



3RD NATIONAL POLONUS MEETING/ EXHIBITION EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS

by Hank Bieniecki

The 3rd National Polonus Meeting/Exhibition held 25-27 Feb. in conjunction with Expo 2005, St. Louis was a resounding success and sent a clear loud signal that the Polonus Philatelic Society is a strong vibrant society with a very positive future. As a Summary of the 3rd National written by Roy Koczarski and Sam Ginsburg was sent to all members, this article will focus on the following two issues.



*Fred Szebel, Art Walinski, Chet Schafer:
Recipients of Lifetime Achievement Award*

The Society utilized the occasion of the APS awards banquet to present Fred Szebel, Art Walinski and Chet Schafer with Polonus Life Time Achievement Awards for their outstanding service to our Society over the past 50+ years. This Society is without question their legacy to ours and future generations of Polonia.

Roy Koczarski, Jerzy Kupiec-Weglinski and Dr. James Mazepa have agreed to join Bogdan Charlam and serve as Directors of the Society. We now have a group of highly qualified and motivated Directors to assist the Officers to continue building the National Society that has been created over the past five years.

POLONUS

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LABELS OF THE AIR DEFENSE LEAGUE (L.O.P.P.) IN POLISH AEROPHILATELY

by Jerzy W. Kupiec-Weglinski

Color illustrations appear on pages L1 to L3

One of the few remaining areas of Polish aerophilately that still awaits in-depth research and a serious cataloging effort are the labels issued by The Air Defense League (L.O.P.P.: Liga Obrony Powietrznej Państwa). This organization was established in Poland back in 1923 (1). In 1928, it merged with The Gas Defense Society (T.O.P.: Towarzystwo Obrony Przeciwgazowej) to form The Air and Gas Defense League (Liga Obrony Powietrznej i Przeciwgazowej). This popular organization propagated aviation, balloon and glider sports, as well as expansion of commercial aerial communication and air-mail services in general. L.O.P.P. actively supported the development of the Polish airforce, built airfields, aircrafts, hangars, and raised funds for airforce academies. It also trained civil pilots, navigators, co-sponsored local and national aviation tournaments, and led a public grassroot air defense education effort. In addition to the home headquarters in Warszawa, L.O.P.P. had branches located in major cities of most of Poland's administrative regions. In 1937, L.O.P.P. had over 1.5 million members belonging to 14,000 local offices and clubs throughout Poland. L.O.P.P. was active until the beginning of WWII in September, 1939.

Between 1924 and the late 1930s, both national and local L.O.P.P. branches issued a number of charitable or propaganda labels to raise funds and support the organization's ambitious goals. Some of these labels were prepared by the L.O.P.P. Warszawa home office to pay monthly membership dues, others were printed by regional offices to commemorate annual "Aviation Weeks". Finally, the third type of labels was prepared to commemorate special flights, air tournaments, or balloon contests. The best known early examples of the latter are special labels prepared for the 1926 Orłowski Tokyo flight, or those issued for the Wankowicz Balloon competition in 1926 and 1928. The Sanabria World Airmail and Ruch Polish catalogues list about 120 L.O.P.P.s produced in an array of designs, shapes, col-

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ors, and denominations. However, based on my own research, it is clear that both of these lists are incomplete. Central and local L.O.P.P. committees in pre-World War II Poland issued at least 200 different labels.

Why are these semi-official stamps, which are classified by some as labels, of such interest to aerophilatelists? L.O.P.P.s appearing in various towns, with denominations ranging from 1 gr. to 5 zł., were regularly affixed to postcards or letters, properly postmarked, and then transported by scheduled or special airmail (or balloon) flights, both within and from Poland. Thus, despite having a philatelic element, L.O.P.P.s, especially those on airmail correspondence, should be considered as an integral, quite unique, and colorful part of the Polish aviation history and Aerophilately.

Given the current lack of reference material, L.O.P.P.s are seldom found or exhibited at the major philatelic shows. Therefore I was pleased when my own Polish Aerophilately collection, consisting of 55 covers with over 80 attached and 120 accompanying mint L.O.P.P. labels from 1924-1929, received a Vermeil Award at the Polonus National Exhibition held at ARIPEX 2004. From the few existing L.O.P.P. articles published in *Filatelista* in Poland in the 1960-1970s we have learned the following background information. The Warszawa branch labels were printed in the Military Geographic Institute with the help of a local stamp collector, Mr. Stocki (2). Not surprisingly, the Gryzewski brothers, true "godfathers" of Polish Aerophilately, started to attach L.O.P.P.s to their airmail correspondence. The way these labels acquired philatelic value, as Kazimierz Gryzewski wrote back in 1961, was rather unexpected (3). While dining in the local restaurant during the 1924 "Aviation Week", he spotted a 10 gr. value green L.O.P.P. label attached to the consumer's bill. This represented a receipt for a small charitable contribution of the restaurant patron for L.O.P.P., which many businesses made mandatory during that 1-week period. Next, Gryzewski convinced L.O.P.P. officials to supply and sell these labels at the Warszawa 19 post-office at Topolowa Street in Mokotow district, the location of the Warszawa airport. Finally, he prepared a few letters, attached L.O.P.P. labels next to the regular franking, brought them to that post-office, and asked the clerk to cancel them all with a "Par Avion" postmark. This is how it all started, and the rest is history. Indeed, airmail letters with L.O.P.P.s immediately caught attention of the philatelic world, as "aviation" rep-

resented one of the most popular areas of collecting between the wars.

Based on Gryzewski's and other Polish aerophilatelist's known activities, it is reasonable to estimate that between 25 and 100 of the individual L.O.P.P and sets affixed to airmail covers were actually flown between the Polish cities and abroad. These covers may occasionally be encountered at US and European philatelic auctions. Forty of such items were sold at the 1986 Poulie auction. The Mazepa L.O.P.P. accumulation of 50 flown covers, and a couple of hundred mint labels, was offered back in 1989. The most common mint L.O.P.P labels can be spotted at Ebay auctions for as little as \$5 per piece. Better items range from \$30 up. Based on the author's own observations, you would be considered lucky to get an airmail cover, in good condition, bearing a common and properly postmarked L.O.P.P. label for \$50-\$100. All covers with labels flown to Gdansk (Danzig) are considerably more expensive, whereas those less frequently seen L.O.P.P's may easily bring \$300 and more per cover. Prices for these items in Poland, if one can still find them, are comparable or even higher. Based on these factors, L.O.P.Ps, especially those on flown airmail covers from the mid 1920s and early 1930s are scarce. Of course this should not be totally unexpected considering well over 75 years of a turbulent Polish history.

The intention of this article is to herald the ambitious goals of the Polonus Aerophilately Study Group. In the next several Bulletins, we plan to publish a series of research articles on L.O.P.Ps. Thus, we ask all the Polonus members, including those in Poland and overseas, to go through their aerophilately-related collections and provide us with scans, xeroxes, copies of articles, etc. The objective is first, to conduct a comprehensive survey, unearth unknown or forgotten labels, and to document their postal usage on the airmail correspondence. Second, is to properly catalogue all known L.O.P.Ps, their varieties, usage, etc., and then publish the results in a separate booklet under the auspices of Polonus. Your assistance with our efforts will be greatly appreciated.

Bibliography:

1. Pietnastolecie L.O.P.P. Praca zbiorowa. Warszawa 1938.
2. Gryzewski Tadeusz: Koszmarna noc. Filatelista monthly. 1960
3. Gryzewski Kazimierz: Kalejdoskop. Filatelista monthly. 1961

IT STARTED IN LWOW...FORGERY OF THE "KATOWICE" OVERPRINT FROM 1934

By Krzysztoff Krupa and Stanislaw Walisch.

Translated by Stanley T. Wlodek, from Przegląd Filatelistyczny, No. 2 2003.

The short, two stamp series (Fischer 264-265, Scott 280-281) dedicated to the 1st Pan-Slavic Philatelic Exhibition in Katowice, 1934, does not enjoy a great interest amongst philatelists. This should not be unexpected - the stamps were overprints on two values of the then current series with the national symbol (Fischer 254 and 256, Scott 271 and 273) which graphically, were not too attractive. One can only regret that on the occasion of such a large event (over 100 exhibits) attractive stamps with the panorama of Katowice were not printed (as was the case of the Torun exhibition, Fischer 260, Scott B28).

The degree of care used to produce the overprints, without changing the nominal value, may have discouraged their study. To date, on the overprints in red, 20 gr. (Fischer 264) and black, 30 gr. (Fischer 265) only one printing error has been observed. In position 75, of the 150 stamp sheet, for the 30 gr. value, and between the phrases "Wyst." and "Filat.", one can find a spot, which is the result of a printing spacer. The only other "curiosity" that is mentioned in Polish catalogs (1, 2) as well as the 60's handbook (3), is the existence of a trial printing which read: *Wyst.Filat./1934r./Katowice*, which was accepted after removing the "r." from the middle phrase. On these very carefully printed overprints, errors such as inverted, double or incomplete images have never been found.

An important feature of this issue was that, as stipulated in the order, only some 40,000 were to be issued. Actually 40,800 were printed. This exceptionally low printing, even by prewar standards, resulted in the absence of these stamps in even high quality packets. Due to the short period of their validity, non-philatelic letters franked with these "Katowice" stamps are rare. These stamps were introduced on May 5, 1934 (one day earlier than first announced). This is the date accepted in most catalogs (2) and handbooks (3, 4) while the Fischer catalog erroneously gives May 6. They were withdrawn from circulation, in the same year, on June 15 so that these

stamps had a postal validity of one and one half months. The date when these stamps were first put into circulation is of some interest. They were to be put on sale in the post office on the grounds of the exhibition, and other offices in Upper Silesia, on May 6.

At the last minute the ceremonies of opening the exhibition were, for religious reasons, advanced to May 5. It is likely that on that day the exhibition post office was also activated and stamps were possibly sold. Since, as noted by an anonymous and meticulous reporter (5), the official opening ceremonies were not held until 4.15 PM, this is not certain. Thus, it would be worth while to check available collections to determine the existence of the Katowice issue with postmarks dated May 5, 1934.

According to reference 4 the special cancellations applied at the exhibition post office were made in black, red and blue. The authors are familiar only with cancellations in black and violet. By yesterday's and even today's standards, the exhibit enjoyed great popularity. It was visited by many groups and individuals, totaling perhaps 5,000. We do not know whether the stamps that were returned from outlying post offices, once their validity had expired, were not possibly destroyed. That, and the small number of stamps printed, caused an increase in their value and awoke the interest of forgers in this issue.

It is certain that forgeries of the "Katowice" series appeared on the domestic market in 1937. They were produced in the workshops of Stefan Kulinski, from Lwow, who was responsible for the forgeries of many Polish and foreign stamps in the period of 1935 to 1937 (6). They were the first, but certainly not the only, forgeries of this exhibition issue. To this day, both in collections and even at philatelic dealers, one can find forgeries of these stamps produced with various levels of skill.

Through the simple comparison with the original, poorly produced forgeries are easy to identify. Most forgeries, however, require a greater level of comparative analysis. As shown in Figure 1 (page L4), measurements performed on some scores of the overprints of both the 20 and 30 gr indicate that both stamps were printed from an almost identical typographic form. Differences in characteristics of the overprints on the two stamps of this issue do not vary by more than 0.10 to 0.15 mm. Comparison between the dimensions of the

authentic versus the forged stamps leads to the conclusion that the forgers prepared printing forms, that on the basis of dimensions, well replicated the authentic overprints. The dimensions of the forgeries differ little from the originals (Figure 2, page L4).

What are then the features that allow the definitive differentiation between authentic and forged overprints?

1. The authentic stamps are usually cancelled with the clearly legible exhibition cancel. The forgeries bear illegible postmarks, and as often previously cancelled stamps were used, the cancellations may have dates that are earlier than the date of issue.
2. Under high magnification, the forged overprints appear irregular when compared to the original.
3. Some forgeries were made by lithography rather than typography. The lithographic impression is even in density and lacks the darker outline around the periphery of a typographic overprint.
4. The ink of the forged overprints varies from the original, particularly on the 30gr. issue, where the ink on the authentic stamps is a deep black. The forgeries, especially when viewed in transmitted light, exhibit an ink which is grayish and more reflective. We have also seen a slight doubling of the overprint on a 30 gr. stamp, where the ink appears to have been mixed with navy blue.
5. The most important characteristic which allows the differentiation between a forgery and the authentic stamp is the relative position of the central part of the overprint - "1934" - to the upper - "Wyst. Filat." - and the lower - "Katowice" - phrases. The right hand side of the "1" in the authentic overprint coincides with right hand side of the "s" of the upper side of the overprint. In addition the downward extension of the right hand edge of "1" cuts in half the vertical bar of the letter "t" in the lower phrase. In addition, the continuation of the right hand side edge of the number "4" in "1934" up falls between the letters "i" and "l" in "Filat.", while if extended down wards it coincides with the right hand edge of the letter "i" in "Katowice".

We have so far not found a single forged stamp which would exhibit the above listed requirements. Figure 3 (page L4) illustrates the relative positioning of the overprint elements on the authentic and forged stamp.

References:

- (1) "Katalog Polskich Znakow Pocztowych", Fischer, Vol. I, 2001, page 59.
- (2) "Katalog Specjalowany Znakow Pocztowych Ziem Polskich", 1990, Vol. I, page 181-2.
- (3) "Polskie Znaki Pocztowe", A. Laszkiewicz and Z. Mikulski, editors, Warsaw 1960, Vol.I, page 261.
- (4) "Polskie Znaki Pocztowe", A. Laszkiewicz editor, IKAROS publishers, Bialymostok, 1935, pages 97-8.
- (5) "Katowice pod Znakiem Uruczystosci Filatelistycznych" in "Illustrowany Kurier Filatelistyczny", Kolomyja, No.106, May 1934, page 25-6.
- (6) "Falszerstwa Znaczkow Nadrukowanych, Produkowane we Lwowie w Latach 1935-37", Prof. S. Mikstein, IKAROS, Bialystok, No73/12, December 1937, pages 147-9.
- (7) "Falszerstwa znaczkow Polskich", Maciej Perzynski, Ruch, 1971, pages 37-8.

POLONUS NATIONAL EXHIBITION/ MEETING SCHEDULE

March 2006: Held in association with the Garfield-Perry March Party, Cleveland Ohio. This is one of the top 5 APS shows.

November 2007: Held in association with ChicagoPex, Chicago, IL. This will be a Joint Pan-Slavic exhibition.

EDITOR'S NOTABILIA:

by Hank Bieniecki

Bulletin Publication: This Bulletin is the third and final Bulletin that will be issued for 2004. In 2005 we will publish 4 additional Bulletins. The first Bulletin for 2005 will be posted by the end of April. Subsequent issues will be published at the end of each quarter.

As many of you know the Bulletin went through a major transition in 2004. After 50 years, production was moved from Chicago to the Maryville area. Therefore in addition to gathering the material, editing that material, and laying out the Bulletin, I also had to oversee its production. All I will say is bless Chet Schafer for doing all of this production work for a span of 50 plus years.

Well you know the result. Two Bulletins in 2004 plus this issue in 2005. The good news is that I have finally been able to assemble an excellent staff to work on the Publication Committee and assist me to ensure that future Bulletins will be both timely and full of high quality content.

Jim Mazepa has accepted the position of Chief Senior Editor. Jim was a major contributor to the Bulletin in the past, is a skilled editor and a prolific philatelic writer.

Roman Sobus has accepted the position of Poland New Issue Editor. Starting with issue 518, the Bulletin will again be providing you with informative information about the new issues of Poland.

Sam Ginsburg has accepted the position of Associate Editor and in addition to providing original articles and referring articles from other sources for reprinting in the Bulletin, will also assist me in proofing the Bulletin.

Dr. Stanley W. Wlodek, Senior Editor and Translator will continue his critical role of translating philatelic research articles that appear in the Polish philatelic journals, and will also contribute original material.

Dr. Conrad Straub, Senior/Contributing Editor will continue to translate articles from Polish to English, write original material and assist in proofing the Bulletin.

If any of you have idea's for subjects you wish to see covered in the Bulletin or wish to submit articles for publication please email me at biistamp@charter.net or write to me at the Polonus mailing address.

ABC'S OF PHILATELY

NEW ENGLISH LANGUAGE POLISH PHILATELIC REFERENCE LITERATURE NOW AVAILABLE

by Hank Bieniecki

Chris Kulpinski has taken on the challenge of creating illustrated, easy reading reference works, written in English, on various topics of Polish philately. These reference works are available on CD or in 8 1/2 x 11 printed format. A partial list of the available items are listed on page 12 of this Bulletin, along with pricing. If you are interested in one or more of the areas of Polish philately covered in these monographs, you will find them informative and useful.



The Polonus Philatelic Society is a Not-for-Profit Organization which was incorporated in 1939 in the State of Illinois. Its objective is to promote Polish philately via the dissemination of Polish philatelic information in English. The opinions expressed by authors of articles appearing in the Polonus Bulletin do not necessarily reflect the views of the Polonus Philatelic Society.

Members receive the Polonus Philatelic Bulletin quarterly, have full access to www.polonus.org and participate in the events and activities of the society. Annual dues are payable in US funds before the end of March of each calendar year. Membership categories are as follows:

Regular Member: \$25.00 payable in US funds

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(1) Dues, (2) Article for publication, (3) Changes of address, (4) Inquiries regarding and Applications for memberships, (5) General matters or complaints pertaining to the Society should all be sent to:

Polonus Philatelic Society, P.O. Box 2, Maryville, IL 62062

POLISH PHILATELIC REFERENCE LITERATURE

(All Written in English)

1. **Concentration Camp and Ghetto Mail System under the Nazi Regime** :A comprehensive study of the development and use of Camps and Ghettos by the Nazi's. Includes a description of mail distribution and the printing of stamps in several camps. **31 pages**
2. **Polish Airgraphs and Letter Forms – WW II**: Background and history of the development of these airgraphs, usage, types, forerunners and number issued. Profusely illustrated. **40 pages**
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Figure 1: L.O.P.P. Warszawa 1924-1926 issue of member-ship labels on 1927 flown cover from Warszawa to Lwow.



Figure 2: L.O.P.P. Warszawa February 1925 issue of 5gr. orange regular and plate proof without value on a 1925 cover flown from Warszawa to Gdansk



Figure 3: L.O.P.P. Bydgoszcz June 1925 issue of 2gr. blue imperf. between strip of 3 labels on a 1925 cover flown from Warszawa to Gdansk (possibly unique)



Figure 4: L.O.P.P. Bialystok 1928 issue of 4 seldom seen labels (including 1 zł) on a 1928 cover flown from Warszawa to Lwow

Aero Philately ILLUSTRATIONS



Examples of different L.O.P.P. labels issued for annual "Aviation Week"



Examples of different L.O.P.P. labels (from left to right) to raise funds to build airfields; to purchase an airplane engine; to build airfield and hangars in the Wolyn district; to raise funds for Lodz pilot academy

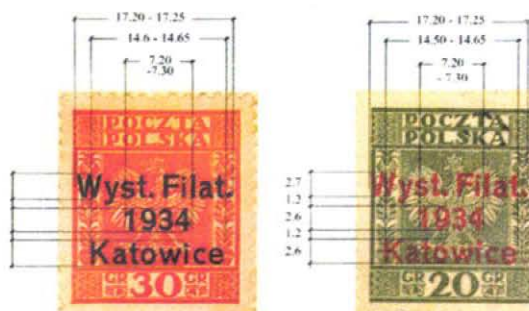


Figure 1. Dimensions of the original overprint on Fischer 254 and 255.



Figure 2. Dimensions of the forged overprints on Fischer 254 and 255.

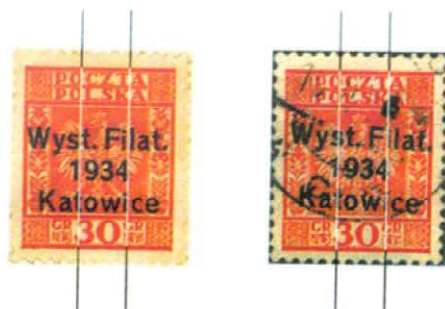


Figure 3. Relative positioning of the three phrases of the overprint on the original (a) and forged (b) stamps.