

BULLETIN OF THE

POLONUS PHILATELIC SOCIETY



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POLPEX 99 COMING SOON

Working on POLPEX '89 for Polonus' 50th Anniversary, I was sure it was our last grand exhibition. Despite some problems, the outlook for 1999 looks good. We are still operating.

We will hold POLPEX '99 in conjunction with our 60th Anniversary, and on the acceptance of Poland into NATO. By joining NATO, Poland will hopefully be protected from future aggression.

Our plans are for a smaller show than the one in 1989, with the participation of out of town members and those in foreign countries. Join us at our 60th Anniversary Celebration. If you need motel accommodations for a few nights, let us know in advance so that we can make reservations for you.

As at every POLPEX, we will have postal cancellations, covers, souvenir sheets and an exhibition catalog. We are appealing to out of town members for participation and financial help.

Be a Polpex Patron for \$10 or more donation or a Well Wisher for a \$5 donation.

POLPEX '99 will take place March 19-20 & 21, 1999 at the House of the White Eagle, 6839 No. Milwaukee Avenue, Niles, IL. Hours will be 10 am to 6 pm on Friday

and Saturday; 10 am to 4 pm on Sunday. Entry forms available from A. Walinski, 7353 W. Estes Ave., Chicago, IL 60631.

—Fred Szebel, Exhibition Chrm.
1615 E. Central Ave.
Arlington Heights, IL 60005
Phone: 847 - 437-1601



1923 Insurrection Post in Warwiszki

By ZBIGNIEW MIKULSKI

The Organizing Committee of the POLSKA 93 exhibition approached me and requested that I write an article for the Exhibition Bulletin. The choice of topic was left to me.

I have decided to write about the years after the First World War, this period resembles the present political situation in the world.

The topic of my paper is the Insurrection Post, Warwiszki in 1923.

Before I elaborate on the topic itself, let me briefly present the political and historical background to the international relationships between Poland and Lithuania (with the provisional capital in Kaunas), the so-called Kaunas Lithuania.

This relationship was not very good at the time.

After the First World War the Vilnius district with the capital in Vilnius was a bone of contention between Poland and Lithuania. By virtue of the Suwałki agreement, signed on October 7, 1920, the Vilnius district became a part of Lithuania, although the lands were mainly inhabited by Poles and the city of Vilnius had for years been part of Polish culture. When the agreement, so unfavorable for the Polish population, was announced, General Lucjan Żeligowski, commander of the Lithuanian-Byelorussian regiment, seized the district and proclaimed an independent state there, i.e. Central Lithuania. On February 20, 1922, the Parliament of Central Lithuania resolved to annex this territory to Poland. On March 24, 1922, the Polish Sejm ratified this decision. The territory was Polish property up to the Second World War. Presently, it is part of the Lithuanian Republic.

The former territories of Central Lithuania and Kaunas Lithuania were separated by a 5 km. wide neutral zone. In March, 1923, the League of Nations Commission divided that zone between Kaunas Lithuania and Poland. By virtue of the decision of the League of Nations a village of Warwiszki, located in that zone, became part of Lithuania. Warwiszki and the adjacent villages were inhabited by Poles only.

The Poles decided to oppose the decision of the League of Nations and organized armed resistance against the Lithuanians. Armed Resistance Headquarters were formed in Warwiszki. Its operations were directed by J. Chmura. An insurrection broke out in the middle of March, 1923. The chances for successful resistance were very small due to the lack of support by Polish authorities which were bound by the decision of the League of Nations. After a short struggle, the Lithuanian army seized the rebellious village and, as a punishment, burnt the village of Warwiszki. During the insurrection it became necessary to organize postal communication with the outside world. It was decided to collect the mail from the area of Warwiszki at the Armed Resistance Headquarters and dispatch it by couriers to the nearest Polish post in Sopoćkinie. From Sopoćkinie the mail could be forwarded by regular Polish postal routes.

In connection with the opening of the postal service in Warwiszki, the commander of the Armed Resistance issued the following proclamation: "As of today, I hereby establish a postal service for citizens

inhabiting the area of the Warwiszki Autonomy which shall be located in the Headquarters of the Armed Resistance in Warwiszki.

"All citizens wishing to send letters shall buy stamps at the Armed Forces Headquarters in Warwiszki. They shall also bring their letters to the Headquarters from where they shall be dispatched. The services of the Post Office in Warwiszki, which will dispatch daily any correspondence to the nearest Post Office on the territory of the Polish Republic, will be available at an extra charge of 50 mk. (Polish marks) for a postcard, 100 mk. for an ordinary letter and 200 mk. for a registered letter.

"The extra charge will be paid in stamps issued by the Warwiszki Autonomy.

"Stamps will be sold daily from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

"I hereby absolutely forbid the use of any postage stamps issued by Lithuania.

"This proclamation shall be displayed in every village and made known to all citizens.

"Village administrators will be held responsible for executing the above."

Commander of the Armed Forces of Warwiszki Autonomy

(-)Chmura

Warwiszki, March 23, 1923

1. STAMPS ISSUED IN WARWISZKI

In accordance with the Proclamation, the insurrection authorities prepared stamps in three denominations to be used as postage for services connected with transporting the mail from Warwiszki to the nearest Polish post office. The three denominations, i.e. 50 mk. for a postcard, 100 mk. for an ordinary letter and 200 mk. for a registered letter, were obtained by overprinting Polish stamps in circulation at the time with an inscription: SAMORZĄD (wavy line) WARWISZKI, (Autonomy (wavy line) (Warwiszki) (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Warwiszki-Issue, a complete set of 3 values.

The overprinting probably took place at the local printing office in Sopoćkinie. The new inscription was overprinted on Polish stamps issued by the Post Office in Sopoćkinie. The assumption about the origin of the stamps is confirmed by the fact that the overprinted stamps were identical to the stamps without the overprints sold at that time at the Post Office in Sopoćkinie.

According to descriptions of the Warwiszki issue given in the literature, the stamps were overprinted by a plate of 50 positions. How-

ever, 30 years of my research proved this assumption false. The stamps were overprinted by means of one typographic form of 25 stamps, manually set by a compositor with individual fonts. I must admit here that the same disinformation (plate of the 50 overprints) was given in "Polskie znaki pocztowe", published in 1960 and edited by A. Łaskiewicz and myself. I reconstructed this 25 stamps plate thirty years ago and showed it at international exhibitions. Since that time I have never come across any none genuine stamp of the Warwiski Issue with an overprint other than that on my reconstruction of this setting. The overprinting consisted of three lines: SAMORZĄD - length: 13.3 mm., a wavy line below the word "Samorząd" of one of two lengths: 3.8 mm and 4.8 mm, WARWISZKI - length: 19.9 mm.

The longer wavy lines (4:5 mm) occur on stamps on the upper part of the setting in positions 1 to 13. The shorter lines occur in positions 14 to 24.

In position 25 there is again a longer wavy line, probably due to the insufficient number of shorter line fonts at the disposal of the printer. The overprinting was made on 25 stamps. The top and left margins of the sheets were removed so as to better center the block of 25 stamps in the printing machine.

ERRORS IN THE OVERPRINTING SETTING:

Each overprint in the printing sheet has its own features which allow us to determine its position in the setting. The most important for the plating are the wavy lines: each of the 25 lines is different. On a few positions the letter "Z" in the word "WARWISZKI" stands higher than other letters, i.e. in positions 3, 4, 10, 11, 17, 18, 19 and 21. Furthermore, in some positions there are varieties in the letters (Fig. 2).

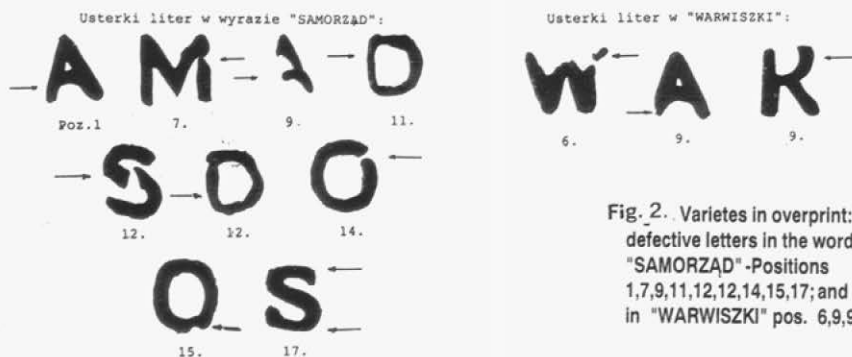


Fig. 2. Varieties in overprint: defective letters in the word "SAMORZĄD" - Positions 1,7,9,11,12,12,14,15,17; and in "WARWISZKI" pos. 6,9,9.

POLISH STAMPS USED FOR OVERPRINTING

50 mk: 50 mk stamps overprinted in Warwiski are on thin paper in two color shades:

- Carmine red on a yellow background; both colors are bright,
- Light carmine red on a yellow background; both colors are dull. Stamps with the same color shades, without overprint, are affixed to letters, as a Polish postage in the P.O. Sopoćkinie (See chapter: Used stamps and letters). Linear perforation of this value is very irregular and varies between:

horizontally - $12\frac{1}{2}$ to $11\frac{3}{4}$,
vertically $11\frac{3}{4}$ to $11\frac{1}{4}$.

Block of four (Fig. 3) shows
different perforations of
stamps from positions: 17-18
and 22-23.

Positions 17: perforation $12\frac{1}{2}$
x $11\frac{1}{2}$,

Positions 18: $11\frac{3}{4}$ x $11\frac{1}{2}$,

Positions 22: $12\frac{1}{2}$ x $11\frac{1}{4}$,

Positions 23: $11\frac{3}{4}$ x $11\frac{1}{4}$.

100 mk: 100 mk stamps
are in one color only, i.e. black
brown on an orange back-
ground. The paper is thick
and spongy, with very regular
perforations: $11\frac{1}{2}$ x $11\frac{3}{4}$.

200 mk: 200 mk stamps are in two color shades:

- Black on a dark pink background,
 - black on a light pink background. The paper is thick and spongy.
- Irregular perforation, ranging between $12\frac{3}{4}$ and 13.

NUMBER OF OVERPRINTED STAMPS:

Early literature data give the following amounts:

- 50 mk: 1000 pieces
- 100 mk: 500 pieces
- 200 mk: 200 pieces.

2. USED STAMPS AND LETTERS

The proclamation of the Armed Resistance Headquarters introduced the stamps with overprint as a postage for delivering the mail from Warwizski to the Polish Post Offices. So far, the only available information is about mail delivered from Warwizski to the Polish Post Office in Sopoćkinie. The mail was dispatched according to the following procedure: on postcards and letters posted in Warwizski, overprinted stamps were affixed: 50 mk on postcards, 100 mk on ordinary letters and 200 mk on registered letters. The overprinted stamps were canceled with an official seal of the Armed Resistance Headquarters, in violet. This rubber seal, 35 mm. in diameter, had the following inscription: *Samorząd Warwizski * Komenda Siły Zbrojnej * (*Warwizski Autonomy * Armed Resistance Headquarters*). Inside the seal there was a picture of the Polish Eagle and a skull and crossbones (Fig. 4).



Fig. 3. Irregular perforation in 50 mk stamps: horizontally: $12\frac{1}{2}$ to $11\frac{3}{4}$, vertically: $11\frac{1}{2}$ to $11\frac{3}{4}$.



Fig. 4. The rubber seal of the Armed Resistance Headquarters used for cancelling the overprinted stamps.

The mail was then delivered to the Post Office in Sopoćkinie where Polish stamps without overprints were placed, on the postcards or letters, in denominations in accordance with the Polish postal rates. The stamps were cancelled with a two-ring dated postmark of SOPOCKINIE. The same postmark is always found on overprinted stamps too (Fig. 5).



Fig. 5. The dated postmark of the Polish Post Office in SOPOCKINIE, where the letters from Warwizski were delivered.

Used stamps are very rare: there is only one example of the 200 mk known. Unfortunately, it was cut out from a registered letter sent to the editorial office of Nowy Filatelista in 1923 (Fig. 6).



Fig. 6. The only known 200 mk stamp of Warwizski-Issue.

There are only three ordinary letters known (Fig. 7, 8). There is no postcard with a 50 mk stamp known.

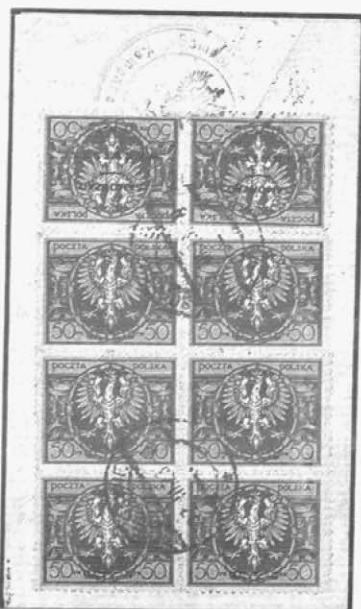


Fig. 7. A letter from Warwizski via Sopoćkinie to Grodno. In Warwizski paid with a pair 50 mk stamps (pos.1 and 2). Stamps canceled by the seal of the Armed Resistance Headquarters. In Sopoćkinie Polish stamps of the total value 300 mk were added and canceled with the Sopoćkinie-post mark: 27.3.1923. The overprinted stamps 50 mk and the Polish 50 mk stamps without overprints are carmine red on yellow background (brigt colors).

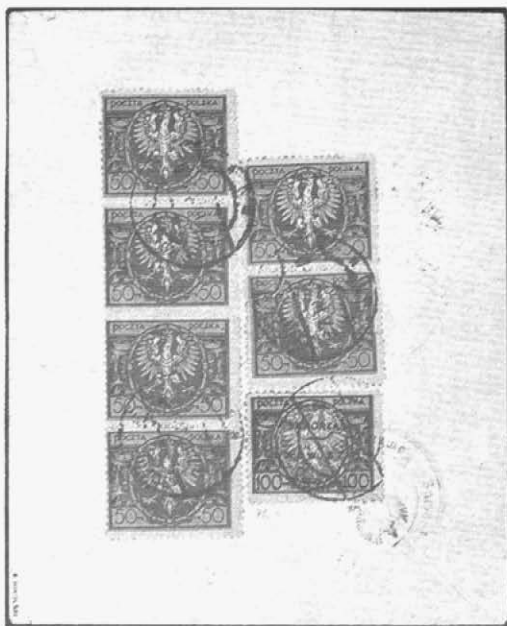


Fig. 8. A letter from Warwiszki via Sopoćkinie to Grodno. 27.3.1923 In Warwiszki paid with 100 mk (sheet's pos.1). In Sopoćkinie Polish stamps of 300 mk were added. The Polish 50 mk stamps are carmin red on yellow background (dull colors).

3. PRIVATE REPRINTS OR FORGERY?

Stamps of the Warwiszki Issue have been in popular demand and very expensive since issued. There are many types of forged overprints — better or worse. I have no intention to describe all forgeries of this issue. However, I have to mention here one probably forgery of the Warwiszki Issue, which is interesting because it was done at the same printing press, with the same types, as the original issue were overprinted. Thirty years ago, during my stay in Toronto in Canada, I purchased from a collector of Lithuanian stamps a block of four 100mk stamps with inverted overprints (Fig. 9).



Fig. 9. A block of four 100 mk stamps with inverted overprints. Wavy lines from positions: 1, 15 and 16, 24 in the original setting.

Until then, stamps with inverted overprints were not known. The overprint, however, revealed many features of authentic stamps. When I returned to Switzerland, I examined the stamps. My opinion was that, unfortunately, this did nothing more than fragment the country.

(Continued on Page 492-11)

The PIAST DYNASTY

by David C. Akin



Mieszko I
922-992



Dobrawa
930-997



Bolesław I Chrobry
966-1025



Mieszko II
990-1025

In the last third of the 10th century, the first Prince of Poland Mieszko I (Scott 2773), accepted Christianity and married Dobrawa (Scott 2774), a princess from Bohemia. A dynamic leader who used both war and diplomacy to attain his goals, Mieszko successfully advanced Polish control over territory up to the Baltic coastline, where he established the city of Gdańsk in 979.

Beginning with Mieszko I, the Piast dynasty would rule Poland for the next 400 years. While Mieszko I, was the Prince of Poland, succeeding rulers would be known by various titles. Whether a ruler was a duke, prince or king depended on his place in history and the status of his relations with the Holy Roman Empire and the pope. The size and shape of Poland under the Piasts was quite different from modern Poland. Mieszko's successor was Bolesław I Chrobry (the Brave) (Scott 2838), who ruled from 992-1025. During his reign, Bolesław extended the borders of Poland east to the Bug River, south the border of Slovakia, and west to the border of the Holy Roman Empire. Unfortunately, Mieszko II (Scott 2839) and his son Kazimierz I Odnowiciel (the Restorer) (Scott 2885) were not as gifted in statecraft. Both were driven from power by coups, although Kazimierz I did recover his throne in 1040. Kazimierz's mother Rychiza, is shown on Scott 2884.

By this time, Poland consisted of two basic parts: Wielkopolska (Greater Poland), with its capital in Gniezno, exerted influence over Pomerania to the north and Silesia to the south, and was affected by the policies of the Holy Roman Empire. Małopolska (Lesser Poland) had its capital in Kraków and responded to events in the Kievan Rus' in the east.

Kazimierz I was succeeded by his son, Bolesław II Szczodry (the Bold) (Scott 2932), who gained the title King of Poland in 1076, only to relinquish the throne to his brother Władysław I Herman (Scott 2933) in 1079. He was succeeded in 1102 by his son Bolesław III Krzywousty (the Wry-Mouth) (Scott 3016). During the course of his reign, Bolesław III was able to regain many of the territories lost by his weaker predecessors. Prior to his death in 1138, Bolesław III took an unusual step in an effort to ensure an orderly succession among his five sons. He divided the country into five duchys, and assigned a son to each; with the eldest receiving the Duchy of Kraków. Unfortunately,



Władysław II Wygnaniec
1105-1159

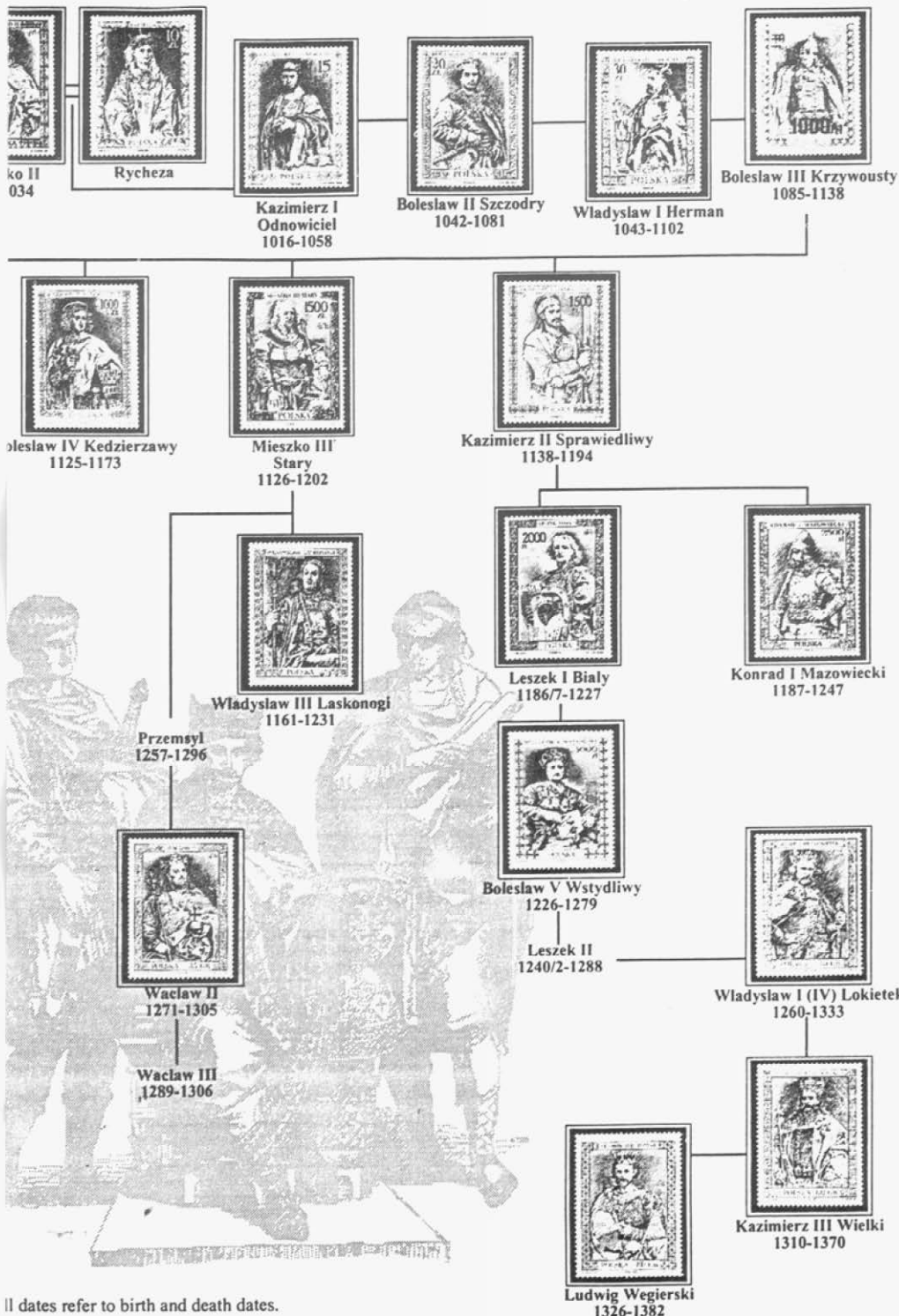


Henryk I Brodaty
1165-1238

Henryk II
D. 1241

B

A



II dates refer to birth and death dates.

Władysław II Wygnaniec (the Exile) (Scott 3017) held the Duchies of Kraków and Silesia from 1138-46. Bolesław IV Kędzierzawy (the Curly) (Scott 3033) was Duke of Mazovia and later Duke of Kraków from 1146-73. Mieszko III Stary (the Old) (Scott 3034) was Duke of Wielkopolska, and also Duke of Kraków from 1173-76. Henryk was given the Duchy of Sandomierz, and was the only son not to also hold the Duchy of Kraków. Lastly, was Kazimierz II Sprawiedliwy (the Just) (Scott 3068), who was Duke of Małopolska as well as Duke of Kraków from 1177-94.

At this point the Duchy of Kraków, and later the throne of Poland, moved between the dynastic branches of Władysław the Exile, Mieszko III and Kazimierz II. Kazimierz's son Leszek Biały (the White) (Scott 3069) held Kraków from 1194-1201. He was succeeded by Mieszko's son Władysław III Laskonogi (Spindleshanks) (Scott 3141), who ruled from 1202-28. He was followed by Henryk I Brodaty (the Bearded) (Scott 3142), who was from the Exile's line in Silesia, and ruled the duchy for a decade. He was succeeded by the first elected Duke of Kraków, Henryk II, the Pious, who was killed in battle with the Tartars in 1241. Konrad I Mazowiecki, Duke of Mazovia, (Scott 2143) held the Duchy for two years before passing it to Leszek Biały's son Bolesław Wstydlivy (the Chaste) Scott 3144). The duchy then passed to Konrad's grandson Leszek II, the Black, who ruled from 1270-88.

Following the death of Leszek II, the Duchy of Kraków and the throne of Poland passed to Przemysł II, who was assassinated in 1296. He was succeeded by Wacław II (Scott 3222) and Wacław III, before Władysław I Łokietek (the Short) (Scott 3223) gained the duchy in 1306, and the throne in 1320. One of the greatest of early Polish kings, Władysław the Short successfully reunited Wielkopolska and Małopolska, and reduced the influence of the Teutonic Order, which occupied Pomerania. His son, Kazimierz III Wielki (the Great) (Scott no. 3224), continued the process, ensuring the sovereignty of Poland.

During his reign Kazimierz III more than doubled the size of Poland. He annexed Mazovia and Ruthenia and exerted control over Silesia. Spared the plague that afflicted the rest of Europe, Poland's population increased. Persecuted Jews were welcomed. The Cathedrals of Gniezno and Kraków were built. The country's mineral wealth was exploited and trade expanded. The University of Kraków was established in 1264. Despite four marriages, Kazimierz III died without a male heir. Disregarding the other Piast princes able to assume the Polish throne, he had arranged to pass the throne to his nephew Ludwik Węgierski (Louis I, King of Hungary) (Scott 3225).

With Louis' death in 1382, his daughter Jadwiga (Hedwig) was given the title Rex and crowned King. She was later married to Jogaila (Jagiello) Grand Duke of Lithuania, who was also known as Władysław II. The ruling line of Poland thus passed to the House of Jagiellon.

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— Reprinted from AMERICAN PHILATELIST

although the block of four stamps bears an overprint made by the same types as the original stamps, it was not a part of the same issue.

I found out that, first of all, the overprint was made with a different ink: grey black, glossy, while original stamps have deep black overprints. However, the wavy lines proved most interesting. All of them matched the lines in authentic stamps, but were arranged in a different order than on the original setting. In the block of four the wavy lines corresponded to original positions: 1, 15, 16 and 24. I managed to acquire another pair of similar stamps with regular overprints which had wavy lines in positions 16 and 24 (as the bottom pair in the block of 4), with the exception that this pair had a margin on the right hand side.

Likewise, measurements of the distribution of overprints differed from the original ones: the horizontal spaces between the words SA-MORZĄD and WARWISZKI were 17.5 mm., while in the authentic setting they were larger, i.e. 18.3 mm. In addition to that block of 4 and the pair mentioned above, I have purchased five more stamps with a similar overprint. One 100 mk. stamp has on the gum side an offset (Abklatsch), unknown on authentic stamps. The other four stamps i.e. a set 50, 100 and 200 mk. and one 100 mk. stamp were interesting because of the wavy lines: exactly like those on the original stamps but printed "upside down", i.e. in an inverted form of the originals. The inverted wavy lines correspond to positions: 14, 19, 22 and 23. All those stamps bear the "A. Plamsch" guarantee. For this reason one might suspect that A. Plamsch, a collector in Grodno, was the initiator of the reprint, or better say, a forgery. In any case the circulation of this forgery must have been very low because I have not seen even a dozen examples in my 40 years as an expert.

—Zbigniew Mikulski
St. Gallen, Switzerland

KRAKÓW ISSUE 1919

50/42 Halerzy Postage Due Stamp with Double Overprint

By STANLEY KRONENBERG



In January, 1919, approximately six thousand 50/42 halerzy Austrian postage due stamps were overprinted into Polish stamps with the overprint form, during the late phase of its use. One sheet with 10 x 10 stamps received a double overprint.

The second overprint is not an error but a corrective overprint. One sheet was weakly overprinted due to the low pressure exerted by the printing press. It was then overprinted

again, this time normally, after the pressure was adjusted. Since there occurred a vertical shift of the sheet by 1.35mm between the two overprints, the corrective overprint is above the first poorly imprinted overprint. In all such double overprints "C"s in "POCZTA" overlap, creating an oval. This doubly overprinted sheet of stamps was sent to the post office in Przemyśl.

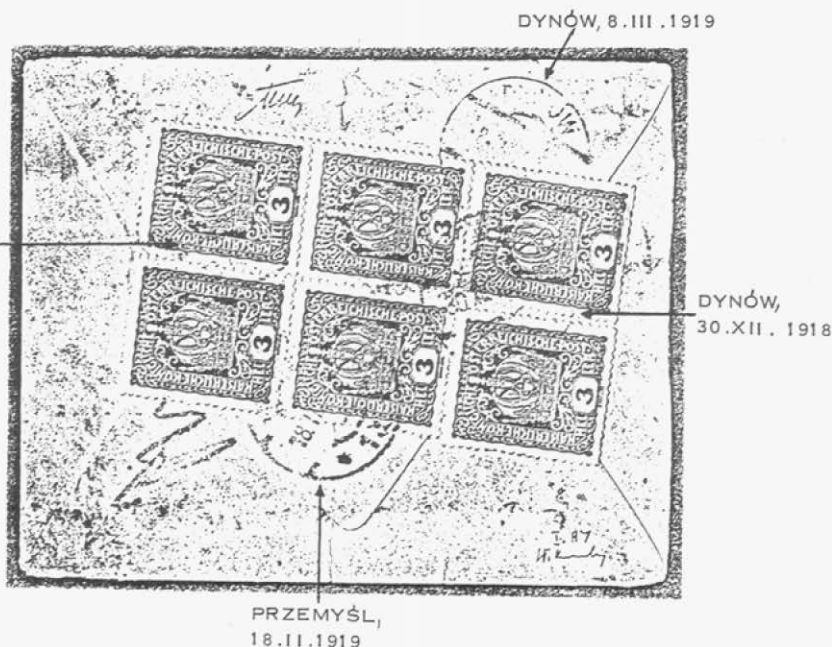
One such known stamp is known to exist unused. It is the position 91 in the sheet. It was in the collection of Myron Steczynski of Chicago who bought it in 1941 with the collection of Col. R.N.W. Larking in England. It was sold in 1967 through Stanley Gibbons Auction in London to Zbigniew Mikulski who later traded this stamp for a Russian stamp. Currently three such used stamps are known. One of them, position 65, is in Poland. Another used stamp with poor perforations on its left side is the position 46. Both are postmarked in Przemyśl. The third known used stamp is on the cover illustrated and described below. It is the position 97 in the sheet.

Other stamps from this sheet were used up on correspondence by the Przemyśl post office as postage dues and became lost, making the few surviving stamps some of the world's greatest rarities.

Cover with the 50/42 Halerzy Postage Due Stamp with Double Overprint



This letter was sent on December 30, 1918 from Dynów, a town on the River San, 40 kilometers due west of Przemyśl, to Przemyśl. On December 31, it was postmarked again in Dynów on its front side. There were no Polish stamps available in Southern Poland at that time, therefore this letter is franked with six Austrian 3 halerzy stamps. The



postage rate for a letter was at that time 24 halerzy, thus it was underpaid by 6 halerzy.

The Polish-Ukrainian war was in progress in the area of Przemyśl with the result that this letter could not be delivered within a reasonable time and arrived in Przemyśl on February 18, 1919. In the meantime Austrian stamps lost their validity in Southern Poland. Therefore this letter was considered by the Przemyśl post office as being not franked and the fine of 50 halerzy postage due was assigned in the form of this postage due stamp with a double overprint. The rubber stamp "T" (= tax = postage due) was imprinted.

The addressee could not be located. Therefore the address to Przemyśl on the front side was erased and replaced by the sender's address which was then also erased. This letter was returned to the sender in Dynów where it arrived on March 8, 1919.

NEW MEMBERS

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Polish Post Abroad

By EDWARD WOLSKI

In the Polonus Bulletin issue #488 of February, 1998, the article on pages 2-3 by George Kay, gave a good description of the Polish mail from and to Great Britain. Unfortunately, it was a partial review based on "regulations."

At one time I had hundreds of letters mailed in the U.K. to Switzerland to an approved intermediary, The Paderewski Aid Fund operated at first by Mrs. Aniela Strakacz and Miss Helen Lübke. After the Paderewski household was moved to the U.S.A., Miss Lübke continued the Aid operation that became world wide. She had support from the Red Cross and several welfare organizations. Letters from Polish military personnel in the U.K. came with all types of censorship markings or without any sign of censorship. The postal cancels were often mute or blotted out place names, or with normal cancels showing the name of the post office. German censorship knew well that most of the mail was of private or charity nature.

The return address was a P.O. Box in London with a number (I had letters with numbers 1 to 200) for the given unit.

Philatelists specializing in Polish Post Abroad, i.e., in the W.W.II period, have this phase very well documented.

The following article highlights Helen Lübke's aid for Polish military internees in Switzerland. The following article, "Murnau POW Letter" is an example of H. Lübke's work with the Polish Red Cross in Teheran. This letter was in a batch of other letters sent to Teheran.

BY HELPING EXILED POLES SHE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR SOME INTERESTING POSTAL HISTORY

The following biography was written by Mrs. Anne Strakacz-Appleton, daughter of President Paderewski's secretary, Mrs. Sylvain Strakacz.

Helena Lübke served for many years as secretary to Mrs. Paderewski and became a member of the Paderewski household.

On June 11th, 1986, Helena Lübke died in Jackson, California, a continent and an ocean away from "Pension-Famille Dryburgh" in Lausanne, a place of happy encounters and happy memories for the World War II Polish Internees in Switzerland.

Among the papers and letters she left, I found a hand-crafted autograph book its red and white cover bearing a Polish DSP Eagle. The inscription on page 1 simply states: To Miss Helena Lübke from the soldiers of the Durrenroth-Summiswald Camp, March 2, 1944. Underneath, and covering page two are signatures of all those who felt grateful and chose this way to express it.

Pernaps those war years were Helena's most shining moment, when on her own, without the moral backing and support of the Paderewskis whom she had loyally served from 1919 to 1940, she became a "Poste Restante" for literally thousands of exiled Poles. Contacting the Red Cross in France and other European countries, she not only man-



Cover addressed to Helena Lúbke in Switzerland from Internment Camp "Miranda" in Spain during W.W.II.

aged to locate displaced families of the Internees anxious about the fate of those they were separated from, she then established a one-woman correspondence center. Switzerland's neutrality helped. When the Germans cut off all postal communications between Poland and those in 'enemy territory' abroad, letters from Switzerland did get through, and were either delivered or sent back with information scribbled on the envelope. Some of it told the senders of the addressees being deported to Siberia. Through the Red Cross, Helena would then manage to locate them. It took months at times, but her knowledge of the Russian language, coupled with her persistence paid off.

Some of the letters received and passed on, have in them such stories of human suffering, as no literature has ever approximated. The sacrifices, the deprivations, the hunger, the torture, the illness in sub-zero weather, the inadequate shelters and clothing, the inevitable deaths, but above all, the waiting, and waiting... for the day of renewed togetherness. The hope against hope which she helped sustain.

Aside from this activity — the weeks, months and years Helena spent sorting and forwarding mail, she established, as the filled pages of her autograph book testify, a sort of Polish center at her modest Swiss Pension. Internees were welcome there, whenever they could get a pass, also and especially on holidays such as Christmas and Easter. What they wrote about those warm gatherings, can be summed up in the words of Tadeusz Szmykowski: 'Memories ... memories ... but they are not an expression of weakness, rather of our perseverance, our links with our glorious past, tragic present and a future which we be-

lieve will reunite us all in a free Poland. Meanwhile, we salute this bit of free Poland-in-exile Chez Helena Lübke!

Since not all the internees could be recipients of her hospitality, she made trips to their camps, consoling the sick and lonely, often bringing them needed or desired items such as Polish books she collected from several families of compatriots domiciled in Switzerland. They called her the soldier's Godmother, God Fairy — a sort of all year round Santa in skirts.

In 1949, having helped a couple of internee-friends establish themselves on a farm in Voisines, France, Helena joined my parents in Los Angeles. By then she had no family left, only those who shared her Paderewski memories. Concerned with being useful, she joined the Women's International Club of which after some years of active membership, she became President.

She outlived my parents, and in 1982, when she who had taken care of so many found it hard to care for herself, came to us in Volcano, Central California. She loved our Mother Lode forest surrounding our ranch home; said it reminded her of Siberia (except for the weather), as she fondly recalled her childhood on Lake Baikal, where her father worked as a railroad engineer.

Born in Darmstadt, Germany in 1893, Helena's life was one of much service and constant travels. With the Paderewskis, she journeyed to Australia and the United States, as well as all over Europe. She always referred to those concert tours as the magic in her life. The trips stopped abruptly, when an ailing Mme. Paderewska needed someone to take care of her at Rioud-Bosson, the Paderewskis' Swiss home base on the Lake of Geneva.

She had to leave the villa, and move to the Pension Dryburgh, when Paderewski, his sister, my parents and I left for the United States in September of 1940. She declined to make that trip, so she could stay with her ailing mother and take care of her. She wound up taking care of many more.

"She summed up her own life shortly before she died by saying. 'If I had to live it over again, I wouldn't change a thing in it. Not a thing'."

Anne Siakacz-Appleton

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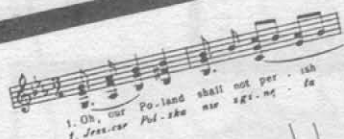
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