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Martial Law Censorship: An Update

By JOE MICHAUD

As you know, martial law censorship began at 6:00 a.m. on December 13th, 1981 and was suspended at 12:00 p.m. on December 30th, 1982. Censorship of all forms of communication was in force during this period. Censoring was intense in the beginning, but diminished as time went on. All types of mail was censored: packages, letters, aerogrammes, even postal and picture postcards. Initially the postal system was caught unprepared, it was neither organized for censorship nor were all the requisite handstamps available. For this reason, during the first seven to ten days, mail was processed in a normal fashion by the postal service, then transferred in bags to the county (województwo) militia office for censorship. The mail was marked with a circular handstamp giving the name of the town, a two-digit number and the initials KWMO (see below for more detailed information). Besides this stamp indicating the locality of censorship, other handstamps were applied to inform the recipient whether the piece of mail had been censored or not. Within a period of seven to ten days the URZĄD CENZURY (Censor Office) numbered stamps became

available and the mail was censored on the premises of the county post offices. It is believed that in the larger towns mail was censored at the post office located at the railway station. These post offices usually carry the number 2 in their circular date stamp, e.g. Łódź 2, Warszawa 2, etc. It should be noted that only domestic mail was handled in the above manner. Outgoing and incoming mail was processed in a central office and outgoing mail received only censored or uncensored handstamps.

Since all possible information about Polish martial law censorship, whether of policy, methods of handling or types of marking, etc., will not be in for some time to come, any study of this kind must remain incomplete and uncertain. For this reason I wish to forego dealing with a classification system for the various censorship handstamps until a future article. For now I will simply describe what has come to my attention so far. Following are the various reported handstamps divided into four basic categories: CENSORED, UNCENSORED, CENSOR OFFICE and KWMO (militia).

CENSORED HANDSTAMPS

The most common handstamp is the boxed OCENZUROWANO (Censored - see figure 1). This was re-

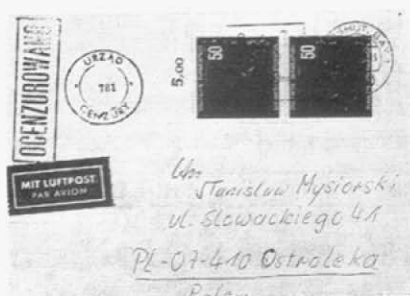


Figure 1

ported by Gobby, Klages and others. The box measures 16 mm by 43 mm and the wording 10 mm by 49 mm. In several articles for *Sammler-dienst*, Binder reports a variety of measurements on this marking including: 15 mm by 55 mm and 14.5 mm by 53. Some variance must be allowed with a rubber handstamp.

This handstamp is found on all three categories of mail: incoming, outgoing and domestic. On domestic and incoming mail it is generally found with other markings (URZAD CENZURY and more rarely KWMO). On outgoing mail it is found alone. As to color, on outgoing mail it is generally found in magenta (I have one unusual example in carmine on a cover to the U.S.); on incoming and domestic mail it has been reported in blue (violet or purple), red, (carmine), blue-green, green, red-brown (maroon), magenta (rose, lilac, pink) and black. The variations in color and shade may be due more to individual ideas of what represents a particular color than to a great variety of colors. Color is one area that deserves further, objective study.

Gobby, in the *American Philatelist*, April, 1982, also reported an

OCENZUROWANO without the box. Some collectors felt this was a worn version of the stamp described above. In the illustration accompanying the article one can see several dots of ink outlining the word. However, the length of the wording is described as 54 mm - 54.2 mm, as opposed to 49 mm for his type 1. Whether those dots represent a worn box and thus a worn subtype of his Type I or are remnants of the edge of the stamp is difficult to know. Binder also reports as possible boxless OCENZUROWANO. This is a very clean strike. However again there is an element of doubt in that there is a dot to the left of the 'O' and a 1.5 mm dash under the 'N'. We'll leave this one for the experts.

Another discreet type of boxed OCENZUROWANO was reported in my earlier article for the Civil Censorship Study Group. This one has rounded corners. It seems fairly scarce, only a few have been reported so far in the U.S. and none in the foreign press. All have been only fair to good strikes, but the round corners are unmistakable. As far as size of box and wording, these conform to the original boxed OCENZUROWANO.

Still another OCENZUROWANO is illustrated in figure 2. This one has a box measuring 10 mm by 61.5 mm and the wording measures 4 mm by 52 mm. This handstamp occurs on domestic and incoming mail. It is much less common than the original OCENZUROWANO. I have two examples of this type on letters from the Soviet Union to Poland. This is unusual since it was thought by many in Poland that mail from other socialist countries was not being censored. This stamp has been reported in red, magenta, blue and



Figure 2

brown. This stamp is interesting for another reason in that it first appeared on telegrams and was for a while thought not to exist on letter-mail. A new type of this stamp was reported by Binder (*Sammlerdienst* 26). It measures 12 mm by 69 mm and the lettering is 4.5 mm high. It has been seen in green, black, and blue. A similar item was reported by G. Rosendoff of Israel with letters 6 mm high.

Alfred Szebel has sent me photocopies of another type of censorship handstamp (see figure 3). This is a 3-line handstamp without a box: OCENZUROWANO / dnia _____

19____ / Sędzia. In English this would be: CENSORED / date _____, 19____ / Judge. The lettering in the first line, all upper case measures 3 mm by 53 mm. Szebel notes that this was used at the 1981 /82 internment camp in Warsaw-Białoleka. This marking includes the date and the censor's initials in manuscript. He reports that a similar handstamp was used in 1966 at the SB (Security Forces) prison at their headquarters on Radowiecki Street in Warsaw. The above described stamp as well as the following two may have been in use before martial law was declared and thus may not be martial law handstamps by intent, but only by usage.

Binder reports a single line Cenzurowano. The first letter is in upper case and the remainder in lower case. As this and the following handstamp were printed in reduced form in an article in *Sammlerdienst* 20, and no dimensions were given, I cannot provide them here. This handstamp occurred on a private letter

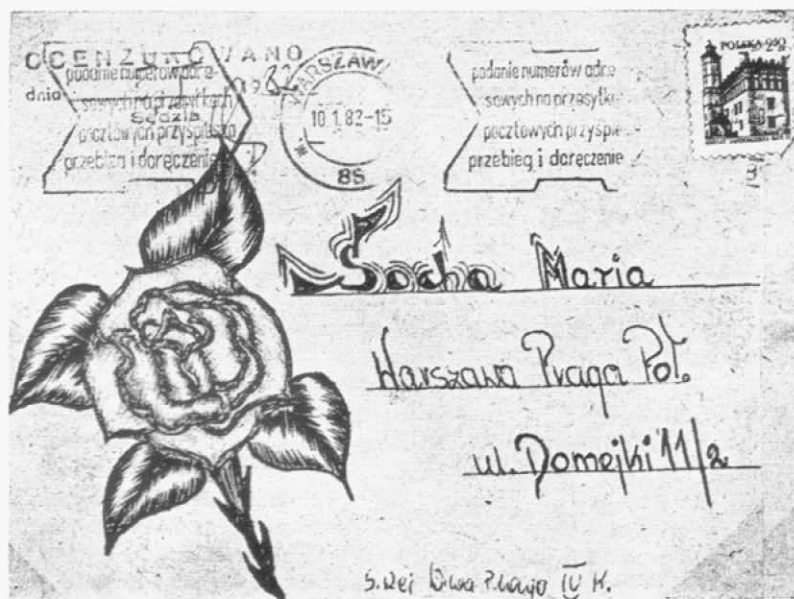


Fig. 3

(CDS Bydgoszcz 30.4.82). There seems to be a part of a frame or more likely the imprint of the edge of the stamp at the top — a line and several dashes. The stamp is in dark red and there is a signature running through the stamp.

Binder reports another from the same party with the same circular datestamp. This and the above stamp may be from the same office. This one is in black, the color usually reserved for official handstamps. It reads: **CENZUROWANO / Sędzia Sądu / Pomorskiego O.W. / w Bydgoszczy**. This reads in English: **CENSORED / Judge of the Pomeranian County Military Court/in Bydgoszcz**. This stamp also has a signature running through it. Note that the word **CENZUROWANO** is all in caps.



Figure 4

Finally Mr. Szebel reports 2 copies of a military unit handstamp (see figure 4) with censorship markings in manuscript. The circle measures 29 mm in diameter and reads: **JEDNOSTKA WOJSKOWA Nr 1223** (**MILITARY UNIT No 1223**). Both covers bear the stamp on the back-flap. One is inscribed *Ocenzurowano* and the other *Cenzura*.

UNCENSORED HANDSTAMPS

Due to the volume of mail not all mail could possibly be censored. The execution of censorship as part of martial law was more for the purpose of giving the Polish people a

constant reminder of the power of the party and military than to acquire political or military secrets. In other words it was an act of psychological warfare against the Polish people. Although the censors may have been directed to monitor the mail of suspicious individuals, the psychological purpose was accomplished as well with uncensored handstamps as with censored. They were a reminder that the mail, although unopened, had still passed through the censor's hand. However, after censorship was firmly established, uncensored handstamps passed out of use.

The most common of this class of handstamp is the boxed, two-line **NIE / CENZUROWANO** (**NOT/CENSORED** - see figure 5). All letters



Figure 5

are upper case, but the word "NIE" is larger than **OCENZUROWANO**. The box measures 23.8 mm by 54.6 mm. The **NIE** is 9.5 mm by 25.5 mm and **OCENZUROWANO** is 4 mm by 46.2 mm. This was reported by Goby and others, being originally the most common handstamp on mail to the U.S. It subsequently went out of use. The latest date of usage reported so far is 5.2.82. Binder reports in *Sammlerdienst* 26 that of 46 pieces of mail with this marking that

he inspected, 44 were in magenta, one in red and one in blue. The blue and the red were both on incoming mail. All outgoing mail that I have seen has also been in magenta. The reason for this is probably that all outgoing mail was channeled through a central censorship office in Warsaw. (Sea mail was probably handled in Gdynia). This handstamp occurs alone on incoming and outgoing mail. It has not as yet been reported on domestic mail.

The mark used on uncensored domestic mail was the two-line **WOLNE / OD CENZURY** (FREE / OF CENSORSHIP - see figure 6). Again as



Figure 6

with the above the first line is printed larger than the second. The box measures 24 mm by 50 mm. The word 'WOLNE' measures 10 mm by 41.5 mm and the words 'OD CENZURY' measure 5.5 mm by 45.2 mm. This handstamp is rather scarce especially on outgoing mail. Only a few copies of it have been reported received in the U.S. All of these were on small packets of postal cards. Apparently during the early days of censorship very little mail went uncensored. The exceptions were military and other official mail. On domestic mail it usually occurs with the **KWMO** stamp and also with the **URZĄD CENZURY** stamp (see below). This handstamp has been reported in black, blue-grey, green, brown,

red and magenta. The usage of this stamp begins with the institution of censorship and ends a few weeks later. The latest date I have seen is 9.1.82. Does anyone have any later dates to report?

A second type of the above also exists. It has been reported by Szebel and Binder. The box measures 24 mm by 44 mm. The letters are of a finer type face. **WOLNE** measures 6 mm by 35 mm and **OD CENZURY** measures 3 mm by 30.5 mm. It has been reported in magenta, purple and black and is used alone even on domestic mail. The one copy I have seen is on a local letter from Gdańsk, dated 15.3.?. One would assume 83 on the year. The question is, why isn't there an **URZĄD CENZURY** stamp along with it?

The only other uncensored marking reported so far is the scarce, two-line **BEZ / CENZURY** (WITHOUT CENSORSHIP). Binder reports this on a letter of 23.6.82 from Switzerland to Legnica. It is in ornamental letters, all caps. The top line is centered over the bottom. (Sorry, no illustration available). Part of a frame, a corner, is visible. This may be the edge of the stamp. Binder suspects this was only in use at the central censorship office in Warsaw.

KWMO HANDSTAMPS

Perhaps the most fascinating of all martial law handstamps are the **KWMO** circular stamps. (See figure 6). The initials **KWMO** stand for: *Komenda Wojewódzka Milicji Obywatelskiej* (People's Militia County Headquarters or Command). The basic stamp consists of two circles. The outer circle measures 29 mm in diameter and the inner 17 mm. There are also two decorative five-pointed stars used to separate parts of the text between the two rings. Beyond this we have to distinguish a number of types. Although I did not want to

deal with a classification system at this time, we will have to provisionally classify the KWMO stamps in order to keep the types straight.

KWMO-1: This is the most common so far. Of the 27 covers bearing KWMO stamps of which I have knowledge, 16 are of this type. This stamp is characterized by the letters KWMO at the top of the circle and a lower case w (or wo or we) and the town name in upper and lower case at the bottom. In the center is a 3-line marking (the lettering also in upper and lower case) reading: Do / pakietów / -- (in the third line is a two-digit number in arabic numerals).

KWMO-2: This stamp is the same as KWMO-1 in all details except that the town name at the bottom is in upper case only.

KWMO-3: In this stamp the center and the bottom are described in KWMO-1, but at the top the first two words are spelled out in capital letters: KOMENDA WOJEWODZKA MO.

KWMO-4: This is similar to KWMO-3 except that the first 2 words of the upper inscription are spelled out in a combination of upper and lower case: Komenda Wojewódzka MO.

KWMO-5: This is similar to KWMO-4, except that the inner circle is completely empty. Two of these have been reported from Kraków.

KWMO-6: This is similar to KWMO-4, except that the second word reads Stołeczna (capitol) instead of Wojewódzka (county). Two numbers have been reported for this Warsaw handstamp, 38 and 39.

KWMO-7: The only example I have of this is about 60% legible. In the center is Dla / pakietów / 44 in upper and lower case. Printing takes up most of the outer circle and the word 'Komenda' starts at the 7 o'clock

position rather than 9 o'clock or later. As closely as I can make out it reads: Komenda Milicji Obyw. Wojsk. Olsz--- ----. The dashes represent letters that are illegible. This was sent from Reezle to Olsztyn where it was censored.

Since the phrases 'do pakietów' and 'dla pakietów' both contain the word 'package' and since one of these two formulas usually occurs on KWMO stamps, they seem to have been intended for the control of package rather than letter mail. My question is, were these in use before martial law was declared, or were they issued in time for censorship with other censored and uncensored handstamps?

As mentioned in the introduction, initially, after the circular datestamp was applied by the postal authorities, mail was transferred to the county militia headquarters where it was censored. (This is the assumption for domestic and outgoing mail. As to incoming mail it is not clear whether it was censored before or after it went through the hand of postal clerks). It was then returned to the post offices for forwarding. This lasted only for a short period. By the 20th of December, 1981, most county censor offices were set up in the county post offices where censorship was carried out by the military. (Klabes reports a KWMO-3 local cover from SZCZECIN dated 15.3.82. There may be an error in the datestamp or we could be dealing with a favor cancel). At this point in time the URZĄD CENZURY circular stamp (see below) came into use replacing the KWMO types. Due to the short period of usage, KWMO handstamps are scarce and some types are quite rare. It should be mentioned that the KWMO stamp is usually found in conjunction with the boxed OCENZUROWANO (10

mm letters) or the WOLNE/OD CENZURY. Also I should point out that KWMO stamps were made of metal rather than rubber. See Appendix A for a chart on KWMO handstamps reported so far.

URZĄD CENZURY HANDSTAMPS

This double circle stamp (see fig. 1) with the words URZĄD CENZURY (CENSOR OFFICE) containing a 3-digit number is only found on incoming and domestic mail. The outer circle measures 30 mm in diameter and the inner circle 17 mm. The numbers and the letters (all in caps) are about 3 mm high. This stamp is never used alone and is generally found with the boxed OCENZUROWANO (10 mm letters). It also occurs less frequently with the OCENZUROWANO (4 mm letters). I have seen one unusual official cover from Piecki to Olsztyn, dated 4.1.82 with censor office 099 and the large WOLNE / OD CENZURY handstamp. This may represent a transition period when URZĄD stamps were available but the uncensored-handstamps had not as yet been dispensed with. This stamp occurs in the same variety of colors as the boxed OCENZUROWANO (10 mm letters).

The numbers run from 001 to 999. Numbers have been reported from 001 to 985. It would be convenient if there were some clear correlation between numbers and locations but at the present time this is an area that can use some research. An article by K. Strug appeared recently in *Filatelista* #7 of 1983. I cannot read Polish but the contents were summarized for me by a correspondent-friend in Poland. The article dealt with censorship stamps that were in use in Kielce county. I quote from Mr. Kozłowski's letter: From Dec. 13-20, 1981, two KWMO -4 stamps were in use, Nos. 13 and 18.

From Dec. 21, 1981, four URZĄD CENZURY stamps were in use, No. 053, 054, 055, 056.

On Jan. 8, 1982, 8 further stamps were introduced, Nos. 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338 & 339.

On Feb. 5, 1982, four more stamps were introduced, Nos. 692, 693, 694 & 695.

All 16 of these circular stamps were in use after issue until Dec. 30, 1982. Mr. Kozłowski comments that since there were only 999 possible numbers, these could not correlate with individual censors since the number of censors had to be much higher. They must therefore correlate with censor offices, although as yet there does not seem to be any system to the issuing of these numbers. Binder reported a rumor in one of his articles, that the government was going to make information available to the philatelic public after the cessation of martial law. I have not heard anything new on the matter.

CONFISCATION HANDSTAMP

It seems a stamp also exists that relates to confiscation. The only information I have on this is from a brief mention by Myron Fox in a recent bulletin of the War Covers Club. I quote:

"One Pole said he got an empty envelope in the mail the other day with a stamp on it advising that the contents had been confiscated. He had no idea what the offending material might have been."

It is not uncommon to find mail with datestamps preceding the onset of censorship, 13.12.82. It is not known what the volume of mail was that could be handled in a day. Certainly in the beginning at least, there must have been a backup of mail due to censorship. Gobby mentions that the flow of mail to Polish Americans began to slow in late

November, 1981. (Was the government anticipating censorship?) Binder mentions a letter stamped 2.12.81 arriving in West Germany on 28.12.81, a transit time of 26 days.

According to the censorship decree (a copy of which Binder managed to acquire), nothing specific is mentioned as regards content. "... insofar as this does not comply with the laws of the land" is all that is stated. We can assume that offensive material would have been anything related to Solidarity or any other material considered subversive from the government's point of view.

UNMARKED MAIL

It should be repeated that not all mail was censored. Mail was most heavily censored in the beginning, then censorship tapered off. Of the 26 pieces of mail I received from Poland with datestamps falling within the censorship period, only one carried the OCENZUROWANO and one carried the NIE/CENZUROWANO. This of course was all outgoing mail. What the percentage of unmarked incoming or domestic mail was, I have no idea at this time.

HANDLING AND MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS

As has already been reported, mail to be censored was systematically cut open down the left side of the envelope. Occasionally contents were damaged as a result. This was particularly aggravating to collectors who received cut sheets or entries. Closure was effected with a single metal staple which again went through the contents as well. Occasional pieces are found closed by a strip of masking tape or transparent tape, applied sometimes vertically down the whole edge and sometimes horizontally across the cut edge. I have one cover from Kutno which was opened at the top. This method was an improvement over ol-

der methods where the cut edge was sealed by dabbing with glue, sealing the contents to the envelope as a consequence.

I should mention as an aside that there was postal censorship in Poland before martial law but it was carried out covertly. Mail was occasionally steamed open and resealed along the flap with glue. I have received mail handled in this manner since martial law ended.

Handstamps were usually applied to the left of the address. Only rarely are covers seen with the stamp to the right of the address. I have one cover stamped OCENZUROWANO on the backflap.

Collectors are aware that illegible and barely legible marks are fairly common. This is reportedly due to an inadequate ink supply. The censors are said to have added water to the remaining ink in the pads, thus rendering marks illegible.

Telegrams were also censored. The OCENZUROWANO with 4 mm letters has been reported in carmine and violet on telegrams. Sometimes the words: "OCENZUROWANO" or "CENZOR" are found as part of the text indicating that the telegram was censored before transmission. The handstamp probably indicates a second control by the receiving telegraph office.

CONCLUSION

This article has presented all new information that has come to my attention since the article by Thomas Gobby in the May-June, 1982 issue of *Polonus*. I have been fortunate in having several knowledgeable collectors share their time and data with me. I would especially like to thank Mr. Alfred Szebel former President of *Polonus*, and Mr. Alfred Klabes, President of the German Arbeitsgemeinschaft Zensurpost and member of the American Civil Cen-

sorship Study Group. It was Mr. Klables who provided me with the articles from the German philatelic press. (All articles are listed in the bibliography). I would also like to thank my Polish correspondent, Mr. Wojciech Kozłowski for giving me extensive information.

If any of the readers has information or material that will add to our knowledge of this fascinating period of Polish postal history, please contact the author direct: Joe Michaud, 1425 Laurel Street, Iowa City, Iowa 52240.

APPENDIX A:

KWMO HANDSTAMPS

No.	Type	Town	Town from	Town to	Accompanying marks	Color
03	3	Wrocław	?	?	WOLNE ...	Black
04	1	Skierniowice	Łowicz	Łódź	OCEN ...	Magenta
06	1	Piła	Piła	Bydgoszcz	OCEN ...	Magenta
13	4	Kielce	?	?	?	?
17	1	Włocławek	?	?	?	?
18	4	Kielce	?	?	?	?
18	1	Poznań	local		OCEN ...	Violet
20	1	?	Zyrardów	Warszawa	OCEN ...	Maroon
21	1	Skierniowice	?, Holland	Wałbrzych	?	?
22	3	Zielona Góra	local		OCEN ...	Violet
23	1	Legnica	?	?	?	?
26	2	Olsztyn	Mragowo	Olsztyn	WOLNE ...	Violet
26	1	Płock	Warszawa	Kutno	OCEN ...	Violet
29	1	Siedlce	Siedlce	Koszalin	OCEN ...	Violet
30	1	Częstochowa	Swidnik /Lublinka	Wrocław	?	Violet
33	1	Tarnów	Tarnów	Kraków	OCEN ...	Violet
35	1	Legnica	?	?	?	?
37	1	Wrocław	?	?	WOLNE ...	Black
38	6	Warszawa	local		OCEN ...	Violet
39	7	Warszawa	local		OCEN ...	Violet
44	7	Olsztyn	Reezlu	Olsztyn	WOLNE ...	Violet
45	1	Wrocław	Wrocław	Ostrołęka	WOLNE ...	Violet
60	4	Szczecin	local		OCEN ...	Violet
—	5	Kraków	Lubartów	Kraków	OCEN ...	Violet
—	5	Kraków	local		OCEN ...	Violet

APPENDIX B:

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GEMS OF POLISH PHILATELY

At 5:44 on the morning of August 3, 1928, Majors Idzikowski and Kubala of the Polish Air Force flew from Le Bourget airfield in Paris in an Amoit bi-plane in an attempt to fly across the Atlantic to New York by way of the Azores and Nova Scotia.

They were forced to turn back shortly before dawn on the morning of August 4th because of a faulty gasoline line. They crashed into the ocean and were later picked up by the German steamer "Samos" off Cape Finisterra. They flew 5200 km during their 31 hour flight.

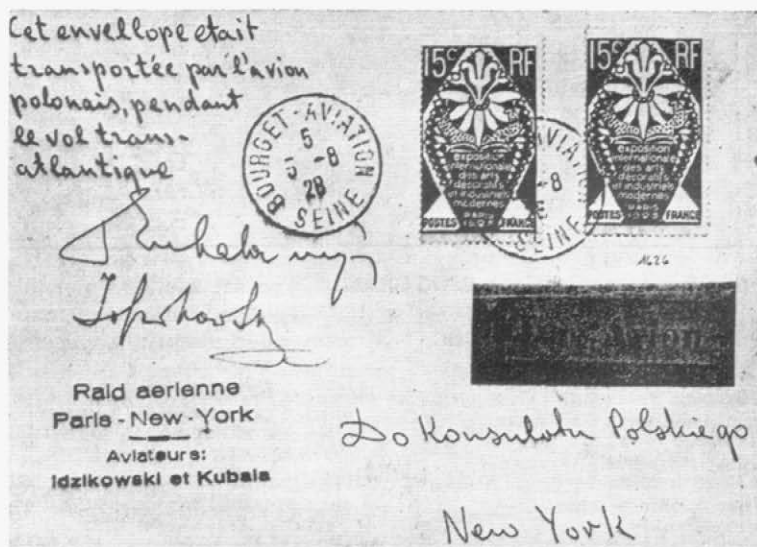
The German steamer had difficulty making the rescue, but the Polish officers were taken on board unharmed and the wreckage taken in tow to Leixoes near Oporto in Portugal.

The postmaster of the Le Bourget post office allowed the Polish offi-

cers to postmark 10 covers which were addressed to the Polish Consulate in New York. These ten letters were carried in the Polish aircraft during the attempted flight to New York. These covers are cancelled with the usual "Bourget-Aviation Seine" date stamp of August 3, 1928, 5:00 a.m.

Each cover has a hand-stamp in French which translated means "Air Flight — Paris-New York/Aviators Idzikowski and Kubala." Also, each cover is autographed by the pilots and has a French handwritten note which means: "This envelope was carried by a Polish aircraft during the Transatlantic flight."

Of the original ten covers, only two can be accounted for today in the major collections of Polish air covers. Perhaps some still exist today in Poland. This is the rarest of all Polish air mail covers.



The Leżajsk Provisionals of September 1944

By KORNEL*

Among many local issue overprints on the stamps of the former General Government, provisional stamps of the town of Leżajsk arouse relatively great interest of stamp collectors. The purpose of this brief outline is to familiarize all the philatelists with the history of this issue and encourage more thorough studies.

Even during the German occupation, several local philatelists in conversations, naturally confidential, wondered what would the first Polish stamps look like after the occupation. The possibility of issuing the provisional stamps and overprints similar to those issued after the First World War during the yrs. 1918-19 was considered. There was even a speculation that the plates for this purpose were being secretly prepared.

The Soviet Army units entered Leżajsk on July 24th. On the next day one of the local philatelists showed me his proposal for conversion of the General Government stamps into Polish stamps. For this purpose, a Polish, pre-war, brass, government seal from one of the local district offices of Eastern Małopolska (Little Poland), suitably adapted, was to be used. As the first "essay" there is the 2 groszy grey, Hitler stamp with superimposed on it the impression of the still intact seal in ordinary red ink.

In the first days after the expulsion of the Germans, the administration and the security in the town were handled by the so called Polish Town Commandant assisted by

* The author used the name he had in the AK. He was the organizer of the post in Leżajsk and his real name is unknown to us.



Overprint from Leżajsk - Type I.

the militia which he, himself organized with the approval of the military authorities. The commandant, as the only representative of the Polish authority in the town, called upon the former post office employees who did not work during the occupation, to reactivate the postal service. In consequence of this action, the post office was reopened publicly on July 28th.

Probably, or to be more correct, almost certainly, the above mentioned philatelist/designer, who at the time had some kind of official position at the side of the town commandant, presented his proposal to the commandant. The commandant accepted the proposal and gave instructions to prepare the provisional stamps for use by the local post office.

Immediately afterwards, the above described seal was sent to the local locksmith and mechanical workshop where the seal's border inscription was removed, leaving only the center of the seal, that is the crowned eagle with a thin, circular border, intact. Directly under it, a two line inscription: "POLSKA PO CZTA", in capital letters was ad-



Overprint from Leżajsk - Type II.

ded and soldered on. On the breast of the eagle a letter "L" was engraved. At the same time, the same mechanic prepared another overprint for stamps in horizontal format, of 2 and 4 zł. denominations in order to maintain the views of Barbican and Tyniec. This overprint has a representation of the crowned eagle, small in size, in the upper right corner, below, single line, revised inscription - "POCZTA POLSKA" in similar letters, and below the inscription, two parallel bars full width of the stamp, obliterating German inscriptions.

To begin with, there was a proposal to collect stamps from the neighboring local agencies and post offices, in addition to the stamps left over in the Leżajsk post office, as well as to accept the stamps brought in by persons unconnected with the post office, on the condition that half of the stamps thus supplied, after overprinting, would remain at the Leżajsk post office, and the other half would be returned to the supplier. Fortunately, this proposal was dropped and only the remaining supply of stamps left in the post office safe, was used for overprinting.

After few ink color trials (green, reddish-purple and black), black ink turned out to be most suitable and on July 29th the work commenced without any delay. Overprinting was

done manually, stamp-by-stamp, by postal clerks and a few local philatelists invited to help out, over a period of a few days, on the premises of the local post office. It was done with ordinary postal ink and the resulting variations in intensity, clarity and the shade of ink are quite considerable.

The following quantities of stamps were overprinted:

2 gr.—	1051 stamps
6 gr.—	650 stamps
8 gr.—	1308 stamps
10 gr.—	2531 stamps
12 gr.—	2523 stamps
16 gr.—	207 stamps
20 gr.—	338 stamps
24 gr.—	5433 stamps
30 gr.—	721 stamps
40 gr.—	265 stamps
48 gr.—	346 stamps
50 gr.—	385 stamps
60 gr.—	830 stamps
80 gr.—	286 stamps
1.00 zł.—	415 stamps
1.20 zł.—	28 stamps
1.60 zł.—	95 stamps
2.00 zł.—	133 stamps
4.00 zł.—	50 stamps

In addition to the stamps, 236 12 gr. postcards with Hitler's portrait were overprinted.

The above quantities also include stamps used in color trials and therefore true quantities are really smaller by 6 stamps for each value from 2 gr. to 1.20 zł., both inclusive. There were no color trials for the overprints on the stamps of 1.60 zł., 2.00 zł. and 4.00 zł. denominations. The stamps of 32 gr., 6.00 zł. and 10.00 zł. denominations, as well as the stamps of the earlier issues i.e. buildings series were not overprinted. The quantities of overprints listed above are taken from the records prepared in two copies on carton paper on which color trials of the overprints were also



Local Leżajsk letter franked with two 24 gr. Hitler stamps with Leżajsk overprints. 2x12 Hitler stamps without overprint are crossed out. Dated 19 Aug. 1944.



Local letter within Leżajsk 7 Aug. 1944.

placed. In the same records, one can also find the impression of the date stamp which was "Polonized" at the time of the introduction of the overprints by eliminating (cutting-out) German inscription "Distr. Krakau" next to the name-place, but leaving Leżajsk without the dot over "z".

As soon as the overprinting was completed, both seals were destroyed in the presence of witnesses by cutting them crosswise and then horizontally through the center of inscriptions.

On August 2nd, 1944, the first overprinted stamps appeared at the post office stamp counter. At the same time on the outside of the post office building, as well as on the town's notice board, it was announced that the post office was accepting ordinary and registered mail to begin with, for local delivery. A short time later, Leżajsk Post Office established contact with neighboring towns such as Łańcut, Nisko, Przeworsk, Rudnik, Żołynia and the mail was sent there in the beginning by messengers-bicyclists, and later by train to more distant localities.

Thus Leżajsk stamps went beyond

the perimeter of local deliveries without having their validity questioned. Understanding was reached with the Soviet military authorities, which offered to dispatch letters from Leżajsk together with military mail by planes from a nearby field air-strip at Wierzawice. There is no doubt that Leżajsk stamps on the non-philatelic letters reached their destinations and it is known that an air-mail letter was received by an addressee in Wojcieszków, Post Office Adamów, District Łuków, Province of Lublin.

The stamps were sold only at the post office counter with a surcharge of 50% of the nominal value, without any indication of this surcharge on the stamps, intended in the beginning for the purpose of the maintenance of the post office, advances on salaries of the postal clerks and postmen. The demand for the stamps was considerable, as much among the philatelists as among the public at large. A great many stamps were bought by the Polish and Soviet soldiers passing through town.

The stamps' validity ended on August 31st, 1944. As of September



Local registered letter mailed within Leżajsk on 3 Aug. 1944. Arrjval registry cancellation on reverse: Leżajsk, 4 Aug. 1944.

1st, 1944, cash prepayment of mail charges was mandatory and soon after the stamps of the Moscow issue made their appearance — the 1st Lublin issue did not reach Leżajsk.

Total amount of money gained from the sale of the stamps and postcards was transmitted in accordance with regulations to the office of the Department of Posts & Telegraphs in Rzeszów, where also on Sept. 18, 1944, an unsold supply of the overprinted stamps for the nominal value of 789 zł., 80 gr. (without the 50% surcharge) was sent. All postcards were sold out.

The town of Leżajsk (upon San) located on the railway line between Przeworsk and Rozwadów had (in 1944?) a population of about eight thousand, of which until recently, 25% were Ukrainians. It's Bernardine basilica was a renown place of pilgrimages.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE:

The reader of the above article, written originally in Polish, should note that it was signed by the author's Underground name "Kornel" and consequently it's author is unknown. The article itself is in some respects peculiar. While it appears that the author was in Leżajsk at the time

that Leżajsk overprints were prepared and issued and had personal knowledge of the initiator of known fact that in July, 1944, Leżajsk was taken over by the units of the Polish Home Army under the command of major Baran (code name Lucjan) who became the Town Commandant and on whose instructions Leżajsk overprints were issued.

—Ryszard Z. Poddubiuk

WINNER'S CIRCLE

BRASILIANA 83. International Philatelic Exhibition in Rio De Janerio Dr. Miet Kamienski, a Silver Medal, for "Poland to 1924." Ryszard Poddubiuk, a Silver-Bronze Medal, for "Kingdom of Poland."

UKRAINPEX 83. Dr. James Mazepa, a Gold Medal and Best of Show, for "World's First Air Mail - Vienna to Kiev."

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IN MEMORIAM

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Ob'ong, Illinois

NEW ISSUES

The Troops of Sobieski

In order to popularize the 300th Anniversary of the victory of the Polish king, Jan III over the Turks at Vienna in 1683, the Polish Post Office in July 1983 issued five postage stamps, presenting the troops who took part in this campaign:

- 5 zł.—17th Century Dragoons. 8,000,000 issued.
- 5 zł.—17th Century Armored Companion. 8,000,000 issued.
- 6 zł.—17th Century Infantry. 10,000,000 issued.
- 15 zł.—17th Century Light Cavalry. 4,000,000 issued.
- 27 zł.—17th Century Hussars. 2,000,000 issued.

Designed by Ryszard Dudzicki. Rotogravure printed in multicolor in sheets of 30 stamps on chalky paper at PWPW, Warsaw.

300th Anniversary of the Relief of Vienna

In commemoration of the 300th anniversary of King Jan III Sobieski's victory over Turks by Vienna, the Ministry of Communications issued in September, 1983 a commemorative series consisting of four stamps and one block:

- 5 zł.—a portrait of King Jan III Sobieski after a painting by an unknown Polish painter of the second half of the 17th century. The painting belongs to the State Collection of Arts in the Wawel Castle in Cracow. 5,000,000 issued.
- 6 zł.—a portrait of King Jan III Sobieski after a painting by an unknown painter from the court of Jan III Sobieski. The painting belongs to the collection of the National Museum at Warsaw-Nieborów. 5,000,000 issued.
- 6 zł.—King Jan III Sobieski on horseback after a painting by



Francesco Trevisani called Romano (?) (1656-1746). The painting belongs to the Royal Castle collection, Warsaw. 5,000,000 issued.

- 25 zł.—a portrait of Jan III Sobieski after a painting by Jerzy Eleuter Szymonowicz-Siemiginowski (approx. 1660-1711). The painting belongs to the collection of the National Museum, Warsaw-Wilanów. 2,000,000 issued.
- 65 zł. + 10 zł.—"Sobieski at Vienna" after a painting by Jan Matejko (1838-1893). The painting belongs to the collection of Vatican City Museum in Rome. 1,200,000 issued.

Designed by Stefan Matecki — Rotogravure printed in multicolor in sheets of 35 stamps on chalky paper at PWPW, Warsaw.

Second Visit of Pope

To commemorate the visit of Pope John Paul II to Poland, the Polish Post issued June 16, 1983, a series of stamps consisting of two stamps and a block:

- 31 zł.—image of Pope John Paul II against the background of the silhouette of the Jasna Góra Sanctuary. 4,000,000 issued.
- 65 zł.—image of Pope John Paul II against the background of the

church in Niepokalanów. 3,000,-
000 issued.

—stamp of a face value of 65 zł. in
a block, with the following in-
scriptions in the margin: "John
Paul II", Second visit to Poland".
1,100,000 issued.

Designed by Ryszard Dudzicki.
Rotogravure printed in multicolor in
sheets of 35 stamps on chalky paper
at PWPW, Warsaw.

—ARS Polona

NEXT MEETING

Friday, December 23, 1983 - 8:00
pm at the Polish American Congress
Building, 5844 Milwaukee Ave., Chi-
cago- This will be a Christmas Party.
Food and refreshments. Bring along
the ladies.

HONORARY MEMBER

We wish to apologize for leaving
out MYRON STECZYNSKI in the list-
ing of Honorary Members in the last
issue of the *Bulletin*.

PART OF STOLEN POLPEX EXHIBIT FOUND

According to Les Winick's article
in the December 12th issue of *Linn's
Stamp News* part of a stolen stamp
collection was recovered recently in
New York City thanks to the alert-
ness of two *Polonus* members.

A collector from Poland exhibited
his collection at a POLPEX in Chica-
go. After the show the collection was
delivered to Pan American at O'Hare
for delivery to LOT Polish Airlines in
New York City. But when the plane
arrived at Warsaw the papers were
on board but not the collection. *In-
terpol*, Polish police and the FBI all
hit dead ends in their search for the
collection.

Polonus sent out out a description
of the missing items to its members.
Two New England *Polonus* members
were shopping at a New York City
dealer's showroom when they spot-

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ted five covers in a showcase. The
two philatelists were able to take
the five pieces home on approval. A
telephone call to Chicago confirmed
that these were the missing covers.

The New York dealer stated the
covers were part of a large lot he
purchased on the wholesale market
but was unable to pinpoint the col-
lection it came from. The FBI feels
that the package was removed from
the Polish plane while it was in N.Y.

The five covers are now in the FBI
vaults in Washington, D.C. awaiting
positive identification from the Po-
lish collector.

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