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THE MAIL GOES THROUGH: A SIBERIAN TRIP REPORT by Jaroslav J. Verner

Eighty years ago this past September the first Czechoslovak mail system inaugurated -- and it was not even in Europe. The Field Post of the Czechoslovak Legions in Siberia began operations on September 16, 1918 by sending a railroad car from Chelyabinsk to Syzran, a distance of 1136 kilometers or 705 miles. The routes of the Field Post expanded as quickly as it could acquire the needed railcars and personnel to staff them.

The Field Post fell under the command of Quartermaster General Klecenda who -- on October 18, 1918 -- ordered a plan be prepared for a direct weekly mail connection between Chelyabinsk and Vladivostok, a distance of 6900 kilometers or 4313 miles. Antonín Novotný (the Field Post Commander) submitted the plan on the 23rd of October. Three days later the first mail car left for Vladivostok.

The entire system serving the Czechoslovak and Allied troops was tied together with the opening of the Chelyabinsk - Vladivostok run even though the system was not complete. In fact, the day the first Rail Field Post left for Vladivostok, a telegram was sent to Schediwý at the Field Post in Irkutsk ordering him to immediately proceed to Vladivostok to open a Field Post there. The Field Post in Vladivostok was opened just 24 hours before the arrival of the first Rail Field Post Office's arrival.

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THE MAIL GOES THROUGH: A SIBERIAN TRIP REPORT
(Continued from Page 1)

Recently, while going through archival material, I came across the report of Václav Kalous who commanded this first Railroad Field Post Office run across Siberia. The report of his 15 day trip notes many of the problems encountered along the route, problems not so different from those the Field Post continued to have throughout its existence. The report is written more like a diary than a formal report, and often is terse in its notations. Throughout Kalous refers to fellow legionnaires as "Brother", a practice common among the Czechoslovak Legionnaires. A translation of this trip report follows:

Chelyabinsk - Vladivostok October 1918

Tuesday, the 22nd: Following my transfer from the Attack Cavalry Battery, I reported to the Commander of the Field Post, Brother Novotný, who really surprised me when he advised me he wanted me to travel to Vladivostok. I replied I would be glad to travel anywhere, and that I was especially grateful for the trip to Vladivostok. I admit, however, I found his plan daring. The Russians themselves did not travel more than 1000 versts¹. I went into town to buy a map of Siberia, sealing wax, ink pencils and so on. Since I could not find the map, I returned to the Field Post to copy down the stations along the road to Vladivostok, of which there were 502 averaging 14 km from each other.

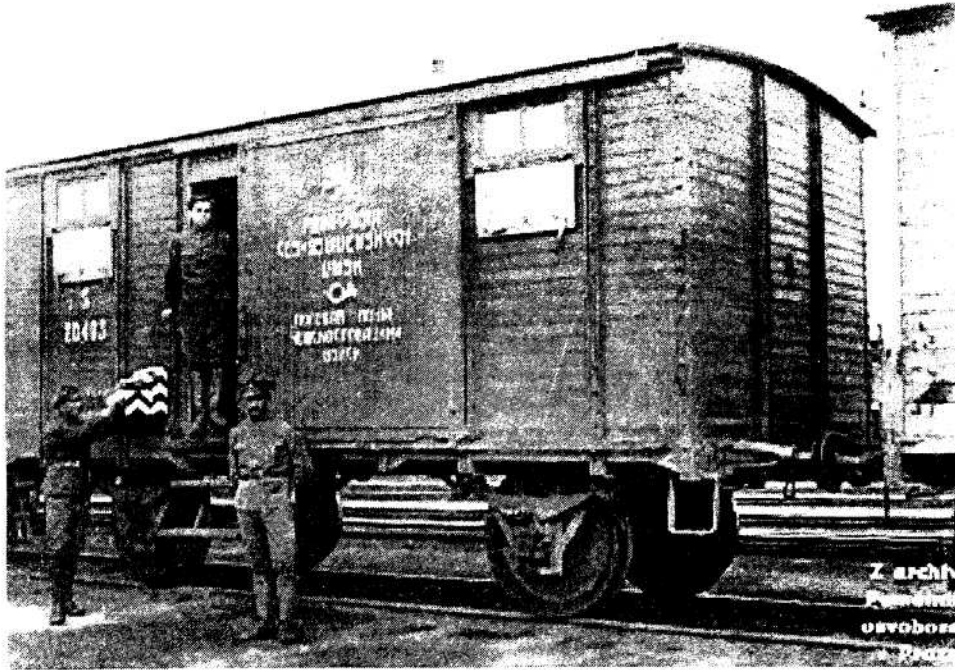
Wednesday, the 23rd: Negotiations over railroad cars reached the stage that it will be possible to leave on the following day. The entire day was spent making necessary preparations. I took a notebook and went to the Postmaster for more details (publications, overview of the mails, locations of our units, et cetera). Brother Červenka² gave me about 50 registers with the admonition that I should be careful with them since they are difficult to come by. In response to my suggestion that they were only disposable transfer documents, the Postmaster replied these were all we would get, that I would enter official mail in them, money letter -- in short everything (of importance). Two brothers were assigned to me. 'I can not give you a mail route overview, I don't know myself where all our units are, we are constantly moving, the situation changes daily. That is why I am sending you to determine the current situation, to establish things as you think best, and to report back to me. You will share your conclusions with our post offices which are located on the rail line, alternately with station masters, or with appropriate unit commanders. Request attachment of your rail car to trains respectfully, but firmly; remind stationmasters of Army Order No. 103D of September 9, 1918. Report the more important things by telegram. You'll get provisions for the trip tomorrow, as well as a canceler and ink pad.'

¹A verst equals 0.6629 miles or 1.067 kilometers.

²Červenka was Postmaster in Chelyabinsk and Novotný's deputy.

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I returned to my "teplushka"³ to work out the service regulations for our railroad field post office (RFPO) and designated Švejch second and Vidimský third in command. Outside it had turned cold, but I was warmed by the prospect of this long trip. I searched for another rail car, but in vain.



"Teplushka" converted into a Field Post Office

Thursday, the 24th: I couldn't wait for morning; I arose early, brought hot water from the water heater, had breakfast, and took myself to the Field Post.

The first person I saw was Brother Závěský and I asked "How's it going?" He replied that the rail car was not yet available, and so we would not be going anywhere. Annoyed by this news, I went directly to the "authoritative point", that is, to Commander Novotný. He calmed me down by saying that the cars would certainly become available, and in fact two cars, No. 556 and 559, became available at noon. I received the key to car No. 559, opened the car, checked the inventory and moved in (2 knapsacks, fur coat, 3 blankets, warm boots, 12 eggs, 4 large rolls, 1 ball of cheese). Then I went to scare up provisions for the three of us assigned to the RFPO and the two postmen who were leaving for the offices in Vladivostok and Harbin. I received 45 pounds of fresh butter, 90 pounds of bread, the appropriate amount of tea and sugar, and then a Primus samovar and a little oil for it. It could be seen these were precious items by the fact that the Deputy Commander himself issued the items.

³A "teplushka" is a colloquial Russian expression for heated freight car used to carry people.

Pointing to the stacked pile of more than 30 loaves of bread, I said "Fellows, before we eat all this we will have learned a lot". We didn't eat them all, but we sure learned a plenty. Checking the mechanism which heated the car with warm water, we determined it didn't work right. When I promised the locksmith "there would be something to drink", he made the repairs right away. Now only one task remained -- to get the car to the train. I again turned to Brother Červenka. He took this on himself, and so a huge burden fell off my shoulders and the deed was as good as his word. In response to the question of whether he wanted anything from Vladivostok, he replied all he would need is the key to open the iron gates, that is, whiskey. I then took the canceler and the material the prisoners (POW)⁴ brought to the RFPO, and we set to work.

Friday, the 25th: Departure of the Railroad Field Post Office was at 3:30 AM on train No. 4. Along the way, in addition to the postal volunteers, Russian postmen tried very hard to get into our RFPO.⁵

Saturday, the 26th: Travel was very poor today. We were constantly stopping, and it was said the cause was that the railroad workers were striking. Toward evening we were approaching Omsk and again we stopped on the bridge. Brothers Vidimský and Závěský, discouraged by the long waits, set out for Omsk on foot. We only arrived there in the evening, turned over the mail, learned from Postmaster Brother Zilovan which units were located in Omsk, and reported to the Field Post Commander by telegram. I was able to borrow a map of Siberia here. Two hours later we continued on. In Novonikolaevsk we again delivered the mail, determined the military units present, telegraphed to Commander, and went to beg for oil.

In Tajga a postman from Tomsk was waiting for the mail, and we exchanged bags. Late at night in Mariinsk we exchanged mail, determined the units, and sent a telegram to the Commander. Then in Krasnojarsk we were surprised by the news that they had prepared dinner for us. The office was very nicely appointed, better than all kinds of offices throughout the world. I'm convinced that many Czechoslovak post offices would be amazed how much one can accomplish with nothing.

From there I wrote a longer report to the Commander of the Field Post which was carried the next day by a teplushka from Irkutsk going West. Since our bread had already hardened permanently (one of our colleagues had broken a tooth on it), we sold it with the exception of one loaf. That one we kept to demonstrate that we could not live on the bread. This did in fact help, and we received rations along the route. We bought a copy of the newspaper "Free Siberia". The article which interested us the most was the report on the Independence of the Czechoslovaks.⁶ In celebration of this, Brother Ulihrách -- a former Austrian officer -- purchased a

⁴A number of prisoners of war worked in the Field Post throughout its existence.

⁵Since transport was such a problem in Siberia, travelers tried any argument they could to catch a ride -- like also being mailmen. I suspect this is what is referred to here.

⁶Czechoslovakia had declared its independence a day earlier, that is on October 28, 1918.

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bottle of vodka out of joy that Kuzmánek would no longer be able to make him dance to his tune (there had been some incident between them in Přemysl).

Wednesday, the 30th: From Nizhnii Udinsk, I sent a telegram to Irkutsk asking them to make arrangements for us to be immediately connected to a train leaving for Mandjurija. The steam heat stopped working in the afternoon. We had a lot of trouble with it, and by evening we were completely frozen through. It was only in Tulun that a locksmith fixed the problem -- for a hefty drink.

Thursday, the 31st: Stations Zima, Cheremchovo, and Polovina. We thus arrived at the half way point. We then came upon a destroyed bridge and had to cross one that had been improvised. Four hours later we arrived in Irkutsk. The Russian Station Master did not want to attach us to the train going onward; said it was not possible. But in the end we had our way. At the Field Post there were two telegrams for me from the Commander. By his order two postmen rode with us from Irkutsk to Vladivostok. I checked on the mail, ordered water be added to the reservoir for the steam heat. I myself crawled up onto the roof and poured the water into the proper opening. In the process I got very dirty from the soot and ash. At night we traveled east, and we fully experienced the cold -- the pump had quit working again.

Friday, the 1st: Plenty of snow everywhere; before Maritui station the train got stuck in the snow. The engineer tried to break through with the engine alone, but he got stuck that way too. Finally they divided the train into two halves, and with the second half they pulled us into the station. During this stop we again carried water for the steam heating system, wallowing in snow up to our waist in the process.

Then we came to Baikal with one tunnel after another; there was a total of 39 of them. We passed through the stations of Baikal, memorable Kultuk, and then Tanchoj Amisovaja. In the station at Vrchni Udinsk we gave the Americans some American magazines.

Saturday, the 2nd: When we arrived in Chita, a big fire was burning. The workshops had been set afire by the Bolsheviks. Ataman Semenov's armored train was standing there.

Sunday, the 3rd: The water ran out; again we were not able to heat. We formed a chain all the way up onto the roof to re-supply the water, then purchased provisions and went on. Next was Olovjenaya, where Staff General Gajda⁷ was stopped before the town. They were waiting here because the bridge here was also blown up, and a pontoon bridge was being constructed. A small engine took us across, on the other side a large engine took over, and we went on.

Monday, the 4th: At Mandzurija station⁸ there are difficulties with transferring our car to the train to Vladivostok because cars on the Chinese railroad had to be in

⁷Commander of the 2nd Czechoslovak Infantry Division.

⁸RR station on the Russia-Mongolia (then part of China) border, western end.

perfect condition, and our car was over 20 years old and not exactly the best. Thanks to the presence of the Station Master, Brother Bičíšta, the inspection ended well, the car was declared serviceable, and so we hoped to leave to Vladivostok the next morning. I reported to the Commander by telegram. Then Harbin -- where we purchased the newspaper "Telegram" reporting on the revolution in Austria. Brother Ulihráč remembered General Kuzmánek. We purchased things we needed and left in the evening. Over night we set a record by passing through 40 stations. In Pogranichnaya⁹ we cleared customs. Late at night we reached Nikolsk Usurijsk.

Tuesday, the 5th: Slowly we began to draw close to Vladivostok. The ocean appeared, and we began to wonder when we would cross that big puddle to get home.

Friday, the 9th: At 4 in the morning we arrived in Vladivostok. After a long search we find the Field Post. Sent the Commander a telegram and searched out Brother Tenču and told him on the next day he was to return to Chelyabinsk with my car.

At 10 in the morning I went to Far East Staff (Headquarters) and reported to General Čeček of the arrival of the first RFPO from Chelyabinsk. He received us very graciously and took an interest in our service. Then we went to find the French Consulate for which I had a very confidential packet. The Secretary thanked us sincerely and did not hide his amazement at the world record set by the new Czechoslovak and Allied Military mail.

In Vladivostok we received the first mail from our brothers in France.

After a six day rest we headed back West.

The longest run of any RFPO, this route had one mail car going in each direction every week. The Field Post had only five mail cars for this route which, given the 10 to 14 days required for the run in each direction, made scheduling and maintaining these cars quite a feat. But extraordinary feats were the norm for the Czechoslovak Siberian Legion.

⁹RR station on the Russia-Mongolia border, western end.

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**STAMPS OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA
USED IN BOHEMIA, MORAVIA, AND SLOVAKIA
ON AND AFTER MARCH 14, 1939**

by John Miskevich

The Czechoslovak Republic ceased to exist during the morning hours of March 15, 1939 when German military forces crossed the border and occupied Prague. Bohemia and Moravia were incorporated into the German Empire while Slovakia had been permitted by the Germans to declare itself an independent state on March 14.

In terms of postal history, the interval between the German occupation of Bohemia & Moravia on March 15 and the issuance of stamps of Czechoslovakia overprinted "Böhmen u. Mähren/Cechy a Morava" on July 15 is known as the forerunner period. During this initial period only the stamps of Czechoslovakia (not already demonetized by the Czechoslovak government prior to March 15, 1939) can be found on the mail posted in Bohemia & Moravia.¹ The first stamps of the German Protectorate were not placed on sale until July 29, 1939. Stamps of Czechoslovakia continued to be sold at post office counters along with stamps of the German Protectorate until November 30, 1939.² Czechoslovakia stamps remained valid for postage until December 15. The period from July 15 to December 15, 1939 is known as the mixed stamp (stamps replaced but still valid) period.

The postage due, personal delivery, and business printed matter stamps ("O.T.") of Czechoslovakia are considered forerunners as no new issues materialized in the German Protectorate to supersede these kinds of stamps between March 15 and November 30, 1939. The newspaper stamps of Czechoslovakia are deemed forerunners if employed prior to August 25. The first set of newspaper stamps of Bohemia & Moravia was placed on sale that day. Czechoslovak newspaper stamps appearing on wrappers from August 25, 1939 onward are mixed frank period stamps. The reason I draw a distinction between forerunner and mixed stamp periods is because that's the way the stamp catalogs determine valuation of stamps on cover or card.

With reference to Slovakia, the pure forerunner period lasted only seven days due to the appearance on March 21, 1939 of stamps of Czechoslovakia overprinted "Slovenský štát". From March 14 to March 20 only Czechoslovakia stamps will be found on covers. Most of the stamps of Czechoslovakia were permitted to be used in Slovakia until July 30, 1940.³ The Czechoslovak newspaper stamps and business

¹Only the perforated stamps within souvenir sheets were valid for postage and not the entire sheets.

²The M. R. Stefanik definitive stamp issued on March 30, 1939 was admissible as postage only in Slovakia and only until July 10, 1939.

³The 30h airmail of April 22, 1939 and 1K T.S. Masaryk definitive of April 23, 1939 were authorized for postage only in Bohemia & Moravia. Neither the PRAGA 1938 Souvenir Sheet nor the perforated stamps on their own were permitted as postage stamps in Slovakia. The exact reason for this is unknown.

printed matter stamps are considered forerunners to April 1939. Postage due stamps of Czechoslovakia utilized in Slovakia are forerunners until August 4 and personal delivery stamps until August 15, 1939. Regular issue stamps of Czechoslovakia applied in Slovakia after March 20, 1939 fall within the mixed stamp period.

Postal cards and postal stationery of Czechoslovakia in use in Bohemia, Moravia, and Slovakia offer additional collecting possibilities. In the German Protectorate, postal cards of Czechoslovakia remain valid until May 20, 1940. Late usages command a premium. In Slovakia the Czechoslovak postal cards were consumed or retired during 1939. Those postally used after March 20, 1939 are more valuable.

Illustrated in this article are covers and cards from my collection. The primary source of information for the article derives from the Katalog Protektorát Čechy a Morava, Slovenský Stát 1939-1945, Sudety 1938, Filatelie Trojan, Praha, 1995. That catalog supplies you with values for stamps of the Czechoslovak Republic on cover beginning March 14 or 15, 1939, as the case may be. It gives a general price guide to the postal cards. To use charts in the catalog you need to make reference to a second Trojan catalog so as to match Trojan catalog numbers with the stamps of the Czechoslovak Republic. The German language Michel Deutschland-Spezial-Katalog offers similar information and likewise in the form of a chart including valuations. It only examines the stamps of Czechoslovakia on cover used in Bohemia & Moravia. The German catalog gives a higher monetary value to the stamps of Czechoslovakia used on cover during the German occupation than does the Czech catalog. However, like Trojan, a second catalog is needed to match catalog numbers set forth to actual postage stamps.

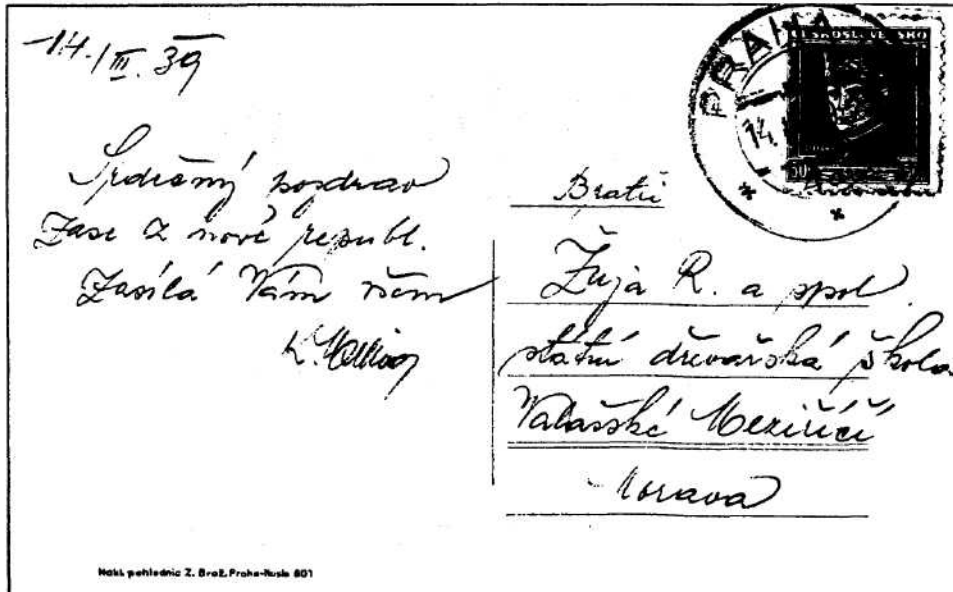


Figure 1 - Posted March 14, 1939 at the 23rd hour (11:00 P.M.), this card was mailed from Czechoslovakia during it's last hours.

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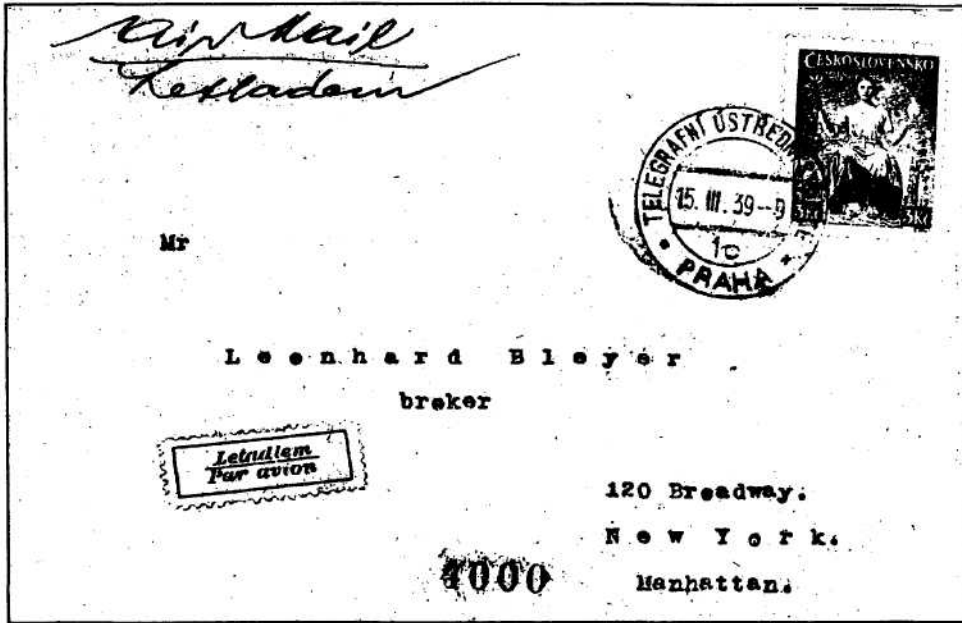


Figure 2 - An airmail cover mailed at the Praha Telegraph Office on March 15, 1939 shortly before the German Army entered the city.

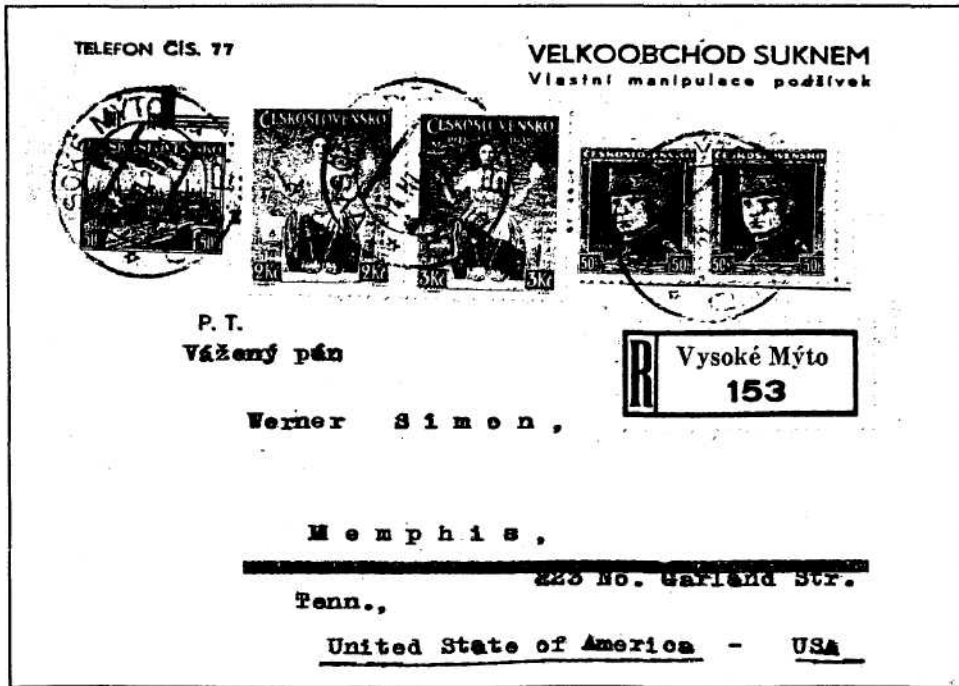


Figure 3 - A registered cover posted at Vysoké Mýto to Memphis, Tennessee, USA on March 14, 1939 -- the last day of the Republic -- has stamps on cover with a catalog value of a few dollars.

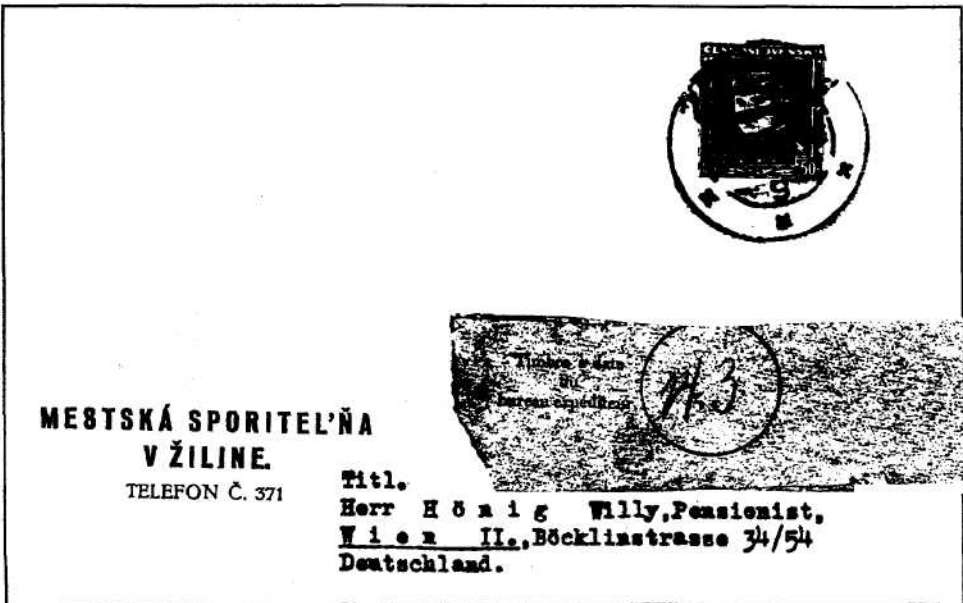


Figure 6 - Czechoslovak stamp used on printed matter card from Žilina, Slovakia on March 22, 1939 during mixed stamp period.

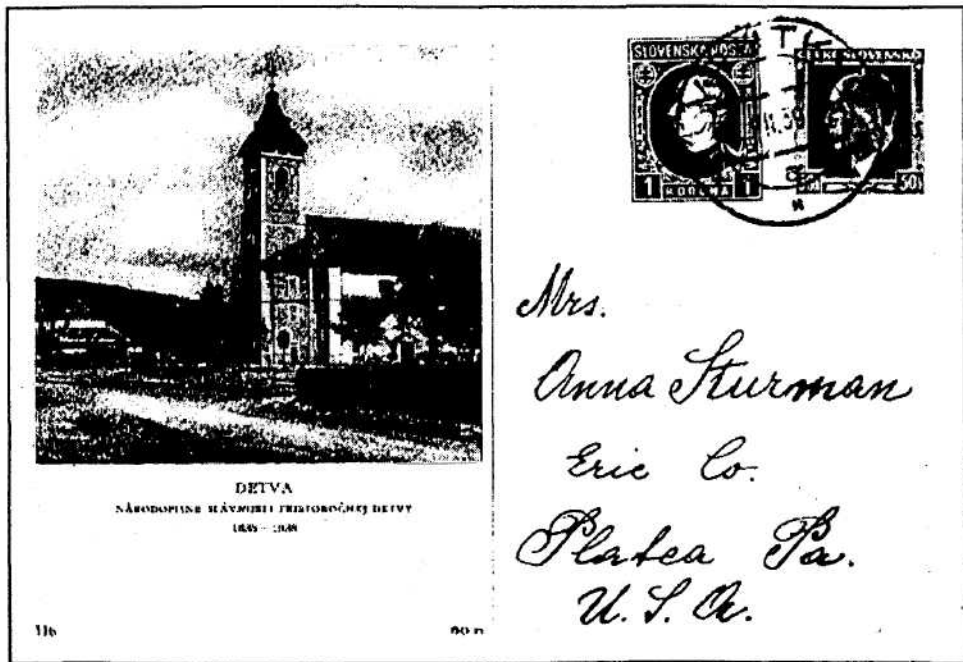


Figure 7 - Postal card of Czechoslovakia tied with Slovakia stamp mailed from Vrutyky, Slovakia to Platea, Pennsylvania, USA on July 12, 1939.

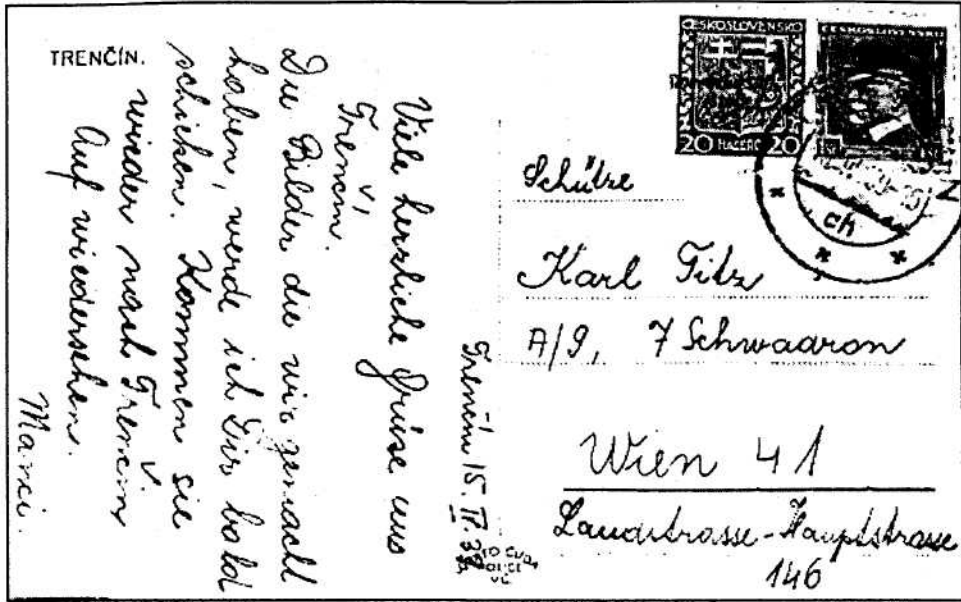


Figure 8 - Card posted at Trenčín, Slovakia on April 15, 1939 bears a Czechoslovak stamp plus one overprinted "Slovenský štát".



Figure 9 - Cover mailed from Tatranská Polianka on May 16, 1939 carries Czechoslovak and Slovak stamps and pays the special 2K reduced foreign letter rate to Hungary.

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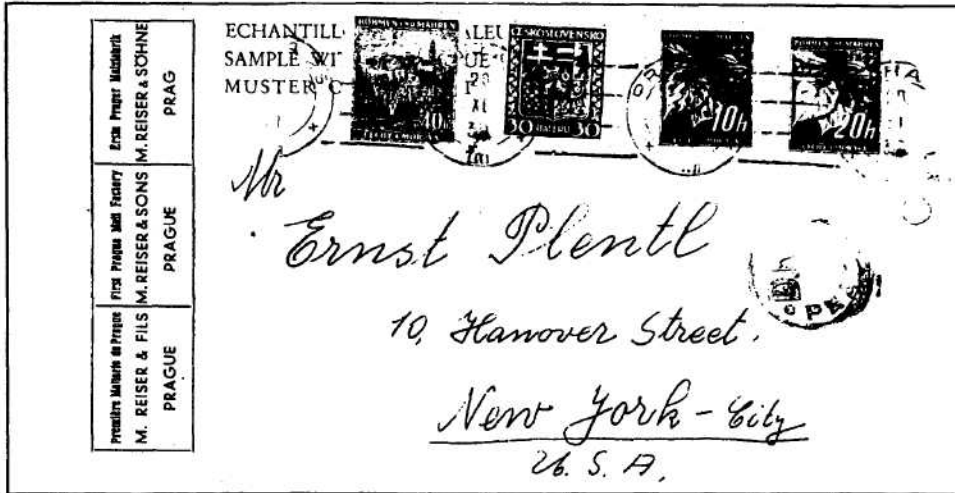


Figure 10 - Merchandise Sample cover with Czechoslovak and Bohemia & Moravia stamps paying the 1K foreign rate (minimum weight) posted at Praga on November 20, 1939.



Figure 11 - Registered cover from Olomouc mailed June 7, 1939 and paying the 5K rate to the United States has copies of stamps celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Czechoslovak Republic. The 30h airmail stamp -- only valid in Bohemia & Moravia -- is superfluous.

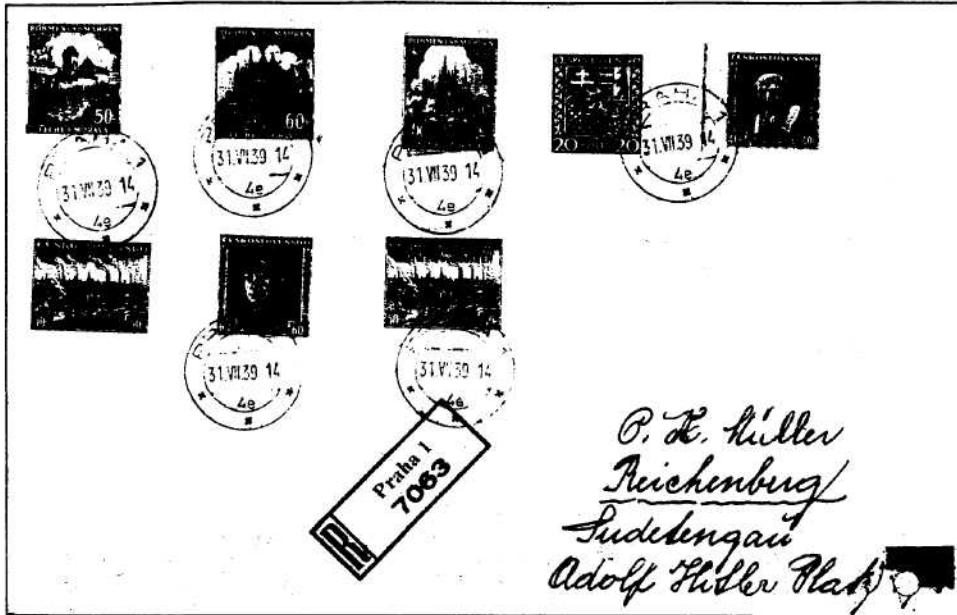


Figure 12 - This registered cover to German occupied territory and posted on July 31, 1939 from Praha uses Czechoslovak, "Bohmen u. Mahren" overprinted, and Bohemia & Moravia stamps.



Figure 13 - Czechoslovak meter on card to Scotland applied during the forerunner period.



Figure 14 - Czechoslovak meter employed August 18, 1939 during the mixed frank period.

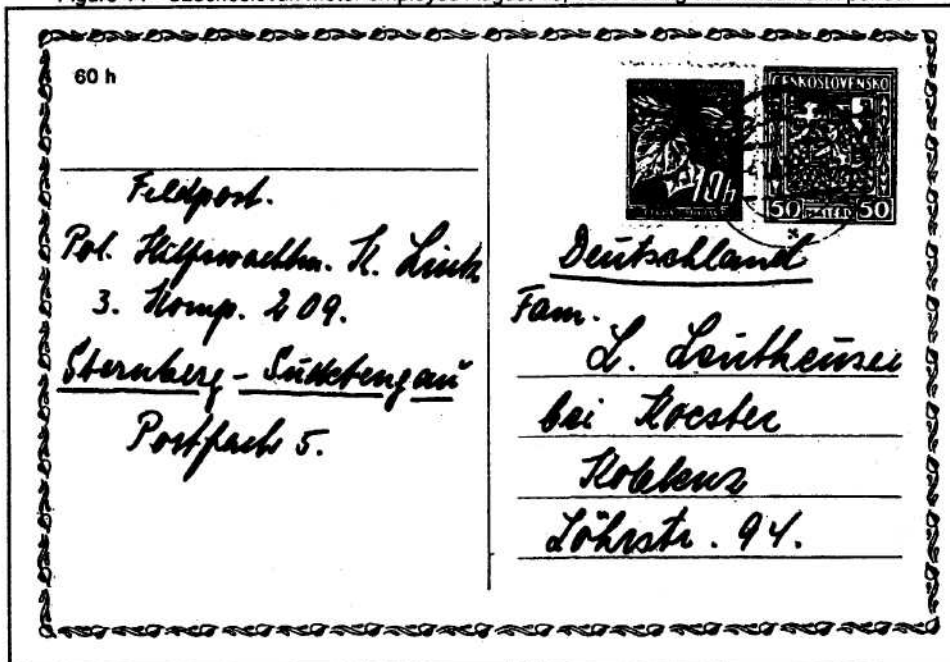


Figure 15 - A Czechoslovak postal card first issued in 1927 plus a Bohemia & Moravia stamp exactly satisfies the 60h charge to Germany from Všetín on December 4, 1939.

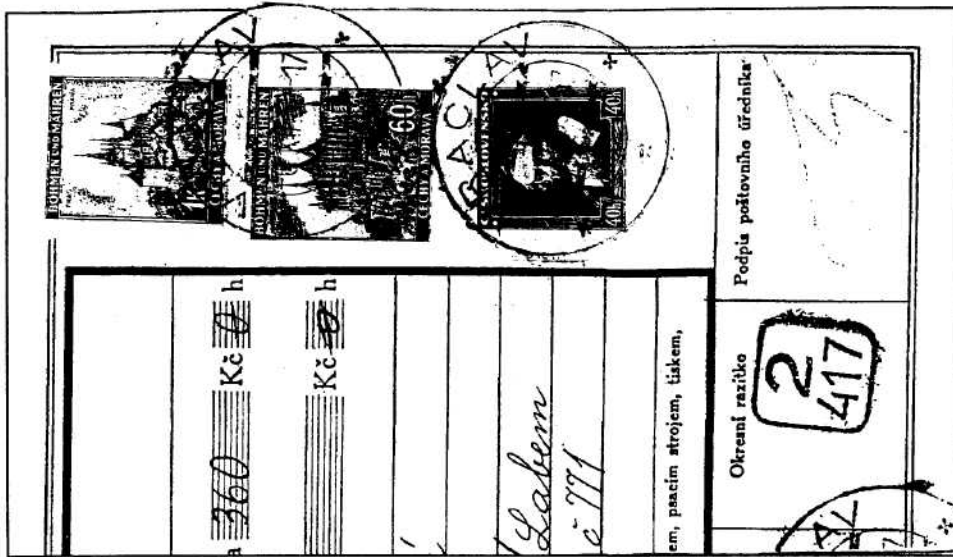


Figure 16 - A parcel clipping receipt bears a Czechoslovak stamp applied at Vraclav on December 8, 1939. Czechoslovak stamps could be used until December 15 in Bohemia & Moravia but were not sold to the public at post offices after November 30.



Figure 17 - This airmail envelope from Praha sent April 6, 1939 was flown to Bremen, Germany as well as from New York City to Washington, DC, with 7.50K covering the 2.50K foreign letter plus 5K airmail fee within the United States for letters weighing over 10 grams but no more than 20 grams.

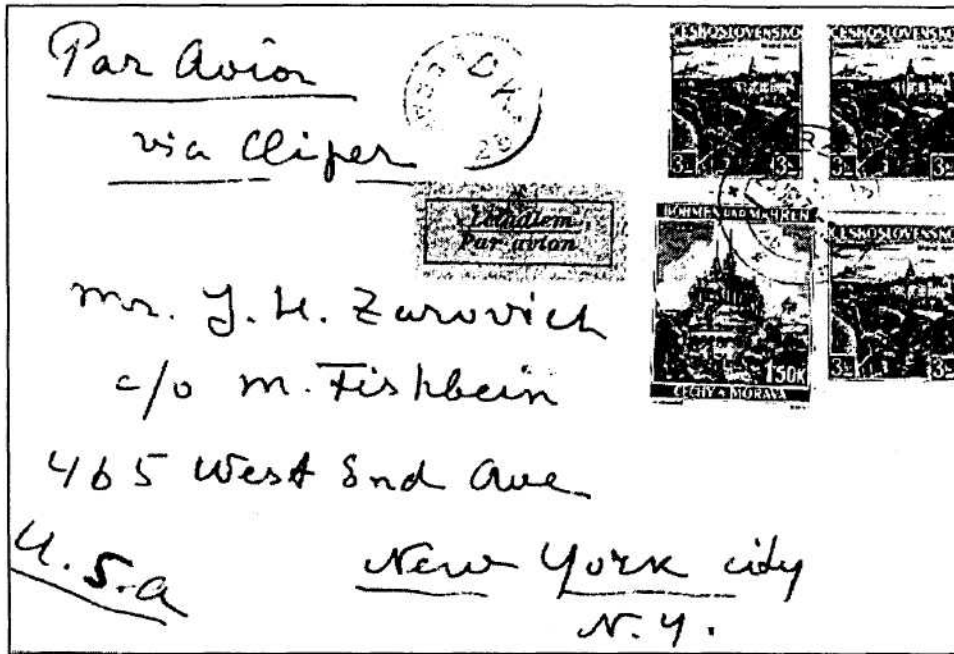


Figure 18 - An early trans-Atlantic airmail cover posted August 23, 1939 has Czechoslovak and Bohemia & Moravia stamps.

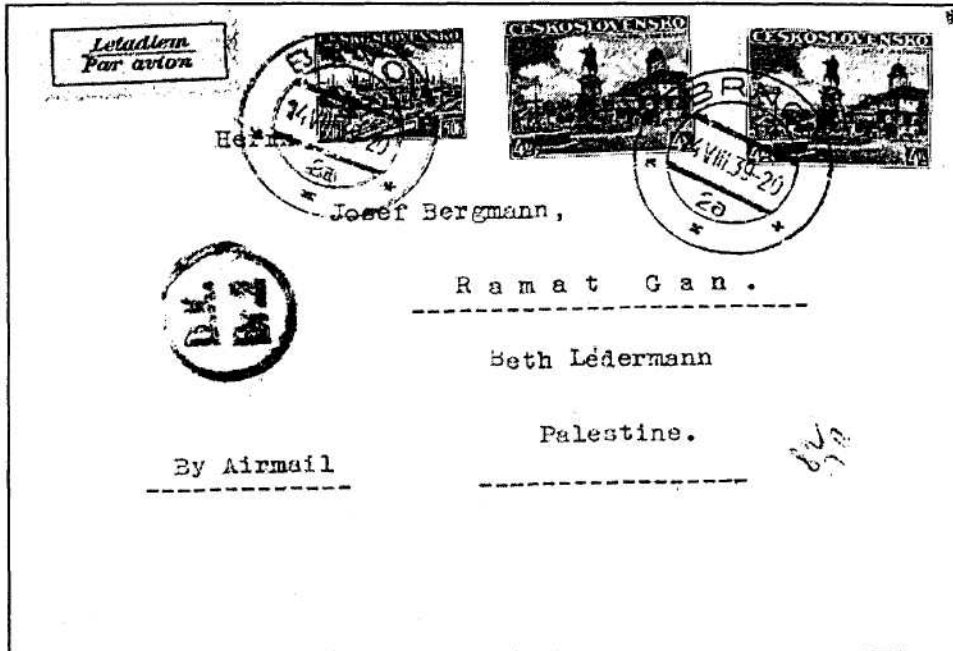


Figure 19 - Airmail to Palestine from Brno in the German Protectorate on August 14, 1939 has Czechoslovak stamps paying the 2.50K foreign letter and 6K air letter fee for covers weighing over 15 grams but no more than 20 grams.



Figure 20 - Another air cover but posted from Moravské Budejovice on April 15, 1939 with the 6.50K representing a foreign letter fee of 2.50K in addition to an airmail fee of 4K for over 5 grams from New York City to Mexico

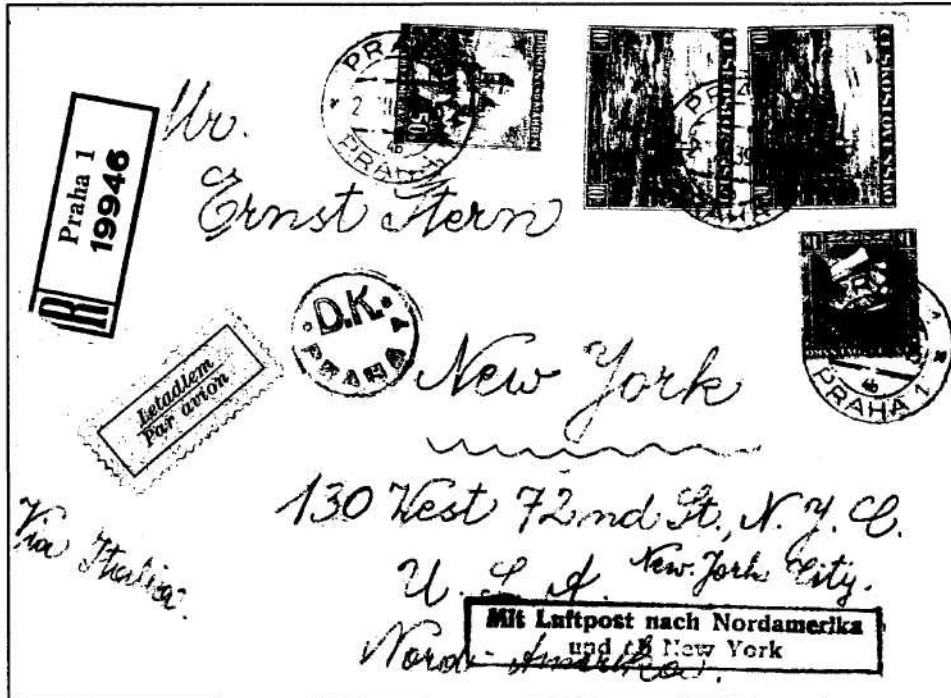


Figure 21 - Registered from Praha on November 29, 1939, this mixed stamp period cover was sent to New York with 2.50K foreign letter, 2.50K registry, and 16.50K foreign air -- for mail weighing over 15 grams but no more than 20 grams.

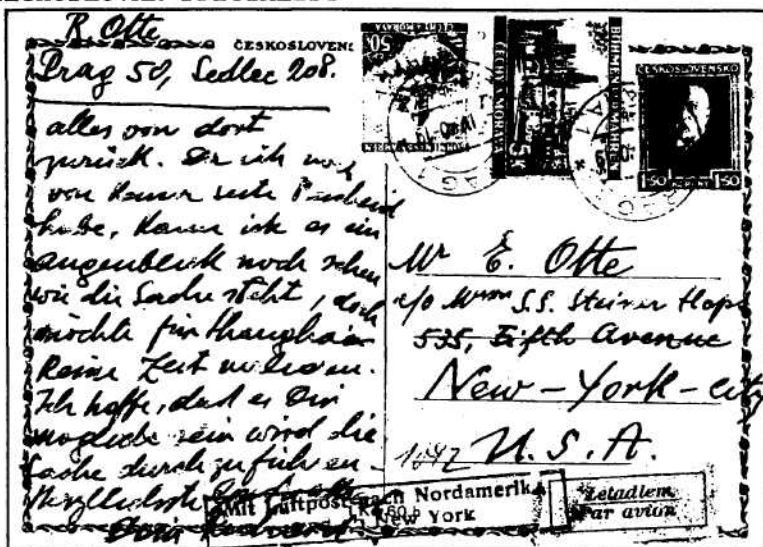


Figure 22 - Czechoslovak postal card mailed April 1, 1940 is a very late usage. Postage paid is 1.50K foreign post card rate plus 5.50K trans-Atlantic airmail surcharge to New York City.

ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE UNION OF CZECH PHILATELISTS

by Henry Hahn

The annual convention took place in Prague on December 5th, 1998 and conducted its normal business including the following actions:

1. Approved the election as Chairman of Ing. Pavel Pittermann.
2. Approved the composition of the elected Executive Committee consisting of: Pavel Aksamit, Ing. Zdeněk Fritz, Libor Krejčík, Ing. Zdeněk Moliš, Ing. Hynek Ondrášek, Ing. Pavel Pittermann, Martin Rozhoš, Ing. Jiří Sedlák, JUDr. Svatopluk Šablatura, Ing. Pavel Švejnar, and Vladimír Zedník.
3. Approved the dues structure of the Union for 1999, which remains 150 Kč for members residing in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, 30 DEM for European members, and \$20 for overseas members.

The Convention assigned the following tasks to the Executive Committee:

1. Complete a plan of activities of the Union for the period 1999-2000 and publish it in the Zpravodáj journal.
2. Provide a detailed evaluation of the program of the International Congress of Collectors of Czechoslovak and Czech stamps.

In it's deliberations, the Convention took into account the submitted report on information of the current attitude of juries at international exhibits on the evaluation of rarity of Czechoslovak postage stamps.

The Union's new Chairman, Ing. Pavel Pittermann (who is a member of our Society) has an ambitious program for his two year term of office. He hopes to adopt the "American" system of having Board elected officers. We wish the Union and it's officers continued success in promoting our hobby.

***Jiří Majer and Jaroslav
Thraumb Auctions
announce their eighth auction
on March 6, 1999***

By the time you receive this issue of the SPECIALIST, our eighth auction of March 6th is a matter of history. While we cannot brag about what a successful auction this was since bid sheets have just started to come in as we write this, the early interest is very positive (and so are the early bid sheets). But that was then and this is now. We have already started putting together our sale for August. It is still not too late to get your better Czechoslovak related philatelic material to us for inclusion in this auction or the one in the Fall. As the only auction house that deals exclusively in Czechoslovak related material, we have become market leaders in this material with an ever growing customer base. Contact us either directly or through our American representative. We look forward to hearing from you.

Write us directly at: ***M & T Auctions
P.O. Box 14
18614 Praha 8
Czech Republic
Telephone/FAX
011-420-2-788-2402***

***You may also contact us through
our American agents:***

L & J Consulting
8602 Ewing Drive
Bethesda, MD 20817-3846
FAX 301-530-7489; e-mail : sibpost@erols.com

APS STAMPSHOW 99
by Bruce Sebek

Our annual convention will be held in conjunction with the American Philatelic Society's Annual Convention and Philatelic Exhibition for 1999. It is being held at the Cleveland Convention Center, 500 Lakeside Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio from August 26-29, 1999.

Included in this issue as a center pull out is an entry form for anyone that plans to exhibit at APS STAMPSHOW 99. An individual entry form for each exhibit along with the entry fee payable by check, VISA, or MasterCard must be mailed to:

The American Philatelic Society
P.O. Box 8000
State College, PA 16803

EXHIBIT APPLICATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED UNTIL MAY 15, 1999.

Exhibits may be entered in any one of four classes: Open, Youth, Display, and Single Frame. The adult entry fee is the greater of \$15.00 or \$10.00 per frame. No single exhibit may be larger than ten frames. Exhibitors should submit eight copies of a summary/synopsis and/or title page with a plan (not more than two pages) to be distributed to the judges to assist them in preparation for evaluation of the exhibit. When you send in your application form, please also send a copy to me -- the Society convention organizer -- at Bruce Sebek, 3255 Glencairn Rd, Shaker Heights, Ohio, 44122-3407, so that we know who and what will be exhibited from our Society.

Special rates have been negotiated with two hotels. Immediately adjacent to the Convention Center, the Sheraton Cleveland City Centre, 777 E. St. Clair Avenue, will be the headquarters hotel. Reservations may be made by calling 216-771-7600 and asking for the APS STAMPSHOW rate which is \$115 for a single. The APS also has a block of rooms at the Holiday Inn Lakeside City Center, 1111 Lakeside Avenue, about three blocks from the show. These rooms are available at \$85/night for a single to quad occupancy. Reservations may be made by calling 216-241-5100.

The Cleveland Browns have a preseason home game the weekend of STAMPSHOW, and the Indians are also in town during the show. Because of this, attendees are encouraged to make their hotel reservations early!

For further information or for questions, contact the APS at the address given above or call 814-237-3803, FAX 814-237-6128, or e-mail: kpmartin@stamps.org. Information will also be available from the APS web page at www.west.net/~stamps1/aps.html.

Questions -- particularly about Cleveland -- may also be directed to me at my address above or e-mail: BASebek@webtv.net.

Watch the future issues of the SPECIALIST for more details on Society events and schedules at APS STAMPSHOW 99.

PRAGA'98 EXHIBITION AND SOCIETY DINNER – REVISITED

by Ludvik S. Svoboda

As was promised we are going to share with you some more of the pictures from PRAGA'98.

The first four show some aspects of the exhibition itself. Despite the problems that were encountered at PRAGA'98 (the setting up of exhibits, exhibition environmental controls, Congress presentation difficulties, location of the Society booth) one could not help but be tremendously impressed by the number of attendees -- especially children and family groups. I have never seen anything like it before at a stamp exhibition. The Czechs certainly do love their philately.

The final seven pictures are from the Society's dinner at Na Pořičí restaurant. I wanted to show you the faces of fellow members who -- by their own words -- had the best time at an "organization" dinner in years. The food was great, but the conversations with friends that we had not seen in years or had only known by mail or phone was truly terrific. Without a doubt this dinner will be remembered as the outstanding function of PRAGA'98 (outside the exhibition itself, of course). We all owe a vote of thanks to the dinner organizers -- Jerry and Lois Verner, and Alan and Annette Hoover.



Figure 1 -- On Sunday, September 13th, a symbolic historical stagecoach post was in operation connecting the two show venues -- the Trade Fair Palace and the Postal Museum. A postal vehicle from Žamberk dating from 1860 ran on this route and handled mail that was handed in at the two venues. A special exhibition postcard and commemorative cancellation were prepared for this purpose.



Figure 2 -- One of the Czech post office windows where postal items could be purchased and commemorative canceled. There were four of these windows in operation at all times. This picture must have been taken at the opening, because normally this area was packed with people.

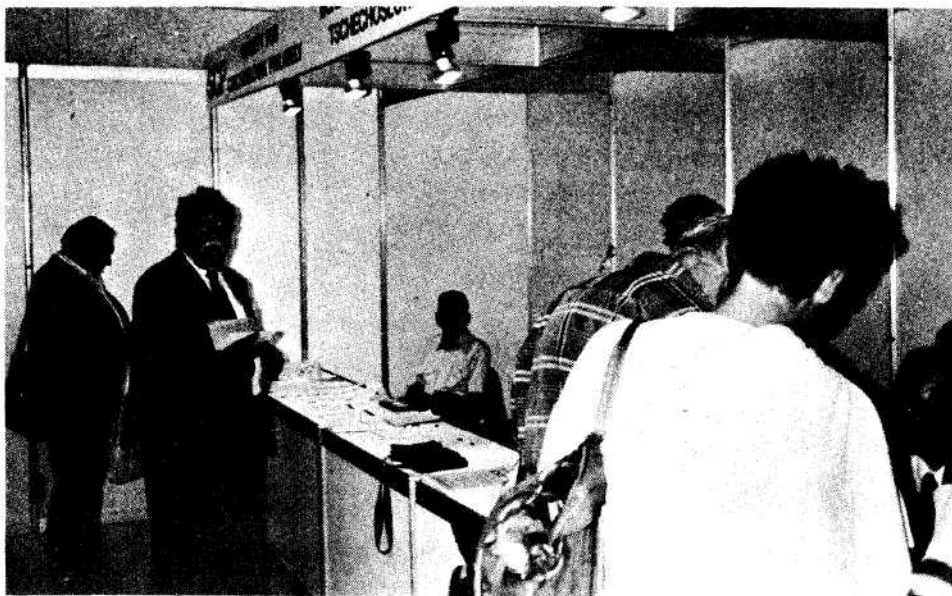


Figure 3 -- A view down the narrow corridor at the end of which was our booth -- manned by Mirko Vondra. On the left, Dr. Walter Rauch is examining some philatelic materials.



Figure 4 -- The "volunteer" USA exhibitions set up crew - Ernesto Cuesta, Tom Cossaboom, Jerry Verner, Alan Hoover, Richard Palaschak, Lou Svoboda, Bob Koschalk, (not pictured, Savoy Horvath)



Figure 5 -- Two friends who not only write a great deal to each other, but also for the SPECIALIST -- Savoy Horvath and Lubor Kunc

THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST



Figure 6 -- What might be considered the "head" table (clockwise) -- Lubor Kunc, Anne Vondra, (out of view Jane Brophy), Berta Nesvadbova, Mirko Vondra, Dr. Walter Rauch, Vladimír Čermák, Frederik Bacheljauw, Lois Verner, Jarmila Mykytinová, (out of view Miroslav Spáček), and Jerry Verner



Figure 7 -- Our "library and marketing" table (clockwise) -- Joyce Palaschak, Tom Morovics, Elena Morovics, Jiří Majer, Jaroslava Majer, and Richard Palaschak



Figure 8 -- An "international" table (clockwise) -- Soelie (Hans Klein's guest), Keith Stupell, Bill Sandrik, Henry Smith, Jiří Cisler, Charles Rehman, Ernst Cohen, Mrs. Cohen, Marilyn Hahn, and Hans Klein



Figure 9 -- The "Czech/Dutch" table (clockwise) -- Tom Cossaboom, Miroslav Langhammer, Mrs. Langhammer, Karel Holoubek, Genny van Dooremalen, Wilma van Amerongen, Annie Verleg, Alan Hoover, Annette Hoover, Jan Verleg, Hans van Dooremalen, (out of view Savoy Horvath), Jaroslav Cába, and Václav Tuček

THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST



Figure 10 -- The "English" table (clockwise) -- Bob McLeod, Bob Allard, Robert Kingsley, Bernice Kingsley, Colin Spong, Betty Day, Pat Spong, Yvonne Gren, Fred Gren, Rex Dixon



Figure 11 -- Another "international" table (clockwise) -- Bruce Landry, Evelyn Landry, Joan Unwin, Brian Day, George Firmage, Peter Kleskovic, Dr. Anthony Blažek, Lenka Suchardová, Karl Ružička, and Alec Unwin

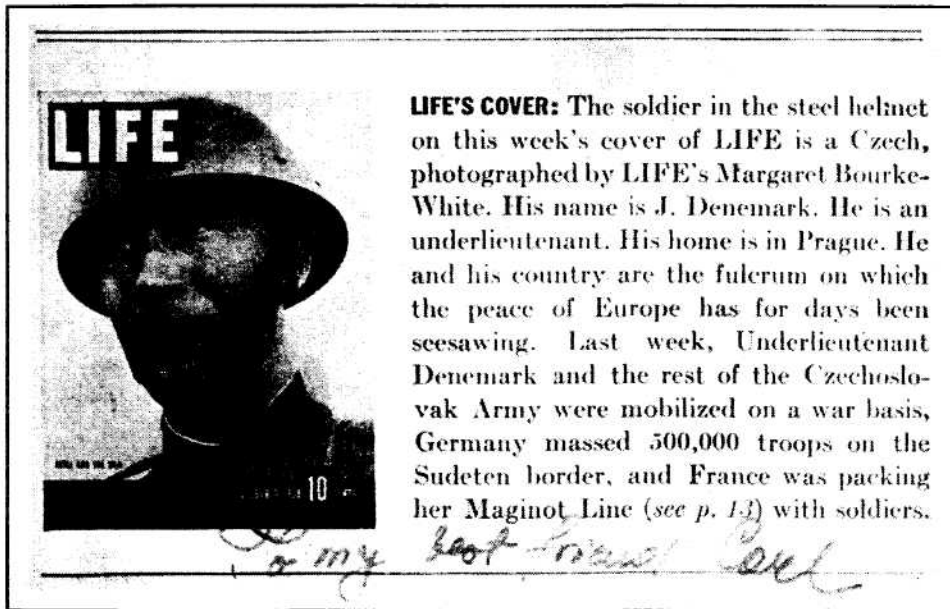
CONFESSIONS OF A FLEA MARKET COLLECTOR

by John Miskevich

Before I begin this article I have to admit that I am a Flea Market postal history and postcard collector. True, I'll be found at area stamp shows selecting material to add to my Czechoslovakia collections. It's also a fact that I will fervently pour over any mail bid sales brochure that finds its way to my door. I've even been known to emit odd sounds while perusing auction catalogues prompting family members to roll their eyes and to shake their heads knowingly, having previously observed this curious behavior. However, my collecting imagination during the summer centers around Flea Markets which in warm weather spring up in wild profusion. The adventurous Flea Market collector can make "philatelic finds" at discount prices. I have found that there is some peripheral material the Czechoslovakia collector can add to his or her collection.

At Flea Markets one must be able to suffer countless yard ornaments, vinyl records, porcelain "knick-knacks", obsolete computer peripherals, second-hand clothing and a seemingly endless selection of rusty, unidentifiable tools. Ever so often there is a merchant possessing a box of paper items. Amid the old photographs, the greeting cards, and the curious advertising pamphlet from an exotic nightclub of a questionable nature in Nevada, you may sometimes come across a stack of postcards and/or covers.

For example, the "Life's Cover" postcard was found at the Meadowlands, New Jersey, Saturday Flea Market (parking lot of the New York Giants football stadium). Figure 1 has a representation of the cover of Life Magazine of October 3, 1938 depicting a Czech second lieutenant, one J. Denmark. It was sent airmail from Czechoslovakia in December 1947 to New Jersey possibly by the same Mr.



LIFE'S COVER: The soldier in the steel helmet on this week's cover of LIFE is a Czech, photographed by LIFE's Margaret Bourke-White. His name is J. Denmark. He is an underlieutenant. His home is in Prague. He and his country are the fulcrum on which the peace of Europe has for days been seesawing. Last week, Underlieutenant Denmark and the rest of the Czechoslovak Army were mobilized on a war basis, Germany massed 500,000 troops on the Sudeten border, and France was packing her Maginot Line (see p. 13) with soldiers.

Fig. 1

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Denemark who graced the cover of Life Magazine in 1938. (I'm still looking for a copy of the magazine for my collection.)



Fig. 2

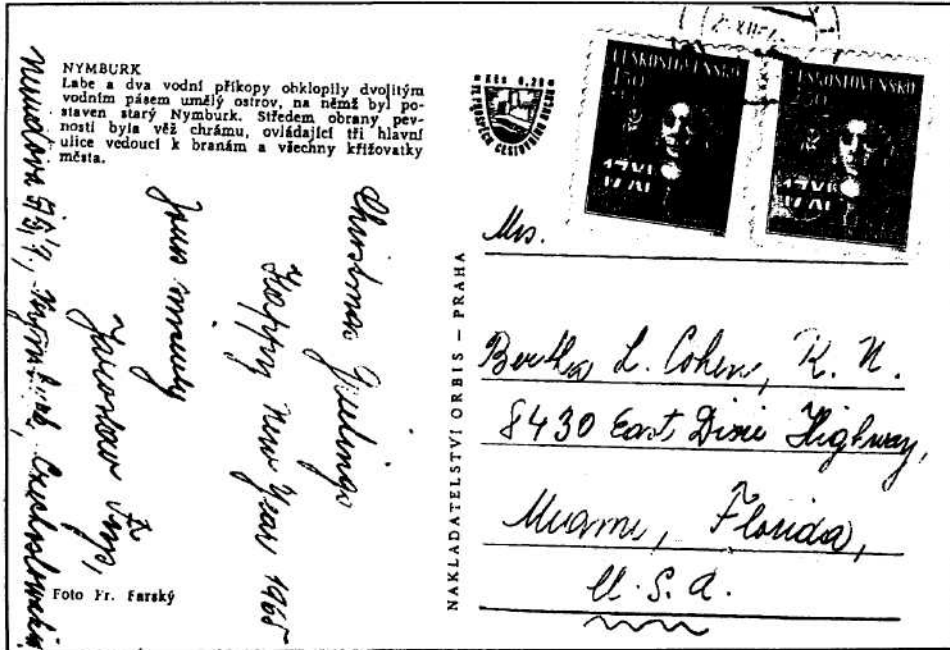


Fig. 3

The "VISIT THE PRAGUE INTERNATIONAL FAIR" color advertising postcard for 1923 depicts a lovely Czech woman together with crystal, silver, and machinery that would be featured at the Spring and Autumn Fairs (Fig. 2). The postcard is mint and discovered at the annual Rutherford, New Jersey, Street Fair this past Labor Day. For a dollar the card will have me returning in 1999 to comb dealer stands for its sisters.

Figure 3 is an oddity which I can not explain. The semi-postal stamps (Scott B154-5) were issued to commemorate the Students' World Congress at Praha, November 17, 1945. The stamps, released November 14, were no longer in use after February 29, 1948. So, what are they doing on a postcard addressed to the United States and posted at Nymburk in December 1964? The message on the postcard reads in part "Happy New Year 1965". Even if the cancel is a "Favor" postmark applied by a friendly post office counter clerk, it should not have been allowed on stamps from 1945.

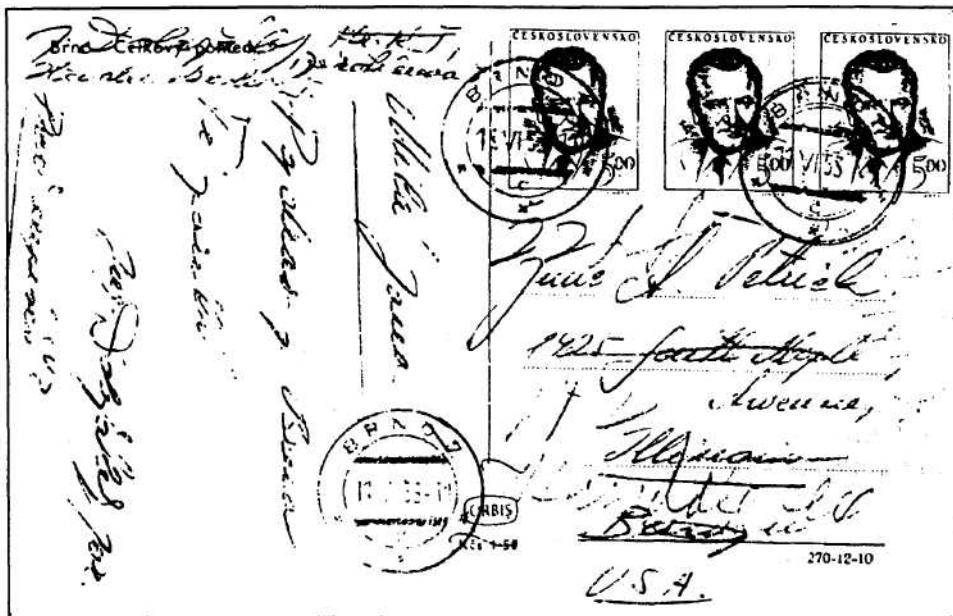


Fig. 4

Another interesting find was made in the gymnasium of the local Boys & Girls Club which sponsors a Flea Market. Among a few very common Czechoslovakia covers and postcards at a booth was Figure 4 mailed at Brno to the USA on June 11, 1953. And you know what that means! On June 1, 1953 Czechoslovakia began to reform the currency. Henceforth, fifty old Czechoslovak Crowns (Kčs) would be the equivalent of one new Czechoslovak Crown. Between June 1 and June 18, 1953 stamps in circulation were converted on a 50:1 basis to the new currency. New stamps of the reform began to be issued on June 19, 1953. On that day all stamps issued prior to June 1 were no longer valid for postage. The postcard shown at Figure 4 bears 15.00 Kčs. On June 11, at the 50:1 exchange, it is the equivalent of 30 haléřů. The sum exactly matches the new foreign surface postcard rate. Covers

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like the one shown here are sought after by specialized collectors of postal history of Czechoslovakia.

As you may have already gathered, the majority of Flea Market philatelic purchases are interesting but rarely spectacular. If you have time this summer, still, by all means, try Flea Market collecting. There is plenty of sun, and where else can you bring your spouse or a friend, and purchase a genuine, handcrafted lamp commemorating your favorite professional football team?

* * * * *

EXCHANGE PARTNER

The following individual has contacted the Society with a request for an exchange partner. Any exchange relationships are strictly between the two individuals, because the Society is a disinterested and uninvolved party.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Miloslav Vlček
Poštovní Příhrádka 13A
768 24 Hulín
Czech Republic | Does not understand or write English, but has a family translator and knows German; offers CSSR from 1945 to 1992, and Czech Rep to the present; seeks USA and Australia material in exchange. [Miloslav is a Society member and regular contributor to the SPECIALIST.] |
|---|--|

* * * * *

Book Review

MONOGRAPH OF CZECHOSLOVAK STAMPS, 5TH PART -- S.O.1920

by Oldřich Tovačovský, co-authored by Vladimír Schodelbauer and Jan Kypast with ten additional contributors listed in the title page. Published by POFIS in cooperation with the Union of Czech Philatelists at the publishing house of FILATELIE, in PRAGUE, 1998.

This book is part of what is currently a twelve (12) volume set detailing much of Czechoslovakia's philately and postal history. It is hard bound, contains 295 pages and, for the first time in the series, includes a color illustrated section showing individual overprinted stamps, full sheets, and covers. The entire set of the Monographs is in Czech.

The contents of this volume -- the S.O. overprints -- is probably the most complex subject in the entire area of Czechoslovak philately. This is due to the existence of all basic varieties of the overprinted stamps, mostly printed from a multiplicity of plates permutated through one or more overprint plates, each showing their own characteristic varieties. In addition the book covers the S.O. overprints on the issues of Poland.

The text is appropriately comprehensive and well organized in nine (9) chapters. The first deals with the history of the plebiscite territory, somewhat condensed, and with some of the maps showing the various demarcation lines, as for example on p.8

perhaps a bit unclear. The second chapter consists of a full presentation of the overprinted Czechoslovak issues. While covering such subjects as perforations, plate varieties and other characteristics of the basic stamps, the treatment is of necessity less detailed than what may be found in the first part of the Monograph series. The third chapter deals with manufacturing faults and trials of the overprint. The fourth covers overprint varieties, pointing the major ones out by diagrammatic presentation showing plate location with accompanying descriptions. Chapter five deals with postmarks in the plebiscite area while chapter six covers the usage of the overprinted stamps. Chapter seven covers forgeries of the overprint, postmarks and covers, and chapter eight deals with valuation, using point count. The last chapter covers usage, postal rates, forerunners, Polish issues, censorship and pertinent historic aspects.

Some, though not all of the information presented on overprint varieties, may be found in other publications, such as the "Padělky"^{1,2} (Forgeries) book published some years ago. However, the information as presented is significantly clearer and more comprehensive. In addition, chapters five and six contain for the most part new and previously unpublished information. Chapter five deals with postmarks in the plebiscite territory, Orava and Spiš, both during and after the validity of the overprinted stamps. The postmarks are listed by type and include those issued by Poland, railroad postmarks, and postmarks of small postal substations (poštovny). Illustrated are also examples of military mail. The various postmarks are listed alphabetically and well described. Overprinted stamps used outside the plebiscite territory are covered separately.

Chapter six includes a detailed description of domestic and foreign postage rates of which there were three, representing various time periods. Usages of regular issues, newspaper, postage due and special delivery stamps are described and amply illustrated.

The authors present a novel system for evaluating the value of covers in chapter eight. The system takes into account the value of the best stamp on the cover, the value of the additional stamps, the type of cover (letter, postcard, registered letter, etc.) and adds the three point counts. It then adjusts the result for the franking type (colored, multiple, mixed), then adjusts for franking period and additionally for location of the mailing. It finally adjusts for overall quality and individual assessment. Point counts for all these factors are listed in tables. The entire system transforms the usual qualitative judgement by collectors into an essentially quantitative determination, eliminating the familiar "Liebhaber Preiss" -- so elusive and questionable in the instance of S.O. covers.

The clarity and overall presentation in this volume demonstrates the results of meticulous research by the authors. The book was exhibited shortly after publication at the PRAGA'98 international stamp show and received a "Large Vermeil" award. The scholarship, excellent graphics and high quality of production undoubtedly factored into the high valuation.

The inclusion of some public and one commercial advertisement, such as noted on p.187 represent a minor but unusual distraction in a book of such high caliber. However, it is recognized that the advertiser provided the financial assistance enabling the book to be published.

We heartily recommend this volume to Czech reading collectors/specialists. It may be purchased from the Society [Book] Sales Manager for \$30, post paid.

Henry Hahn

1. Karásek, J.; Kvasnička, Z.; Paulíček, B.; "PADĚLKY ČESKOSLOVENSKÝCH POŠTOVNÍCH ZNÁMEK 1918-1939", Nakladatelství Dopravy a Spoju -- PRAHA 1963

2. *English translation of above -- published by the Society for Czechoslovak Philately, 1968 by Verner and Hahn, and republished with illustrations and revised by Hefer in 1985.*

* * * * *

Book Review

**POFIS KATALOG 1999:
CZECHOSLOVAKIA, CZECH REPUBLIC, SLOVAKIA
226 pp, Prague 1998**

The editors of Filatelie featured a new Profil (the publisher of Filatelie incidentally) catalog and claimed that two catalogs in one would be available to collectors. The cover of Filatelie showed the covers of the two catalogs. What was not clear to the reader was that the catalog was in fact one volume and the illustrated "covers" were in fact the front and back of one small volume. I have just received a copy of this new catalog and must confess my real disappointment.

Technically this catalog is very well done. The World War issues are separated from the other parts by turning them upside down so they are to be read from the back. Cute, but this approach hardly justifies the overblown claim that this volume is actually two catalogs. It is printed on good glossy paper, in good color, and is clearly organized, much as the earlier Trojan catalogs. (Profil had recently bought out Trojan.) This is not surprising since Martin Trojan was the author of this as well as the earlier Trojan catalogs. What is surprising is that the catalog is so bad. In fact, I would argue that this is not really a catalog, but rather a simplified price list.

Even as a price list, however, it does not meet the standard of usefulness -- except perhaps for rank beginners. The list only includes the basic stamps of the stamp-issuing entities and does not include any types, perforation varieties, plate or printing varieties or other variations from the basic stamp. Nor does it include any of the information about the stamps, such as date of issue, designer and engraver, or method of production, a buyer of a catalog has the right to expect. In fairness there is a letter code that indicates there might be types, perforation varieties and so forth. But nowhere in the volume can one learn what these varieties are.

After examining this publication I asked myself why a catalog of this sort was issued. I have no clear answer, and it would not be fair to speculate on intentions not known to me. However, my conclusion is that I must recommend against the purchase of this publication. It would be a waste of your money.

Jaroslav J. Verner

* * * * *

Letters to the Editor:

1. Dear Lou:

I would like to add some observations to Miloslav Vlček's article, "More Counterfeits of Postal Cards", pg 21 of the Jan/Feb 99 issue.

I have compared closely two genuine cards with a counterfeit one. The two genuine ones were printed in 1997 and 1998. Their first address line reads in microprinting "ČESKÁ POŠTA · PTC · 1997" and "ČESKÁ POŠTA · PTC · 1998" respectively. I found these additional differences in the forgery:

- In the stamp on the forgery -- typical of recess printing (the original uses offset) -- the design consists of a series of variously intense colored dots in a diagonal grid. This is not so in either of the originals.

- On the forgery, the pale grey logo did not disappear at all under heat, and it is darker than on the originals.

- On the forgery, both sets of five rectangular blocks for ZIP codes are made of small, squarish dots -- the corner ones are slightly larger. In both of the originals, the blocks are made of larger round dots that are all of the same size. Consequently, the ZIP blocks are much more visible on the originals.

- On the forgery, there is a vertical pale-yellowish rectangle between the sender's address lines and the vertical dividing line. This rectangular area is not visibly discolored on the originals. This area has chemicals impregnated which show up under UV lamps.

Using the last two differences above, it is relatively easy to pick out the counterfeit.

Kivdul Adobovs

2. Dear Lou:

I have some information in response to Karl Ružička's questions about Olomouc overprints in his letter in the Jan/Feb 99 issue.

This overprint and others from 1945 can also be seen in the Geophila Catalog authored by our member Karel Holoubek. This catalog is in our Society library.

This overprint was already planned during the German occupation by Olomouc postmaster Alois Novotny. After Olomouc's liberation the overprinting was approved by the city government. The Hitler definitives 30h and 1.20K were overprinted in blue, while the 40h, 50h, and 60h ones were done in red. They were sold at the Olomouc post offices from May 15 until May 24, 1945, and their usage stopped on May 27.

Nobody accumulated these stamps, rather the overprinting was done on the remaining stocks of stamps after the Germans capitulated or left the city.

The communist government of the Cold War era did not really prohibit the Protectorate and Slovakia stamps nor the overprints of 1944/45. They chose to ignore them, and in this manner they did not have to acknowledge that the USA and the Allies liberated a big part of Czechoslovakia.

Besides the overprint, Olomouc also had a local issue. This was a set of five semi-postal stamps picturing the Moravian eagle [Fig. 1 from the editor]. The set was allowed to be printed by the Soviet military government only after the author A. Beran added a star with hammer and sickle to the design.



Fig. 1

Savoy Horvath

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3. Dear Lou:

I enjoyed John Miskevich's article "Currency Control and the Examination of Mail in Bohemia & Moravia during 1939" in the Nov/Dec SPECIALIST. John states that the color of the "D.K." handstamp is always a shade of blue, violet or purple. Enclosed herewith you will find a copy of an uncensored cover dated August 11, 1939 with a black "D.K." handstamp.

Lawrence Cook

John Miskevich responds:

Not only is the "D.K." PRAHA 25 handstamp in the color black, it also is different in format from the ones shown in my Figures 3 and 8. Note that the "PRAHA 25" is lower in the mark, the "D.K." is smaller in size, and the "stars" (six-pointed) flanking the "D.K." are well pronounced (Fig. 2). Thanks, Lawrence, for identifying an additional color variety of handstamp in your collection and sharing it with the membership.



Fig. 2

4. Dear Lou:

The Jan/Feb issue contained an interesting, though not very precise or accurate, critique of Eckart Dissen's book "The Issues of Czechoslovakia for the 1939-1940 New York World's Fair."

In his second paragraph, Henry Hahn states: "The FORWARD was written by Mirko L. Vondra." He then goes on to list "numerous errors in English, mostly typos, and presents facts highly suspicious to this reviewer." Since the focus is on Mirko Vondra, let's consider some of these "numerous" errors and see what we come up with.

First, there is indeed one error and that is the word "FOREWARD" which should have been spelled with an "O" instead of an "A" and for which I take responsibility. Where are the other "numerous errors in English"? As a matter of fact, Mr. Hahn unfortunately misspelled the word "FOREWORD" in the second paragraph of his own review by omitting the "E". [Ed. Note: Having checked the original submitted by Henry Hahn, the error in this case rests with the editor. Mr. Hahn's original had the correct spelling.]

Let's continue. In his third paragraph, Mr. Hahn asserts that a statement attributed to me that the Carpatho-Ukraine was temporarily occupied by Poland and Hungary is seriously doubted as being accurate. Had Mr. Hahn examined the contents of the book more carefully, he would have noticed that my name follows the end of the FOREWORD. The statement to which he alludes he correctly notes is on page 15. But my FOREWORD ended on page 13.

Further, there is my own statement which Mr. Hahn admits to be correct to the effect that "it is common knowledge that these overprinted sheets were never postally valid and therefore do not qualify as true philatelic material." To this, he adds his own comment: "This fact alone may have played a major role in the low evaluation by the PRAGA 98 jury." I am not sure that this is a non sequitur, though it certainly smacks of one. Is the reader to presume that this book, a catalog, was compiled with a view toward receiving a top literature award? Or was it actually intended to inform philatelists about these official sheetlets that had been turned into semi-philatelic labels designed to generate funds for the support of the

Czechoslovak government during World War II? To put it another way, is it detrimental to the sale of a book to tell the truth about what its subject matter represents or should such facts be concealed from the reader? I leave it to collectors to answer that question.

I am willing to concede that on page 6 of this catalog, it clearly states that the book was "Revised by Mirko L. Vondra." But that revision was strictly grammatical, not substantive. It should be noted that it states directly above my name that it was "Translated by Eckart Dissen." Mr. Dissen is Dutch, and his command of the English language, though commendable, is not completely fluent. Therefore I was glad to assist in that respect.

Finally, Mr. Hahn states that "mention in the book of the U.S. Flag Issue of July 12, 1943 falls outside the scope of this book, as are other sheet and label issues described." Not so! If read in its entirety, the book is a compilation not only of the New York World's Fair Issues, but also all issues that were released during that period of upheaval which supported in one way or another the determination of Czecho-slovakia to regain its independence, including some special cancellations. For that matter, neither the London Exhibition Issue of 1943 nor the Brussels Commemoration of Lidice Issue of 1945 had anything to do with the World's Fair overprinted sheets except for their purpose, timeliness and relevancy.

The main thrust of the book is to catalog the various N.Y.W.F. overprints and, to that extent, the author has succeeded. Throughout Part II and Part III of the catalog, the text is almost continuous in its use of three languages. It is not limited, as Mr. Hahn would lead us to believe, to just the APPENDIX. Perhaps Part I should have been in three languages also. But that is the author's prerogative.

Ordinarily I would not have written this letter, but would have let the readers draw their own conclusion. But since the "culprit's" identity has been publicized, I feel constrained to render the above comments in self-defense.

Mirko Vondra

* * * * *

New Issues

**1999 ISSUE PLAN*
FOR CZECH REPUBLIC STAMPS**

Date of Issue	Name of Issue	Number in set	Value Kč
Jan 20	The Tradition of Czech Stamp Production	1	4.60
Feb 17	Animal Care/House Pets -- Cats	3	4,4.60,6
Mar 10	Easter	1	4
Mar 10	Nature Conservation -- Butterflies/Birds	4	4,4,4.60, 4.60
Apr 14	50 th Anniversary -- Council of Europe	1	8
Apr 14	100 th Anniversary -- Czech Olympic Committee	1	12.60
May 5	POSTEUROP National Parks	2	11,15
May 26	Children Cartoonist -- Ondrej Sekora	1	4.60
May 26	Beauties of our Country -- Old Bridges	2	8,11
Jun 23	Geologist -- Joachim Barrande: Souvenir Sheet	1	30
Jun 23	125 th Anniversary -- Postal Union	1	8
Aug 8	200 th Anniversary -- Vincence Priessnitz	1	10

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Aug 29	Folk Art -- Bee Hives	3	5,6,7
Oct 20	Humor on Stamps	3	4,4,60,6
Oct 20	Beroun School of Art: Souvenir Sheets	2	10,30
Nov 10	Art on Stamps	3	15,22,23
Nov 10	Christmas Stamp	1	4

* The Czech Republic raised its international postal rates on January 1, 1999. The domestic rates are going up about June. Thus, the stamp values shown above will probably change.

1999 ISSUE PLAN FOR SLOVAK REPUBLIC STAMPS

Date of Issue	Name of Issue	Number in set	Value Sk
Jan 20	Winter Universiad Games - 4th EYOD	1	12
Jan 28	Personalities		
	- Matej Bel	1	3
	- Juraj Haulik	1	4
	- P.O. Hviezdoslav	1	11
Mar 12	Splendors of our Homeland - National Costumes	3	4,15,18
Mar 12	125 th Anniversary of UPU	1	4
May 5	EUROPA - High Tatras National Park	2	9,11
May 5	50 th Anniversary - Council of Europe	1	16
May 5	Clergyman Renovation	1	4
Jun 15	50 th Anniversary - Slovak Philharmonic Orch.	1	4
Jun 15	Senior Year	1	4
Jun 15	Flight of First Slovak Spaceman	1	12
Jul 15	125 th Anniversary of UPU - Education	2	12,16
Sep 3	Bienale of Illustrations	1	5
Sep 3	50 th Anniversary - Faculty of Fine Arts	1	4
Sep 21	Water Pilar Machine - J. K. Hella	1	7
Sep 21	Nature Protection - Singing Birds	3	14,15,16
Oct 5	Art	2	13,14
	- Milos A. Bazovsky		
	- Dominik Skutecky		
Oct 5	Israeli-Slovak - Edition A/B	2	18,12
Nov 3	Christmas	1	4
Dec 18	Stamp Day - A. Brunovsky	1	4

CZECH REPUBLIC

1. On December 9, 1998, the Ministry of Transport and Communications issued a set of two commemorative stamps in the Art on Stamps series (Fig. 1). The graphic design and engraving of the first was by Josef Herčík while the second was by Bedřich Housa. Both were produced by the Post Printing House Prague by recess print from flat plates in printing sheets of 4 stamps.



Fig. 1

-- The 15 Kč stamp (in ochre, pink, green, blue, and black) shows "A Painting from the Greater Cycle 1902" by Jan Preisler (1872-1918) from the National Gallery in Prague. Jan Preisler was born in the village of Popovice near Beroun in central Bohemia on February 17, 1872. In his early boyhood he experienced poverty and hardship. At the age of 15 he came to Prague (1887), wishing to earn a living as a painter. He enrolled in the College of Applied Arts. In the first year of the new century he worked at the college as a lecturer and visiting professor. Preisler first exhibited his paintings in 1896. He was one of the founders of Czech modern art. He was involved in the Manes art group and especially with the periodical *Volné Směry* (Free Trends). He undertook several trips, notably to Italy, Paris, Belgium and the Netherlands. This painting is one of his greatest works and was influenced by his studies and experiences in Italy. He died in Prague on April 27, 1918. Also refer to the 80h stamp in the Art set of 1968 (Black Lake) (Scott 1590/Pofis 1730). A FDC in grey-black includes a transcription of J. Preisler's self-portrait from 1902-03 (oil on canvas)(Fig.2).



Fig. 2

-- The 16 Kč stamp (in ochre, red, grey-blue, dark brown, and black) shows "The Spinner (c. 1850)" by Josef Navrátil (1798-1865) from the National Gallery in Prague. Josef Navrátil was born on February 17, 1798 at Slaný. He studied at the Art Academy in Prague from 1819-1823 and made his living as a decorator; his profession in the Old Town register is, in fact, listed as painter-decorator. Early on, he earned reknown in Prague for his interior decorations of unbelievable extent, variety and fantasy. For example, he decorated the salons of today's Postal Museum in Prague. He also created the impressive decorations at Prague Castle for the enthronement ceremonies for the last Bohemian King, Ferdinand V in 1836. His last commission, in 1861, was also at the castle and was the year he lost the use of his right hand as a result of a stroke. In oil paintings he reached success with landscapes, figure motifs and still-lives. He died in Prague on April 21, 1865. On

THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST



Fig. 3

August 20, 1965 a 30h stamp was issued to commemorate his death (Scott 1326/Pofis 1468). A FDC in grey-black includes a transcription of "Our Lady with Infant Jesus and Saints" (pencil and pen drawing)(Fig. 3).

stamp was issued as part of the "Castles, Landscapes, and Towns" series. It was made up from a water color by Jaroslav



Fig. 5

Šetelík and engraved by the French engraver, Abel Mignon. The design of the modern stamp was by Bedřich Housa, and it was engraved by Pavel Kovářík. The stamp was produced by the Post Printing House in Prague by rotary recess print in sheets of 30 stamps. At the same time, philatelic booklets will be issued containing 8 stamps and 4 labels bearing the logo of the Brno 2000 Philatelic Exhibition in dark blue. The National Philatelic Exhibition with international participation will take place in the Congress Center of Brno in March 2000. A FDC in blue-black bears a drawing showing the Cathedral of St. Peter and Paul, and the Bishop's Court in Brno (Fig. 5). The drawing is completed by the text BRNO and is a transcription of the Brno anniversary stamp from 1928 designed and engraved by Karel Seizinger according to an original painting by J. Šetelík.

2. On January 20, 1999, the Ministry issued a 4.60 Kč stamp entitled "The Tradition of Czech Stamp Production" (Fig. 4). This dark blue, red, light green and gold "stamp on a stamp" includes the Prague stamp from 1929 showing the group of statues of St. Wenceslas against the background of the National Museum. The original 2.50 Kčs Czechoslovak



Fig. 4

Šetelík and engraved by the French engraver, Abel Mignon. The design of the modern stamp was by Bedřich Housa, and it was engraved by Pavel Kovářík. The stamp was produced by the Post Printing House in Prague by rotary recess print in sheets of 30 stamps. At the same time, philatelic booklets will be issued containing 8 stamps and 4 labels bearing the logo of the Brno 2000 Philatelic Exhibition in dark blue. The National Philatelic Exhibition with international participation will take place in the Congress Center of Brno in March 2000. A FDC in blue-black bears a drawing showing the Cathedral of St. Peter and Paul, and the Bishop's Court in Brno (Fig. 5). The drawing is completed by the text BRNO and is a transcription of the

Postal Stationery

3. On January 4, 1999, the Ministry issued a postcard with an imprinted 4 Kč stamp -- and a hologram added -- for normal postal service (Fig. 6). The stamp image captures the view from the Charles Bridge in Prague showing the tower of the old town bridge and various other churches and buildings. The postcard was originally issued on March 26, 1997. The hologram was added to the postcard as a new security element to replace the recent security elements -- a pearl strip and the logo of the Czech Post. The hologram was made especially for the Czech Post. From various angles of view the color and the picture of the hologram change - the logo of the Czech Post alternates with a flying pigeon hen. The hologram is located on the left side of the card to the right of the sender's postal code boxes. The postcard was

produced by the Post Printing House, Prague, in brown and brown-red. The selling price of the postcard is 4.70 Kč.

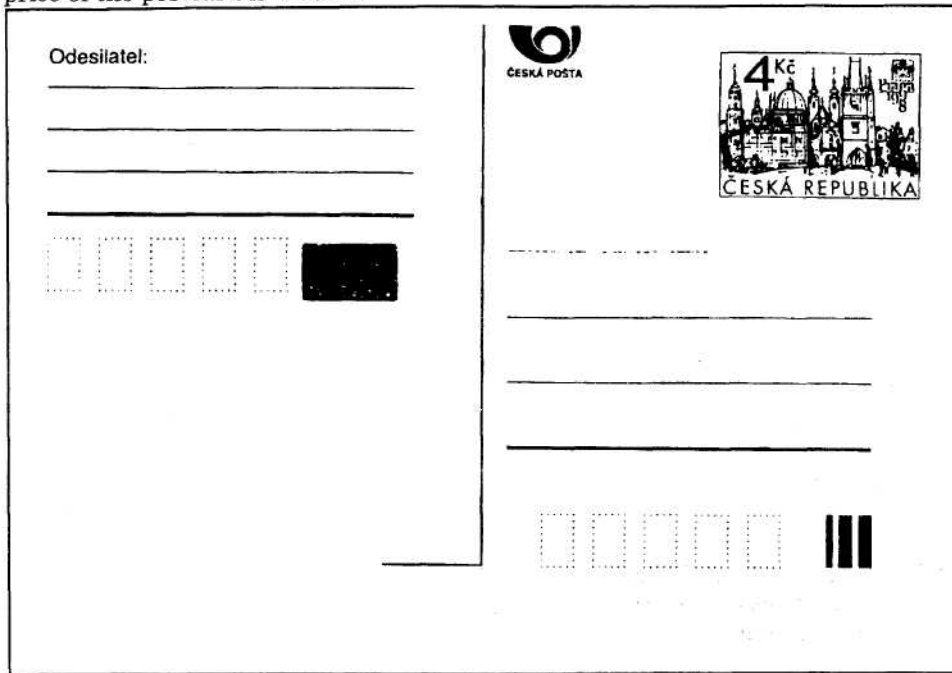


Fig. 6



Fig. 7

SLOVAKIA
by F. Garancovsky

4. On December 18, 1998, the Ministry of Transport, Posts and Telecommunications issued a commemorative 4 Sk postage stamp with an

attached label entitled "History of the Postal Service" from the Stamp Day series (Fig. 7). Depicted on the multicolored stamp against a background showing a typical Slovak village with wooden cottage architecture are various symbols of the Slovak postal system -- a postman on a bicycle, carrier pigeons, and the logo of the Slovak Post. On the label is depicted a historical letter box and the post office building in Banská Bystrica. The stamp was designed by Jozef Baláz and was engraved by Rudolf Cigánik. It was produced by the Postage Stamps Printing House - Prague using rotary recess printing in combination with recess printing in sheets of 30 stamps and 40 labels. A FDC in blue-grey depicts the portal elements of the historical post office building in Bratislava, the Bratislava coat-of-arms, and a postal mail car pulled by a team of horses. It bears a post mark from Banská Bystrica.

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ELECTIONS TO THE BOARD

The candidates that you, the general membership, have nominated to run in this year's election to the Board of Directors include the following:

- 1 -- James T. "Captain" Carone (member #1579) of Schaumburg, IL; secretary of Chicagoland Branch, Czech collector (Hradcany) since 1971, doing study of Czech town, Titanic researcher, Civil War re-enactor, US Postal Service employee (21 years).
- 2 -- Tom Cossaboom (member #936) of O'Fallon, IL; long-time Society secretary, European historian, studied at Charles University in Prague.
- 3 -- Henry Hahn (member #777) of Fairfax, VA; past-president, current vice-president, past-editor, APS accredited Czech judge, author, translator, fluent in Czech.
- 4 -- Savoy Horvath (member #1686) of Readstown, WI; emigrated from Czechoslovakia in 1948, author, fluent in Czech, translator, regular Czech Rep. visitor.
- 5 -- Peter Kleskovic (member #840) of Succasunna, NJ; emigrated from Czechoslovakia in 1948, masters degree from Seton Hall Univ., fluent in Czech, translator, regular Czech Rep. visitor.
- 6 -- Ludvik Svoboda (member #1203) of Aurora, CO; past-president, past-treasurer, editor, translator, knows Czech.

Of the above, Tom Cossaboom, Henry Hahn, Savoy Horvath and Ludvik Svoboda are currently on the Board and are seeking reelection.

Below is the election ballot that every member in good standing is asked to complete. Vote for any 5 of the candidates listed above. The order in which you list them is not important. Mail your ballot to our secretary, Tom Cossaboom, at the address given below. Make sure that your ballot is postmarked no later than May 15th. The new Board will convene for the first time at our Convention and meeting at STAMPSHOW'99 in Cleveland, August 25, 1999.

VOTING BALLOT

I vote for the following five candidates to serve on the Board of Directors of the SCP starting later this year:

1. _____ 2. _____

3. _____ 4. _____

5. _____

Signed: _____ Mbr # _____ Date: _____

Mail to: R. T. Cossaboom, Secretary, SCP
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