

# CZECHOSLOVAK PHILATELIC SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN

## BULLETIN

No 3

SEPT 1975



Edited & Published by  
C. Wackett  
to whom all communications  
should be addressed

## The 'Hradcany' Design of 1918-1920

by: Mr.G.Pearson

Following upon the formation of the Czechoslovak Republic in October, 1918, the new authority immediately set about the task of producing its own postal adhesives. One of the Country's foremost artists, Alfons Mucha, who was also recognised as an authority of the history of his country was selected and commissioned to design the first issue.

Unfortunately printing facilities were very limited at the time with the result that the beauty and symbols which Mucha had striven to incorporate into his design could not be shown to better advantage.

In order to obtain a better explanation of the motifs Alfons Mucha, when interviewed by the historian Jindrich Novacek, who wrote under the pseudonym Jaroslav Orlicky, a few months after the stamps had been issued, stated:-

"Why I decided upon Hradcany Castle as the symbol for our first postal issue? Now, every nation has a palladium of its own embodying the past and future history. Ever since my boyhood I felt and saw in the architectural lines of the St.Vitus Cathedral built close to the castle, a powerful interpretation of our national symbol. I could, therefore, choose no other subject for my design than the Hradcany Castle and surrounding architecture of the Middle Ages".

Pointing to several sketches and designs on a table in front of the two men, Mucha continued:-

"Do you see the small leaves in the upper corners?. These are Slavic symbols. We Czechs, Moravians, Silesians and Slovaks have survived centuries of oppression. The small budding leaves are the eternal expression of our ever blooming and awakening national life. The somewhat larger central leaf may be symbolical of Bohemia, being leaned upon by the smaller leaves, representing the four other provinces of our country".

"Notice the two little roosters (doves) in the lower corners. They express and pronounce the coming of a new day - the hope for a glorious future of our nation".

"The small hearts, grouped around the value oval, are our expressions of our love for peace among ourselves and towards other nations".

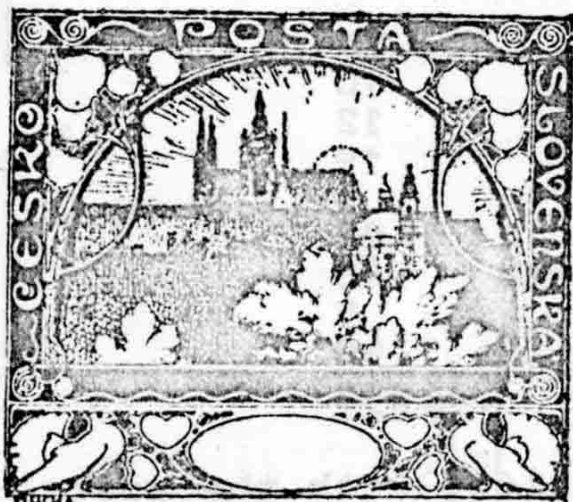
"As to the central motif the Cathedral of St. Vitus was not its founder St. Vitus, Bishop of the Slav tribes which lived on the banks of our large river Labe centuries ago".

The sketches referred to above comprised the following:

1. The contours of the Cathedral of St. Vitus. Above the inscription 'Posta' the ornaments have not yet been worked out in detail but in the lower left corner there already appears one of the little doves.
2. A detailed study of the main tower of the Cathedral. This sketch, or better said the almost finished detail was not very much improved upon before final incorporation into the design.
3. Cupola of the St. Nicholas Church, situated near the St. Vitus Cathedral and in the finished design found on the right side of the Cathedral rising above the foliage.
4. Parts of the border ornaments and rough sketch of the entire design.

When the stamps first appeared considerable amazement was expressed by the inclusion of a rising sun behind the Cathedral. The thing that baffled those conversant with the geographical position of the design was that the sun was rising behind the Cathedral instead of descending since the scenery depicted is the Western part of the horizon. Mucha, wishing to symbolise the dawn of a new day for the Republic, simply made use of 'artistic liberty' and placed the sun in the opposite direction. The sun was omitted from later issues.

The 'Hradcany' Design of 1918-20 (Cntd.)



The initial issue showing rising sun behind roof



Later issue with sun removed

Born at Ivancicich in Moravia on 24th July, 1860, Alfons Mucha died on 14th July, 1939 at the age of 79. He was buried in the old historic cemetery at Vysehrad in Prague.

-----  
N E X T      M E E T I N G      C A N C E L L E D

So many members have written to say that they are unable to attend the September meeting we have decided to cancel it. The next meeting therefore, will be the Annual General Meeting and will be held at the usual venue on 4th October, 1975. As this is an important occasion we would like to see as many members as possible.

## Czechoslovak "Polni Posta" 1938 (Contd.)

Not including "POLNI POSTA 29", for which cancellers may or may not exist as previously mentioned, there was a total of 232 hand cancellers in use, made up as follows:-

P.P. Group 1	77
P.P. Group 2	10
P.P. Group 3	12
P.P. Group 4	19
P.P. Group 5	9
Tridirna P.P.	20
Vojenska Vlakova Posta	40
Ustredna P.P.	5
Sberna P.P.	40
	<u>232</u>

Before leaving this section dealing with the postal markings, brief mention must be made of the small square boxed "control" handstamps. These are not very commonly found on Field Postcards/covers, and their usage was for the same accounting control purposes as the corresponding civilian markings. It must be pointed out that the "P.P. and numbers" shown in these control handstamps do not correspond to the P.P. number of the unit of origin. For instance, in my collection is a Field Postcard cancelled at P.P.1 on 19.X.38, with control handstamp "PP.36" used at that Unit. There were two types of these control handstamps to be found used on the Field Post material under review:

Type A. - 15 mm x 15 mm approx. square corners, thin characters, "PP" in the form of a monogram.

Type B. - 12 mm x 12 mm approx. rounded corners, thicker characters, "PP" as separated letters.

### FIELD POST CARDS

By far the greatest volume of mail that emanated from the Armed Forces and passed through the Polni Posta organisation was in the form of Field Post Cards. And obviously this is the most common form in collections of this brief period of Military Postal History.

Field Post Cards were issued free of charge to forces personnel and were made available right from the commencement of the operation of the Polni Posta organisation. There are nine different types of Field Post Cards known, details as shown in the following table:

<u>Polni Posta</u>	<u>Censurovano</u>	<u>Designation/Unit</u>	<u>Podpis censura.....</u>	<u>Lines</u>	<u>Notes</u>
*	*	Polni Posta unit	*	3	
*	*	Pesi pluk..rota	*	2	
*	*	Polni Posta unit	*	3	
*	*	Polni Posta unit	*	3	
*	*	Polni Posta unit	*	2	
		Polni Posta unit		2	
<u>Unboxed Types</u>					
<u>Podpis censura.....</u>					
	*	Polni Posta unit	*	3	
	*	Unit in 2 lines		3	
*	*		*	2	
*	*			2	
	*		*	2	
	*			2	
	*			2	PP and Unit added separately.
	*			1	"fingers" at ends,
	*			1	
	CENS only			1	

In addition to the above boxed and unboxed types, one further style is known boxed three sides with the top open. This bears the two-line inscription "CENSUROVANO/Podpis censura.....".

Note: Types 8 and 9 were remainders from 1919-1920 issues, in use at the time of the hostilities with Hungary and Poland.

These type numbers are those suggested by Dr. Vratislav Paľkoska who has also stated that "it cannot be entirely accepted that other types of printed cards do not exist". However, I feel that the chances of any further types coming to light are just about nil.

An approximate chart of relative scarcity is given below. These figures are based entirely upon personal records and are only given as a rough comparative guide:

Type 1 - 445	Type 2 - 240	Type 3 - 12
4 - 1	5 - 1	6 - 100
7 - 150	8 - 26	9 - 25 (per 1,000)

#### MISCELLANEOUS POSTAL ITEMS

Apart from the official Field Post Cards other types of mail were despatched through the Polni Posta i.e. Postcards, letters and registered letters.

Postcards of all types are to be found with despatch postmarks of the Field Post. Ordinary plain postcards, with manuscript endorsement "Polni Posta" are frequently found. Local viewcards, similarly endorsed, are also reasonably common - normally, the location printed on the card was made indecipherable for security reasons. Such usages were in the main due to temporary local shortages of the official cards. Again occasionally stamped 50h Postal cards are seen, even though postage was free. Probable explanations are the temporary local shortages with no other types available that users did not realise that plain cards could still be used without prepayment of postage, that senders had intended to send such cards through civilian offices to avoid Unit censorship but then found it inconvenient.

Stampless covers originating from the Forces and passing through the Polni Posta organisation are also reasonably common and were also postage free. Many such covers are of an official nature such as inter-unit correspondence which

would show unit or origin. Many more were simply private letters from Officers which would normally show senders name, rank, unit and service address, whilst a smaller number would be from other ranks.

A registrations service was also available, though such registered stampless covers are very difficult to find. Those few that I have seen recorded have all apparently been for important military documents. As far as I can ascertain, registration facilities were not generally available to service personnel, and no such covers have come to my notice. Registration etiquettes, where used, were of the ordinary civilian type without location, the F.P.O. canceller being used to show office of origin. At F.P.O.'s where such blank labels were not available, manuscript boxed marks were substituted again using the F.P.O. canceller to show the Polni Posta Office of origin.

CENSORSHIP MARKINGS. Personal mail was subject to local unit censorship before entering the Polni Posta system. Normally such mail would have appropriate markings to denote that it had been subjected to Unit censorship, though a small proportion bear no apparent evidence of such censoring and these generally have very brief messages. Of those with censorships markings, roughly half have a manuscript endorsement whilst the other half bear some form of handstamp.

The manuscript marks are in some form of ink, crayon or indelible pencil. They consist of the legend "CENSUROVAN" "CENSUROVANO" or "CENSUROVANO" in full or abbreviated to "CENS" or "CENZ", together with the censoring officers signature or initials.

Handstruck markings are also used with the signature or initials of the censoring officer. Whilst there are no hard and fast rules about colour of ink, the most usual colours are black, blue/black and blue with violet, red and green all being far from uncommon. The various styles of censors handstamps can be grouped as the following schedule of inscriptions.



Type	Inscription mm.	Postmark size mm.	Size of card mm.	Colour	Circle for Postmk.	Lines for address	Arrangement at left
1	90	10.5 x 12.5	148 x 105	Pale buff	Dotted	5	Horizontal, sender 6 lang.
2	90	10.5 x 12.5	148 x 105	Buff	Dotted	5	Vertical, Cze +4 dot. lines.
3	89	15 x 18	144 x 101	Pale buff	Dotted	5	Vert. 3 line inscr. 4 lines
4	73	16 x 18	148 x 105	Buff	None	4	As No. 3 inscr. +v Zapoli, 4 dotted lines.
5	73	18 x 20.5	148 x 105	Blue-Green	None	4	As No. 4 above
6	64	10 x 12	142 x 91	Pale green	Solid	4	Vert. 3 line inscr. 4 dotted lines
7	64	10 x 12	142 x 91	Lt. green	Solid	4	As No. 6 + inscr v Zazemi
8	51	CSR. Monogram	159 to 142 x 88 to 92	Pink	None	4	Horiz. sender 6 languages
9	47	No Arms or monogram	140 x 88	Grey	None	4	Horiz. sender Czech only.

Other Philatelic Material. Under this heading, one could include the usual philatelically inspired material and "cancelled by favour" Field Post Cards. More importantly a representative collection should include examples of the "Consignment Despatch Notes" and "Mail Bag Seals".

The consignment despatch notes are printed forms that accompanied the bags of mail. They are normally on pale buff paper and are inscribed as follows:-

Signature..... Location and date  
Postmark of despatching office

Post Office - Railway Posts

..... (here addressee Unit added in manuscript)

The mail bag seals were obviously used to seal the string tying the mail bags, these bags being apparently made of strong paper. Thus appropriate cuttings from the paper "mail bags" bear the manuscript details of the addressee Polni Posta Unit, the seal of the despatching P.P. Unit together with its dated canceller. These postal seals were of two types:-

1. Made from gummed paper with the Polni Posta Unit canceller added.
2. Specially printed gummed seals, double-ringed with P. P. Unit designated in these rings, as in the cancellers, but with the Czechoslovak Lion in the centre. Some of the Base Collecting Offices, from where obviously many bags despatched, used such printed seals, i.e., "SBERNA POLNICH POST/ R UTKY" "SBERNA POLNICH POST/BRNO".

Normally such bag seals were accompanied by the dated canceller of the despatching P.P. Unit.

CONCLUSION. This concludes the present summary of the philatelic aspects of the Polni Posta 1938. Should any reader find any points that have not been covered or have any further information concerning this organised postal service the writer would naturally be very pleased to hear from them.

## Addendum to "Polni Posta 1938"

Since writing this article, Mr. W. A. Dawson has had the good fortune to receive a further supply of relevant material, which actually came from a German source. In this material were included items from Polni Posta 29, the minor 'mystery' referred to in his draft.

These items showed use of cancellers coded "a" and "b" for this Office. Details are given below:-

P.P.29 Code "a" - on Field Postcard, cancelled by favour 15.XI.38 - 12, canceller being Type 1B.

P.P.29 Code "b" - on piece of postal advice card as the office of receipt, dated 20.X.38 - 12, canceller again being Type 1B.

Thus, amendments to the article in the Bulletin should be made as follows:-

1. Total number of "Polni Posta" Offices can be confirmed as 64 in all.  
(Issue No.2 of Bulletin - Page 5).
2. Check list for Polni Posta Offices cancellers for Group 1, Type 1B, to have the addition of '29a and b'.  
(Issue No.2 of Bulletin - Page 10).
3. Summary of the totals of cancellers used to be amended for P.P. Group 1 now total 79, and the grand total to be amended to 234.  
(Issue No.3 of Bulletin - Page 4)

## A Recent Discovery of a Rare Watermark Error of 1925

by: Mr. G. Pearson

It is not generally known that a few examples of the 2 Kcs. blue of the small  $19\frac{3}{4} \times 21\frac{1}{4}$  mm. Masaryk issue of 7th March, 1925, referred to as Type II - S.G.242 and Pofis 195 - have been found with the Linden Leaf Watermark in vertical positions 1-4 instead of the normal horizontal positions 5-8. However, the number of known copies is extremely small. Like the well-known 50 on 50 Postage Due error - S.G.280a and Pofis No.S49 - their existence was not disclosed until long after their issue, and the initial discovery led to an intensive search which produced meagre results.

Until a few years ago, only single copies had been found but a pair with vertical watermark position 3 was reported. Many years elapsed until a remarkable discovery was made in the Spring of 1974. A fine used block of four with vertical position 4 was offered in Prague at an exchange meeting and this multiple item must be considered as being unique as it is unlikely that a similar or larger block will be discovered. However, a close examination of all copies in your possession is advisable and it is hoped that success may come your way. Any information will be recorded in a future issue of the Bulletin.

An illustration of the abovementioned block is depicted in the February, 1975 issue of 'The Czechoslovak Specialist', together with details of its discovery and much of the information given therein has been incorporated in this present article.

It may be of interest to members to note that a watermark error exists in the photogravure Masaryk issue of 7th March, 1925. In this instance, the positioning is reversed as the normal Linden Leaf watermark is in vertical format 1-4. Examples are known, both mint and used of the 50h. value green with horizontal watermark position 5, but again they are extremely rare.

by Mr. G. Pearson

Thomas Garrigue Masaryk, the first president of the Republic of Czechoslovakia, was born on 7th March, 1850, at Hodonin, Moravia. His father was a Moravian coachman employed on one of the Austro-Hungarian Royal Estates, his mother of mixed Slovakian/German descent. He was first set to work with a Viennese locksmith, and then as a blacksmith in Moravia, but neither of these employments met with his taste.

When 15 he persuaded his parents to allow him to enter the German gymnasium at Brno with the idea of becoming a teacher. For this he showed great aptitude, and after some years, he continued his studies in Vienna, where he took a doctor's degree and became a lecturer in philosophy when only 29. He also studied in Leipzig. As a boy on the Imperial Estates in Austria, he became aware of the appalling problems of political life in Central Europe, and determined to exert himself to remedy them. In 1878 he married Miss Charlotte Garrigue daughter of the managing director of the Germania Insurance Company of New York, and added the name of Garrigue to his own.

In 1882 he was nominated a professor in the Czech section of Prague University and became a political writer and speaker of some force. As such, he was elected a Deputy for the Young Czech Party in the Austrian Reichsrath (Chamber) of 1891. Two years later he resigned, but his bold criticisms of Austro-Hungarian policy had already marked him out as a leader of the Czech patriots, and he never wavered from his intention to secure the freedom of his race. He was re-elected to the Chamber in 1907.

Shortly after the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, he escaped from Austria and being accepted as the recognised champion of the Czechs, threw in his lot with the Allies his aim being the overthrow of Austria-Hungary and the freedom of the smaller nations within the Empire. His greatest and most difficult task was to raise a Czech National Army. He was appointed professor of Slavic studies in King's College, London, in 1915.

During 1917, he went to Russia and organised an army from the Czechs in that country, many of whom had deserted from the Austro-Hungarian Army to form groups with the object of fighting on the side of the Allies, which then included Russia. However, this idea was frustrated by the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk on 3rd March 1918, following which Masaryk arranged for that great trek of the Czech legions from Russia, across Siberia to Vladivostok and then to the French front via America.

With the collapse of Austria-Hungary, following upon the abdication of the Emperor on 12th November 1918 the Czechs and Slavs united. When the Czech National Assembly met consequent upon the emergence of the Czechoslovak Republic on 28th October 1918, Masaryk was chosen as the Country's first president. Despite many initial difficulties the new Republic prospered under his authority from 14th November, 1918 until his resignation in favour of his colleague, Dr. Eduard Benes, in December, 1935.

He retired to Lana Castle, near Prague, where he died from inflammation of the lungs in the early hours of Tuesday, 14th September, 1937, aged 87 years.

- - - - -

#### WANT'S LISTS

Mr. H. Hocke  
(Guisborough)

1918 Scout Stamp - 10h first printing  
Siberia (cracked yellow gum).

1918 Scout Stamp - 20h second printing  
Siberia (smooth yellow gum).

ALL MINT

Mr. G. McAuley  
(Strabane)

Slovakia S9 - 139-44 (Tiso)  
Czechoslovakia - S.G. 395M - 490M  
412-20M - 448-462aM - MS402a -  
MS608aM

Covers: Any pre-1918 cover with post-  
mark of Upice (Eipel) or any Bohemia  
Moravia cover of same.

East Silesia - S.G.48 used.

The Theresienstaat stamp.