On that day they had to twice stop their work, put everything away, and lie down on the ground to wait

until the Nazi's went by and the shooting stopped. In the evening after 9 o'clock, Josef Sokol -- again by bicycle -- returned to Kostelec with the first overprinted stamp sheets.

At the printing works they worked on -- Sunday and Monday too. On 7 May the post office in Kostelec had enough stamps, and so they began selling them. But the printing went on until the 10th of May, because they were joined by additional selling post offices in Vamberk, Rychnov nad Kněžnou, Doudleby, Potštejn, and Slatina nad Zdobnicí. At the conclusion of the printing, the completed supply was distributed. These overprints were also known to be used by Holice, Brandýs nad Orlicí, and Hradec Králové.

After liberation, the District Council confirmed in writing its agreement to the production of the overprints. In it was stated that the Council had put out an order to overprint the stamps. The document has a date of 11 May 1945. It was also published in the regional weekly "Posel z Podhůří", number 20, dated 19 May 1945.

In actuality Josef Sokol and the printing establishment had borrowed the stamps. They came from the supply of the named post offices and were their property. About 253,371 Kč was transferred to the postal administration for the sale of overprinted stamps. From this the post office kept 5,180 Kč and the rest was given to the Provincial National Committee. The remainder of the unsold overprinted stamps were given back to the post offices. Management conducted a follow-up on the overprinted stamps held by the post offices. In Vamberk they even did a survey to see how many stamps they sold. The money from their sale went to the postal administration and was properly accounted for. The letters that were franked by these stamps were transported and delivered like normal mail.

For several months after May, the District Committee in Rychnov nad Kněžnou negotiated with the postal administration for official recognition of this revolutionary overprint issue. They were not successful.



## ELECTION RESULTS

In our recent election you elected two new board members, John Miskevich of Clifton, NJ, and Kimber Wald of Woodbine, MD, and re-elected three incumbent board members Edwin Lehecka, Richard Palaschak, and Jaroslav J. Verner. Their term of office will run through 2003.

***LIBRARY -- The finest collection of Czechoslovak philatelic literature is at your fingertips. Contact the librarian, Richard Palaschak (page 2), for an index of books and for the rules of our borrowing by mail service.***

## PACIFIC '97 - THE SHOW AND EXHIBITS

Pacific '97 - World Philatelic Exhibition, a once in a decade FIP show held in the United States, took place at the splendid and vast Moscone Center in San Francisco from May 29<sup>th</sup> through June 8<sup>th</sup>

The show included some 3,500 frames - the maximum allowed under current FIP rules - located along the outer edges of two large halls, at the center of which were booths representing the world's foremost stamp and accessory dealers. The halls were well lit, with areas of the dealer and postal administration booths covered by rugs -- while, significantly, the exhibit areas were not.

Judging was handled by a jury having an eight member presidium, with F. Burton Sellers acting as President, Robert Odenweller, Secretary and Steven D. Schuman as Jury Coordinator. The jury, including apprentices, numbered forty-four, plus two senior consultants and three members of the Expert Committee. Unfortunately, not a single jury member, consultant or expert had extensive knowledge of the Czechoslovak area. Traditional Czechoslovak exhibits were judged by four or five judges, including Messrs. Odenweller and Livesay. As a result, according to the Czech Commissioner and accredited FIP judge, Ing. Pavel Pittermann, some serious errors in judging were evident. A similar situation was evident in Postal History and Thematic exhibits.

The Commissioner General of Pacific'97 was Mr. Joseph D. Schwartz. The Commissioner for the Czech Republic was Ing. Pavel Pittermann and the Commissioner for Slovakia was Dr. Peter Osusky, M.D. Below are listed exhibits by members of the SCP as well as exhibits by Czechs and Slovaks:

Name	Country of Origin	Title of Exhibit	Class/Award
Ludvík Pytlíček	CZE	Czechoslovakia 1918 - 1939	FIP Championship
Stephan Frater	USA	Classics of Hungary, Issue of 1871	FIP Championship
Henry Hahn	USA	Czechoslovakia - The First Republic	Gold
A. G. Zulueta	USA	Nepal, Classic period, 1881 - 1907	Large Vermeil
J. L. Klein	NED	Czecho. 1918-39 - Selected Pages	Large Vermeil
Lad. Fischmeister	USA	Czecho. and Territories, 1918-1945	Large Vermeil
Lumír Brendl	CZE	Troubled Times in Bohemia and Czechoslovakia, 1629-1945	Large Vermeil
Alexander Unwin	USA	Canada's Pacific Maritime Mails	Vermeil
Jiří Horák	CZE	The Century of the Motor Car	Vermeil
Geoffrey McCauley	IRL	Harness the Wind, Hazard the Sea	Vermeil
Peter Osusky	SLO	For the Glory of Sport -- Coubertin's Years	Vermeil
František Beneš and P. Tošnerová	CZE	"Mail Services in the Ghetto Terezin, 1941-1945"	Vermeil (Literary)
Vit Vaníček	CZE	The Post of the Austro-Hungarian Navy	Large Silver
Josef Tekel	SLO	Train Post Offices from Territory Slovakia, 1863-194	Large Silver

George Štupka	CZE	Dove and Allegory Issues 1920	Silver
Victor G. Berecz, Jr.	USA	The Pioneer Period of Hungarian Air Mail	Silver
Jan Klim	CZE	"MERKUR REVUE" (Literary)	Silver
Mirko L.Vondra	USA	"The Czechoslovak SPECIALIST" (Literary)	Silver/Bronze
Robert Skolek	CZE	Vodní Sporty - Aquatic Sports (Junior)	Bronze
Branislav Malák	SLO	Red Cross - Humanism - Peace (Junior)	?

It is possible that we have inadvertently omitted some exhibits by members of the SCP or others of interest to SCP members -- for this we humbly apologize.

We have carefully examined most of the tabulated Czechoslovakia related items and wish to point out some of the highlights.

Mr. Pytlíček's exhibit included most rarities of the period, many of which are illustrated in the current Trojan catalogue. We particularly note replacement of a doubtful Scout telegram from what was shown at CAPEX with one we are also not quite certain of.

Henry Hahn's exhibit displayed the only recorded block-of-four of the 50/400h Agriculture & Science overprinted for postage due, and the probably unique full sheet of the PC 1919 brown "Karl" with reverse die position. The original discovery by the exhibitor is referenced.

Probably the most undervalued exhibit at PACIFIC'97 was the exhibit of J. L. Klein. The previously gold award winning display included four 30h Hradčany gutters, the largest known block (of 14) of the 20h Hradčany imperforate VZOREC, a block-of-four of the 120h Hradčany silver shade, four narrow 1.50K air mails - one with inverted overprint, a block-of-four of the PC 1919 10h Mercury, the headless red Chainbreaker inside a block-of-six, joined types of the rare perforated 40h Chainbreaker, a block-of-fifteen of the 2000h Švabinsky Masaryk printed from a copper plate, a block-of-four of the PC 1919 large 2h postage due, and the Masaryk vertically watermarked 3Kč, position 3, with plate number. Four horizontally watermarked 40h Masaryk "NEOTYPIE" were shown, as well as the 1 Kč Nitra and 3.50Kč Křivoklat gutters, both types of the PC 1919 "granite" 10K, the "granite" 4K, and the 50/50 Postage Due Chainbreaker - all amidst other unmentioned rarities.

Dr. Fischmeister has shown another wealth of rarities which include Hradčany horizontal gutters, rare Hradčany perforations, no less than five of the narrow format dark 2K PC 1919, a block of four of the 10K with set-off, the only recorded PC 1919 10h Mercury with inverted overprint, all three types of the PC 1919 Postage Due, large numeral 2h, all four types of the 20h "Magyar Posta", both the 1Kč Nitra and 3.50Kč Křivoklat gutters, and a pair of the 50/400h Agriculture & Science postage due overprint. Protectorate Hitler vertical gutter pairs and the Heydrich sheet brought the exhibit to a close. As in the past, the exhibit lost points due to penciled Czech descriptions and large "R's" to indicate rarity.

Lumír Brendl exhibited in the Thematic Class. The thoughtfully prepared exhibit covers Recatholization, the influence of Jan Hus on the Czech language and nation, education by both the Catholic and Protestant clergy, Karel Havlíček Borovský, Palacký, Rieger, the Sokols, Bishop Belanský (Slovak educator), Bishop

## THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

Moyses of Matice Slovenská - leading to Masaryk and World War I, Siberia and the first Czechoslovak stamp issue. The exhibit concludes with World War II, concentration camps Sachsenhausen, Terezin, and Buchenwald. This writer, not being very familiar with thematic exhibiting, found the subject and presentation fascinating - though in a few cases the philatelic item presented was only loosely connected with the theme.

Peter Osusky's showing, also in the Thematic Class, deals with the origin of the Olympic Games and later on the Slovak role. It shows the work by Alfons Mucha in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He includes German vignettes and even Fliegerpost Przemysl with just an obscure connection to the subject. The exhibit ends with an extensive showing of the 1925 Olympic Congress held in Prague.

The Palmares dinner - at \$100 - was far from a "rubber chicken affair". In fact, the dinner included filet mignon, crab cakes and plenty of good wine. Only Gold Awards were presented, except for the Grand Prix d'Honneur, the Grand Prix International and Grand Prix National. Mr. F. Burton Sellers presented the awards.



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**PHILANGLES**



*New Issues*

CZECH REPUBLIC

[*Ed. Note: With this issue we are beginning to play catch-up with the new issues of the Czech Republic by completing those from 1996 that we have just received information about.*]



Fig. 1

1. On 11 September 1996, the Ministry of Transport and Communications issued a 3Kč commemorative stamp entitled the "50th Anniversary of UNICEF" (Fig. 1). The multicolored horizontal stamp shows an allegorical drawing of a butterfly with flowered wings and with a body consisting of a boy playing a flute. To the left is the UNICEF logo. Designer: K. Franta; engraver: B. Šneider. It was produced using line engraving combined with recess printing. The FDC carries a design of a seated little girl with a kitten and a rose.



Fig. 2

2. On 25 September 1996, the Ministry issued a set of two stamps each showing one of the two varieties of the Kladrup horses -- vraník (black) and bělouš (white) (Fig. 2). Both stamps carry a value of 3Kč and are basically dark blue, red, and ochre. Designer: P. Orišek; engraver: M. Ondráček. The stamps were produced using line engraving combined with recess printing. Each stamp has a FDC with a design showing the appropriate prancing horse.

3. On 5 October 1996, the Ministry issued a 6Kč stamp commemorating the 60th anniversary of the birth of the Czech Republic's president, Václav Havel. The stamp has a portrait of the president under which is the text "VÁCLAV HAVEL 1936.5.10.1996". The stamp was printed as part of a miniature sheet (Fig. 3). The sheet contains two of the perforated stamps side by side, the president's flag, and a facsimile of Havel's signature along with a heart. Both the stamp and the miniature sheet are blue and red. Designer: J. Solpera; engraver: V. Fajt. The miniature sheet was produced using line engraving combined with recess printing. The FDC has a graphical representation combining the presidential standard, the initials "VH", and the number "60".

4. On 5 October 1996, the Ministry issued a 20Kč stamp in the Art on Stamp



Fig. 3

series titled "Endre Nemes (1909-1985)" (Fig. 4). This was a three-way joint issue with the Slovak Republic and Sweden. *[Ed. Note: Please see the write-up on the Slovak Republic issue in the Jan/Feb 1997 issue of the SPECIALIST, pg 20. All of the information found there is applicable except for the denomination change.]*



Fig. 4



Fig. 5

5. On 9 October 1996, the Ministry issued a 5Kč stamp for the 450th anniversary of the birth of the Danish born astronomer, Tycho Brahe (1546-1601) (Fig. 5). He is world renowned for his work with Johannes Kepler in the court of Emperor Rudolfa II. He is buried in a marble tomb at the Church of Our Lady before Týn. This multicolored stamp contains a portrait of the astronomer, an illustration of a piece of astronomical equipment of the time, a stylized moon, star constellations, and the text "1546 - TYCHO BRAHE - 1601". Designer: J. Leisler; engraver: J. Herčík. The stamp was produced with recess printing. The FDC shows an illustration of astronomer's equipment and constellations.

6. On 9 October 1996, the Ministry issued a set of three multicolored stamps commemorating historical aircraft (Fig. 6). The 7Kč issue shows the biplane LETOV S 1 from the year 1920; the 8Kč shows the biplane AERO A 11 from 1925;



Fig. 6

and the 10Kč shows the biplane AVIA BH 21 from 1925. Designer: E. Urban; engraver: M. Srb. The stamps were produced using line engraving combined with recess printing. There are three FDC's, each illustrating the respective aircraft silhouette.

7. On 13 November 1996, the Ministry issued a set of two multi-colored stamps in the Art on Stamp series (Fig. 7). The 9Kč issue illustrates the painting "Ráj [paradise] (1912)" by Josef Vachal (1884-1969) from the National Gallery in Prague.



Fig. 7

It shows Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden under the Tree of Knowledge with the serpent at their feet. The 11Kč issue illustrates the painting "Snídaně s vejcem [breakfast including an egg] (kolem r. 1630)" by Georg Flegel (1566-1638) from the National Gallery in Prague. It shows two carnations in a spouted glass pitcher, a water glass, a plate sitting on a loaf of bread, and an egg with a fly on it. Graphic artist and engraver: M. Ondráček (9Kč) and V. Fajt (11Kč). The stamps were produced using flat plate recess printing. The FDC's illustrate a woodcut by Váchal and a detailed drawing by Flegel respectively.



Fig. 8

8. On 13 November 1996, the Ministry issued a 3Kč multicolored stamp commemorating Christmas (Fig 8). It illustrates a Nativity Scene woodcut by Josef Heji from

## THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

Halenkov na Vsetínsk with a falling star and the text "Betlém z Dinotice" in small print. Designer: J. Králík; engraver: J. Herčík. The stamp was produced using line engraving combined with recess printing. The FDC includes a stylized drawing of comets and stars with a text of "1796-1996 200 LET VÁNOČNÍ MŠE JAKUBA JANA RYBY".



### Letters to the Editor

1. Dear Lou:

I'd like to comment on Salvatore Rizza's letter in the March/April issue, p. 30. I can't answer all the questions - just some.

Vidnava or Weidenau is a small town near the frontier between Moravia and Poland, northeast of Jeseník. The Germans included it in the Sudetenland, since the present day adjacent Polish territory was then German.

The cover - which includes not only Austrian and Czech stamps - also includes 12 Pf in German stamps, which would be enough to cover the domestic German letter rate. I don't believe the rest would be near enough to pay registry + air mail. It is possible that the Austrian postage was valid in annexed territories at that time. However, I doubt that the cover was flown - it is most likely favor canceled, even though the air mail label is tied. It is likely that the Czech name, Vidnava, was removed from the canceling device on Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup>, the day on which the town declared itself annexed, though it is also possible that the cover was fabricated later.

The Znaim cover is probably also favor canceled, as evidenced by the incomplete address, the careful placement of the postmarks, and lack of any airport transit marking or other marking, assuming that the back of the cover is clean. Neither cover I assume has a return address on the back.

Hence both are just souvenirs. I suggest you read the book by Hoer and Dub on Sudetenland (in German) which is in our library. While their politics are rather bad, there is some good philately in it. I wouldn't put either cover in my Sudetenland or German occupation of the ČSR exhibit.

Henry Hahn

2. Dear Lou:

The following notes were prompted by a comment by Henry Hahn in his article "The Revolutionary Overprints of Czechoslovakia" (January/February 1997 issue of *The SPECIALIST*).

It is written that various stamps were overprinted . . . "and even one stamp of France". This is incorrect! At least 30 French stamps are known to have been overprinted with the motif now illustrated (Fig. 1,

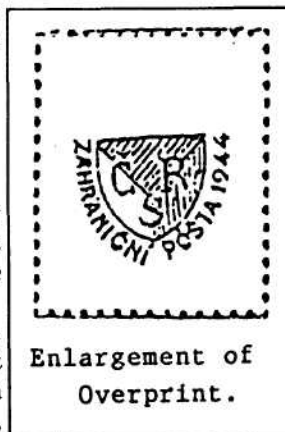


Fig. 1

Stamp	Yvert	4f (recess)	522
<u>Pétain</u>		4f50 (recess)	523
60c	509	5f	524
70c orange	511	<u>Mercury (Postes)</u>	
80c green	513	10c	546
1f	514	30c	547
1f20	515	40c	548
1f50 brown	517	50c	549
2f	518	Tricolour )	565-to
2f40	519	Legion )	566
3f	521	June 1943 Relief	576-to
4f (typo)	521A	Fund Issue	580
4f50 (typo)	521B	1944 Great	612-to
		Men	617

Fig. 2

showing "ČSR ZAHRAŇIČNÍ POŠTA 1944" - Foreign Post 1944).

The overprinting was carried out shortly after the arrival of the Czechoslovak Independent Armoured Brigade in France at the end of August, probably whilst the brigade was in the Falaise area awaiting deployment to the Dunkirk perimeter (October 1944).

A listing of known stamps overprinted is shown above (Fig. 2). Most are known "used" on cover, undoubtedly cancelled by favour. One example from the Vire district some 30 miles from Falaise and with Paris postmarks (Fig. 3, part cover - Paris 13th October 1944).

(A full write up on this facet of "liberation" is included in the Czechoslovak Pilatelic Society of Great Britain Monograph No. 5 -- available from Edwin Lehecka.)

W. Alec Page FRPS,L

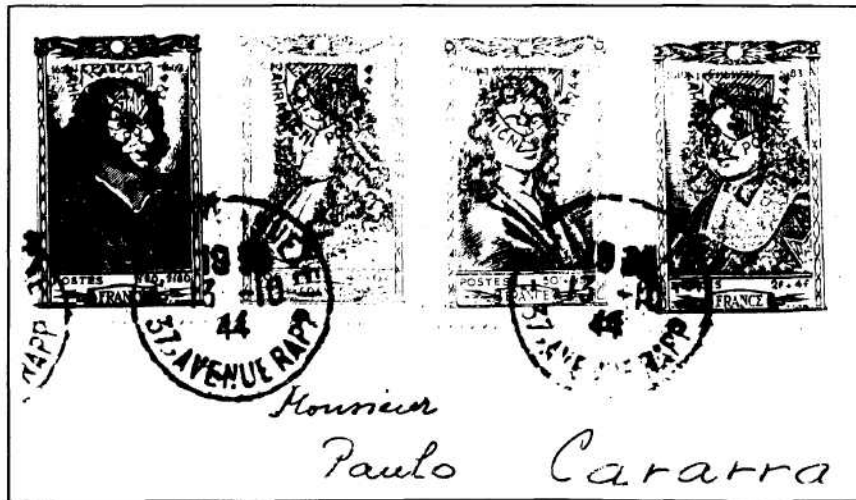


Fig. 3

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