

BULLETIN OF THE

POLONUS PHILATELIC SOCIETY



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The Plebiscite Stamp Issues for Eastern Silesia*

by Vincent Domanski Jr.

Eastern Silesia, known as CIESZYN to Poles and TESCHEN to Czechs, is a region straddling the Polish-Czech frontier about halfway along the deckle edge of Northern Czechoslovakia. It is an area of about 850 square miles, with a population of 450,000.

CIESZYN is important because it is rich in coke and gas coal deposits, the best in Europe, used both by Poland and Czechoslovakia and had long been a source of controversy between the two nations. Also it is a corridor for two great trans-European rail routes linking Vienna and Budapest with Berlin and Warsaw.

As far back as the Ninth Century, the kings of Poland and Bohemia clashed frequently over Cieszyn, but in 1335 A. D. the Polish crown relinquished it in favor of Bohemia, (the western end of what is or was modern Czechoslovakia), whence it passed to Austria after the Hapsburgs gained the Bohemia throne. Through the years however, the population remained predominantly Polish although there were substantial settlements of Germans and Czechs.

So we come to 1920—Czechoslovakia and Poland had been allies and friends in the World War, yet both claimed this region of Cieszyn. Poland's claim was racial. The inhabitants of the area were more than 65 per cent Po-



lish. Czechoslovakia's claim was historical, the fact that Cieszyn was an integral part of the old kingdom of Bohemia, which, said the Czechs, never ceased to exist though it was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Czech population, however, was not over 25 per cent. From the 10 per cent German population came yet another demand, for an independent neutral state, a demand which stressed the economic unity of the region and the danger which would follow disruption of partition between Poland and Czechoslovakia. Three arguments all on different bases. All are plausible from their varying points of view. After the World War I, the Peace Conference at Versailles, had innumerable disputes to settle and decide. To properly settle such disputes a Council of Ambassadors was set up. To this Council of Ambassadors, representatives of Poland and Czechoslovakia came to present their cases, with regard to each country's claim over Cieszyn. The Council of Ambassadors at Paris was not, as we

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know, composed of Solomons. It rejected the German autonomy proposal and ordered a plebiscite. Thus an agreement was entered into by the parties concerned and the decision was to await the results of a plebiscite to be held July 28, 1920. On Feb. 15, 1920, the duly appointed commission to administer and conduct the plebiscite arrived in the city of Cieszyn and with the co-operation of the Czechs and Poles commenced their work. This plebiscite commission was also known as the "Oesterreichisch-Schlesien Kommission." Both the Polish and Czechoslovakian governments complied with the requests of the commission to furnish postage stamps for their region. Each government had its current stamps in use at that time surcharged with the required letters S and O, initials of "Silesia Orientale" and the year date, 1920. Disorders reigned in the months which followed. There were two large strikes first by the Czech miners, then by the Polish miners, both of which were quelled. Each nation sent troops into the area, and soon it was divided by barbed wire, sentries, and custom stations. The Czechs, however, took advantage of Poland's pre-occupation with the Soviet Union in the war of 1920 which brought the Bolsheviks almost to the very gates of Warsaw, to seize Cieszyn for themselves. Bad feelings were generated by this action of Czechoslovakia. Two kindred and neighbor nations, which badly needed each other's friendship and support parted and remained aloof from each other. Then the Council of Ambassadors at Paris abandoned the idea of further conducting the scheduled plebiscite to take place July 28, 1920. Instead it approved the partition of Cieszyn. The dividing line ran through the middle, even cutting the town of Cieszyn so that, while the town proper went to Poland, the Oderberg-Jablunkov railway went to Czechoslovakia, along with the valuable coal mines. Although Poland accepted that settlement, many Poles had not forgotten nor forgiven the "rape," as they called it, of Cieszyn and vowed they never would be content. They kept their vow. One of the conditions of the dreadful Munich pact and agreement was the return of Cieszyn to Poland by Hitler. This was done on Oct. 2, 1938, which was the next day after the first German advance into Czechoslovakia. Thus, shameful-



ly, Poland took advantage of a crisis to seize it all. Czech sentiment ran high. Since that time it has smoldered and once again we hope that, in the peace to follow this horrible World War II, a really fair and true adjustment of this region will be decided on for all times and peoples. Chief concern to the philatelist is the postal administration in this region, for no doubt it was during this short period that many interesting and scarce postage stamps came into existence. Standard catalogues list these stamps as true plebiscite varieties, which raises the question if they really were such. Since the plebiscite was never held, you can choose for yourself if they should. I myself classify these stamps as provisionals of Cieszyn.

These stamps issued and overprinted for Cieszyn were in two series: those on Polish stamps and the others on Czechoslovakian stamps. Stamps of Poland current in 1920 were surcharged at Warsaw, by the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs on ten different denominations: 5, 10, 15, 25 and 50 fennigi, the overprint in black in two lines, and the 1, 1½, 2, 2½, and 5 Korona, overprinted also in black but in one line. At the Postal Printing Works of Czechoslovakia at Prague, the overprinting was done on a larger scale. Many denominations of current postage stamps were overprinted in different ways and in three colors—black, blue and red. It is likewise noted that the Czechs furnished the commission their special delivery stamps of two separate denominations 2 and 5 haleru, overprinted in black and blue; postage due stamps, eleven denominations, with black overprint. Both these series were put on sale at all the post offices in the region under the supervision of the Plebiscite Commission on May 15, 1920, and remained until Aug. 5, 1920, after which date these stamps were discontinued and became demonetized. The actual number of stamps overprinted by both

governments was never revealed. However, it is estimated that the numbers were very small, varying from a few hundred to not more than 50,000 of any denomination. There were no postal cards or revenue stamps issued. All perforated copies of all imperforated issues not listed below are of private origin and have no value. Many counterfeits exist and my warning is that you should be careful from whom you purchase these stamps.

FIRST SERIES

Stamps of Czechoslovakia (1918-1920) Imperforate and Unwatermarked

TYPE 1. White lettering on colored background.

SO
1920

SURCHARGE 1920 in BLACK

- | | | |
|----|-----------|-----------------------|
| 1 | 3 Haleru | Red Violet |
| | | a. double surcharge |
| | | b. inverted surcharge |
| 2 | 5 Haleru | Yellow green |
| 3 | 10 Haleru | Rose |
| 4 | 20 Haleru | Blue green |
| | | a. inverted surcharge |
| 5 | 25 Haleru | Blue |
| | | a. inverted surcharge |
| | | b. gray blue |
| | | c. ultramarine |
| 6 | 40 Haleru | Orange |
| | | SURCHARGED in BLUE |
| 7 | 25 Haleru | Blue |
| 8 | 40 Haleru | Orange |
| | | SURCHARGED in RED |
| 9 | 25 Haleru | Ultramarine |
| 10 | 30 Haleru | Bistre |
| | | a. inverted surcharge |

TYPE 2. Lettering colored on white background.

SURCHARGED in BLACK

- | | | |
|----|------------|-----------------------|
| 11 | 100 Haleru | Brown |
| | | a. inverted surcharge |
| 12 | 200 Haleru | Ultramarine |
| | | a. inverted surcharge |
| 13 | 400 Haleru | Purple |
| | | SURCHARGED in RED |
| 14 | 200 Haleru | Ultramarine |
| 15 | 400 Haleru | Purple |

TYPE 3. Lettering Czechoslovakia through center design. Sun behind Cathedral. Colorless foliage in foreground.

SURCHARGED in BLACK

- | | | |
|----|-----------|-----------------------|
| 16 | 1 Haleru | Brown |
| | | a. double surcharge |
| | | b. inverted surcharge |
| 17 | 50 Haleru | Violet |
| | | a. inverted surcharge |

SURCHARGED in RED

- | | | |
|----|-----------|--------|
| 18 | 1 Haleru | Brown |
| 19 | 50 Haleru | Violet |

TYPE 4. Without sun. Shaded foliage in foreground.

SURCHARGED in BLACK

- | | | |
|----|-------------|--------|
| 20 | 60 Haleru | Orange |
| 21 | 1000 Haleru | Violet |

SURCHARGED in RED

- | | | |
|----|------------|-----------------------|
| 22 | 60 Haleru | Orange |
| 23 | 80 Haleru | Olive green |
| | | a. inverted surcharge |
| 24 | 300 Haleru | Green |
| | | a. inverted surcharge |

SURCHARGED in BLUE

- | | | |
|----|-------------|--------|
| 25 | 60 Haleru | Orange |
| 26 | 1000 Haleru | Violet |

TYPE 5. Lettering thinner. No foliage in foreground. Positions of buildings changed.

SURCHARGED in BLACK

- | | | |
|----|------------|-----------------------|
| 27 | 5 Haleru | Blue green |
| | | a. inverted surcharge |
| 28 | 10 Haleru | Red |
| | | a. inverted surcharge |
| 29 | 25 Haleru | Violet |
| | | a. inverted surcharge |
| 30 | 50 Haleru | Blue |
| | | a. inverted surcharge |
| 31 | 500 Haleru | Red Brown |
| | | a. inverted surcharge |

SURCHARGED in RED

- | | | |
|----|------------|-----------------------|
| 32 | 50 Haleru | Blue |
| 33 | 75 Haleru | Slate gray |
| | | a. inverted surcharge |
| 34 | 120 Haleru | Dark gray |
| | | a. light gray |
| 35 | 500 Haleru | Red brown |

SURCHARGED in BLUE

- | | | |
|----|------------|-----------|
| 36 | 500 Haleru | Red brown |
|----|------------|-----------|

The 500 and 1000 Haleru denominations, with the portrait of President Thomas C. Masaryk, were overprinted in red and purple, respectively, for use but not issued to the public, having arrived too late.

SURCHARGED in RED

SO
19 20

- | | | |
|----|-------------|----------------------|
| 37 | 500 Haleru | Slate, grayish |
| | | SURCHARGED in PURPLE |
| 38 | 1000 Haleru | Dark brown, br'nish |

STAMPS OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA (1918-1920) Perforated and Unwatermarked

TYPE 1. White lettering on colored background.

Perforated 11½ and 14 and Black Surcharge

- | | | |
|----|----------|--------------|
| 39 | 5 Haleru | Yellow Green |
|----|----------|--------------|

TYPE 2. Lettering colored on white background.

Perforated 11½ and 14 and Red Surchage

46 200 Haleru Ultramarine

TYPE 3. Lettering Czechoslovakia through center design, etc.

Perforated 13½ and Black Surchage

41 1 Haleru Brown

Perforated 13½ and Red Surchage

42 1 Haleru Brown

43 50 Haleru Violet

TYPE 4. Without Sun. Shaded foliage in foreground.

Perforated 11½ and Blue Surchage

44 60 Haleru Orange

Perforated 11½ and Red Surchage

45 60 Haleru Orange

TYPE 5. Lettering thinner. No foliage in foreground. Positions of buildings changed.

SURCHARGED in BLACK

Perforated 11½

46 5 Haleru Blue Green

a. Perf. 14 or 13½

47 10 Haleru Yellow Green

a. Perf. 14 or 13½

48 15 Haleru Red

a. Perf. 14 or 13½

b. Compound perforated 13½x11½

49 20 Haleru Rose carmine (only perf. 13½)

50 25 Haleru Violet

51 30 Haleru Red Violet

SURCHARGED in BLUE

Perforated 11½

52 30 Haleru Red Violet

SURCHARGED in RED

Perforated 11½

53 50 Haleru Blue

SPECIAL DELIVERY STAMPS OF 1920 OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Imperforate and Yellow Paper

SO

SURCHARGE

19 20

SURCHARGED in BLUE

54 2 Haleru Red Violet

55 5 Haleru Yellow Green

SURCHARGED in BLACK

56 2 Haleru Red Violet

57 5 Haleru Yellow Green

These above come perforated and are thus of private origin not officially made. Surcharges on white paper are reported to be counterfeits.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA POSTAGE DUE STAMPS OF 1920 IMPERFORATE

Surchage

SO

1920

SURCHARGED in BLUE

58 5 Haleru Deep Bistre

59 10 Haleru Deep Bistre

60 15 Haleru Deep Bistre

61 20 Haleru Deep Bistre

62 25 Haleru Deep Bistre

63 30 Haleru Deep Bistre

64 40 Haleru Deep Bistre

65 50 Haleru Deep Bistre

SURCHARGED in RED

66 100 Haleru Dark Brown

67 500 Haleru Sea Green

68 1000 Haleru Purple

CZECHOSLOVAKIAN NEWSPAPER STAMPS OF 1920 IMPERFORATED

Surchage

SO

1920

SURCHARGED in BLACK

69 2 Haleru Gray Green

a. inverted surcharge

70 6 Haleru Red

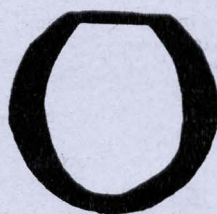
71 10 Haleru Dull Violet

72 20 Haleru Blue

73 30 Haleru Gray Brown

Both the postage due and newspaper stamps also have been privately perforated which are not listed as official perforations.

Once in the sheet will be found a new type of the numeral "2" and likewise, on careful observation, varieties of broken numerals and letters, such as opened "O" and flattened top of the large letter "O," broken "9" and missing serifs on the numeral "1."



Flat Top



Open



Normal



Once in Sheet

- | | | |
|-------|------------|---|
| P. 11 | 5 Fennige | Olive Green, perforated 10, clean cut, thin hard paper. |
| | | a. Olive Green, perforated 11½, clean cut, thin hard paper. |
| | | b. Olive Green, imperforate, thin hard paper. |
| P. 12 | 10 Fennige | Lilac Brown, perforated 10, clean cut, thin hard paper. |
| | | a. Lilac Brown, perforated 11½, clean cut, thin hard paper. |
| P. 13 | 15 Fennige | Red, perforated 10, clean cut, white wove paper. |
| | | a. Red, perforated 11½, clean cut, white wove paper. |
| | | b. Red, perforated 11½, rough cut, white wove paper. |
| | | c. Scarlet, perforated 11½, clean cut, thick white wove paper |
| | | d. Scarlet, perforated 11½, clean cut, grey paper (rare) |
| P. 14 | 25 Fennige | Olive, perforated 11½, clean cut, white wove paper. |
| | | a. Olive, perforated 11½, rough cut, white wove paper. |

- P. 15 50 Fennige Dark Green, perforated 10, clean cut, white wove paper.
 a. Dark Green, perforated 11½, clean cut, white wove paper.
 b. Dark Green, perforated 11½, rough cut, white wove paper.

Overprint in one line only, the spacing 5¼mm between the letter S and O.

- P. 16 1 Kronen Dark Green, perforated 10, clean cut, white wove paper.
 a. Dark Green, perforated 10x11½, clean cut, white wove p.
 b. Dark Green, perforated 11½, clean cut, white wove paper.
 c. Dark Green, perf. 11½x10, clean cut, white wove paper.
- P. 17 1½ Kronen Brown, perforated 10, clean cut, white wove paper.
 a. Brown, perforated 10x11½, clean cut, white wove paper.
 b. Brown, perforated 10x11½, rough cut, white wove paper.
 c. Brown, perforated 11½, clean cut, white wove paper.
- P. 18 2 Kronen Dark Blue, perforated 11½, clean cut, white wove paper.
 a. Dark Blue, perforated 11½, rough cut, white wove paper.
 b. Dark Blue, perforated 11½, rough cut, ribbed paper.
- P. 19 2½ Kronen Violet, perforated 11½, clean cut, white wove paper.
 a. Violet, perforated 11½, rough cut, white wove paper.
 b. Violet, perforated 11½, rough cut, ribbed paper.
- P. 20 5 Kronen Slate Blue, perforated 10, clean cut, white wove paper.
 a. Slate Blue, perf. 10½x11, clean cut, white wove paper.
 b. Slate Blue, perforated 11½, clean cut, white wove paper.

S. P. A. CONVENTION PLANS MANY FEATURES

The Golden Jubilee Meeting of the Society of Philatelic Americans, to be held at the Hotel La Salle, Chicago, August 10 to 13, 1944, will include numerous features of interest to stamp collectors of all sorts. The annual CHIPEX stamp exhibition, to be held on this occasion and as part of the gathering, has been enlarged to 500 frames, in response to a widespread and overwhelming flow of entries. Entries for this exhibition, not limited to S. P. A. members, can still be received until July 26, by Exhibition Chairman Alfred Diamond, Room 205, 58 West Washington St., Chicago.

Among the features of the gathering are:

A "Beeba" entertainment to the visiting philatelists, with the Polonus Philatelic Society as host, Friday evening August 11.

A meeting of the Essay-Proof Society, to organize a Chicago Chapter, under the leadership of Dr. Clarence Hennan.

A meeting of the France and Colonies Group, to organize a Chicago Section, under the leadership of Ben Reeves.

The national presidents of both of these societies will be at the Chipex-S. P. A. Golden Jubilee gathering.

A Bourse, with approximately twenty dealers (possibly more) having booths.

Those desirous of attending the Chipex-S. P. A. should make reservations at the Hotel La Salle without delay, since accommodations are necessarily difficult to obtain at short notice under wartime conditions.

REVEILLE SALUTES ANOTHER VETERAN

Thaddeus Stanczak is an employee of the Company who can wear a "twenty-year" watch with pride. He started at Victor in February of 1921. Tad began as an assembler on the adding machine line, and successfully did base and carriage work, casing machines, outside service work, and final inspection, the position he has now in John Kusinski's department.

Thaddeus has a boy in the Navy, and a little girl who was nine years old on April 1. He has another interest, outside of his family and his work. Tad began collecting stamps in 1929, when he saw a truck leaving Victor with a quantity of stamped envelopes, thrown away as waste, and decided to take up stamp and coin collecting as a hobby.

His philatelic, stamp, collection has won five ribbon awards in Chicago shows, receiving the fifth award late last month. He specializes in rare Polish and Vatican City stamps. Among other items of interest in the numismatic (coin) collection are three buffalo nickels. These nickels are unusual because the buffalo has only three

legs, and coins of this issue are extremely hard to find.

Mr. Stanczak is treasurer of the Polonus Philatelic Society of Chicago; he is on the reception committee of the society; is a delegate to the Central Federation of Stamp Collectors, and is a member of the S. P. A.

We hope that Tad will have twenty more good years here at Victor.*

* Reprinted from the Victor Reveille, the plant newspaper of the Victor Adding Machine Company.

COPERNICUS SOUVENIR

Last year for the Copernicus Quadricentennial meeting at the Polish Roman Catholic Union Archives and Museum sponsored by the Polonus Philatelic Society, an attractive and appropriate souvenir was prepared.

Quite some time ago the Muzeum Poczty i Telekomunikacji in Warsaw issued an envelope 3 3/4 x 4 3/4 inches, with a glassine window, containing the two Copernicus stamps, Scott's Nos. 192 and 193 and the Konarski stamp, Scott's No. 194. Each envelope has rubber stamped in purple ink — Muzeum/ Poczty i Telekom. enclosed in a rectangular box and each is numbered.

These envelopes are a gift to the society by our member, L. A. Kupferwasser.

On the occasion of the Copernicus Quadricentennial Meeting the Society overprinted these envelopes in red, in two lines above the glassine window, upper right hand corner, as follows: COPERNICAN QUADRICENTENNIAL / POLONUS PHILATELIC SOCIETY, and in two lines, also in red, below the glassine window, lower left corner, P. R. C. U. MUSEUM, CHICAGO / MAY 28, 1943.

It was at first intended to distribute these as souvenirs of the meeting but because of the exceptionally large gathering, and in order to be fair to all concerned, this was not done, for unfortunately only forty of such envelopes were available for distribution. The possibility of auctioning these items was discussed but this brought up certain problems and difficulties.

It was finally decided to sell them at 25 cents each and as only 38 are now available for distribution, the first come first served rule has to be

applied. To make it fair to all members of the society only envelopes postmarked after the mailing of the BULLETIN will be honored.

So, send 25 cents in coin to Adam Floskowski, 2528 North Drake Avenue, Chicago 47, Illinois, if you want one of these Copernicus souvenirs.

Remember, only 38 are available. First come, first served.

THIS 'n THAT

Again we learn of a new Polish issue. No, not officially but by the grapevine.

* * *

On June 20, 1944, so we are informed, four values are to be overprinted with a suitable overprint in honor of the victory of the Polish forces at Cassino.

* * *

Winning battles is important. Winning the War is more important. Issuing stamps is less important—but informing collectors of the issuance of new stamps seems to be a matter of no importance—that is, to the Polish Postal authorities in London.

* * *

So, instead of a complete and detailed account of the proposed new issue, we give you the meager information above, not even knowing if the information is authoritative.

* * *

At the June 9th meeting of the Society, Jack Domar and Myron Steczynski, gave an interesting talk on the Warsaw Municipals. Last month we told you Jack and Myron are collaborating on an article on this subject.

* * *

At the July 14, 1944 meeting, John Gapinski and Frank Wolosewick, of the Polonus Experts Committee, will talk on their favorite subject "The Krakows." The expertising of the Krakows will be discussed in detail.

* * *

We welcome back as a member Dr. Stanley Przygocki, whose application for reinstatement has been received and acted upon.

* * *

For the information of all members—the first meeting of the month is the philatelic meeting. Speakers are engaged for this meeting each month. The second meeting is the business meeting.

Vincent Domanski Jr., candidate for president of the S. P. A. and our member from Philadelphia, has been invited to give a talk at our meeting on August 11, 1944. The talk will precede the Beeba!

POLPEX Director for 1945 is Dr. M. E. Uznanski. Dr. Uznanski is enthusiastic about the affair, and is already buzzing everybody. This must be a better and bigger POLPEX than ever before—so says the good Doctor.

Honorary Chairman of the Beeba is Mrs. Anne Mikucki, the wife of the originator of the Beebas. In appreciation for her splendid work in the past, she has been tendered this important post. The job is not strictly an honorary one either. Mrs. Mikucki has assumed the leadership in making the preparations for this affair.

In anticipation of a goodly crowd, the large ballroom at the Polish Falcon Hall has been rented. Arrangements are proceeding on the theory that at least two hundred visitors will attend the Beeba.

In keeping with the past practice of giving every one attending a Beeba a souvenir, the committee has arranged for a fitting souvenir sheet to be given free to each one attending the Beeba.

Remember our 1944 POLPEX Souvenir Sheet? The bar of music heading the souvenir sheet is from a song published in April 1943, entitled "Piesn Lotnikow" or "Song of the Airmen." The music is by Jerzy G. Czaplicki, words by M. Niedzwiecki. The design of the cover page is by M. E. Steczynski, our president and the publisher is our member, John Gapinski.

It seems the Beeba has attracted a lot of attention. We hope many of our out of town members will be in Chicago on August 11, 1944. If you can come in, remember the meeting begins at 8:30 P. M. and the Beeba is scheduled for 10:15 P. M. at our regular meeting hall, 1062 North Ashland Avenue.

The latest reports indicate that 10 of our members will exhibit at the CHIPEX to be held in conjunction with the S. P. A. Golden Jubilee Con-

vention in August. There should be more Polonus exhibits. How about it?

The Polonus Library will soon be in such condition that members will be permitted to borrow books. Rules and regulations governing this practice are now being prepared by the Board of Directors.

Last month we announced we would give you the date of the donation Auction. We can not announce the date because, as the Sales and Auction Manager, Roman Reinowski, said, "If you want me to run the Auction with Dr. Kozakiewicz's lots and the one other one I received I'll do it." How about it. Send in your lots to Roman Reinowski, 1939 South Highland Avenue, Berwyn, Illinois.

We are very happy to reprint the item about our Treasurer, Thad Stan- czak. If you have one about yourself or see one about one of our members, send it in to the Editor, and it will be reprinted in the BULLETIN.

Sometimes we wonder how the Juniors are getting along. How about a report Adam? And speaking about Adam Kloskowski, his new address is 2528 North Drake Avenue, Chicago 47, Illinois. Please change your address book accordingly.

Watch the BULLETIN for important announcement concerning Experts Committee. The kettle is boiling and soon should boil over. Big question—What should we do about Experts Committee and How can we have opinions of Experts Committee recognized by collectors?

Krakows and locals present the greatest difficulties.

POLPEX Seal Director, Adam Kloskowski, reports that orders for POLPEX seals are still coming in. That the demand for seals this year was greater than ever before.

Help Win the War
BUY MORE BONDS
