

## BULLETIN OF THE

# POLONIS PHILATELIC SOCIETY



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## THE POLISH POST IN TURKEY

by Jan Reychman

Translated from "Ilustrowany Kurier Filatelistyczny" by Dr. L. P. Kozakiewicz

After the First World War following the example of other nations of Europe, Poland for a short period of time, had its own postal agency in Constantinople and used its own stamps. Few knew that Poland had its own postal service in Turkey when postal systems were sparse in Europe and only Austria was the other nation to have a system in Istanbul.

It happened during the reign of Stanislaus August, a king who was very progressive in establishing the posts of Poland. In 1765, when he notified Turkey of his crowning as king of Poland, he entrusted his charge-de-affaires Boskamp to establish a postal agency to serve between his and neighboring countries that sent mail through Belgrade and Vienna. Boskamp had messengers who did the carrying of the mail.

From Warsaw through Lublin-Lwow to Komieniec the post was already established, and in 1770 by agreement with Russia, it went to Jassy to Constantinople. This route was very rarely used as we notice some of the postal routes went by way of Vienna-Belgrade. This continued to 1789.

In times of emergency a special messenger was sent from Komieniec to Constantinople and usually this gentleman was a certain Konstanty who was praised by the commandant Witte of Komieniec. He was paid about 2600 zloty yearly. This route

was interrupted during the war between Austria and Turkey (1787-1791) and Russia and Turkey (1789-1792). The post then went by way of Venice-Corfu instead.

Envoy Peter Potocki in Constantinople made arrangements with the Prussian ambassador to jointly keep communications going through Komieniec Padolski to Warsaw. During this time (1790) an agreement was made with Turkey to establish a trade contract. Mail was collected at the Polish agency and Turkey gave protection to the messengers with an escort. This was in the making when on May 22, 1792, Potocki sent the first messenger who arrived in Komieniec on June 5, 1792. He reported to Orlowski the commandant in Komieniec who dispatched the mail to Warsaw which arrived there on June 9, 1792—all in 18 days, while by the Venetian route it took a few months. Chocim was still occupied by the Austrian army.

The messenger soon returned to Constantinople when the new Russian-Polish War broke out. Potocki in the meantime sent two messengers to Komieniec on July 2 and July 23, 1792. The Russians then took over the mail. On August 14, 1792, however, one of the messengers returned to Constantinople.

Potocki was soon recalled to Poland when shortly thereafter Poland lost the war, was partitioned and was no

longer a nation.

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## POSTAL AGENCY IN CONSTANTINOPLE "LEVANT" 1919-1921

by A. B. Piaskowski

(Translation by Dr. L. P. Kozakiewicz)

Certain pre-war nations of Europe: England, Germany, France, Italy, Austria and Russia, depending on their control of the middle east, and basing their right on the international capitulation law of the XVII century, opened their own post offices in their embassies and consulates in Turkey, Greece and Egypt.

The Nationals of these various countries, instead of using the postal system of the country, made postal transactions in their respective diplomatic offices. These postal stations were known as "Levant" (station). They were not controlled and collected for services as to the tariff of their home country by the addition of "Levant" or the Turkish valu "para" and "piastre". They had their own cancellers, materials, stamps and printed matter. Postal matter was put into sealed pouches on their respective ships.

Such postal arrangements were a parasite on the country and were tolerated only because of Turkey's weakness, because of its capitulation.

The republican government of Turkey, after the First World War, still tolerated this system until the peace was signed in Lorraine in 1923, and from hereon disposed of this method and asked the foreign powers to close their post offices on Turkish soil.

Poland, which then became a nation, also had a post office agency in Constantinople, but closed it in 1921 after it and Turkey were accepted into the League of Nations and only the powers who had their

agencies before the war, still functioned further.

By opening this post office Poland showed her ungratefulness to Turkey—a nation which did not sign the right of Partition of Poland at the Congress of Vienna.

Due to post-war conditions in 1918-1920, there was no normal direct communication with Turkey, and because of the need of Polish consulates, economic agencies and a Polish Chamber of Commerce, it became necessary to develop, as soon as possible, means of exchange offices. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Warsaw instructed the consulate in Constantinople to carry on a "Levant".

The consul in Constantinople, on June 1, 1919, opened an agency at the consulate building (Pira, rue Minsk) as per instruction from his Ministry. The Polish delegation was fully responsible for its function.

An employee named Stanislaus Czarkowski carried out the duties of the office. It was opened from 9 to 12 a.m. and 2 to 4 p.m. daily except Sundays and holidays. There was only one letter box in the office and none outside.

At first only the Poles could use this service; later others could use it. Also at first, only correspondence to Poland was accepted, but later (for a short time) all correspondence was taken in. This mail was transmitted to its destination from Warsaw.

The agency in Constantinople accepted letters or registered letters

only and franked them with Polish stamps from the first day of its operation.

Correspondence was put in pouches, sealed and transmitted by courier to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Warsaw once, twice or three times a month. Return mail from Warsaw came just as often; it was addressed to the Polish Postal Agency in Constantinople. The first transmittal from Warsaw was on April 24, 1919.

These services were not regular, depending on the need of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Mail that was received from Poland in Constantinople, was delivered by the postal employee to the receiving person in the agency only, and if addressed to other cities, it was consigned to the regular Turkish post for expediting.

The letters to or from Poland, amounted to more than 200 at a time, with the majority being philatelic.

Constantinople's Polish Postal Agency functioned well during its existence of 19 months and there were no official complaints.

In August 1921, the agency curtailed its work, but on Jan. 21, 1922, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs ordered the agency to close on Feb. 15, 1922.

On April 15, 1921, a method of exchange of mail from and to Poland through Rumania was established on the basis of the International Postal Convention of which Poland and Turkey were members. During this interim Poles in Turkey used the British or French facilities, and later the Turkish postal service.

On Sept. 12, 1924, a Polish commercial exposition in Constantinople was held. For this occasion, on August 5, a train load of Polish exhibits was sent from Warsaw to Turkey. In commemoration of this first commercial event, Turkey issued a special cancel inscribed in Turkish and French.

From the first day of its existence the Polish agency used Polish stamps. They were the same as those used in Poland except for the overprint "Levant". Polish stamps were officially overprinted in two printings, which are difficult to tell apart, and in a

third printing (fantasy). Used also were stamps of Poland not overprinted.

The first issue was overprinted in Warsaw April 19, 1919, and totaled 27,685,000 marks. The overprint was horizontal, machine printed in dark red, perforation 12½. Values in the series were 3, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 and 50 fg. Size of the overprint was 2½ mm. high and 12 mm long. The 1, 1½, 2, 2½ and 5 mk. values had the overprint 19 mm long. This entire issue was sent to Constantinople except 100 sets which were distributed by the Polish Philatelic Society to its members.

In the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs there is evidence that the Kronen stamps were also overprinted in the amount of 13,280,000 Kronen, but since none are known in philatelic circles it is assumed they were destroyed before put into use.

The second issue amounted to 30,000 sets. This issue was really not necessary, it was only released because of the demand of philatelists. Overprinting was so similar to the first issues that to date it is a problem to differentiate them from the first issue.

The third issue was not that of the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs in Warsaw. When the agency in Constantinople was running short of stamps and had to use the regular Polish stamps, they felt the stamps should be differentiated and overprinted them with a three letter rubber stamp "P. P. C." (Post Polonaise Constantinople). These stamps appeared in November 1920, and were promptly condemned by postal officials and philatelists.

The fourth issue officially was the third. Overprinted on May 25, 1921, they totalled 20,000 sets to the value of 710,000 mks. The overprint consisted of the word "Levant" in script at an angle. Issued on May 25, 1921, only a few on letters were used as the agency ceased to function in August, 1921.

These stamps became very popular and consequently, in a short time, forgers were busy making their masterpieces.

Cancellers for these issues were made in Warsaw. They were delivered to the agency in Constantinople April 19, 1919, and on the termination of the agency, they were delivered to the ambassador Mr. Borowski March 22, 1922, who reported this to the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs.

### NEW ISSUES by J. J. Domar

Officially Released

A stamp picturing "Mechanization of Mining Industry in the Six-Year Plan."

Date of Issue: October 18, 1952

Denominations: 1.20+15 gr. Color, Orange

Perforation,  $12\frac{3}{4} \times 1\frac{1}{2}$ . Gum—White Paper, White without watermarks Steel plate engraved Size, 21.5 x 31.25 mm.

The Henry Sienkiewicz stamp which was scheduled for September 20 actually was released October 25, 1952.

Denomination, 45 gr.+15 gr.

Color, Sepia

Perf.  $12\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{3}{4}$ . Gum, White.

Paper, white without watermarks.

Steel Plate engraved.

Size 31.25x21.5.

### ••••• POLONUS PHILATELIC SOCIETY •••••

Ed Hopps, Secretary  
2246 Medill Ave.

Chicago 47, Ill.

J. J. Domar, Treasurer

3715 S. Clinton Ave.

Berwyn, Ill.

#### Publications Committee

Chester W. Makowski, Chmn.

2215 W. Cortez St.

Chicago 22, Ill.

Chester A. Schafer, Editor

2144 W. Potomac Ave.

Chicago 22, Ill.

#### Associate Editors this issue

Jack Domar

Dr. L. P. Kozakiewicz

Polonus Philatelic Society is non-political. The views expressed by the authors of articles appearing herein do not necessarily express the views of the Polonus Philatelic Society.

### TID BITS

Our deepest sympathy to member Leo Topolinski whose wife passed away November 13th.

Jack Domar was a guest speaker at the Chicago Women's Stamp Club November 28th.



NEW ISSUES—Top three values issued in commemoration of Aviation Day. The Shipyard Development in Danzig set is shown at bottom left, and the 100th Birth Anniv. of Victor Hugo set is at bottom right. These were described in detail in October BULLETIN. (Cut courtesy of Western Stamp Collector).