

BULLETIN OF THE

POLONUS PHILATELIC SOCIETY



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Issue 210

April, 1963

POLONUS MOURNS THE LOSS OF DR. UZNANSKI



The Polonus Philatelic Society is mourning the passing of its highly revered president, Doctor Matthew E. Uznanski on Wednesday morning, April 24th, 1963. On Good Friday April 12th, the night of the Polonus Meeting, Dr. Uznanski was taken to St. Mary of Nazareth Hospital where he was Chief of Obstetrics and Gynecology for 30 years and where he brought thousands of babies into this world in his 40 years of practice.

Dr. Uznanski was born in Chicago on August 14th, 1895, attended local schools, graduating from Carl Schurz High School and getting his M.D. degree from Northwestern University in 1922. He continued his education in Paris, Vienna, Budapest, Poland and Germany, and served his internship at Chicago University Lying-In Hospital under Dr. DeLee. Mrs. Uznanski is president of the Women's Auxiliary of the Illinois State Medical Society. They have two children, Dr. Rita who is married to Dr. Rudolph Bottei, professor of chemistry at Notre Dame University and Dr. Kenneth Uznanski serving his internship at present. There are three grandchildren.

Dr. Uznanski taught or lectured on obstetrics and gynecology at Northwestern University, Loyola University, Chicago University Lying-In Hospital, Columbus Hospital and his own St. Mary of Nazareth School of Nursing. He was a Founding Fellow of American College



Dr. Uznanski with gold cup, medal and certificate he received for his Christmas Seal exhibit at Caritas, Spain.

of Obstetrics and Gynecology, past president of the N.W. Branch of the Chicago Medical Society and of the Polish Medical Society, and a member of the American Assn. for the Advancement of Science, the New York Academy of Science, American Medical Assn., Illinois State Medical Society, Polish National Alliance, etc.

Dr. Uznanski's philatelic interests go back many years, as he was a founder and life member of Polonus. He was president in 1945 and now again when Polonus is getting ready for its silver

jubilee, the Society selected Uznanski as its president. He served on many committees, including the important office of Polpex Chairman which he always filled with distinction.

Uznanski collected Poland, United States, Vatican, Allenstein, Marienwerder, Upper Silesia, Eastern Silesia, Central Lithuania, Austria and selected topical subjects. His collection of submarine covers was unique. His rockets and balloons were the envy of his fellow collectors. His very extensive collection of the world's Christmas Seals was augmented by beautifully illustrated album sheets on anti-tuberculosis history and personalities that devoted their lives to this branch of medicine. He laid special emphasis on the work of Mme. Curie who received an honorary doctorship from Northwestern Uni-

versity at Uznanski's graduation. He wove in her discovery of radium into the anti-tuberculosis movement.

Finally, Uznanski won high awards in international and other philatelic exhibitions, being especially honored in Poland, Denmark and Spain.

Dr. Uznanski remained a loyal and enthusiastic member of Polonus since its founding. He was always in demand as a speaker on the many facets of his extensive collections, and contributed generously to the philatelic press. He was "Duke" to those who knew him closer, a warm fellow and an ardent philatelist who would find rest and relaxation in his stamps during moments that he could spare from his medical work.

—Myron E. Steczynski



Polonus President Dr. M. E. Uznanski was honored at the March Polpex with the presentation of a special Paderewski stamp cancellation by Dr. Edward Rozanski of the Society Historique Et Litteraire Polonais of Paris, France. Photo shows Dr. L. P. Kozakiewicz, Myron Steczynski, Dr. Uznanski, M. Bojanowicz of London, England, Dr. Rozanski, and John A. Troike, Chairman of the Illinois Youth Commission who represented Governor O. Kerner of Illinois.

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THE GHETTO STAMPS IN THE LIGHT OF FACTS AND DOCUMENTS

By Thaddeus Gryżewski

Late in 1943, I learned of the existence of the stamps issued for use in the interior of the Łódź Ghetto from a Gestapo man, a Mr. Messing, who frequently made trips to Warsaw in private matters, and who also was a passionate stamp collector.

Confirmation of this information followed in 1945 when I found myself in Łódź and was shown the stamps of the Ghetto in full sheets, allegedly found in the private safe of the civilian administrator of the Ghetto, a German, named Biebow.

My interest was aroused and I began to gather available information from some of the Jews who survived the Ghetto. I then published my findings in my own catalogs and in other publications abroad.

Not long ago I received much new information on this subject. My informer was one of the Polish journalists (a philatelist) who covered the Eichman trial in Israel. Before his departure to Israel, he studied various documents of the German Gestapo and of other German institutions in Łódź. Quite by accident, he came across some interesting documents pertaining to the Ghetto Post. Further search through documents and files brought to light Ghetto stamps hitherto unknown.

Based on these official documents we can ascertain the full validity of the Ghetto postage stamps and from the same documents we learn of the conflicts and friction between the civilian administration of the Ghetto and the German Gestapo.

On January 30, 1942 a public contest was announced for the design of the Ghetto stamps as follows:

"I have decided to issue postage stamps for the Ghetto in denominations of 5 and 10 pf. In connection with this I need suitable drawings with text in German and Jewish languages, from which I will choose the best for future emission of the stamps. I am assigning three awards in cash, of

which the first award is 100 Mk. for the best, 60 Mk. second, and third — 40 Mk. All drawings should be placed in sealed envelopes and deposited with Mrs. Daum, at my office on Balucki Square, not later than February 15, 1942. The name and address of the designer should be placed on the envelope and not on the project."

(—) M. Ch. Rumkowski
Elder of the Jewish Community
Litzmanstadt.

To better understand the real reason for the issuance of special postage stamps, one has to familiarize himself briefly with prevailing conditions in the Ghetto.

Despite the complete isolation of the Jews in Ghetto, from the beginning the Germans were simulating the recognition of the Jewish Community. An Interior Jewish administration was created and M. Ch. Rumkowski was nominated as Elder of the Jewish Community. He represented the isolated Jews before the Germans, being virtually at the same time a dictator over this congregation of wretched humanity.

Being the head of the community during the entire existence of the Ghetto, he endeavored to create something of an autonomous State with its own administration in every field, including the post. The Germans, in contrast to what was happening in other Jewish centers, did not control the interior affairs in the Ghetto. Mr. Rumkowski's intentions were centered on creating an economic unit, valuable enough to the Germans, so they would be faced with the problem: Which would be more profitable to them — "murdering the Jews or profiting from their slave labor?"

The Łódź Ghetto became one huge manufacturing camp, with industrial, trade and home production of goods for the German Army. Millions of pairs of shoes, uniforms, coats, etc., were manufactured. The efficiency of production of course depended on proper, peaceful working conditions.

Rumkowski's politics lied in outsmarting the German authorities. He was constantly convincing them that the work of the Jews was useful in the defense of the Reich. These politics were intended to save the Jews from extermination. Gaining relative autonomy, but having no authority to compensate his "subjects" with cash for the work done, (the Hitler Law forbade the Jews to possess any property, including money), he suggested the issuance of special coupons for the Ghetto as a substitute for money. The German authorities agreed to this plan, under one condition, namely that the "coupons" would bear the inscription: "Quittung ueber Mark" (Receipt for Mk.) In this manner the Germans got around the law forbidding the Jews the possession of money.

The terrain of the Ghetto was of considerable size, inhabited by some 70,000 to 80,000 human beings, who by the sweat of their brows, had to work from early dawn of the day to the hour of dusk. From various diaries, that were kept during these days, we know that friends and acquaintances were without communication between each other because of lack of time and telephones. To ease these living conditions, the community organized interior local mail by reopening three post offices and even installing mail boxes. The mail was serviced by three Jewish functionaries. For letters mailed locally a special fee was charged—payable by mail. For letters dropped into mail boxes the fee was collected from the recipient.

A second reason for the proposed issuance of postage stamps was the purpose of raising extra funds for the needs of the community, which, for lack of funds was wrangling with the problem of salaries for their officials. Here I might add that in 1941, through German initiative, a special commercial institution was established with the purpose of purchasing from the Jews every item of value, such as jewelry, gold, etc. This institution had a philatelic department which bought stamp collections. The philatelic department was located in the Post Office building.

The Germans were well aware of the fact that despite the confiscation of all Jewish properties, the wealthier segment of the Jews still found successful ways of hiding many valuable articles. Through this institution they tried to drain the remains of their wealth, especially by paying them for it with the worthless camp coupons of the Ghetto. Rumkowski had in mind the issuing of stamps which would pay postage, and at some future time would also sell in the philatelic department and from these sales he would obtain additional funds.

Of the outcome of the contest mentioned earlier, we have no information. Originally it was stated that the value on submitted designs should be in "pfennigs". Since the German authorities would not permit the showing of any value whatsoever in German marks the project had to be abandoned. Possibly a new contest was held or a design from the first contest was changed in the manner that the design showed the value numerals only. Based on this theory, it should be assumed that the stamps of slightly different design on glossy, photographic paper, gummed and even perforated, are designs submitted in the contest rather than proofs, because these show the letters "pf."



In 1942 there appeared a special postal regulation with annex 'D' which regulated specifically the matter of the Post in the Ghettos; in par. 6 of this annex it stated that Jewish authorities within the confines of the Ghettos have no right to issue postage stamps. Similiar regulations were issued also for the General Government and the Protectorate of Czechy and Moravia. The appearance of this regu-

lation must have restricted the emission of the stamps in the Łódź Ghetto.

Despite this regulation, in 1943 there appeared stamps for sending packages from (Theresienstadt (Ghetto in the Czech Protectorate). After the war it was revealed that these stamps were printed on order from the Czech Gestapo, and part of the printing was allotted to the Ghetto Camp, the other part of the printing was taken by the Gestapo which was selling them, indirectly, for very high prices. Packages from Theresienstadt franked with these stamps began to arrive at the Łódź Ghetto about January 15, 1944.

Rumkowski took advantage of this situation and contacted the Łódź Gestapo, headed by Kiessling and his confidant, the previously mentioned Messing. Because both were philatelists, despite the restricting order of the postal authorities, they granted their permission, and with their consent Rumkowski issued the order to print the stamps. This fact is confirmed by a memo, made in Dr. Oscar Singer's Diary on Feb. 29, 1944: — "The Chairman ('prezes') intends to issue postage stamps of 10 pf., intended for interior use within the Ghetto camp. Two designs are ready. It is assumed both designs will be subsequently used for the printing. The chairman intends to assign only a small amount (1000 copies) for postal needs, and overall only several thousand are to be printed. PERMISSION FOR ISSUANCE OF THESE STAMPS WAS GRANTED BY THE GERMAN AUTHORITIES."

In the same diary under the date of March 9th of the same year we find the following paragraph: "The chairman had a conference with the gentlemen Rosensztein (print shop) and Davidowicz (philatelic section). The first set of stamps, value 5 and 10 pfennigs is already finished, naturally in very restricted quantities. The stamps bear the likeness (portrait) of the chairman with symbols of the Ghetto (A Bridge in the Church Square and a Jewish youth at work.)" See illustration above.

We find another memo in the diary of Józef Poznański who writes: "The



post office was selling postage stamps printed in the Ghetto at considerably increased prices." As a marginal observation to these two diaries' notes, it should be added that Dr. Singer was a Czech Jew, who after finding himself in the Łódź Ghetto, became an inseparable companion of Rumkowski — whom the Jews popularly called "prezes" (chairman), and who from the very beginning of his presence in the Ghetto was writing a diary "The Chronicle of the the Ghetto" from day to day. This chronicle diary has been saved and became a great source of information on the Łódź Ghetto. The quoted citations, authenticity of which can not be questioned, draw the conclusion that Rumkowski was anxious in having the stamps printed speedily. Having obtained the Gestapo permission, he wanted to exploit it to the utmost immediately, to confront the civilian administration of the Ghetto, Biebow, with an accomplished fact. The granting of permission to print and use special stamps in the camp lied within Biebow's competence. But from other sources we know that at that time he was on furlough in the Reich.

The first stamps were handed Rumkowski on his birthday, March 9, 1944, which was very solemnly celebrated. In the meantime Biebow unexpectedly returned to Łódź and already on March 14 directed a letter to Rumkowski with the following text: "Because I do not see any need for franking letters within the Ghetto, I am forbidding the further printing of such, and I am calling upon you to deliver all finished quantities to the office of my administration!" (—)Biebow.

After the liberation of Łódź from the German Occupation it turned out that the stamps were not turned in by Rumkowski to Biebow's bureau of the

civil administration at all. The whole stock of the printed stamps was stored not at Biebow's office but in the Łódź Gestapo Building.

The first stamps (illustration on p. 5) were the design of Józef Kowner and printed within the Ghetto. These are the 5 pf. brick-red and 10 pf. light olive, of much rarer emerald. The stamps measure 32 x 25 mm., lithographed from stone in sheets of four stamps, imperforated, ungummed, printed on various scraps of waste paper evidently from some German prospectus, as we find on the reverse (seldom on the obverse) places printed in gothic letters. Some of the 10 pf. values are found on brownish paper. Waste paper was used — because it was the only available, and because the whole Ghetto was suffering from lack of paper. It suffices to say that when a patient went to a doctor for an examination, he had to furnish the paper to obtain a prescription! On one of the 10 pf. values from the above described issue was found a weak impression of the Second issue, it could be therefore assumed that the second printing was done about the same time as the first.

The second issue in denominations of 5, 10 and 20 pf. was made in the same print shop. Lithographed in sheets of 20, on white either horizontally or vertically ribbed paper, with only the 10 pf. value on gummed paper. An insignificant number of sheets was line-perforated 11½. The stamps are from the second design, mentioned by the *chronieler* and feature the portrait of Rumkowski, spools and scizzors as symbols of labor, gears and chimneys, as symbols of industry. Thus far, these stamps were considered as the only stamps of the Ghetto. Quantities printed are unknown. The 10 pf. value was printed in a much smaller quantity than the rest. Sheet proofs of those stamps are known, with the 10 pf. value in olive gray. The same stamps were also printed in small sheets in colors: blue, orange-yellow, brick-red, and olive gray.

Significant is the fact that the printing of the two issues of stamps from two different designs in which the

first is a rather primitive product, made of poor quality scrap paper, while the second printing is done with great care on good paper, of a quality not obtainable in the Ghetto. Here we can make only some conjectures. Permission by the Jewish Community was obtained from the Gestapo. When the Gestapo granted the permit, its influential leaders intended to draw some personal profit from it. On the other hand, Rumkowski proposed the issuance for the benefit of the community. Evidently Rumkowski found a way from this dilemma by deciding on two issues: first — for the use of the community, second — for the Gestapo.

The first printing he evidently conspired to smuggle in secretly, sell some at the post office, and retain the balance to sell at a proper price later on. He ordered the printing on the kind of paper the print shop had at its disposal.

The second issue was printed on paper furnished by the Gestapo and the full quantity must have been delivered hurriedly back to the Gestapo, in order not to fall into the hands of Biebow.

The reader might be wondering why the so called second issue is known since 1945 whereas the first issue is first established now. The explanation is simple. The second issue was found in the files of the Gestapo, which has not received the stamps of the first issue. The first issue was partially sold at the post office, as mentioned before — and perished together with their buyers. Several copies accidentally found recently, have rested peacefully in an entirely different institution. While analyzing and organizing the documents in that institution these stamps also were found. Further proof of authenticity of the first issue is the fact that among the projects in the design contest reproduced at one time in the "Philatelic Review" (*Przegląd Filatelistyczny*) published in Łódź, this design was also included. Despite the fact that neither the first nor the second issue was in use for mail outside the Ghetto, it should be assumed that A NEGLIGIBLE number of the

first issue was used for local correspondence, which perished in the Ghetto liquidation. An irreputable fact remains that the stamps were fully an official issue, because the Elder of the Jews, Rumkowski, directing as it were "a State within a State" was authorized to impose and collect additional dues on all Ghetto territory; was authorized to mint coins (within the Ghetto) regulated and signed currency bills, even though these were printed outside the Ghetto.

Of no less importance is the assertion by Singer, that the German authorities consented to the issuing of postage stamps. In this instance it is not important, whether it came from the Gestapo or the civil administration. Of no less interest is the insight on the relations, prevailing between the different segments of the Hitler Regime, as evidenced here by the little example of the Jewish stamps.

Stamps of the Łódź Ghetto are undisputably a historical curiosity, without precedent in postal history.

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Because you members supported our organization with the payment of dues, the Polonus Philatelic Society is in existence today. We need this revenue to continue the publication of our Bulletin, for hall rental, supplies and the other various expenses incurred by a Society like ours.

Many of you have responded to our last appeal for 1963 dues for which we are grateful. But a few have neglected to do so.

To alleviate the work of our new Treasurer, would you be so kind as to send in your \$2.50 immediately? He is not compensated for his work but too must pay his dues. This cooperation on your part will save him much time and work. Mail your \$2.50 to Eugene J. Bogucki, Treasurer, 4622 N. Kelso Ave. Chicago 30, Illinois.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May 10, 1963:

Business meeting. Auction of Bert Powell collection of Poland, U.S. and Foreign material.

May 24th, 1963:

Program Meeting. Joseph J. Janecka, Jr., president of the First Czechoslovak Club of America will speak on several topics of philatelic and historical interest to both Polish and Czech collectors. One of these will be the introduction of Christianity and the alphabet to the Slavic peoples 1100 years ago by Sts. Cyril and Methodius.

Mr. Janecka visited West Germany and Prague last autumn and has many interesting experiences to relate.

June 14th, 1963:

Business meeting. Another Auction of Bert Powell material.

CHICAGOLAND STAMP SHOWS

The 20th Annual Stamp Exhibition of the First Czechoslovak Philatelic Club of America will be held on May 4th and 5th, 1963 at the C.S.A. Building, Large Gymnasium Hall, 2138 So. 61st Ct., Cicero, Ill. The theme of the show honors the 1100th anniversary of

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4622 N. Kelso Ave. Chicago 30, Ill.

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

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— Annual Dues are \$2.50 —

Christianity and the alphabet as introduced by Sts. Cyril and Methodius in Moravia. A 120 frame show will include exhibits of Czechoslovakia, Austria, Japan, United States and topicals.

* * *

On May 25th and 26th, LITHPEX XI will be presented by the Lithuania Philatelic Society at the Lithuanian Youth Center, 5620 S. Claremont Ave. in Chicago. Polonus members attending this exhibition are always sure to find material relating to Poland.

* * *

COMPEX 1963 is scheduled for May 31st, June 1st and 2nd at the Hotel LaSalle in downtown Chicago. 1000 frames of stamps will be shown, a 40 dealer table bourse, first day of the 1c Jackson coil — are among some of the attractions.

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