



Meets 2d & 4th Friday of each month at Polish Falcon Hall, 1062 N. Ashland Av.

Issue No. 113

May-June 1953

Warsaw Local Post During World War I

by Stanislaus Rembielinski

(Translated from ILUSTROWANE WIADAMOSCI FILATELISTYCZNE
published in Poznan, Poland, March, April and May, 1934)

(continued from April Bulletin)

Local Post Stamps Not Permitted in Circulation

Philatelic literature gives two definitions of stamps: "stamps issued but not put into circulation" and "stamps not circulated". On the surface it would appear that both definitions mean one and the same thing and very often that is the way they are used: one for the other. Meanwhile this is fundamentally incorrect. Stamps "issued but not put into circulation" are stamps which had been issued by the proper authorities, whose duty it is to do just this, viz., to issue stamps to be used in payment for postal service, but which however, for some reason or other, were not used for that specific purpose. As an example can be cited the stamps of Bosnia with the portrait of Carl or the so-called IV Austrian issue of the Fieldpost, which never did get into circulation because of the downfall of the Austrian dynasty. To this same category belong the stamps issued in 1914 for the Austrian Fieldpost in Serbia, stamps which never reached the stamp windows in the Post office, since long before they were prepared—the Austrian army was forced to retreat from Serbia.

On the other hand stamps "not in circulation" or "not circulated"—are

stamps which owe their existence to private individuals or . . . speculators holding office who preyed upon the naivete or inexperience of collectors, and therefore stamps which from their origin had nothing in common with the postal services. Usually it has to do with various peculiarities, deliberately perpetrated, in the form of imperfs instead of perforated or colors and shades other than the original. Frequently these are but waste paper, which—instead of being destroyed—found their way mostly in an illegal manner, to the market.

A classic example of these stamps "not circulated" are the various peculiarities found in the Austrian Fieldpost, concerning which the catalogue of Senf has this to say: "The issues of the Fieldpost imperforates, as well as those with double overprints, inverts or irregular colors and shades, were made by order of high dignitaries and never were sold at the Post office."

Deferring the detailed discussion in a separate article of the stamps of K. O. M. W. (Citizens Committee of the City of Warsaw), which were not circulated, and which saw the light of day thanks only to various "fake-philatelists" and would-be-dealers, I shall consider the stamps "issued but not put into circulation".

I.

The Citizens Committee appealing to the German authorities for permission to organize the Local Post within the sphere of activity as proposed in the memorandum, cited by me in a previous article, thought that it would be much easier to obtain permission, if the whole scheme were presented to the Occupation authorities, which plan was already, in its own time, approved by the Russian powers. This therefore, was not a question of something new—but rather the continuation of a previously initiated activity.

The postage stamps, the issuance of which the Committee was only now planning, for the same reasons decided to present as having been prepared already in the time of Russian rule. For that reason it was necessary to have printed beforehand a certain amount of stamps, to have on hand this sort of "concrete evidence", and—above all—that the eventual permission to organize the Local Post would not catch the Committee unprepared. However, unable to foresee beforehand, what attitude the German authorities would show towards the plan of the Committee, and—what naturally follows—not anxious to incur too large of an expense for printing of the stamps, which in the event of a German refusal would become useless, the issue was limited to a minimum: 2,000 copies of each denomination, namely:

- I.—5 groszy, gray-green, sandy background.
- II.—10 groszy, black, yellowish background.



Only when the above stamps, popularly known today as "first issue", were prepared, then on the 16th of August, 1915, was the memorandum

in question presented to the Occupation authorities. Upon presentation of it, the representatives of the Committee gave additional oral explanations in accordance with the plan mentioned by me above.

Then—during the negotiations—when assurance was given, that the Committee would be entrusted with organization and direction of the Local Post, as well as the fact that the Committee will be permitted to collect fees through the use of "existing" stamps, a new supply of both denominations was printed—this time in the amount of 268,000 of each, however in different colors, namely:

- 1.—5 groszy, (dark) or deep blue, on green background.
- 2.—10 groszy, red, on yellow background.

The above mentioned stamps were used exclusively from the opening of the Local Post. On the other hand however, the stamps of issues I and II NEVER WERE IN CIRCULATION. For that reason too—because of the circumstances under which they appeared and described by me above they must be recognized as **proof issues**. Of course it should be clear, that that classification of the issue by no means lessens the philatelic value of the "first issue". Quite the contrary is true—it increases the value. Now in as much as this minimum issue was fully justified, having been made "for any eventuality", then by the appearance of the issue destined for regular use, it would seem to give the others the semblance of a speculative issue, which however, they definitely were not.

Having considered and described the circumstances under which the "first issue" came to being, and having established the character of these stamps, let us in turn consider the externals of the stamps, that is, the design.

The design of the 5 groszy denomination represents the coat of arms of the city of Warsaw, a mermaid, while the 10 groszy—the Polish Eagle. What catches the eye at first glance is the extreme crudeness or

primitiveness, I might say—the sketching of both designs. All the more amazing is the fact, that the author was prof. Edward Trojanowski, creator of many highly artistic designs of later issues of Polish stamps: the so-called Monumental series, the first definitive issues, issued by the M. P. i T. (Ministry of Posts and Tel.) in the mark and crown values (val. 3-15 fen.=hal) and others.

I am deeply grateful to Mr. Stanislaus Ejsmond for clearing up this mystery. Namely from information given in due time to the latter personally by prof. Trojanowski, it was found, that the order for the designs of the stamps was received by the artist from the leader of the Local Post, Radziszewski, one late evening, with the provision that the design be complete by morning. It is evident, that under such circumstances he could not have tempted fate to create something artistically outstanding, and had to content himself with a simple design. Moreover, the Committee—represented by Radziszewski—was not concerned too much about it, because of the uncertainty of the attitude of the German authorities relative to the matter of a Local Post.

During my research work in the archives, I endeavored to find confirmation of the above mentioned information and behold, in the protocols of the meetings of the Committee I found that on the 4th day of August, 1915, it was resolved on the motion of Radziszewski, that it was necessary to organize a Local Post and to issue stamps to be used as fees, and that on the 7th day of said month the proposed designs of the stamps were approved by them. Taking into consideration the fact that, on the 4th day of August the members of the Committee were completely absorbed in the task of taking over of the city from the hands of the evacuating Russian authorities, then on the 5th of August—with negotiations with the German authorities who were in the process of occupation of Warsaw, it becomes evident that eng. Radziszewski could not have taken up the matter of the stamps any sooner than

the 6th of August, which data completely agrees with information given by prof. Trojanowski.

Now comes the question: what did the artist use as a model for his design of the stamps, especially the mermaid, which completely deviates from the models used contemporarily, and—with minor changes even today, as the coat of arms of the city.

Characteristic features of the design (the figure facing left, the wings and the paws) indicate that the likeness of the mermaid must have been based upon the coat of arms of the city as used in the XVI-XVIII centuries. At the same time this design departed considerably from the copies of the coat of arms of the Capital of that era, as pictured in all of the well-known publications, recording the life, the activities of Warsaw and its coat of arms.

Now, that prof. Trojanowski could not have searched any of the archives for motifs for his design of the stamps—leaves no room for even the slightest doubt. Then again, it would be less probable to assume that these motifs were creations of the artist's fancy or imagination. I was ready to admit that the question of the original model for the design of the stamps of the Local Post will remain unexplained and a mystery, when—as it so often happens—chance, or a mere incident, served me to unravel the mystery.

Lo and behold, an illustration chanced to fall into my hands, taken from a work by George Braun, a German geographer, "Theatrum urbium praeciparum mundi", a work published in the years 1593-1613 in Cologne. In this illustration could be seen the coat of arms of Poland and its Capital, BOTH COMPLETELY IDENTICAL IN DESIGN to those on the stamps of the Local Post. Not the slightest doubt can be entertained therefore, that this illustration supplied the artist with the original model for his design of the stamps. Then there is this, though only a secondary circumstances to consider: did he use this original illustration, or a reduced

facsimile, found as vignettes on title pages of publications by the Lovers-of-History Society in Warsaw, publications which were in circulation especially during the first years of the World War.

The next item is the denomination of the stamps—namely a description of the normal value of the stamps in groszy.

The former Kingdom of Poland had its own currency in the beginning, and the monetary unit of exchange was the zloty, equalling 30 groszy. After the fall of the November Insurrection the work of Russianizing of the former Kingdom did not overlook the currency. In the year 1841 there was introduced—for the time being IN ADDITION to the presently used currency—the ruble values. One zloty was the equivalent of 15 kopecks, or 1 grosz equalled $\frac{1}{2}$ of a kopeck.

Gradually limiting the circulation of Polish currency by newly enacted rules and regulations—the Russian powers definitely removed the Polish currency as of Dec. 31, 1857. However despite the introduction of the ruble as the official and exclusive monetary unit of exchange, the greater majority of the people in the former Kingdom of Poland continued to use the name of “zloty” and “grosze” until 1917, that is, up to the time of compulsory introduction of German currency by the Occupation forces.

The Citizens Committee, from the time of the evacuation of Warsaw by the Russians, striving very strenuously to eliminate every vestige of the century old indignities, could not, having issued its own postage stamps, pass up the opportunity of returning the former Polish name of “grosze” in place of the presently used “kopecks”, despite the fact that of necessity the circulating currency had to remain in force as the ruble and the kopeck.

While establishing the normal value of stamps, it was overlooked however, that the 5 groszy monetary units ($2\frac{1}{2}$ kopecks) did not exist, and the currently in circulation unit of one-half kopeck, the equivalent of one grosz, did not exist in sufficient a-

mount. This detail was not noticed until later—during the negotiations relative to setting in motion the service of the Local Post—and therefore the rate for delivery of ordinary mail and postcards was established—even BEFORE THE OPENING of the Post office—as 6 groszy, i.e. 3 kopecks. However there could be no question as to changing the lettering on the stamp from the five to a six, because the Committee had to consistently adhere to the assertion that the stamps on hand were printed while the Russians were still in power.

These last details and information, graciously given to me by Mr. Radziszewski, are of special importance. The reason is: they put an end—once and for always—to the commonly held opinion, that the normal value of the stamps with the mermaid was raised from five to six groszy only sometime later after the establishment of the Local Post—when the five groszy rate apparently proved itself to be impractical.

In conclusion it is necessary to establish under what date should the proof issues be listed or catalogued—an item concerning which we find a divergence of opinions in existing catalogues. The “Manual of Polish Postage Stamps” compiled by the catalogue Commission P. T. F., lists “the first issues” under the 14th of Sept. 1915; Michel does the same. However Senf—lists them under the date, Sept. 20, 1915. Yvert does not even list them at all as a separate and distinct issue. Lastly Zumstein is satisfied to list them only under the year, 1915.

Both dates, the 14th and the 20th of September are incorrect. On the basis of the data cited by me: the approval of the design of the stamps on the 7th of August and the presenting of the memorandum relative to Local Post to the authorities of occupation on the 16th of said month, the date on which the printing of the “first issue” was completed, can most assuredly be established as positively the 14th of August. It is evident from the protocol of the meeting of the

Citizens Committee of August 15th, that already on that day "Mr. Dziełowski (Secretary of the Committee—ed. note) undertook to draw up the memorandum". However, as we know, the drawing-up of the memorandum and the presenting of it were dependant upon the actual possession of the stamps in stock, therefore all things considered, the printing of the stamps must have been completed the day before, i.e. the 14th of August.

Now in so far as the positive establishing of the date of issue of the stamps, presently in circulation, is important, so too regarding the stamp as in this case, a proof issue—whether it is of only secondary importance. For that reason I undertook to deal with it towards the end. Now although all the above mentioned circumstances and data point to the 14th of August as the date of issue, for philatelic purposes, nevertheless, it will suffice to list the date of issue simply: August 1915.

NEW ISSUES

J. J. Domar

To date no official notices of anticipated "New Issues" are being received from Poland. We were previously informed that this information would be furnished but so far no news has been received.

We did however receive information about items previously released this year. It is as follows:

Complete set of two bicolored stamps issued in commemoration of 10th An-

niversary of Stalingrad Victory:

Date of issue: February 2nd, 1953

Nominal value: 60 gr—grey-olive,

Banner in red and 80 gr—Blue,

Banner in red

Perforation: 11¼

Paper: white, unwatermarked

Process: printed in rotogravure

Measurements: 25.5x38 mm.

Complete set of two stamps marking Economical Development of Poland in the 6-Year Plan, picturing Lorry Factory in Lublin:

Date of issue: February 20th, 1953

Nominal value: 30+15 gr dark-blue

and 60+20 gr violet

Perforation: 12¼x12½

Gum: white

Paper: white, unwatermarked

Process: concave printing

Measurements: 31.25x25.5 mm.

Complete set of two stamps issued in commemoration of 70th Death Anniversary of Karl Marx:

Date of issue: March 14th, 1953

Nominal value: 60 gr—grey-blue and 80 gr—brown.

Perforation: 12½x12¾

Gum: white

Paper: white, unwatermarked

Process: printed in rotogravure

Measurements: 25.5x31.25 mm.

Complete set of three stamps issued in commemoration of 6th International Cycling Tour of Peace Warsaw-Berlin-Prague:

Date of issue: 30th April 1953

Nominal value: 80 gr. with Warsaw's

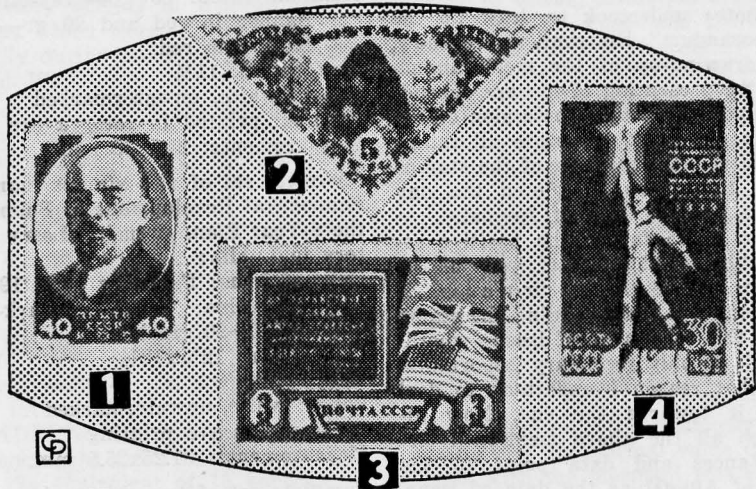
Coat of Arms—dark-brown

(continued on back page, first column)



The 60 gr. light red of the Labor Day issue and the 80 gr. red of the Peace Cycle Tour set described in New Issues article.

Are Reds Financing Spies Through Fake Stamp Sales?



SOVIET STAMPS—1—Lenin stamp. 2—Bear stamp. 3—This issue shows flags of U. S., Britain, Soviets together. 4—Russ World's Fair stamp.

(Cut courtesy Polish Daily News)

By Henry C. Nicholas
Central Press Correspondent

Washington—For the last 12 years loyal Americans, entirely innocently, are believed to have been financing the expenses of the Soviet spies in this country. It is a gross piece of international chicanery carried on by a government on a large scale and over a long period of time.

For some years this fact has been well known to high officials in Washington, but aside from breaking off diplomatic relations with the U. S. S. R. there is nothing this government feels it can do about it.

There is no accurate information regarding the amount spent by Russia annually on the maintenance of its espionage organization in this country, an organization which is operated directly from Moscow and as far as possible is kept separate from the government's regular diplomatic channels. Best guess by the most competent authorities is that the sum is around \$12 million a year, or about \$140 million during the last 12 years.

Big money, but it is a small sum in terms of national expenditure. It is an estimate based on the known meth-

ods of Russian espionage and the historically established fact that few of the famous traitors of the world were influenced by payments of large sums of money.

Virtually all of the prominent traitors unearthed by the FBI and the CIA, particularly those working in government circles and on atomic secrets, were discovered to have betrayed their country's secrets merely by promises that fed their vanity—glowing promises made of positions of eminence and power they would hold in the new economic and social world the foreign power, with their help, was planning to establish.

Russia is said to have first become aware of this golden opportunity for obtaining sufficient dollar currency from American citizens to maintain its espionage system in this country, at the 1939 New York Worlds Fair.

As a part of its exhibition at the massive Russian Pavilion it placed on display two sets of Russian stamps one picturing the Russian Pavilion and the other showing a Russian youth holding a torch.

The fact is that neither of these

sets of stamps had ever seen Russia. They were made in America, having been printed in New York purely for display purposes.

The Russian exhibitors who apparently had little idea of the number of stamp collectors in this country, were unquestionably greatly surprised at the interest they aroused. Not only was there a large demand for these stamps from visitors at the fair, but soon orders began pouring in from stamp collectors from all over the United States and other countries.

When the Russian representatives discovered that many dealers and collectors value a stamp more highly if it has been canceled, showing it has passed through the mails, the Russian Pavilion within 24 hours placed on sale a large supply of "canceled" stamps.

Stamp dealers noticed at once that these "canceled" stamps had full gum on the back. Had they been legitimately used for mailing, as the cancellation indicated, the gum would have disappeared when the stamps were soaked off the envelope. This was the first evidence of chicanery, which later was developed into a fine art.

Capitalizing on this opportunity to obtain a good supply of badly-needed dollars, the Soviet Philatelic agency was established in Moscow. Other governments have philatelic departments, but the Soviet Philatelic agency soon demonstrated it is a special brand of animal.

While other countries only sell stamps primarily for postal purposes, the stamps issued and sold by the Soviet Philatelic agency have no relation to postal purposes.

Its only object is to extract every dollar possible from foreign countries, and the only stamps in which it deals are those manufactured for sale to foreign collectors.

There is no record of the amount annually paid by stamp dealers and collectors for Russian stamps, because stamps come in duty free. The best estimate by authorities is that the amount varies from \$2 million to \$20 million a year.

Soviet stamps have been issued to commemorate events and occasions which have never occurred, and in one instance the Soviet agency is believed to have forged one of its own issues, the Russian stamps issued for famine relief in 1921.

The plates of these stamps are known to have been destroyed by the Germans, but New York dealers are continually being offered supplies, which examination has shown are being issued from forged plates.

Cold war or not, the Soviet Philatelic agency is still selling to American stamp collectors stamps commemorating the long and lasting friendship of Russia for America and England. One of the most popular issues is one showing the American and British flags.

It may hurt the Soviets in thus advertising its great friendship for its former allies, but apparently this hurt disappears at the sound of the dollars tinkling in its till.

NEW MEMBERS

- Joseph LaGocki
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Toronto 4, Ontario, Canada
John F. Jarosz
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Jersey City, N. J.
John Zietkiewicz
1134 N. Wolcott Ave.
Chicago 22, Ill.
Edward D. Wolski
3200 16th St. N. W.
Washington 10, D. C.

80 gr. with Prague's Coat of Arms—red
 80 gr. with Berlin's Coat of Arms—green
 Perforation: 12.5x12½
 Paper: white unwatermarked
 Gum: white
 Process: printed in rotogravure
 Measurement: 25.5x31.25 mm.
Complete set of two stamps issued in honor of Labor Day—1st May Celebration 1953:
 Date of issue: 28th April 1953
 Nominal value: 60 gr.—light red and 80 gr.—dark red
 Perforation: 12.5x12½
 Paper: white unwatermarked
 Gum: white
 Process: printed in rotogravure
 Measurement: 25.5x31.25 mm.

WHAT DO YOU COLLECT?

The Polonus Society is compiling a new Membership List which will be published in the Bulletin shortly. All members who are paid up with their dues will be included in this list. It is planned to put after each member's name in this list, a short explanation as to what he or she collects. Paid up members, please write this information on a 2 cent postal card and send it to Jack Domar, 3715 S. Clinton Ave., Berwyn, Ill.

Members who have not paid their 1953 dues of \$2.50 will not be included in this list. Those who paid the old rate of \$1.50 are requested to send in an additional \$1.00 to the treasurer, John Skotnicki, 1036 N. Wood St., Chicago 22, Ill.

TID BITS

Polonus is donating two trophies to the coming Society of Philatelic Americans Convention and Exhibition to be held in Chicago in 1954. One trophy will be used as the Grand Award, and the Dr. Kozakiewicz Trophy will be awarded to the best Slavic exhibit. (You do not have to be a S. P. A. member to exhibit in this show.)

Our deepest sympathy is extended to the family of member Dr. John Tenczar who died last month.

A total of 38 members and guests attended the April 24 program meet-

POLONUS PHILATELIC SOCIETY

Adam Kloskowski, Secretary
 2528 N. Drake Ave.
 Chicago 47, Ill.

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 2144 W. Potomac Ave.
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Associate Editors this issue

Jack Domar
 Anonymous

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ing at which Dr. L. P. Kozakiewicz lectured on "Drang Nacht Osten". Doc Kozy presented a fine philatelic report of the German Drive To The East in World War II. Program chairman Anton Banasiak informed us that at the Beeba that followed, the herring and bread was donated by Leo Topolinski, the cheese by Mrs. Banasiak, and the balance came from the Beeba fund.

At the Auction Night May 22nd, the 76 lots brought in \$96.18. This amount was placed into the Society treasury. Auction Manager Roman Reinowski and Jack Domar acted as auctioneers at this well attended meeting. Food for the Beeba that followed was donated by the Society's steadiest guest Sid Shayman.

Specialists of Polish Stamps and Covers:

I have a wide variety to choose from, errors and regular issues. Also have a fine selection of Polish Army in Italy and England.

Wide variety of World, Religious, Topic, Vatican, etc. Approvals to members.

John Skotnicki
 1036 N. Wood St., Chicago 22, Ill.