

BULLETIN OF THE

POLONUS PHILATELIC SOCIETY



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POLPEX 82 TO BE AN OPEN SHOW

Plans for POLPEX 82 are under way. At the board meeting of September 17th, it was decided to make this coming exhibition an open show. This means that an exhibit other than Poland may win the Grand Award. The Polonus Trophy, as always, will go to the best Polish exhibit. This arrangement was decided on so as to attract a higher caliber of material for our show.

Entry forms will be printed up shortly and made available. Souvenir sheet and cachet designs are in the making. Dealers are already reserving tables for the bourse.

The Awards Chairman, Fred Szebel, hopes to carry the theme of our show, the 600th anniversary of Our Lady of Czestochowa at Jasna Gora on the awards, in the form of gold, silver, and bronze medals, if possible.

The Polish American Numismatic Association plans to show an exhibit of medals pertaining to Our Lady of Czestochowa.

President John Bartczak announced the following committee appointments:
Bourse: Roman Strzelecki, Romuald Odrowski

Sales: Al Rybarski, Walter Lewinski
Mail Sales: John Bartczak

Awards: Alfred Szebel

Arts: Leon Kawecki, Alfred Szebel

Entries: Tom Gobby

Finance: Stanley Rusin



Vatican City honored Our Lady of Czestochowa with a set of three in 1956.

Set-Up: William Jusack

Beeba: Walenty Poniecki

Program Catalog, Patrons, Well Wishers: Chester Schafer

Security: Walenty Poniecki

Stage Decoration: Walenty Poniecki

Publicity: A. Szebel, C. Schafer, J. Mazepa

Executive Chairman: John Bartczak

Mark these dates on your calendar:
February 27 - 28, 1982 and plan to participate in POLPEX 82 at the Polish Veterans Building, Irving Park Rd. and Austin Ave. in Chicago.

**KATALOG SPECJALIZOWANY ZNAKÓW ZIEM POCZTOWYCH
1981 VOL. 1 — Wiesława Kawecki and Andrzej Myśliński, editors**
Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza, Warsaw 1980, 414+ pages in Polish

By JAMES MAZEPA

In the May-June issue of the "Bulletin," I was able to report on the Volume 2 edition of the new Ruch catalog. Since then the Volume 1 has appeared and I am pleased to say that this volume is not only equal to the one previously mentioned, but in many respects surpasses it.

The editors remind us that these volumes have been in planning for nearly eight years. The plan was to publish a simplified form of the catalog on a yearly basis which was to be called the "Katalog Popularny." The first edition of this appeared in 1975. This year is the first year of the "Specialized" edition which is scheduled to appear every four or five years.

The Catalog is exceptional in many respects. First, a host of postal history information is presented and priced for the first time. Readers who are familiar with the series "Polskie Znaki Pocztove" will see the same basic format followed and the material priced (for the first time in this writer's experience). The catalog begins with a listing of the wax seals of the 18th century followed by the first inked postmarks of the Kingdom of Poland. Much of the information here is taken from the extensive work by Mikstein published in 1939. The next section treats the inked and wax seal marks of the Duchy of Warsaw as well as the other various postal seals of this period. Then follows the listing of prestamps of the Kingdom of Poland (1815-58). Once again, for the first time a detailed listing and pricing of these marks is offered. This is followed by sections on the Austrian and Prussian posts in Poland, and auxiliary marks. Poland #1 and the first Polish stationery of 1859-60

complete this section of the catalog.

The next section deals with the Polish post from 1918-39. This section is outstanding in its detail with much information never before included in the Ruch catalog. Much significant technical information is given such as designers and engravers, sheet size, size of stamps marginal marks, varieties, proofs, errors, essays, as well as prices for mint, used, covers and FDC's if applicable.

The remaining sections are equally comprehensive in scope and detail and once again offer information never before available, such as a listing of private labels by German forwarders. Other sections include official and unofficial city posts, Locals, Occupation issues, Postage dues, Military post, Central Lithuania, General Gouvernement, POW issues, foreign offices, Gdansk, plebiscites and more.

Pricing is generally uniform and for the 1918-39 issues (converted at 3c per zloty) U.S. collectors will think the prices a bit high, but they do reflect the European market. Postal history items also are priced at European auction prices, for example, many of the wax seals of the 18th century prices at \$750.00 each. I think many of the prestamp marks are bargains at the price offered, and some very cheap such as the Warsaw type VI of which only three are recorded, listed at only \$7.50! The only major criticism is that the overall quality of the photos is poor.

Our colleagues are to be congratulated on a fine work which belongs in the library of every Polish philatelist. The catalog is available from Bieniecki, Inc., Box 100, Granite City, IL 62040, for \$6.95 post paid.

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POLAND

Noble Struggles In Postage

By Stephen G. Esrati

Poland and its people have long paid the price for living on a border between civilizations — Christian and Moslem; Catholic and Protestant; Catholic and Orthodox; Communist and non-Communist. It has cost Poland dearly, rising from small principality to superpower and then being wiped off the map for more than a century. At its zenith, Poland controlled a vast empire that included most of the European parts of what is now the Soviet Union.

Poland, a kingdom that elected its kings, even had its own *Magna Carta*, the Statute of Piotrkow of 1496, which gave the gentry extensive privileges at the expense of the peasants and burghers.

Poland's stamps have reflected the bloody history of this buffer state, the roles of its heroes, the successes of its great thinkers and artists, and even the tragedies that have befallen the Polish people.

Like many another country in the Soviet bloc, Poland has issued a flood of stamps since World War II — but indications are that there have been no dirty tricks played on collectors, as there have been in the German Democratic Republic. It is believed

that all Polish stamps were on sale at post offices and that all have been valid for postage. Unfortunately, Polish stamps have been placed on sale specifically to collectors as CTOs (canceled to order), meaning that mint stamps were canceled and sold.



King John III Sobieski directed the Battle of Vienna that pushed the Turks out of Europe.



All such stamps can be easily identified by the fact that the cancel is so placed that one cancel covers exactly four stamps, giving each stamp a corner cancel. In many cases the cancelers used show up as blacker, cleaner cancels than those one would see on mail. So, even if the gum has been soaked off, one can still spot CTOs — which are not considered desirable by collectors.

But the flood has its advantages — Polish stamps on the whole are not expensive. Of all the stamps issued since 1944, only the first set of the Polish Peoples Republic and a few souvenir sheets run into double digits — costing more than \$10.

But you can't beat Poland as a country that allows you a peek at its past from its stamps. One great advantage is that, because Poland did not exist as an independent state before 1918, there are no great rarities from the 19th century. It is possible to complete a collection of Poland without

being rich, although some of the early overprints on stamps of Austria may stump average collectors. But there is a lovely way out of this problem. One simply collects stamps only if they were issued for all of Poland, eliminating the need to concentrate on those early regional issues. And the stamps from 1919 on are eminently affordable.

When Poland reappeared in 1918, it had different geography than the Poland of old, which had been carved up first in wars against the Swedes and Russians, then against the Germans of Prussia and Austria. By the time of the third partition of 1795, Poland had ceased to exist as a geographic entity. But the resurrection of 1918 was only the first reappearance of Poland.

In 1939, Poland again vanished, taken this time by Hitler and Stalin. When Poland re-emerged from World War II, giving it its present borders, it had been shifted dramatically to the west, making such cities as



Top: Stamps pay honor to the resistance of the Polish people in World War II and the early Polish fighters in Danzig. A stamp detail shows famed author Joseph Conrad, a Polish son.

Bottom: Commemoratives mark the courage of the Warsaw ghetto fighters against Hitler, the Polish Dabrowski brigade in the Spanish Civil War, and a renowned daughter of Poland, Marie Skłodowska Curie.



General Jozef Bem and battle scene



1938 20th Anniversary Issue

Stettin, Breslau and Danzig, Polish. But in the process, Poland also lost vast areas to the Soviet Union.

The history that preceded Poland's deaths and resurrections includes so many events commemorated on stamps, that our albums become veritable history books.

One of the main events, noted by a stamp of 1933, was the Battle of Vienna of 1683, which marked the "Stalingrad" of Islam's last great push into Europe, when the Turks besieged the Austrian capital for the second time. The siege was relieved by John III Sobieski who also liberated Hungary from the Turks and who has been on many Polish stamps. The 1933 stamp marked the 250th anniversary of Sobieski at Vienna and is based on a painting in the Vatican Gallery. It is as fitting a symbol of Poland as the recent photographs of Polish workers kneeling in prayer at Gdansk or the photos of the Polish pope, John Paul II, praying at Auschwitz. For the thread of Roman Catholicism has held together the rent fabric of Poland as it was torn asunder by German Protestants to the west, German Catholics to the south and Orthodox Russians to the east.

Even while there was no Poland, Poles continued to fight for their freedom and for the freedom of others (as shown by U.S. stamps honoring Kosciuszko and a U.S. postal card for Pulaski). Jaroslaw Dabrowski fought in the Paris Commune in 1871. Josef Bem led revolts against those who had submerged Poland — and lost. He fled to Turkey and was converted to Islam. A stamp was issued in 1928 to mark the return of his ashes from Syria.

A set of stamps of 1938, marking the 20th anniversary of Poland's rebirth, shows scenes of struggle going back to 1000, including the merger with Lithuania in 1596 that made Poland into a true world power.

Poles fought in World War I as soldiers of Austria-Hungary, Russia and Germany. But at the moment of their own freedom, they formed the Polish Legion under Gen. Josef Pilsudski, which went to war against the weak Bolshevik regime to the east in an effort to return Poland's eastern border back to where it had been in 1772, including the entire Ukraine.

The Soviets pushed the conquering Poles out of Kiev and Vilna and began a counteroffensive toward Warsaw, where



Kosciuszko at left, Pulaski at right. Backgrounds darkened to set off faces. Unifying architectural treatment frames all three portraits. Lettering improved in style and size and values in lower corners brought down. Flags are re-draped and re-proportioned. Anniversary dates 1732 — 1932 embellished in baroque oval.



Marshall Pilsudski reviewing troops



Exiled Government in England

the Poles made a stand. The Poles held, and the Soviets had to give up their Polish conquests. But today's Poland is hardly likely to issue a stamp showing that chapter of Polish-Russian relations. Instead, there has been a stream of stamps proclaiming fraternal ties, such as the portrait of the Soviet dictator Stalin of 1951 to mark a month of Polish-Soviet friendship. Still, as recently as 1948, Poland had issued a set of airmail stamps in honor of the Fighters for Freedom. Roosevelt is there; Stalin is not.

But 1948 was the key year of Poland's third degradation. It was the year in which a Soviet marshal took command of the Polish armed forces, the year Poland became a Soviet satellite state, the year Poland lost its freedom, if not its national identity. And there is no stamp that marks the change.

Another chapter of Polish history not being marked by today's Polish state is to be found on stamps, however. These were the stamps issued by the Polish government-in-exile in London during World War II. That government stayed in exile, its place taken by the Soviet-sponsored one. Its stamps show Poles in battle from Tobruk in North Africa to Monte Cassino in Italy. It was the Polish 2d Army under Gen. Anders and the Free French that captured

Cassino, ending one of the bloodiest battles of the Italian campaign. Most of the veterans of the 2d army never went home and now live scattered throughout the English-speaking world.

The London Poles also issued a stamp to mark the unsuccessful uprising against the Germans in Warsaw in 1944. The Red Army waited on the other side of the Vistula for the Germans to put down this uprising. But even the Communist Poles have marked that tragic episode with stamps although they take the view that the uprising was premature and that the Red Army was unable to rescue Warsaw.

Polish struggles for freedom of other people have been repeatedly marked with stamps honoring the Dabrowski Brigade which fought in Spain in the sneak preview for World War II as part of the International Brigades. Also fighting there were Americans of the Abraham Lincoln Battalion.

Polish stamps since 1945 have also conveyed the horror of genocide by honoring the victims of the extermination camps at Majdanek, Treblinka and Auschwitz. Polish stamps have also recalled the revolt of the Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto in 1943 and the martyrdom of Dr. Janusz Korczak, who



Gen. Anders Issue in Italy



led the children of his orphanage into the jaws of death in the Treblinka death camp.

One Pole who is not on a Polish stamp is the Blessed Maximilian Kolbe, who was killed in Auschwitz. When Pope John Paul II visited the death camp in 1979, he made his way to the cell of Father Kolbe, who had been arrested for sheltering Jews. He was in Cell Block 14a on a July night in 1941 when two of its 40 inmates escaped. The guards lined up those who remained and picked out 10 for execution. Father Kolbe, a Franciscan who claimed he was "old and tired anyway," took the place of a man with a wife and two children. He was put in a starvation cell and died there on Aug. 15, 1941, after 14 days of hunger, at the age of 47.

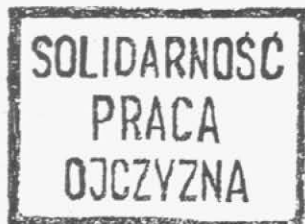
While at the camp, the pope was introduced to Franciszek Gajowniczek, the man whose life was saved by Father Kolbe. Gajowniczek told newsmen: "This was a place for killing."

But amidst all the blood that has flowed across Poland, there is pride, too, in such distinguished sons and daughters as Jozef Konrad Korzeniowski who wrote in English as Joseph Conrad; Frederic Chopin, who composed and played in France; and Maria Sklodowska, who discovered radium and won the Nobel Prize for physics, as Marie Curie.

There are also day-to-day acts of courage on Polish stamps, not those dealing with national salvation, but those that show the greatness of ordinary people in everyday life, such as the pair of stamps issued in 1956 to honor Ludwiga Wawrzynska, a heroic schoolteacher who saved three children from a burning house at the cost of her own life.



But the blood of battle continues to be seen regularly on the stamps of Poland. One that most symbolizes this was issued in 1958 to commemorate the 19th anniversary of the defense of the Polish post office in the Free City of Danzig, an event that was portrayed in the movie, "The Tin Drum." It was here that World War II began, and the stamp is inscribed, "You were the first." But no stamps mark later happenings in Danzig, now called Gdansk, where a tall monument was dedicated this year to the Polish workers who died there in the first feeble stirrings for freedom in Poland, and where Lech Walesa's independent Solidarity union was born. It was at the Polish post office that the first shots of World War II were fired; it was in Gdansk where the monolithic structure of Marxism took its worst punishment.



A New, Third Type of "Gordon Bennett, 1936" Forgery

By STANLEY KRONENBERG



Two types of forged overprints of "Gordon Bennett 30, VIII/1936" (Scott 306, 307) were previously reported. Type I has been known for a long time; it can be easily distinguished by the "1" of "1936" being positioned below the period after "30" (see *Polonus Bulletin*, 1947, No. 54). The type II counterfeit was reported by Dr. Jerzy Bialy (*Polonus Bulletin*, October 1976, p. 346-3). Although the "1" of "1936" is positioned correctly below the "0" of "30", it can be distinguished from originals by the flat right side of the "6" and the shift of the "6" to the left in respect to the first "I" in "VIII", as well as by other characteristics. These forgeries exist on both the 30 gr. and the 55 gr. denominations.

I observed the third forgery type on the 55 gr. stamp cancelled: *Dawidow, 10 February 1938*. It resembles the type II in several respects but also differs from it significantly by uneven spacing of the parts of the "VIII" and by other details in the lettering (see photographs). The length of "Gordon" measures 9.0 mm (the same as in the type II forgery), while it measures 8.75 mm in genuine overprints.

As is often the case with type II forgeries, this forged type III overprint is on a wrong stamp—the rotary press edition printed after February,

1937—whose design height (without the designer's name) measures 22.2 mm. Since "Gordon Bennett" overprints were issued on 15 August 1936, they can exist only on stamps printed since July 1935 by means of a flat press, whose heights measure 21.7 mm.

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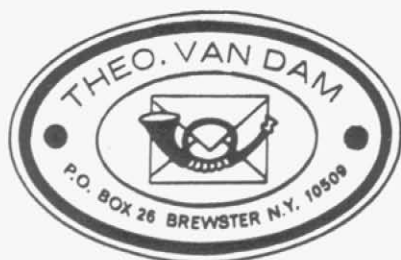
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NEW PUBLICATION

The Postal History of the Polish Forces in the Holy Land, 1940-1947 by Polonus member Jerzy Kucharski was just published by the Society of Israel Philatelists in the USA. Size 8 1/2 x 11, it consists of 70 pages with 40 illustrations of covers and tables of date stamps, censor stamps, and a map. The price is \$8.00 postpaid and it is available from SIP Educational Fund, 25113 Duffield Road, Beachwood OH 44122.

NEW ISSUES

Poland issued the following stamps for the second quarter of 1981:

- 5/11: WIPA Internat'l Exhib. 1 val.
- 5/15: Old Wroclaw Engraving 1 val.
- 5/20: General Wlad. Sikorski 1 val.
- 6/15: Antique Ceramics 6 val.
- 6/15: XLV Int. Arch. Congress 1 val.
- 6/30: Game Animals 6 val.

—J. Bieniecki

NEW MEMBERS

Tadeusz Gozdecki, E. Hartford, CT
John Niececki, Chicago, IL
Walter Feret, Chicago, IL

KUDEREWICZ WINS TWO AT WIPA

Dr. Jozef L. Kudrewicz of Manchester, NH was awarded a Vermeil with a Special Award for his Austria-Hungary Disinfected Mail, and another Vermeil for Czechoslovakia - Siege of Przemyśl 1914-1919 at WIPA 1981 the prestigious International Philatelic Exhibition held in Vienna, Austria.

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— Annual Dues are \$10.00 —

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Stanley Rusin, Treasurer

P.O. Box 56148, Chicago, IL 60656

POLISH LEGIONS BOOK

At the last Polonus meeting Alfred Szebel announced that he and other Polonus members undertook to work on a book of the Polish Legions. It is to be a remake of the work by Colonel Berek of England, expanded, and brought up to date. There is still about a year's work on this project. When completed it will probably appear in xeroxed form, or if possible, printed by offset. It will be profusely illustrated.

NEXT MEETING

Our next meeting will be held on Friday, October 23rd, 1981 at the Polish Veterans Hall starting at 8 p.m. This will be a program meeting.

ROCEPX 81

Alfred Szebel was appointed as Assistant Commissioner to the Republic of China ROCPEX 81 scheduled for late October in Taipei. He states that three Polonus members will exhibit: John Bartczak, James Mazepa, and himself.

HAVE YOU MOVED?

If you have moved, please notify us of your change of address. Mail notice to Al Rybarski, Box 82, River Grove, IL 60171. This will insure your receiving the Bulletin promptly and save Polonus the expense of postage dues.