



CZECHOUT

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NOTES

The next London meeting is on **Saturday 13 January** when **Richard Beith** will be showing *The Czechoslovak Independent Brigade in Great Britain and their return home 1940-1945*.

A Note for your Diaries: Have you booked for the next CPSGB Weekend arranged for 16-18 March 2007 at the White Hart Hotel, High Street, Lewes? We hope to see you there.

We send best wishes to Otto Hornung on a speedy recovery from his recent fall, glad to hear that he made the last meeting, also to Bob Allard who has to go into hospital again.

There will be two International Exhibitions in 2008, which will be of interest to our members: **PRAGA 2008 Friday 12 - Sunday 14 September 2008**. This will stage the competition classes of traditional philately, postal history, philatelic literature and an experimental class of one-frame exhibits. PRAGA 2008 will be held simultaneously with the 11th International Collectors Fair. **Yvonne Wheatley** has been appointed the UK Commissioner. **WIPA 2008 Thursday 18 - Sunday 21 September 2008** will be in Vienna. The UK Commissioner is **Brian Sole**.

The Editorial team send best wishes for a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Opinions expressed in articles in Czechout are the sole responsibility of the author(s), and are not necessarily endorsed by the Editor or the Society.

NEWS & NOTICES

We regret our automatic page numbering system went awry in the September journal – it should be 62 to 90.

Meeting held Saturday 4 November 2006 at the Czech and Slovak National Club, 74 Westend Lane, London NW6 at 2.00 pm

The Chairman, Richard Beith, welcomed 22 members and one visitor. Apologies had been received from four members.

Richard invited **Ron Hollis** to present ***Czechoslovakia in 1945***. Ron started with some late items from Bohemia and Moravia, including a couple of bilingual 'sign of life' cards, which were used after air raids. He showed a wide variety of stamps on and off cover, cash frankings and souvenirs, including a range of cards from Plzeň issued by the American forces. One postmark, dated 10 May 1945, was inscribed *Finis Germaniae*, the End of Germany. In the second half, there was a large range of photo-postcards, including the re-unveiling of the statue of Masaryk. The expulsion of the Germans from the former Sudetenland was illustrated by several items including propaganda cards.

Richard Beith gave the vote of thanks, congratulating Ron on an excellent display that had political, postal and military history all combined.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 3.20 pm.

Rex A Dixon

Northern Meeting 18 November 2006 at Leeds

The meeting held in conjunction with Leeds Philatelic Society's Annual Stamp Fair on 18 November produced its best attendance to date. There were nine members and guests present including two members from the Austrian Philatelic Society.

The Chairman, **Richard Beith**, opened the proceedings with a display of Smetana and Dvořák.

Derek Baron showed Olomouc.

Keith Brandon, of the Austrian Philatelic Society, followed with a display of the postmarks of Brunn.

Yvonne Wheatley showed the Czechoslovak Army in Siberia.

The meeting concluded with **Peter Cybaniak**, a guest, showing pages from his forthcoming book, which he is writing with Roman Dubyniak who was also present. The book is entitled *The Czechoslovak Army in Ukraine 1914 - 1920*.

As usual there was a lively exchange of information. There will be another meeting at the fair next year on **19 November 2007**. The Society would like to record its thanks to Leeds Philatelic Society for providing the meeting room free of charge.

Yvonne Wheatley

Letters to the Editor

✉ **Richard Beith** advises that **Savoy Horvath** has contacted him with the following news item: "Hello UK, to let you know that we are now selling the Czechoslovak Specialist 1939-1999 on a CD. Cost is \$10.00 to members, \$20.00 to non-members, plus \$1.00 for overseas postage per CD. Best wishes to all you all, Savoy (canclecek@mwt.net)."

✉ **Milan Černík** mentions that EXPONET <http://www.japhila.cz/hof> is a permanent international non-competitive exhibition. It is intended as a public display of high quality exhibits of all philatelic areas and time periods. We turn to you with a request for support of this project in your geographic territory and to help bring exhibitors to this showcase. Technical specifications for scanning complete album pages are (1) separating 18.7 mil covers (2) quality 300 dpi (3) in minimum width of image 900 pixels (4) numbered pages in tif or jpg format burnt on CD are to be sent to me at PO Box 243, CZ-16041 Praha 6, Czech Republic.

>

☒ **The British Postal Museum Archive** mention that they have now completed the Victorian period catalogue for archive POST 150: British Postage Stamps. This online catalogue completion will mean that together with the RM Phillips collection all the BPMA's Victorian philatelic material is now available online. Also, from last June visitors to our search room have been allowed to use their own cameras to photograph documents.

Congratulations

To **Bob Allard** on becoming an Honorary Life Member for services to the Society. Bob has been Honorary Packet Secretary for more than 20 years! To **Richard Beith** on his interview by Richard West in the British Philatelic Bulletin, volume 44 October 2006; this includes an excellent photograph of Richard and write-up of his background and interests. To **Otto Hornung** on being made a Fellow of the Royal Philatelic Society London. And to **James Hooper** upon his election as Chairman of the Austrian PS at their recent AGM.

ABPS TORQUAY AWARDS to Society members

Traditional – National: Rex A Dixon *Deutsche Nothilfe 1924- 1935* Silver

Postal History – International: Brian C Day *Military Post in Slovakia 1918/1920* Silver (judged as a National exhibit); J Barry Horne *Czechoslovakia Currency Reform of 1st June 1853* Silver; Richard Wheatley *Netherlands East Indies pre-stamp marks* Large Vermeil

Aerophilatelic – National: John N Hammonds *French Air Mail to Madagascar* Vermeil

Literature – Handbooks: Richard Beith *Postal Arrangements following the Liberation of Prague in May 1945* by Robert J Hill Silver

Literature – Periodicals: Richard Beith *Czechout* Bronze Silver; Norman Hudson "238" *The Journal of the Faroe Islands Study Circle* Silver

In addition, J Barry Horne got Silver for his entry as part of the Wessex Philatelic Federation in the **Inter-Federation** competition: *Czechoslovakia - 1953 Currency Reform*

Publications

We have received the following journals, which will be available from the Society Library. Items of interest to members are:

- The Winter 2006 issue of *Austria*, No. 156:
- ▶ Postal History of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the Far East 1898-1920 cont. (Piroette); "Grüß Aus" Lithos by Schwidernoch (Pollak); Austrian Postal History 1840-UPU ((Fechenbauer pp.18-23).
- The September/October & November/December 2006 issues of *The Czechoslovak Specialist*, Vol. 68, Nos .5 & 6, Whole Nos. 599 & 600. The articles include:
- ▶ Mailings of the Prague Pneumatic Post [5] [conclusion] (Šmid & Schödelbauer); Jubilee and Charity Issue of 1919 [conclusion] (Moliš); Unusual covers franked with POŠTA ČESKOSLOVENSKÁ 1919 stamps (Kunc); Eastern Silesia...where is that? (Garancovsky); Thirtieth Anniversary of Opening of the Branch of the Prague Postal Museum in Vyšší Brod (Hahn); "Personally Deliver to Addressee" or About Letters from Previous Times (Švejnar).
- The September 2006 issue of *Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Tschechoslowakei*, Vol. 37, Whole No. 149. Douglas Baxter has kindly translated the list of contents for us. The articles include:
- ▶ Comparative catalogue lists (-); Forgery crisis in Czech philately – what the study group is doing (Liebermann); The Political history of Czechoslovakia [1] (Koch); Distinguishing features on the 40h stamp from the Mountain Rescue/Alpine flowers series Pofis No. 2368 (Ziegler); Velké Slemence – a divided community (Tischner); Special Cancellations from Slovakia 2005 (Tischner); Czech Air Mail – new items (Müller). >

- The October 2006 issue of *Dylizans*, No.43. The articles include:
 - ▶ Court Delivery Service (Berrisford).
- The 9, 10 & 11/2006 issues of *Filatelie*, Vol.55. The English translation of the Contents does not cover all the articles:
 - ▶ Die Stamping "Linden Leaves & Blossom" stamps 1945 (Zedník); Postal Operations on the Territory of Deutschböhmen (Kunc); History of Car Brands in Bohemia & Moravia [4] (Horák).
 - ▶ History of Car Brands in Bohemia & Moravia [5] (Horák); Problems and Outlook of Electronic Philatelic Literature (Langhammer).
 - ▶ Czech Republic Special Flights 2003-2006 (Crha); History of Motor Car Brands in Czechoslovakia [1] (Horák); Plate Errors on Czech stamps of the 1st half of 2006 (Brožová & Zedník); History of the Motorcycle in Czechoslovakia on stamps [1] (Horák); Supplement: Special issue of the magazine PERFINY Vol. XXVII 2006 [Perfins]
- The 5/6 2006 issues of *Merkur Revue*. The articles include:
 - ▶ 40 years of the "Art 1966" issue (Fritz); Postmarks of the Plebiscite area [2] (Tovačovský); The "Economy & Science" issue from 1920 [3] (Stupka); Austrian state notes of 5 Gulden, issue 1886 (Šustek); Forged Slovakia 1939 covers (Šablatúra).
- Nos. 7/2006 Issues of *NIEUWS* (Dutch Society for Czechoslovak Philately)
 - ▶ Nieuwe kenmerken ter identicatie van de 1 Heller Hradchin type III (Trip); De posttarieven van Tsjechoslowakije [4] (van Dooremalen); Karlsbad-30 woelige jaren [1] (Tukker).
 - ▶ The December 2006 issue of *Stamps of Hungary* No 167. The articles include:
 - ▶ A summary concerning the Hungarian telephone ticket (Endrödi); Collecting meter-marks and slogan postmarks (Benford); Budapest local parcel service, 1932-1942 (Morrell & Endrödi); Hotel posts of Transylvania-Errata (-).

Comments on the October 2006 Auction

Fortunately the Pricing in Proportion actually made postage and packaging easier.

A smaller selection this time meant that only 22 bidders bid for 190 lots out of 415. This compares with 35 bidders for 326 lots out of 516 in the last Auction. The average bid was just over £6.45, in a range from 20p to £120. For the statistically minded, the mid value was lower than the last Auction's at £4.75 (£2.75 last Auction) and 174 bids were £10 or less (286 in the last Auction).

The most popular item was lot 221, the Sudetenland p/c with five bids were the Perfins books (6 bids and 4 bids). A wide range of bids with particular interest in the Siberian and sheets. The Polish overprints for Eastern Silesia and the Eastern Silesian varieties were also well bid for. The only areas short of bids were postcards and engravings.

At the time of writing, I am still expecting a significant delivery of lots to interest you all in the next two auctions – the January 2007 postal auction and the March 2007 room auction.

Peter Williams

OBITUARY

George Kwiatkowski Kay (1925? – 2006) George came to Scotland as part of the Polish Army in exile in World War II, and after the war he stayed on in Scotland, using his skills as an artist and his knowledge of printing to make a living. He changed his name from Jerzy Kwiatkowski to George Kwiatkowski Kay. Always affable and modest and with a quiet sense of humour, he integrated well into British society and contributed to the life of the local community. He married and eventually had a loving family of three children and three grandchildren. Interested in Polish philately, he built up an extensive and interesting collection of Polish postal history and was always happy to display his material at meetings.

>

He took the trouble to put into print the knowledge that he acquired. Between 1956 and 1960, he and John Crimlisk compiled a four-part *Polish Postmarks Catalogue*, the last two volumes of which became part of the *European Philatelic Library*. In 1992 he published his *Postal Place Names in Poland*, an invaluable guide to postal historians faced with the problem of identifying localities that had later changed their names. In 1997 he and Ron Negus produced their *Polish Exile Mail in Great Britain 1939-1949*, a comprehensive and definitive work on the subject. At the same time George was also contributing articles to philatelic magazines, especially to *Dylizans*, the bulletin of the Society for Polish Philately in Great Britain. The last of these articles appeared in Issue No. 22 of July 2001 under the title of 'A Polish Post Office in Edinburgh'.

It was in 2001 that he and Roy Reader wrote an article about Aleksander Stocki, a controversial figure in Polish philately. George translated this into German for the *Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Polen* in Germany and it appeared in the Society's *Mitteilungsblatt* No. 44 under the title of 'Aleksander Stocki, rätselhafter Philatelist'. He and Roy then expanded this article into the book *Aleksander Stocki: Enigmatic Philatelist* published in English in 2004. Illness sadly ended his philatelic and literary activities early in 2004 and led to his death on 18 October 2006. A translation he had done of a Polish article in 2003 had appeared in *Czechout* just a month before he died. This was therefore his last contribution to philately. The philatelic world has lost a brilliant and much respected philatelist and postal historian; those who knew him personally have also lost a good and ever helpful friend.

Roy E Reader

[When George Kay offered his article to us through Roy, he later phoned me to say that if there were any articles of joint interest published in Polish he would gladly translate them. Sadly through illness this co-operation never came to pass and a good friend, philatelist and postal historian has now gone to his rest. Editor]



BOOK REVIEWS

Postal arrangements following the liberation of Prague in May 1945

Translation by Robert Kingsley of an article by Lubor Kunc from *Postilion* 2/2006

The Czechoslovak Philatelic Society of GB in Britain issued in May of this year, so as to coincide with the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, the latest in a series of monographs that it has issued, this time dealing with the postal arrangements which took place in Prague in May 1945. This monograph consists of more than 90 pages and contains numerous black & white and colour illustrations. Its author is Bob Hill, who has been responsible for writing a number of previous monographs. Included in the monograph there is a map of post-war Prague and also a numbered black print.

This monograph differs in one important respect from previous ones in as much as the text appears in two languages, English and Czech, side by side. The Society also timed the issue of this monograph to coincide with the Brno Philatelic Exhibition and for the benefit of Czech philatelists decided to publish the monograph with the text being written in Czech as well as in English. We welcome the fact that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has also participated in its publication. It can be purchased from most Czech philatelic shops and in the last issue of *Merkur Revue* it was offered on mail order for Kč 640.



The publication first of all briefly describes the military operation associated with the liberation of Prague. It then continues to deal with the types of cancellations used at Prague Post Offices in the given period; this also includes a list of special cancellations. A chapter is devoted to the revolution issue of stamps used in Prague, the stamps issued by the Czechoslovak Post Office and the payment of postal items by cash. Special attention is given to postal stationery used in Prague. The author thoroughly researched and describes labels used on registered mail and value-declared labels. Useful is also the list of existing Post offices showing the

cancellers that were used. In the final part of the publication there appear illustrations of interesting items of postal stationery, postcards and commemorative sheets. A special part of the publication deals with the currency reform of 1945 and with Vlasov's "Liberation Army", which includes an illustration of the stamps that were issued.

All in all, one can review the monograph positively. Robert Hill has dealt with the subject matter very thoroughly and drawn the reader's attention to a number of very interesting pieces of information which will be most useful to beginners as well as more experienced collectors.

So that we don't only offer words of praise, permit me to point out two omissions, which, even though they do not reduce the monograph's value, I feel that the reader's attention should be drawn to. The first is on page 34 and deals with official stamps amongst those that were valid in Prague. This is a mistake since this issue was valid only on Slovak territory.

The second omission concerns the illustration of the card-dated 23.5.1945 and sent to a Prague address. It contains an American Army censor's canceller (see illustration). Unfortunately the author does not point out that this canceller is a forgery to the detriment of collectors, as was identified in the 80's, but which still continues to appear on items sold by philatelic traders and auction houses. Apart from the fact that on Czechoslovak territory in 1945 there was no American Army censorship of private correspondence, one must point out that American Field Post APO 655 referred to on this canceller was based deep inside German territory and served as a transit post office to facilitate contact between Czech soldiers from the Czechoslovak armoured brigade and foreign countries. It is therefore not possible to find any item sent from one part of Prague to another. Collectors can find further information of this canceller in *Filatelie* No.5/1983 on page 153 and No.11/1987 on page 297.



The monograph can be recommended to our readers, as it will certainly serve as a useful guide to the complicated question of postal arrangements in post-war Czechoslovakia. We hope that the British Society and the author will continue in the praiseworthy task of researching the post-war period and that they will not remain the only ones to do so. And to us Czech collectors we would express the hope that further monographs from the British society will appear in the Czech language.

This monograph and all others from Nos. 3 to 18 are available from our Publications Officer. Editor

"A Concise History of Hungary" by Miklós Molnár, originally published in 1996 in French and translated by Anna Magyar, Cambridge University Press, reprinted 2005, hardback: ISBN 0 521 66142 0, paperback ISBN 0 521 66736 4, 370 +xviii pp., £14.99 (paperback)

When your desperate relatives ask you what you would like for Christmas, you could do worse than try this one. As its title says, it's a concise history with all the tribes, battles, revolutions and politics neatly laid out, from the beginnings to 1990. The author, a Hungarian professor, was himself part of this history, being incarcerated by the Nazis, returning to edit a communist newspaper, but then fleeing to Switzerland after the 1956 revolution, and returning after the fall of communism.

The book's eight chapters break Hungary's history down into 'bite-sized chunks', with the first one dealing with the early days up to 1301. Chapter 2 follows up to the Battle of Mohács in 1526. Chapter 3, entitled 'A country under three crowns', follows the to-ing and fro-ing of the Ottoman domination. The period of Austrian domination is covered in Chapter 4, which takes us up to the 1848 Revolution. The next three chapters deal with the Dual Monarchy, with the inter-war period, and 'Under Soviet Domination' while the final chapter deals briefly with the most recent post-communist era. While not profusely illustrated, there are 11 maps and 48 plates of historical figures (all the usual suspects) and places. The one of Bela Kun addressing a factory crowd in 1919 is particularly interesting.

Overall, it is a good read, puts everything into perspective, and it will surely help to interpret the people and events that are commemorated on Hungarian Stamps.

Roger Morrell

Who would like to be the Society's next Publications Officer?

As he announced at the recent AGM, Richard Beith will not be standing for this post at the 2007 AGM. Richard and Margaret are shortly moving back to Scotland, to be nearer to family and grandchildren. Richard has presided over the launch and marketing of all Monographs from No.12 to No.18 and still hopes to launch any new monographs produced in the next ten months.

The duties involved can be briefly summarized as:

- liaise with the authors of new monographs and advise on layout and contents, in conjunction with the Hon Secretary
- liaise with the Hon Secretary over print production
- allocate ISBNs to each publication
- draft a sales flyer for each new monograph
- control the dispatch of all legal, copyright and review copies of a new work
- dispatch resulting orders
- keep appropriate accounts in consultation with the Hon Treasurer

It should be noted that the Publications Officer does not get involved in any way with the production of *Czechout*. The Hon Secretary holds the bulk stocks of older monographs and he and the Publications Officer regularly review the need for any reprints.

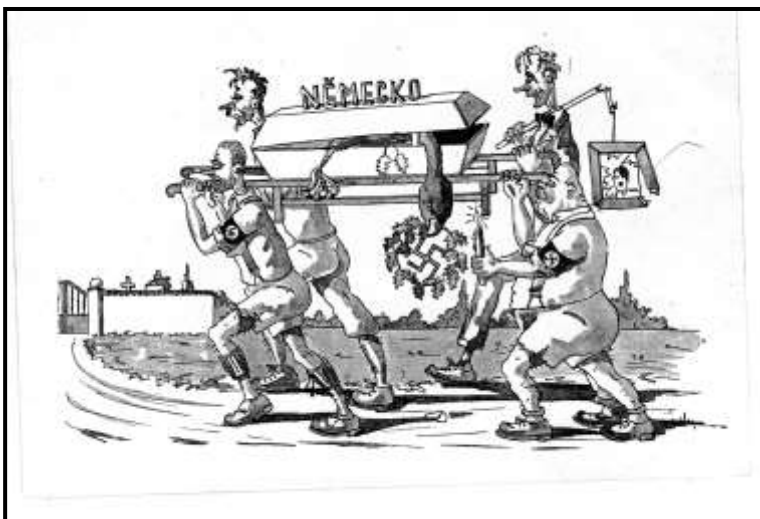
If you are interested in considering this post and would like to discuss this opportunity in more detail, please contact Richard at the address given on the inside front cover or e-mail to richard@rbeith.demon.co.uk

POSTCARDS OF INTEREST

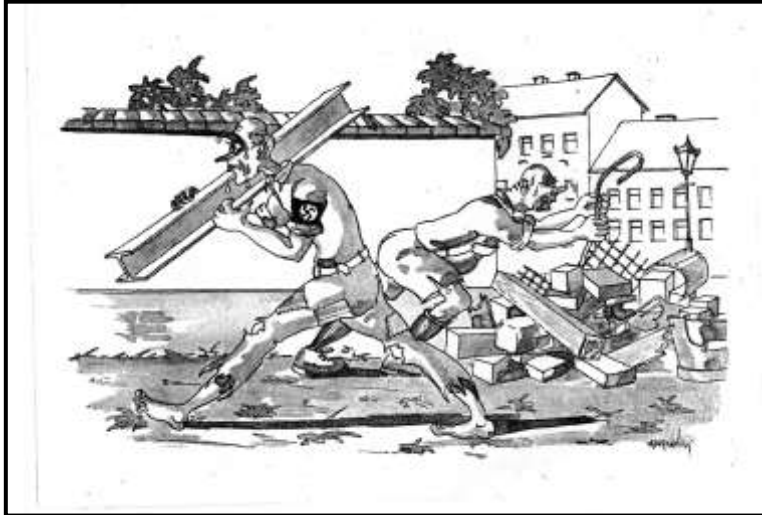
-Tony Moseley-

Following my request for information about the anti-Sudeten German series of propaganda postcards last year (*Czechout* 3/2005, page 85), I have been able to add three more cards to my collection, plus details of a fifth card which I do not have. There is a possibility that a sixth card exists to complete the series, but I have not yet seen an example of it.

All the postcards were drawn by Milan Dupal and were printed in České Budějovice.



1) Pohřeb Německa (German Funeral)



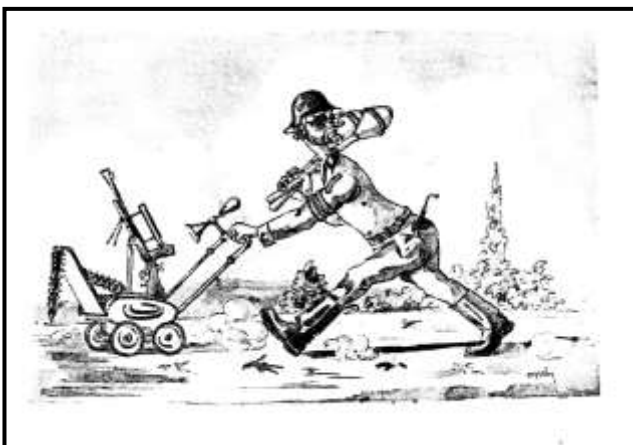
2) Němci Odklízejí Barikády
(Germans removing the barricade)



3) Domů Do Říše! (Home into the Reich)



4) Na Sibiř! (To Siberia)



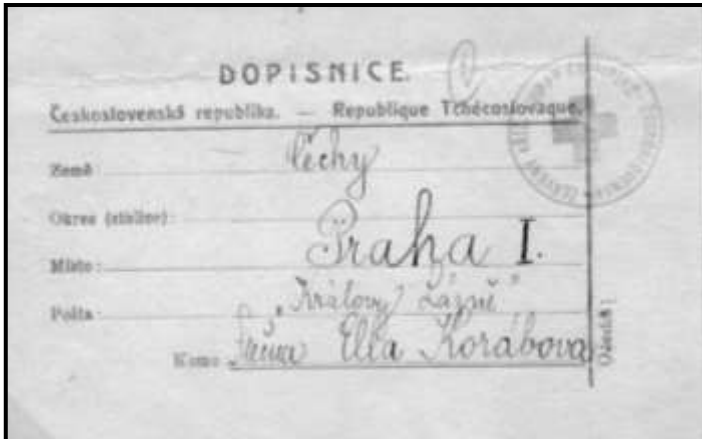
The fifth card shows a German soldier pushing a pram loaded with a Bren gun, carrying two 'Panzerfaust' anti-tank weapons. He is looking over his shoulder presumably for the Red Army who are in pursuit! I would like to know what the object in his trouser pocket is? (I have not yet worked this out.) At the moment I do not have the title of the fifth card.

Any further information from members about these cards would be welcome. Does anyone know the details of the sixth card? My thanks to Rex Dixon and Tony Hickey for pointing me in the right direction.

CZECH FORCES IN RUSSIA - TWO WORLD WAR I P.O.W. CARDS

-Kenny Morrison-
Translations by Vladimír Kraliček

These two cards were acquired some time ago, both dated in December 1918 and appeared to be from Omsk addressed to Prague, both bearing Czech Red Cross POW unit cachets in red. The card dated 27 December also has a very faint circular cachet in violet.



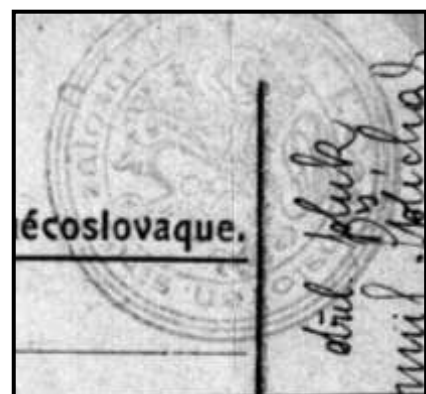
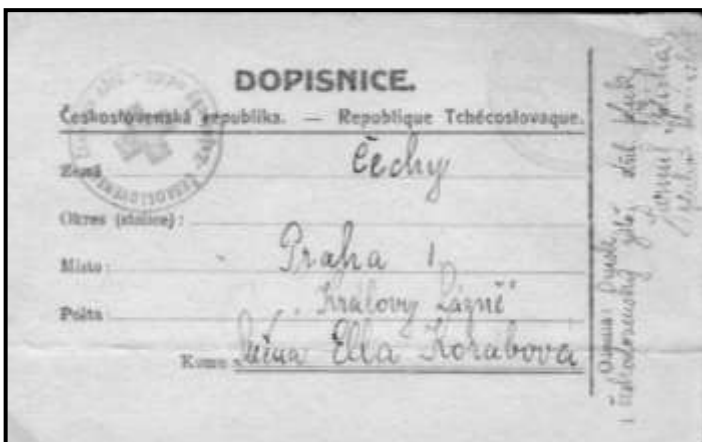
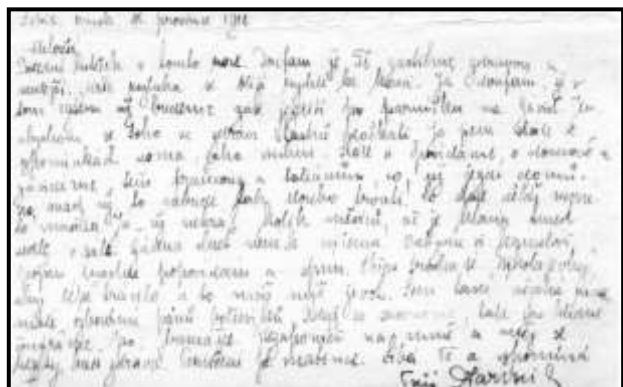
Translation: Card dated 27 December 1918 addressed to Miss Ella Korábová, Praha 1, Králový Lázně, Bohemia. From Jarmil Spíchal, Regiment Office, 1st Czechoslovak Reserve Rifle Regiment, Omsk.

Beloved Elličko, Siberia, Omsk, 27 December 1918

Here I am sending my second card. Previously I have sent a letter. Christmas has passed well, even though we have fought the Bolsheviks through it. I am well and constantly thinking of you. There is

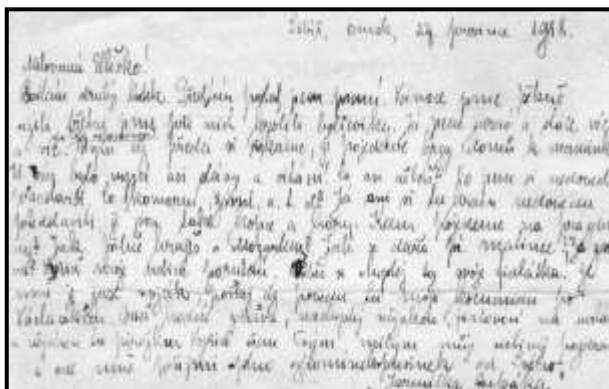
now talk of coming soon home to our mothers. You would have had lots of celebrations and welcome. You are probably doing the same? I find it difficult to imagine. With the music, etc? I am unable to visualise the beauty of those hills and mountains. Where shall we go for our holidays? You would still be playing with the Mozartines. How is Mrs Malinka? Is she well? Pass on my regards to her. Better get your things ready.

As far as I am concerned, I am still a soldier and just wait until I take my 'Commander' for a walk along the 'Václavskem' (i.e. the St. Vaclav Square in Prague, Trans.) Be prepared to welcome her with some 'Fialovou' (flowers) and some pasty. Please pass on my greetings to all of our dearest and for you from me many memories and kisses. From yours, 'Jarmilka Zupáka' (Zupák = Sergeant)



Translation: Card dated 31 December 1918 addressed to Miss Ella Korábová, Praha 1, Královy Lázně, Bohemia.

Dearest Elličko!, Siberia, Omsk, 31 December 1918. This is the last card for the year. I hope it will find you well and happy. Our separation is coming, at long last, to an end. I hope that this summer we will again set sail by steamer on the way home. Hopefully we shall come to it still in good health. In my memories I am always home, just as the others are. We are always talking of our home and we are jealous of the French and Italians (legionnaires), who have already departed. Perhaps it won't be so long now.



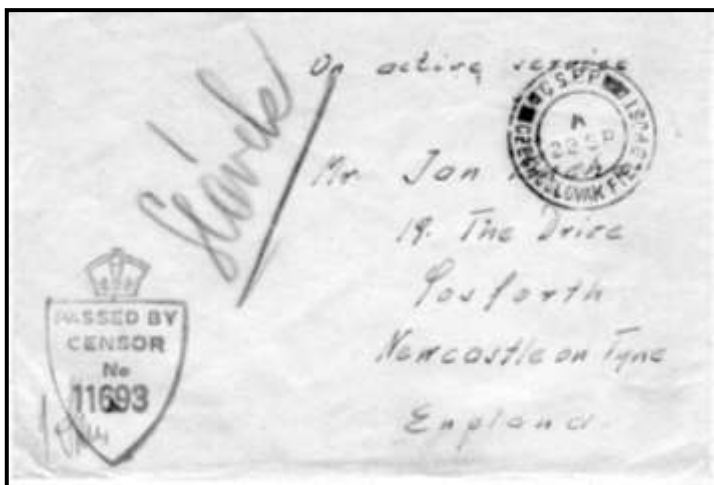
What is happening here is the Russian music. We have not heard any for some months, but now it is heard in a hall nearby. I have no taste for it. I spent my time in the office, we talk about the war and then go to sleep. Sometimes I walk through Nijolajevky to improve my digestion and there you have our life. Sometimes we hear a gunshot from the Bolsheviks. After we reply it will be quiet again. Don't forget me, keep well and have a nice time. Give my regards to J. Marince. I am thinking of you, love from, Your Jarmil

CZECHOSLOVAK ARMY IN EXILE – UK CENSOR MARKS

-Brian C Day-

I enjoyed Vladimir's WWII censor marks in *Czechout* 3/2006 and I noted missing number 11693, in particular, which I was very lucky to find recently after many years of searching and I illustrate below a copy of it together with my album sheet. Members will note that I was also very fortunate in that the addressee was Jan Mucha of the Czechoslovak Colony in Newcastle, which is another nice story for my album sheet. However, I would mention that I am still missing censor numbers 11695 and 12720 of which Vladimir has no spares, in case someone else has them!

1944. Cover posted from France by a soldier "On Active Service" with the Czechoslovak Independent Armoured Brigade then deployed in Northern France. [Slávek, written in red, is the name of a person and was probably written by the recipient as an aide-mémoire.] Addressed to Mr. Jan Mucha, in Newcastle on Tyne, it bears regular British-style field post steel Type 2 canceller C S.P.P. 22 SP 44, code A, and initial and censor cachet No. 11693; attached to the Sappers Squadron. The addressee, Jan Mucha, known to be an ex-naval man, was at that time the Chairman of the Czechoslovak colony in the N.E. (Newcastle, Tyneside, area) and among its members were Czechoslovaks working in the War effort under the brilliant Czech engineer, Miroslav Sigmund, of the Sigmund Pumps Company, in the armament industry, on the Team Valley Trading Estate in Gateshead, manufacturing parts for the Bren gun, and among them was a group of engineers and craftsmen who had managed to flee from the Bren factory in Brno, Czechoslovakia.



In *Czechout* 1/1999 "What, When, Where?" on page 19, Richard Beith illustrated two labels from a Czechoslovak Club, Newcastle during WWII. Richard inquired which Newcastle this was, Upon Tyne, under Lyme, Co. Down etc. Brian's article appears to supply the answer - it is Newcastle-upon-Tyne. [Two for the price of one! Editor]

LIGHT IS FINALLY THROWN ON THE MYSTERY SURROUNDING THE “WLASSOW” (VLASOV) STAMPS.

-By Karl-F Heide and F E Graf Kesselstatt-

Translation from the German by Douglas D. Baxter from the journal *DBZ* 24/93 pp 1900-1995,
with permission for publication in *Czechout*.

As this document is translated from the German, use is made throughout of the German spelling WLASSOW and not the anglicised version VLASOV nor the Russian version ВЛАСОВ. Typeset and illustrated by Robert J. Hill

In the appendix of the Michel Field Post Handbook there is a mention of five unissued stamps for the “Wlassow Troops”. Some collectors will have come across one or other of these, sometimes they come up for auction. What was behind these stamps has for a long time been obscure. Half a century after the production of these stamps, an exhaustive explanation is possible for the first time. The five “Wlassow stamps”, which have drawn the threads of history into philately, provide little information about themselves. They bear neither the name of a country or national insignia nor can the purpose of them be ascertained. Only the Russian word ПОЧТА in Cyrillic script (*Post* in English) and a value in roubles suggest that they were for use in a Russian speaking area. No stamp catalogue includes these stamps, but the second edition of the Michel Field Post Catalogue (1986) has a short mention without giving any value.

Attempts at an explanation

If you search in philatelic literature for publications which promise to give information about the “Wlassow stamps”, you find only very few attempts at an explanation. In the overwhelming majority of cases, you are diverted away from the name Wlassow and a connection is made between these stamps and the Wlassow Army which was formed on the German side at the end of 1944. Among the explanations of the “Wlassow stamps” that have so far appeared the following, roughly sorted, are the essential hypotheses: (the numbers in brackets refer to the references at the end of this document).

- The “Wlassow stamps” are Field Post for members of the Wlassow Army, similar to the Field Post of the Flemish Legion; the Danish legion etc. (1), (2), (5), (6), (7)
- They were issued for a Volunteers Unit, formed within the Wlassow Army in Bohemia & Moravia to be used, postally, later on, in Russia. (3)
- The “Wlassow stamps” were a provisional issue for Wlassow troops in the Ukraine. (2)
- It is also possible that it was a stamp issue for a camp Field Post in north Russia. (2)
- Or it was for messenger post for the Russian irregulars under the command of Kaminski, who were fighting against Russian partisans in the Pripet marshlands near Lokotj in the district of Brjansk. (2)
- A stamp issue for Russia produced by the Reich Ministry for Education & Propaganda is another explanation. (4)
- For many the stamps are simply fantasy issues from the post war period, similar to the Adria – Alps Foreland issue. (5), (7)

It is worthy to note that all the theories have only one thing in common: nobody doubts that the stamps are German in origin.

Information from a printing order

It has been proved that examples of the “Wlassow stamps” (under that name) were in the hands of the German military personnel, or those allied to the Germans by the end of 1943. Colonel Holmston – Smyslowski, the then Commander of the Special Division R, had had in his possession at the time one mint set and one used set, the latter, however, missing the 10 rouble value. However, as he himself was not a philatelist, he gave the stamps later to a well known stamp expertiser in the Federal republic. Also, a used set, again without the 10 rouble value, is known in a war time collection in Silesia. As a result of this, the above mentioned theory that the “Wlassow stamps” were a fantasy issue from post-war times can be disregarded.

The first relevant reference to the “Wlassow stamps” appeared in an article (8) in 1958, which reported the discovery of an envelope containing the printing contract for the Wlassow stamps, a trial printing,

imperforated colour trials and a perforated sheet of stamps of each value. In the envelope there was also the information that the printing contract had been given to the firm of Malz in Berlin. However, only sixteen years later in 1974, the text of the contract was published (9) after the envelope changed hands.

Together with this document and the wide ranging scientific study of the events of the Second World War, it has become possible, after fifty years, to clarify in a reliable way the history and the political background of the "Wlassow stamps".

The printing contract which was drawn up on 12 July 1943 with the contract number 412, gives the name of the issuer of the contract. It is the Propaganda Department W (White Ruthenia), a formation of the German Armed forces.

Furthermore it prescribes in every detail, the production of the stamps i.e. the designs, the size and format, the printing method and the quality of the paper. Even the extent of sub-contracting is stated – to the firm of Lindacker (lithos) and of Greulich (perforation).

From the information in this printing contract it is perfectly clear that the idea for producing the "Wlassow stamps" arose by the end of 1942 or at the latest in the first quarter of 1943, at a time when a Wlassow Army did not yet exist.

Therefore the stamps could have nothing whatsoever to do with that army.

Printing contract issued by Propaganda Department W (White Ruthenia) a formation of the German Armed Forces, sent to the firm of Malz in Berlin commissioning the production of five perforated commemorative stamps. 12. July. 1943.

German propaganda in Russia

For a more precise understanding you have to be aware of German propaganda in the east since the beginning of the invasion of the USSR on 22 June 1941 (10). After the entry of the German troops into the USSR, the High Command of the army (OKH) ordered on 4 July 1941 the setting up of three Propaganda Departments for the Eastern region – analogous to the already existing Propaganda Departments in France and Belgium.

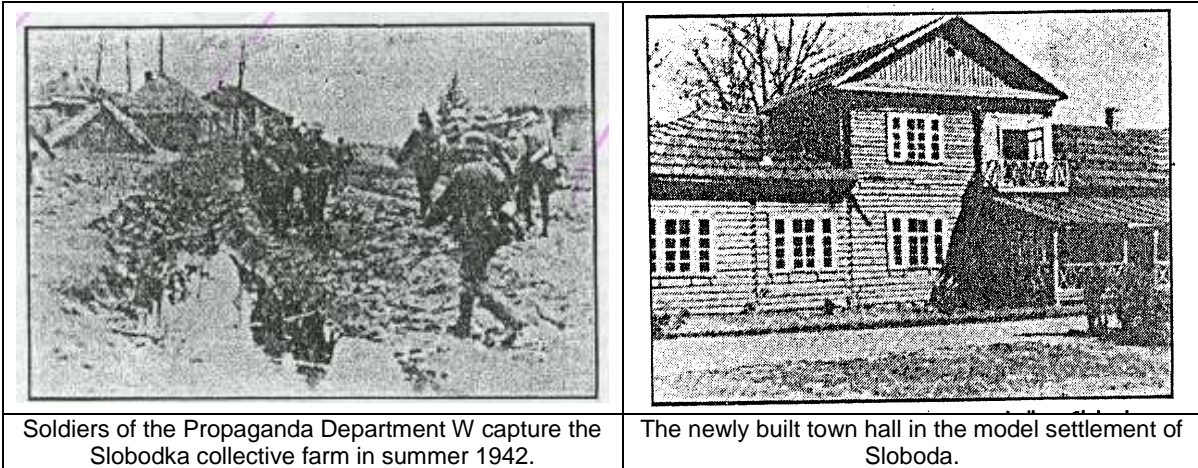
The establishment of the new Propaganda Departments was to be completed by 1 August 1941, in the occupied Baltic States, White Ruthenia (W) and Ukraine (U). In 1942 Propaganda departments in the Caucasus and Don region were added. The Propaganda Department W mentioned in the printing contract in connection with the "Wlassow stamps" did not become operational until the middle of October 1941 (11). On 15 October 1941 it was moved by rail from Potsdam, where it was set up, to Smolensk. Smolensk remained the home of this Propaganda Department until the retreat in 1943. It served the area of the Army Group Central.

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During the Second World War the German propaganda service in the east ran three major campaigns, sometimes in conjunction with the summer offensives. The first propaganda campaign had the following themes:

1. Justification for the German assault on the Soviet Union.
2. The army's task of liberation.
3. The common struggle against Stalin's criminal regime.
4. The good treatment of Russian prisoners of war by the Germans.

The campaign ended in total failure because these statements did not reflect what was actually happening. Fact, of course, could not remain hidden from the Russian people. In the end the death camps for deserting or captured members of the Red Army and the treatment of the Russian population as "Slavic sub humans" were a complete contradiction to the propaganda.



As a result of the total collapse of the German Propaganda Department in the east in 1941, those responsible for the 1942 campaign ordered a program of actions, rather than mere promises.

Better treatment of Russian prisoners of war and the raising of the living conditions for the population in the occupied Russian territories were needed. As early as 1941, the Armed Forces Propaganda Service had recognised that an answer to the question of the future political shape of the Russian territories had to be given and the people who lived in these territories had to be positively involved. Therefore, in the interest of successful propaganda, great importance was placed on the formation of what would appear to be a Russian government.

In 1942 the German Propaganda Service in the east concentrated firstly on land reform. This planned the abolition of the collective farms and the reinstatement of free, independent Russian farmers on their own land – a theme that would be well received by the Russian people and also by the Red Army.

But then, for the German propaganda machine, a circumstance arose which could have overshadowed everything that had happened before. On 12 July 1942 the Soviet Lieutenant General Andrei Andrejewitsch Wlassow was captured near the village of Tuchowetschi. He became German prisoner of war no. 16901. Wlassow was one of Stalin's closest advisers. He was always brought in where a catastrophe was threatening Soviet troops, most recently on the Wolchow front.

The Armed Forces Propaganda Service recognised extremely quickly the great importance of this man for their plans. Although he was initially reluctant, he was eventually won over as an ally against Stalin. However Wlassow made clear that there was no doubt that he could never agree to German forced rule over Russia. His actions were aimed above all at the formation of a free Russia, having equal rights with the German Reich.

The Wlassow propaganda

In spite of the reservations of the Lieutenant General, a new Wlassow "trump card" was prepared in Berlin for propaganda in the east. As a piece of propaganda fiction, a "Smolensk Committee", headed by Wlassow was invented. It drew up the so called "Smolensk Proclamation". This basically outlined the programme of a Russian counter-government to Stalin. The document was signed by Lieutenant General Wlassow as Chairman and by Major General Malyschkin as secretary of the committee.

Secretly the leadership of the Armed forces hoped that the formation of this proposed Russian counter-government in 1942 would win Hitler's agreement.

The Wlassow propaganda of 1942 was based entirely in Smolensk the home of Propaganda Department W (from now on Prop. Dept. W). This connection was deliberately chosen, because Smolensk was a well known town in the USSR. In propaganda terms you could talk very plausibly of that town as a putative seat of a Russian counter-government.

Prop. Dept. W was the most active and successful such department during the whole of the Second World War. Besides its extremely active role in the Wlassow campaign and building on the Land Reform Propaganda, it began, in 1942, what would be called nowadays a "Development Aid Programme", a programme whose effect would soon spread into the ranks of the Red Army. (12)

Under the leadership of its commander Major Kost, a farmer from Westphalia, the Prop. Dept. W captured, in the summer of 1942 the Slobodka collective farm about 10 km south west of Smolensk and also the village of Skrelewschtschina about 3 km further on.

The Slobodka collective farm was chosen for the aid programme for propaganda reasons because of its name. Sloboda (Slobodka is its diminutive form), as the settlement will be called from here on, translates in a figurative sense as "settlement of free people". Formed during the period of serfdom the name Sloboda was given to places in which farmers, who had been freed or who had escaped from serfdom, settled and, to a certain extent, defended themselves militantly. This place name is found relatively frequently in Russia.

In Sloboda a small Prop. Dept. W garrison was set up and an agriculture development programme was begun immediately. The collective farm and the village were turned into a model agricultural undertaking by Russian farmers with the active co-operation of soldiers from Prop. Dept. W. Seed and cattle were provided by the soldiers of Prop. Dept. W and their commander, sometimes at their own expense. The houses were newly built or completely renovated.

In Sloboda, besides agricultural operations and housing there was also an education centre for Red Army soldiers who had deserted or had been captured. For the Prop. Dept. W this was a completely new modus operandi – they were leaving the prisoners completely free and without guards. They exercised no force and waited until the prisoners, of their own free will, were prepared to collaborate with Prop. Dept. W or other German institutions. In this they had excellent success.

The "Silver Stripe" operation

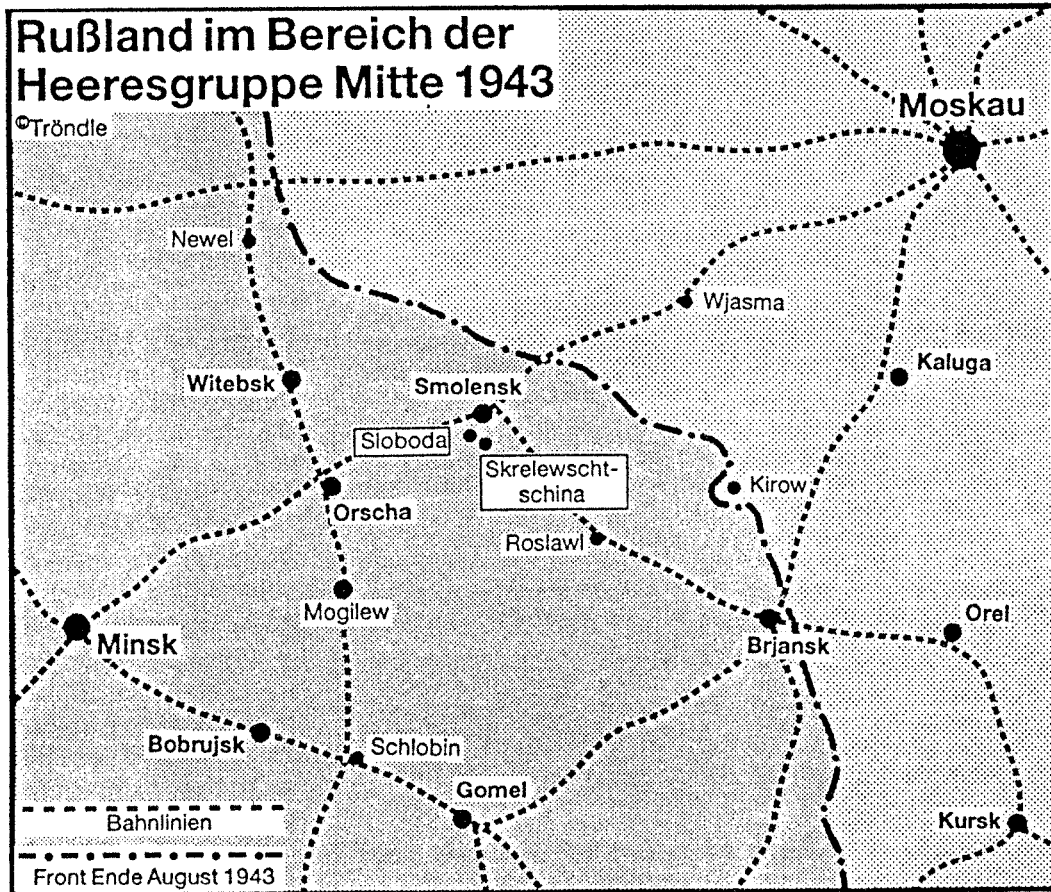
The setting up of Russian counter-government was rejected by Hitler in 1942, against the hopes of the propagandists. On the Soviet side too it was quickly recognised that the proposed Russian counter-government, which was feared in Moscow, was only a German propaganda trick. In addition there was, at the end of 1942 and the beginning of 1943, the heavy German defeat at Stalingrad – whereupon at the end of 1942 German propaganda in the east again reached a nadir. Particularly as it was left to its own devices, the Prop. Dept. W again had to follow the path of promises and deceit.

Therefore, in order to achieve a turn around in the increasingly definitive German defeat in the east, it was decided on the German side to make propaganda thrust of great size in 1943. The planned operation was given the name "Silver Stripe". It was to begin on 6 May at the same time as the planned pincer movement at Kursk.

The main part of operation "Silver Stripe" was to be again a Russian counter-government led by Lieutenant General Wlassow. This time the propaganda would be further elaborated by the claim that there existed some army units which were involved, the so called ROA. In view of the extremely critical situation on the east front, there were fairly certain in the OKW and in the Armed Forces Propaganda Service as well as departments in Berlin, which were involved with operation "Silver Stripe", that they would receive Hitler's approval for a Russian counter-government for the beginning of 1943, because it had long been recognised in the leadership of the Armed forces that the war against the Russian people could never be won – except perhaps in this way.

In the planning phase they went as far as to deal with the follow up arrangements for the Russian counter-government, which included for example the establishment of a Russian postal service with its own postage stamps. The ideas concerning this in the OKW/WPr section IV were drawn up by Captain van Grote and Lieutenant Dürksen in conjunction with the Foreign Armies East section under Major General Gehlen.

>



Russia in the area of the Army Group in the middle of 1943.
 Key in bottom corner: - - - - - railway line - - - - - the front at the end of August 1943

Already at the time, the name “Wlassow stamps” had been coined – the name that strangely has never left the stamps and which is always used when the stamps are mentioned and which, however, has never been an official designation. In the preparation for operation “Silver Stripe” the main role was taken by Prop. Dept. W together with Prop. Dept. Ostland and Ukraine. To it was given the task of producing the planned postage stamps. It is certain that the idea was to achieve an additional piece of propaganda by means of stamps. It was a well known fact, even at that time, that postage stamps can have a very large propaganda value. The Prop. Dept. W had at its disposal for such tasks – designs for leaflets, posters, propaganda, publications. etc. – a professionally qualified staff of assistants. Amongst these were:

- NCO's Hundertmark (decorator & photographer); Rupp (artist).
- Corporal Kubicek (artist)
- Officers Langhof (draughtsman); Laible, Hartmann & Zeume (all artists)

It can safely be assumed that the designs for the “Wlassow stamps” originated from the circle of these seven men. How many designs were prepared in total and whether they were based on photographs or on drawings made in the field can no longer be clarified today.

The illustrations on the “Wlassow stamps”

On the five stamps, the artists of the Propaganda Department depicted the main themes of the propaganda work undertaken by Prop. Dept. W.

- 50 Kopek dark green
The building of a Russian wooden house as an example of the construction of village settlements.
- 1 Rouble red brown
A farmer ploughing as a symbol of the propaganda theme “A free Russian farmer on his own land”.

| | |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2 Rouble | dark blue A view of Sloboda with its newly built town hall in the traditional, old Russian log cabin style, erected in winter 1942 – 3. |
| 4 Rouble | violet A view of Smolensk, the capital of the planned Russian counter-government with the town fortification walls, with the towers of the Upenski Cathedral rising above it. |
| 10 Rouble | dark brown A general view of the model village of Skrelewschtschina, taken at an angle, from the air. |

In the summer of 1942 the Prop. Dept. W, under the leadership of NCO Hundertmark staged a mobile propaganda exhibition in a lorry. For this Hundertmark constructed two scale models of Skrelewschtschina. One showed it as it was originally whilst the second depicted the village after its reconstruction. The design of the 10 rouble stamp is based on this model.



Red Army and German soldiers from the Sloboda Education Centre in front of their accommodation in Skrelewschtschina.

The production of the “Wlassow stamps”

The Reich Ministry for education and Propaganda was in fact (4) involved in the production of the “Wlassow stamps”. It is certain that the final version of the stamp designs, the decisions about the size of the stamps and the arrangement within the sheet as well as the awarding of contracts to printers was carried out by the OST department, area 2 (reporter – Herr Wiebe) of this Ministry.

Furthermore it is very probable that the terms of the printing contract were also drawn up there. However, it is unlikely that information about the planned stamp issue was given to the Reich Post Ministry because, after all, it was not a question of German stamps.

Somewhat unusual is the fact that the stamps were printed neither in the Reich Printing Works in Berlin nor in the State Printing Works in Vienna. At best we can speculate about the reasons. Limited capacity or consideration of cost may have played a role. However it is certain that, after 1942, German propaganda about the production of printer's proofs attracted private firms.

The production of the “Wlassow stamps” was entrusted to three private firms in the Reich capital Berlin, they were:

- 1 The printing firm Max Lindacker, Berlin SO36, Reichenberger str. 36. They made the printing plates for use in the offset process
- 2 The fine printing firm of Sebastian Malz & Son, Berlin SW11, Saarland str. 67 As main contractors they printed the stamps using the offset process. This process allows the use of lower quality paper.
- 3 The firm Lithography and printing, Stamp factory of Roman Grenlich, Berlin C2, Georgenkirch str. 40. They perforated and cut the sheets of stamps. The limited ability of this firm meant that it could only carry out line perforation.

None of these firms exist now.

Details of the stamps

Before the actual printing was carried out, the firm Malz & Sons produced trial prints of the five stamps on sheets measuring approximately 113 x 215 mm in the five colours and at least three sheets for each colour. The authors of this article have seen, so far, two trial prints of the 50 Kopek stamp in dark green and one of the 10 Rouble value in dark brown.

From each of the trial sheets of each colour, the relevant stamps, in the colour that had been finally proposed, were cut and stuck on to black card and labelled by hand “colour submission”. If you take

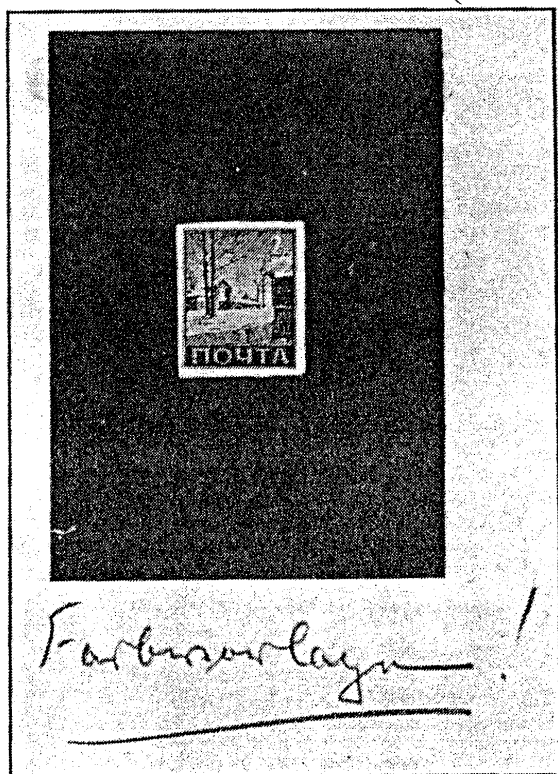
into consideration the war time exchange rate of 10:1 (10 Roubles = 1 Reichmark), the colours of the "Wlassow stamps" correspond to those of the then German definitive issue, with the exception of the 10 Rouble.

After probable examination by the Propaganda Ministry the stamps were printed in offset on relatively coarse, light greyish brown tinted, wood free paper of low quality. On one side it was coated with a smooth, yellowish gum and, for the printing process, was cut into sheets measuring 280 x 380 mm.

The five stamps were printed in three different formats:

- 1 50 Kopek, 1 Rouble, 2 Rouble
Vertical oblong format, 29 x 35 mm in sheets of 50 stamps, 326 sheets of each value (163,000 stamps).
- 2 4 Rouble
Horizontal oblong format, 32 x 28 mm in sheets of 35 stamps, 470 sheets printed (16,450 stamps).
- 3 10 Rouble
Horizontal oblong format, 32 x 46 mm in sheets of 30 stamps, 552 sheets printed (16,560 stamps).

The borders of the sheets remained blank, i.e. there were neither figures giving the value of rows nor any other printing remarks. All of the sheets of stamps were line perforated vertically and horizontally with the gauge of 11½. This resulted in the fact that the corners of the stamps nearly always have defective perforations. The postal purpose of the individual values of the "Wlassow stamps" is unexplained.



Colour sample of the 2 Rouble value in dark blue on its presentation card.

At which place in Berlin and at what exact time the finished stamps were delivered is not known yet. It could have been at the Department OST in the Reich Ministry for Education and Propaganda from whose funds the payment for producing the stamps certainly came. It is more likely, however, that the delivery was made to the High Command of the Armed forces Propaganda on the banks of the Tirpitz river. A part of the stamp issue was immediately taken to Smolensk and presumably stored at the premises of the Propaganda Department W. at Rote Kreuz str. 8. The reminder stayed in Berlin.

In the middle of 1943 Hitler rejected very forcibly the formation of a Russian counter-government. In doing so, he gave away the last possible remaining chance of success in the east. This decision arrived at in complete misjudgement of reality and in absolute autocracy lead, at the beginning of the second half of 1943, to the final irrevocable collapse of the propaganda campaign "Silver Stripe". Hitler's decision also sealed the fate of the "Wlassow stamps". There was no longer a possibility that they would be issued and used.

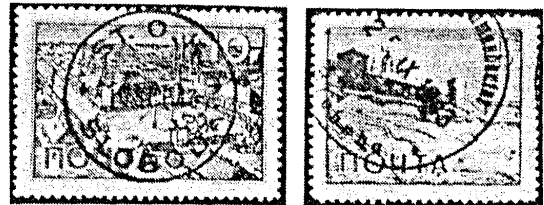
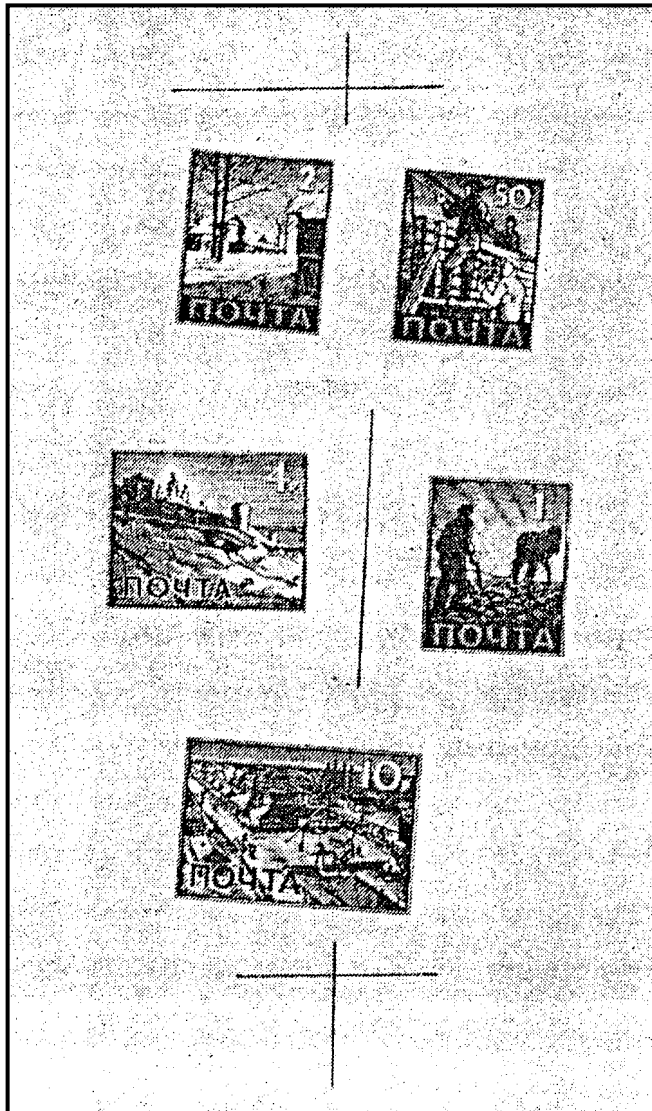
Cancelled "Wlassow stamps"

As the "Wlassow stamps" were never issued or come to that, were never used postally, there can not, of course, be any postally cancelled examples of stamps from this series. Yet a relatively high percentage of "Wlassow stamps" appear with strikes of two different cancellations, even complete sets on cover. For all known examples the two following cancellations are used:

1. A circular canceller with the inscription "ST. O. K. SLOBODA" and the date. It is a steel canceller 28.5 mm in diameter, corresponding to the standard German Field Post cancellers. The

height of the letters (3 mm) and the typeface with rather broad letters also correspond with those on standard Field Post cancellations.

2. A circular cancellation with the inscription (in Gothic script) "Standartkommandantur Sloboda" (Garrison Headquarters Sloboda) and the date. This is also a steel canceller 35 mm in diameter corresponding to the German Field Post letter cancellation. The height of these letters (2.8 mm) and the type face correspond exactly to those of the Field Post letter cancellations of this type.



Above – "Wlassow stamps" with:
 (left) the cancellation "ST. O. K. SLOBODA / 10. SEP. 43" on 10 Rouble value
 (right) the cancellation
 "STANDARTKOMMANDANTUR SLOBODA / 25. IX. 1943" on the 4 Rouble value

Left – Trial print sheet of the 5 "Wlassow stamps" in dark green.

The producers of the cancellers can only have been the firm of Hammer & Sons in Aschersleben. During the war they produced numerous standard and letter cancellers for Field Post use. These two cancellers are not included in surviving proof books of the firm Gleichmann of Berlin which was working for the Field Post at that time.

Both cancellers were without doubt among the official hand stamps of the armed forces. Somewhat unusual, however, is the clear place designation but we must take into consideration that these were cancellers of a German propaganda unit and were for a place which was at the centre of propaganda activities and therefore should be recognised as such.

The cancellers were also part of the propaganda. They were certainly produced in the middle of 1942 then put to use in the Garrison Headquarters of Sloboda. They were, however, neither postal cancellers nor did these cancellers have any connection with the "Wlassow stamps". However as the stamps and cancellations exist together, further information can be gathered from the dates of the cancellations, and without exception, these come from September 1943. The authors of this article have seen, so far, dates between 10 and 30 September 1943. >



A complete set of "Wlassow stamps" with the "ST. O. K. SLOBODA" cancel on 50 Kopek and 2, 4, 10 Rouble value and "STANDARTKOMMANDANTUR SLOBODA" on the 1 rouble. Cancellation dates 15, 22, 24 27 30 September 43

The retreat from Sloboda

The position at the front line in September 1943 in the Smolensk district was characterised by hard battles and retreats by the German armed forces. On September 25 the town was surrendered by the armed forces. Shortly before that Sloboda and Skrelewschtschina had been evacuated. From the German side, no destruction was carried out in Sloboda or

Skrelewschtschina, in order that the Red Army might see the advantages of German development aid.

In view of the military situation in the Smolensk district, the stocks of "Wlassow stamps", which were kept there, were taken to Sloboda in the first days of September, so that they would not fall into the hands of the Red Army. They were distributed from the Education Centre.

The stamps themselves reveal nothing about the origin but we do have two official communications with the place name Sloboda and details of the respective dates. Together they bear witness to a place from where, in accordance with the will of the German armed forces, the idea for a new, free Russia was to be spread – a place in which people had worked enthusiastically towards this goal.

The stamps were distributed to German military personnel and advisors but above all to the Russian students in the Education Centre. It is not known if the farmers in Sloboda and Skrelewschtschina received any. The stamps were available mint and used but it is mainly the used ones that were sought after. However not everybody got a complete set because the 10 Rouble value must have been scarce.

There is no official evidence of the above mentioned events in Sloboda. The description of the events is based on the statements of Herr Holmston-Smyslowskij which he made in conversation in Liechtenstein after the war.

At the end of the war, the Brigadier General and Commander of the First Russian National Army Holmston-Smyslowskij (better known under his pseudonym "von Regenan") took his units to internment in Liechtenstein and, in so doing, saved his self and his men from being handed over to the USSR. In September 1943, still as Colonel, Holmston-Smyslowskij was in Sloboda, presumably as a lecturer and witnessed at first hand what happened. As already stated, he would also have received "Wlassow stamps".

Cancellations with dates after 25 September 1943 could no longer come from Sloboda. We can only conclude that, when the retreat took place, the existing stock of stamps together with the official cancellers were taken to the Hatitsche Estate north of Baranowitsche from where Prop. Dept. W immediately continued its Development Aid Programme. The stamps were also distributed from there.

Where have the stamps gone?

There is no proof that the Wlassow stamps were not produced in the quantities referred to in the printing contract. We are therefore talking about 16,300 complete sets and, in addition to them a few hundred further stamps of 4 and 10 Roubles.

There are no clues as to how many stamps were taken to Smolensk. Nor do we know if all the stamps were distributed. There is much evidence against the latter. Taking into account the 1943 population of Sloboda and Skrelewschtschina and what is known of the approximate distribution per person, scarcely more than 1,500 sets – probably fewer – were distributed. However, the part of the issue that had been taken there must have been the greater. It is also possible therefore that some stamps could have been destroyed. Examples of "Wlassow stamps" issued in Sloboda, usually used ones, have, after the end of 1943, found their way into the possession of philatelists in Germany. Others have gone missing as a result of the ravages of war. The Russian students who, at the end of the war, were without exception in the officer class in the Wlassow Army, mostly kept their stamps. In 1945 these soldiers were handed

over to Stalin and thereby delivered to their deaths. The “Wlassow stamps” that were in their possession were thus destroyed.

We have to assume therefore that the majority of the “Wlassow stamps” issue remained in Berlin. In addition it is reported (5) – and there is no reason to doubt the truth of this statement – that, shortly after the capture of Berlin by the Red Army, large numbers of the stamps were seen lying around in one or two Berlin streets. Presumably they had been thrown out of a building during the process of plundering. Unfortunately the streets in question were not named, so we cannot come to any conclusion as to where the stamps were stored.

Children and passers-by picked up some of the stamps and took them away. However, Soviet military personnel very soon blocked the road off, gathered the stamps up, fetched those still remaining from a nearby building and took them away. Those stamps that had been picked up by Germans reached the stamp market and went almost exclusively to West Germany. Eventually, trade in such stamps was forbidden in the Soviet Occupation Zone and the later DDR.

Where did the printer’s document case come from?

The history of the document case with the printing contract (mentioned in the first part of this article) has not been completely explained. It cannot have remained with the printing firm Malz & Son because this printing works, which stood right beside the Anhalt railway station was completely destroyed in the summer of 1944 in a heavy bomb attack. It is plausible to suppose the document case, together with the undelivered stamps, was kept in Berlin and taken by a German in 1945. It may have come into the possession of a collector later through the stamp trade.

This document case is first mentioned in 1958. It is at that time traceable to a philatelist in Böblingen. On its sale at the beginning of the seventies its contents were broken up and probably the only still existing sheets went to a collector or a dealer and were divided up. The authors have not come across any units bigger than a block of four.

It seems therefore that, of the original issue of 16,300 complete sets, very few remain. Cautious estimates of examples of mint and used stamps worldwide amount today to only 2,000 sets. It is more than unlikely that any stamps from the stock that was taken away in 1945, are stored in an archive in Russia.

Finally, it must be emphasised that the “Wlassow stamps” – a civil stamp issue from Russia, planned from the German side for a Russian counter-government – must be considered unequivocally as German occupation stamps of the Second World War.

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Very special thanks to Dr. Ortwin Buchbender, Cologne who, with his specialist knowledge and assistance, made possible the explanation of the character of the “Wlassow stamps”.





“Wlassow stamps” of 1, 2, 4, 10 & 50 Roubles in blocks of four, bigger units are not known to exist.

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See also: Hill, R.J. *Vlasov's Army*, Czechout 4/2000. pp.92-96.

SHEDDING LIGHT ON THE WLIASSOW (VLASOV) ISSUE

-Tony Moseley-

I was privileged to see a pre-press copy of the translation of the article by Karl-F Heide & F E Graf Kesselstatt. My attention was drawn to the comment that the Wlassow stamps are not known in blocks any larger than four. This came as somewhat of a surprise as I have in my possession a complete sheet of 30 of the 10 Rouble value which complies in everyway with the description in the translated article.

I acquired this by auction in mainland Europe and it was not the cheapest thing I have ever bought but seemed too good a chance to let slip.



We also thank Tony for sending copies of stamp illustrations for the main article on the Wlassow stamps. Editor

QUERIES AWAITING ANSWERS

- Czechout 2/02:* John Hammonds' American Aid for German POWs card
- Czechout 2/03:* Richard Beith's 24Kčs 1946 Airmail Stamp
- Czechout 3/03:* Barry Horne's 1919 1st Anniversary Sheet perforations
- Czechout 2/05:* Maurice Tyler's French cover with Czech slogan
- Czechout 3/05:* Ian McQueen's Shanghai Airmail via Czechoslovakia to Denmark
- Czechout 3/05:* Vernon Brown's Bohemia & Moravia cover
- Czechout 3/05:* Bob Hill's American Army 1st Olympic Games in Klatovy
- Czechout 3/05:* Richard Beith's Undercover Letters?
- Czechout 1/06:* Charles Stirton's two covers with unusual "Red" stamps
- Czechout 2/06:* Bob Hill's Death of the invaders overprints

WHAT? WHEN? WHERE?

Another selection; at present we have a fair number outstanding awaiting answers. We would be grateful if members would see if they could reply to some of these queries, as it is a pity to write these off as unknown! It would be helpful if inquirers having covers with further details on the reverse also photocopy that side to assist with any replies.

Re Tony Moseley's B & M Commemorative Sheet in Czechout 3/2006 page 83

From Peter Jenkinson: I saw the same sheet in a German auction. It was a Dr. Reinhard Fischer auction in September 2006, lot no.2219, with a reserve of 130 euro. The description and picture match the Moseley sheet and describes it as a commemorative leaflet, with a variety of cancels and very rare.

Re John Hammonds PZ Envelopes in Czechout 2/2006 page 54

From Richard Wheatley: This short article comes as a result of John's query. PZ stands for *Poštovní Zboží*, which is the Czech name for the German-inspired *Postgut* parcel service of the 1930s. The idea was to provide a cheaper parcel service in return for bulk sendings with few frills. There had to be a minimum of five parcels and these could only be handed in at certain post offices, and could only be sent to named post offices. Of course these designated post offices were in the larger cities. A parcel card did not accompany the parcels with this service.

One of the few frills with this service was that parcels could be sent Cash on Delivery [COD] and it is respect of this service that the PZ envelopes were used. For the COD service the sender would hand in his parcels at the post office, along with an envelope clearly identified PZ. This envelope was addressed to the receiving post office. The three PZ envelopes that I have all differ in format, but they are all addressed to Hranice in 1939.

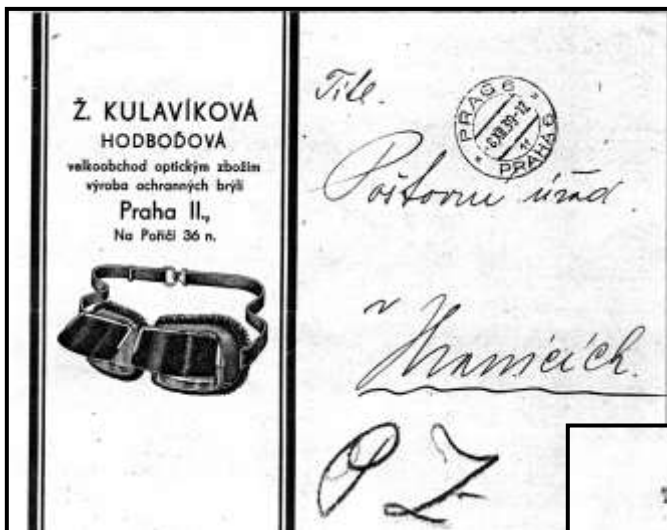
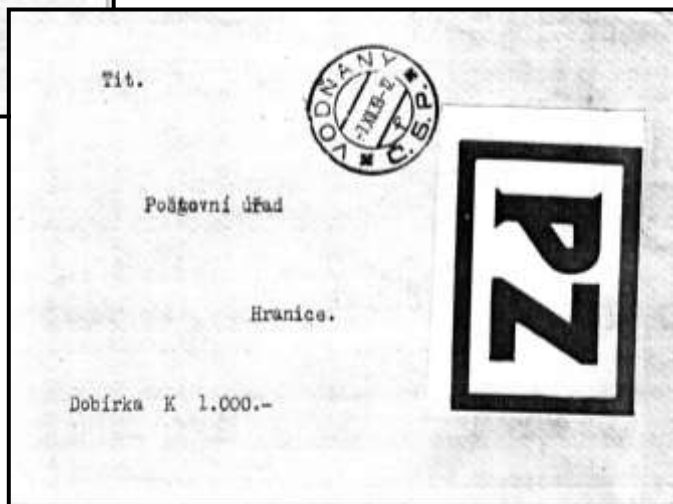


Figure One

Commercial Envelope with manuscript PZ in blue pencil. From Prague 8 XII 39.

Figure Two

Plain envelope with black on white PZ sticker along with typing "Dobírka K 1.000.-" = COD K. 1,000. From Vodňany 7 XII 39.



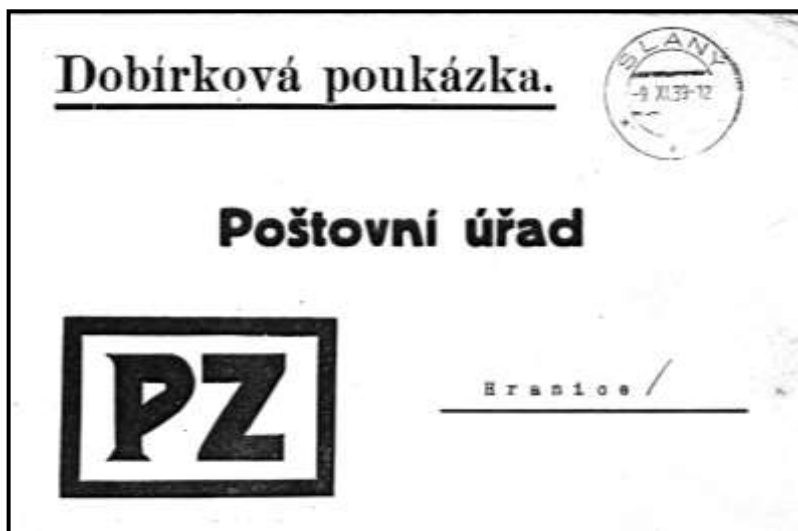


Figure Three

Printed envelope with PZ and Dobírková poukázka = COD postal order. From Slaný 9 XI 39

Not one of these four envelopes, including the one that John Hammonds owns, has the flap stuck down. There are no markings on the reverse.

Inside would be placed a post office form duly completed by the sender, checked by the postal clerk and marked on the back with the COD number of the parcel. The enclosed form would either

be: a paying-in slip for the COD amount into the sender's post office savings bank, or a postal order form for the COD amount – for this a self-addressed envelope was needed also.

For more information consult:

Evinic, Dusan. *Balikova Posta Slovensku 1918 - 1985.*

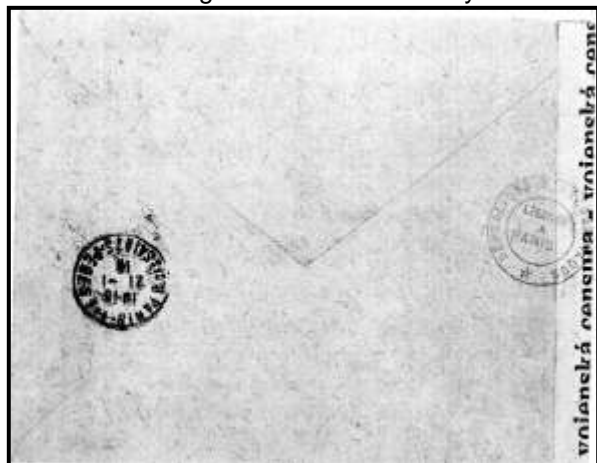
Whiteside, John. *The Postgut Parcel Service, Czechout 2/1993* pages 37-38.

A New Query

From Robin Pizer: I have an envelope postmarked Prag 2 Jan 1919 and addressed to Lyon in France. It is correctly franked at the foreign letter rate of 25h. It bears a censorship label; with wording "vojenská censura" which is tied by a red cachet reading "Republique Tschecoslovaque / Légation A Paris" and is backstamped "Paris 18 – ?44C?/ R des Saints Peres" dated 21 January 1919. Rue des Saints Peres is in the St Germain des Près district in central Paris just south of the Seine and is the boundary between the 6th and 7th Arrondissements. There is no arrival mark at Lyon.



So my question is how did this letter get delivered to the Czech Legation in Paris and why was it censored there? At this time there was no postal service



between France and Germany and the most likely route for such a letter would be via Germany or Austria and Switzerland. Mail from Switzerland was routed via Pontarlier and usually censored there as the Swiss border with Alsace was closed. However, was mail taken by diplomatic bag from Prag to the Legation in Paris and was there an arrangement with the French that such mail could be put into the French postal system with the original Czech foreign rate franking accepted by the French? Did the Legation pay a fee to the French Post Office for this service? Did the French insist on the Czech Legation censoring the mail? I would be grateful for any help in answering my questions.

NEW ISSUES

-Lindy Bosworth-

Unless otherwise stated, Post Printing House, Prague prints the stamps and stationery for the Czech Republic.

From 2004, many of the stamps of the Slovak Republic are printed by WSP –Cartor, France, indicated in the text as WSP. During 2006 a number of issues were printed by Állami Nyomda Nyrt., Hungary indicated in the text as ANN.

| | | |
|-----------------|---------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Printing | RD | = rotary die stamping with multicolour photogravure |
| | DS | = die stamping from flat plates |
| | RD + DS | = combination of both techniques |

Czech Republic

27 September 2006

Ecology



Designer: Jaroslav Chadima **Engraver:** Bohumil Šneider **Printing:** RD in sheets of 50.

Design: a symbolic tree to indicate the ecological relationship between all living things. The Ministry of Information held a competition open to the general public and this was chosen as the winning design.

FDC: printed DS in black with commemorative Praha cancel. The cachet is another symbolic design.

11 October 2006

Folk Architecture – Wooden Churches



Designer: Jan Kavan **Engraver:** Václav Fajt **Printing:** RD in sheets of 50

Designs: 7.50Kč – wooden church of the Virgin Mary in Broumov. This is the oldest preserved wooden building in the Republic, dating back to 1449. In 1700 a lower level vestibule was added to the single-naved church. **FDC:** printed DS in black-brown

with commemorative Broumov cancel. The cachet design is a carved statue of the Madonna with outlines of further wooden churches. 19 Kč – the wooden church of St Andrew in Hodslavice which was consecrated c. 1551 although it had been built earlier. Later additions were made to the church although it retains its simple interior. **FDC:** printed DS in brown-black with commemorative Hodslavice cancel. The cachet design is the statue of the Madonna from the central altar with outlines of further wooden churches.

11 October 2006

Praga 2008 – Vrtbovská Garden



Designer: Karel Zeman **Engraver:** Jaroslav Tvrdoň **Printing:** RD in sheets of 30.

Design: part of the sculpture decoration of the garden with a view of the Vrtba Palace, the towers of St Nicholas Church and the logo of the International Postage Stamp Exhibition Praga 2008.

FDC: printed DS in dark blue with commemorative Praha cancel. The cachet drawing shows a view of the terrace and stairs of the Vrtba Gardens. The lady with a fan commemorates the balls and garden parties held there.

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11 October 2006

Christmas Congratulation



Designers: Libuše and Jaromír Knotek **Printing:** multi-coloured offset in sheets of 9 stamps and 12 labels by Victoria Printing, a.s.

Design: stamp - a snow covered landscape seen through a window with Christmas decorations. Labels – the right upper shows an open envelope with a small decoration and the text, in Czech, “Merry Christmas”. The other 11 labels have the same motif with the text “Merry Christmas from the Czech Post.” Part of the print run will have blank labels for use by customers.

There was no official FDC.

8 November 2006

Christmas



Designer: Jan Ungrád **Engraver:** Bohumil Šneider **Printing:** RD in sheets of 50.

Design: the central part of a folk crèche from Krušnohorský Mountain region. The original, by an unknown maker, is now in the Crèche Museum, Karlštejn. St. Francis of Assisi is credited with popularising the nativity scene tradition. In Bohemia the first one was exhibited in Prague in 1560. By the end of the 18th century the tradition had spread to households. Various materials were used including wood, clay, paper, glass, and gingerbread. **FDC:**

printed DS in dark green with commemorative Praha cancel. The cachet drawing is a silhouette of Bethlehem town with a comet.

8 November 2006

Art



Designers: by the engravers from original works of art **Engravers:** 22Kč – Miloš Ondráček; 25Kč & 28Kč – Václav Fajt **Printing:** DS in sheets of 4

Designs: 22Kč – JD de Heem (1606-1684) “Still Life with Fruit” (1652) in the National Gallery, Prague. His Still Life paintings of flowers and fruit contained in expensive dishes or glass are characterised by rich colours, fine detail and often include crawling beetles and butterflies. **FDC:** printed DS in black green with commemorative Praha cancel. The cachet design is from another of the artist’s drawings on wood “Still Life with Fruit”

25Kč – Jaroslav Čermák (1830-1878) “Montenegrin Madonna” (1865) in the National Gallery, Prague. This Czech artist studied for a short time at the Prague Academy but then studied abroad and lived in Paris from 1857. He was an admirer of the Southern Slavs struggle for freedom which was a theme of several of his works. He also painted sea, mountains and the interiors of folk buildings from Brittany and Dalmatia. **FDC:** printed DS in green-black with commemorative Praha cancel. The cachet design is from the artist’s work “Portrait of a Girl with Tankard”

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28Kč – František Kaván (1866-1941) “Pod Suchým Skalím” (1899) in the West Bohemian Art Gallery, Plzeň. This Czech artist studied at the Prague Academy and is recognised for his landscape works, particularly the Vysočina Hills around the Železné Mountains, an area he loved. **FDC:** printed DS in dark-grey with a commemorative Plzeň cancel. The cachet design is a detail of his painting “Early Spring in the Jilemnice Region.”

1 December 2006 Definitive: The World Postage Stamp Exhibition – PRAGA 2008.



Designer: Jan Solpera (also designer of the Praga 2008 logo)

Printing: multi-coloured offset in sheets of 100

Design: the logo of the Exhibition. The Exhibition will take place 12-14 September 2008 at the Exhibition Ground, Holešovice, Prague.

There was no official FDC.

Postal Stationery

Official Postcards

17 May 2006 – Czech Historical Buildings. This is the 13th issue in the series and numbered from A153/2006 to A160/2006. Each card has a 7.50Kč imprinted stamp of the modified Great State Arms of the Republic. The designs are from Foto Studios, Skala and printed by Victoria Security Printing. The second line for recipients address is a continuous micro printing of Česká Pošta. The left side of the card has a coloured picture of the building and explanatory text in Czech and a commemorative cachet drawing in black of the building. This series shows buildings of Prague, Roudnice nad Labem, Jindřichův Hradec, České Budějovice, Králíky, Staré Brno, Hradiště, Sv. Hypolita and Opava.



Promotional Cards

31 May 2006 National Exhibition of Youth Philately – Mladá Jihlava 2006. Design: imprinted 7.50Kč stamp and security hologram with the Czech Post logo. The promotional portion is a symbolic design with accompanying text for the event.

14 June 2006 Euregia Egrensis – 3rd Philatelic Exhibition Karlovy Vary 2006. Design: imprinted 10Kč stamp with the promotional part showing a collage of various sights in the town and text for the event.



Slovak Republic

27 September 2006

Joint Issue with Indonesia – Puppet Theatre



Designer: Vladislav Rostoka **Printing:** offset by ANN (stamps) and TAB Ltd, Bratislava (FDC)

Designs: 22Sk – the puppet Semar. Semar is a character in the Wayang Golek traditional theatre, which has a following all over Indonesia. The characters for these plays are centred on the fight between good and evil. Semar is a good character with his make up and clothing reflecting this. The puppet represented on the stamp is about 70cm tall with head, arms and tongue controlled by straight rods. FDC: has a commemorative Bratislava cancel and cachet drawing of a female puppet operated with straight rods.

25Sk – the puppet Gašparko (Silly Billy). The puppet on the stamp was carved from limewood in 1936 for a professional puppeteer. It stands about 48cms tall, is dressed in textiles and is a traditional string operated marionette. The character Gašparko has evolved from the medieval character of a middle aged clown but with a distinctive Slovak character. In plays he is often represented as a bandit and redresser of wrongs. FDC: has a commemorative Bratislava cancel and a cachet drawing of another comic male marionette.