

BULLETIN OF THE

POLONUS

PHILATELIC SOCIETY



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Issue 193

October, 1961

"LAIKONIK" — A LEGEND FULFILLED

by W. Kolakowski



The story behind a set of three stamps issued by Poland on June 16, 1955, is one of great interest. While many Poles, historians, and philatelists are perhaps aware of the legend of Laikonik in Cracow, few know the modern sequel to the story.

Every year on the day of the Corpus Christi celebration in June, come tourists from all over Poland to participate in a colorful national carnival. When the bells in 100 churches stop ringing after the religious procession, a boisterous parade issues from Zwierzywiecka Street. A gaily costumed man in a high black cap and a long black beard rides a wooden horse covered by a brilliant mantle. The whole figure, the creation of Stanislaw Wyspianski, represents Laikonik, a Tartar leader of an invading force which attacked Cracow in 1281. A band of followers in similar costumes produce squeaky, unpleasant noises on primitive fifes and drums,

announcing to the citizens that Laikonik the Tartar is capturing the town. With his sceptre the leader pokes and jabs at the crowd around him, producing joyous shouts because by superstition the touch of Laikonik brings good luck. The Tartar band dances grotesquely along the street to the unmelodic rhythm of their simple instruments, the crowd shouting and stamping with them. Laikonik is greeted by the Mayor of Cracow and offered wine, an offer which is repeated at restaurants along the way.

The role of Laikonik must by tradition be taken by a member of the family of Wlozkwow. At the time of the invasion, one of this family of loggers rode into the city and ordered the gates closed, warning of the approach of the Tartars. At the same time, from the turrets of the castle, trumpeters had just started to play the evening Call to Prayer. One of the

Tartars, thinking the call was an alarm, shot an arrow through the throat of the trumpeter just as the highest note was reached. From that time until today, everyday at noon from the Belfry of the Church of the Virgin Mary, the same trumpet call is played, up to the highest note, then broken off.

This legend is well known in Poland. But a modern chapter of the story is known only to a few. Far away in Samarkand (an old town in Uzbekie in the Asian part of the U.S.S.R.), a group of Polish soldiers arrived in 1939, fleeing from the German army. Among them were some students from Cracow who knew the legend of Laikonik. The local people wondered how to treat these strangers, and held an investigation to determine if they were really sons of Lechists, as the Tartars called the Poles. They knew that Lechists are Christians and respected their belief in God. The soldiers showed their crude crosses, made from pieces of tin cans, which they wore on their chests. The time was June and the religious holiday of Corpus Christi approached, some trumpeters among the soldiers won permission from the natives to play in honor of their national holiday. They were invited to play in the market place, facing Mecca.

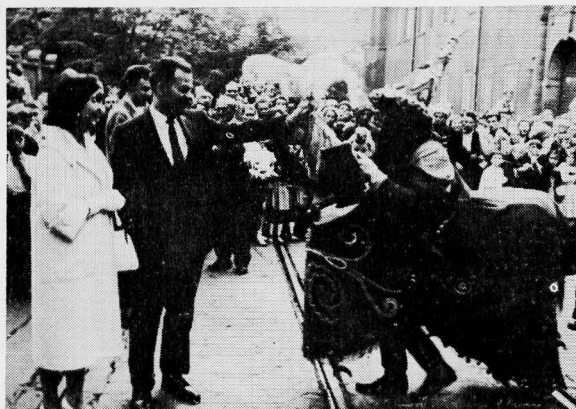
A tremendous crowd jammed the market place on the appointed day. The trumpeters forced their way through to the center, where they played their traditional calls: Reveille, Call to Colors, and Call to Prayer. The last call was ended abruptly on the highest note. A strange and deep quiet came over the listeners, who seemed turned to stone. The Polish soldiers departed, and one by one the people walked away.

In Samarkand it was well known that Laikonik had joined in the Tartar invasion of Poland and had penetrated all the way to Cracow, then the capitol, where they were defeated. They knew

that one of their soldiers had shot the Polish trumpeter as he played the Call to Prayer, and their priests had taught them over the centuries that their defeat came as a punishment from God. The priests told the people that they must no longer attack outside their borders or they would be completely destroyed and their temples would lie in ruins covered by moss. For centuries it had been prophesied that their punishment would be ended and their future brightened only when the trumpeters from Lehistan should come to Samarkand and play in the market-place the same Call to Prayer so profanely interrupted in 1281. This prophecy was known to Mongolian people from Pamir to the Caspian Sea. It was therefore a moment of great religious solemnity when the trumpets sounded in the market place of Samarkand, after nearly seven centuries.

This sequel to the legend of Laikonik greatly enhances the interest of the better known part of the story. The Carnival of Laikonik, as still celebrated in Cracow, was commemorated by Poland in an issue of three stamps on June 16, 1955. Each value depicts, in different color combinations, the figure of Laikonik astride his horse brandishing his sceptre. The set was designed by W. Chomicz and printed in Warsaw by the P. W. P. W.

The accompanying photograph shows the author receiving the good luck salute from Laikonik during the carnival in June, 1960.



Unissued Postage Stamps of the Polish Resistance

by Dr. R. Wurth

In many instances interesting philatelic items stay hidden for a long time before becoming known to the philatelic public. This was demonstrated with the so called "Polish Home Army" prepared postage stamps. This was the name given the Underground that resisted the German Occupation of their homeland.

The fact that these stamps were intended as postal values and not as some fund-raising labels, is evident from the inscription "Podziemna Poczta Polska" (Polish Underground Post), but more so from the actual historical events of the uprising movement under General Bor, which in the Summer of 1944 approached practically the character of full scale warfare.

That, with this development, the leaders of the Resistance, in calculating the chances of success, at least of winning control over some parts of the country, had made certain preparations, among them, for provisional postal service, goes without saying and further explanations.

Whatever attitude one has towards emissions not gotten into postal service and circulation, as historical documents these stamps deserve far greater attention than the various "Exile" Issues whirling through everyday Philately without having anything to do with postage.

Besides from the circumstantial foresight for their need, the fact that this issue was actually prepared for postal use is further evidenced from the relatively primitive production (various large sheets, simple typographic printing, etc.), as well as the motif selection for printing in that period of World War II.

The set of the "Polish Underground Post" consists of nine values typographed printed on grey paper.

For the five values in this set the producers used the 1941 issue of the Polish Government in Exile in London, as a model (Michel Nos. 362-367). The 55 gr., 75 gr., 80 gr., 1 zł. and 1.50 zł. values of the Exile issue appeared with the same motif as the Underground issue, with the exception of the 1.50 zł. value, which in the Underground series has the value of 50 gr. (error?!) — the values also correspond. The other four values show: on the 25 groszy value — the title pages of four newspapers (evidently illegal publications of the Resistance Movement) "Młody Nurt" (Young Current), "Wiadomości Codzienne" (Daily News), "Miecz i Pług" (Sword and Plow) and "Wieści" (Tidings). The 30 groszy shows a secret print shop; the 2 zł. bears the portrait of General Władysław Sikorski and finally the 5 zł. value has a map of Europe and Africa with the indrawn



Three of the nine values of the unissued "Polish Underground Post" series described in this article.

War Fronts on which the Poles were fighting for their Independence.

The Underground issue is printed in sheets of 32 to 42. This arrangement is probably due to the limited facilities of the secret print shop in utilizing what paper and machinery was at hand.

Just how small a lot of the Underground emission reached the hands of Mr. Hanns Seeleldners (Salzburg, Reichenhaller Strasse 11), through whose courtesy this presentation is made, could have this probable explanation: When the Polish Uprising was crushed in the late Summer of 1944 by the German Armed Forces, during the embittered battles for every individual dwelling, the print shop had fallen into German hands, and all printed material — among it the postage stamps — was confiscated.

What happened afterwards, one can only surmise, but very likely something like this:

First, storage in some German archive. Then came the last stage of the war and the withdrawal of German troops from Warsaw. Things that could not be taken along were destroyed. Since philatelists are found most everywhere, here too, some "Folksdeutscher" or officer might have had a small quantity "liberated."

These were the circumstances to which we today owe the knowledge of the existence of this prepared series.

Complete listing of the individual stamps of the "Polska Poczta Podziemna."

- 1.) 25 gr. black - Four Newspapers. Vertical format 28 x 32 mm. 32 stamps to a sheet.
- 2.) 30 gr. grey - Secret Print Shop. Vertical format 22 x 33 mm. 36 stamps to a sheet.
- 3.) 50 gr. blue - Submarine. Vertical format 21 x 30 mm. 42 stamps to a sheet.
- 4.) 55 gr. red - Destroyed Royal Castle. Horizontal format 32 x 21 mm. 40 stamps to a sheet.
- 5.) 75gr. emerald green - Infantry. Horizontal format 33 x 23 mm. 32 stamps to a sheet.
- 6.) 80 gr. grass green - Tanks. Horizontal format 32 x 22 mm. 36 stamps to a sheet.
- 7.) 1 zł. lilac - Airforce. Horizontal format 33 x 22 mm. 32 stamps to a sheet.
- 8.) 2 zł. brown - Gen. Wł. Sikorski. Vertical format 23 x 33 mm. 32 stamps to a sheet.
- 9.) 5 zł. red - Map. Vertical format 21 x 33 mm. 36 stamps to a sheet..

Besides the name "Podziemna Poczta Polska" uniformly identical on all values, some values have additional descriptive text.

* * *

This article was translated and corrected from "Der Sammler Dienst" of June 10, 1961.

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POLISH SPORTS MUSEUM TO OPEN SOON IN WARSAW

One of the permanent exhibition halls in the new Sports Museum in Warsaw, now in its final construction stages, will be dedicated to philately and Sports On Stamps.

The Museum contemplates to have some fragments of the exhibits ready by the end of November and open to the public by the end of the year.

In aggregating necessary material, the Museum is seeking the help of sport fans — stamp collectors with some interesting material, mint sets of FDC's which they can spare and would care to donate to the Museum.

The following disciplines of sports

are now in preparation:

Polish Sports, Olympics, Light Athletics, Soccer, Football, Basketball, Bielycling, Water Sports, Touristics, Fencing and Boxing.

The address of the new Polish sport culture center is: Muzeum Sportu, Warszawa, Poczta Sejm, Ulica Rozbrat Nr. 26, Poland.

All contributions will be promptly acknowledged and names of donors will be entered into the Museum Honor Book.

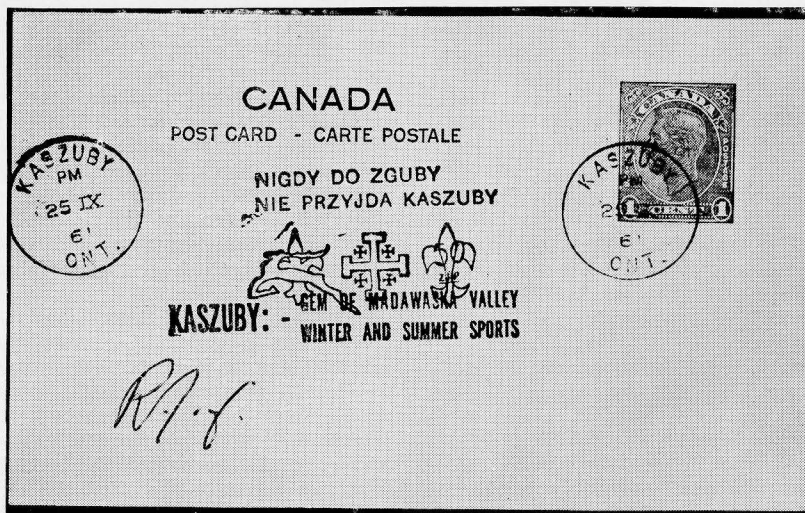
— W. S.

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The birthplace of Polish Philately — Kraków, honored its reknown promulgator, Stanisław Mikstein, on the fifth anniversary of his death with a commemorative cancellation.



Collectors of "Polonica" will have to look for this gem from Canada: "KASZUBY: Nigdy do zguby nie przyjdą Kaszuby", and that is the truth!

— W. S.

Stamps Honoring the International Fair at Poznań

by Dr. Mł A. Rayall de Ragan



The Traditions of the International Fair at Poznań

Some of the existing European fair organizations claim their long, sometimes centuries old traditions. The International Fair at Poznań may also claim its old tradition which goes back to over seven hundred years ago.

The ancient document known to us and clearly speaking of trade in Poznań is the privilege, given to the Dominican Order in Poznań, issued about 1230. This privilege exempts the traders, arriving at Poznań for the St. Dominic's Fair, from paying taxes during the 8 days of the fair (in the second-half of December). These rights were confirmed by the Duke of Przemysł the 1st of Wielkopolska, in the document of 1254.

As a kind of birth certificate of the International Fair at Poznań, we can accept the erection-act of the new municipal borough on the left bank of the Warta river issued by the rulers of Greater Poland (Wielkopolska), the Piasts: Duke of Przemysł the 1st, and Prince Bolesław the Pious, from 1253. By this document both Dukes jointly established a yearly fair in Poznań and

undertook an obligation of building a trade-house in town for the use of the traders. Furthermore, personal safety to the foreign traders was safeguarded, and the local traders who were exporting and importing goods, also by means of the Warta river traffic, were free for a period of eight years from paying custom duties.

Owing to those privileges the trade of Poznań developed successfully in the following centuries. In those times Poznań was an important center of the cloth and leather industry, and the products of the town and the rich agricultural and sylvan subtown districts behind the river's bank were shipped down the Warta, and Odra rivers to the Baltic Sea Harbor of Szczecin.

The strong and lasting foundation, however, for the big international trade in Poznań was an application of the warehousing law (*ius stapulae*), this highest trading law in the Middle Ages, given to the town in 1394 by King Władysław Jagiełło the 1st, the victor of Grunwald. (The warehousing law made it obligatory for the foreign traders to stop in the town, and to put their goods during three days time on

display and sale. After this time, and paying to the town municipality all dues and taxes, the traders were free to continue their journey with the remaining goods which were not sold there.)

In the XVIth century Poznań lived its Golden Age. Its revenues bled, luxury began and it was necessary to check it. Since those days there in the Old Market the pillory, erected in 1533 palaces and new houses of the city's patriciate arose — built in the Renaissance style, lived to our days and were renovated with great care after the destruction by the Nazis in the last days of World War II.

The most magnificent monument of those days is the Old Town Hall (design on stamps of Poland Scott No. 230, 239, B40, B102, B103, 682, 683) — the most precious relic of the Italian Renaissance art flourishing in the countries situated north of the Alps. In the year 1519 the Poznań University was founded.

Unfortunate for Poland was the reign of the Dynasty of Wazas (King Sigismund the IIIrd, Vladislav the IVth and John Casimir the IIInd) and the Polish-Swedish wars 1655/1660 and the Northern War 1700/1721 which deadly hit the Poznań trade. The city badly depopulated and the population in the half of the 18th century dropped down to a mere 9,000 inhabitants (in the 16th century it had over 30,000 inhabitants) and the international trade died away. After the year 1780, followed a short period of revival under the rule of the intellectual King Stanisław Poniatowski, and the second partition of Poland in 1793 incorporated Poznań to the Prussian Impery, and the international fair did not revive. However, the traditions of the fair, and especially of the folk lore St. John's fair survived in the form of local fairs known under the name of St. John's Contracts until the outbreak of World War I.

With the beginning of the Independence of Poland in 1918, the fair tradition revived in Poznań with the local fairs since 1921 and International Fairs since 1925.

Soon the Poznań Fair was admitted to the membership of the Board of the International Fairs Union, and is num-

bered among the founder members. (The Congress of IFU in 1930 was held in Poznań.).

The Poznań Fair survived with flying colors the period of the most grave world crisis in 1929/1934 and by the facilities offered the Fair, its geographical reach and the global turnover of closed contracts put it in the front rank in Europe just behind the leader — the Leipzig's Fair.

The first fair after World War II, took place in 1947, as the twentieth show already. 608 exhibitors from 11 countries (108 foreign exhibitors) took part in it.

Today the International Fair grounds contain about 250,000 sq. meters of area (60 acres), with over 50,000 sq. meters (over 60,000 square yards) of covered area. The International Fair takes place in the second and third weeks of June each year.

Over 500 foreign exhibitors from 60 countries of the whole world were announced at the Jubilee XXXth International Fair.

Since September, 1955 in Poznań was the sight of the International Fair area, the Autumn National Fair, and in March, the Spring National Fair.

The Fair on Stamps

The first postage stamps honoring the Fair at Poznań were the two semi-postal air stamps, issued on May 29th, 1921, honoring the First Fair at Poznań in 1921, so called TABROMIK. The



stamps, though issued by a private corporation (Aerotarg i.i. Air-fair Inc. Ltd.) were sold in the Post Offices Warsaw 1, Poznań 1, 3 and 9, and were intended for a surtax for air mail (25 mks. for postcard and 100 mks. for letters), on the air lines Poznań-Warsaw.

and Poznań-Gdańsk.

The second stamp, honoring the Poznań Fair was a stamp Scott's No. 261, issued to honor the International Fair in 1929, in connection with the Agricultural Exhibition to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of Polish Independence: "Powszechna Wystawa Krajowa, - PeWuKa". The stamp depicts the ancient Slav god "Światowid" (world seeing god), with four heads, each facing in different directions.

The next issue was released in 1950, to honor the XXIIIrd International Fair and depicts a symbolical group, (value 15 zł.) Scott's No. 474.



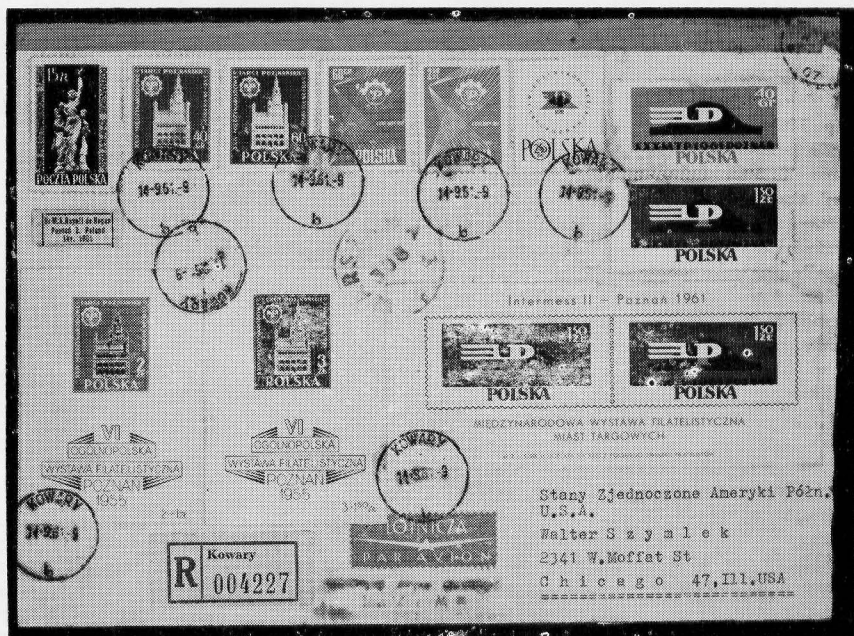
Honoring the XXIVth International Fair in 1955 were the Polish Mail two stamps of 40 gr. and 60 gr. with a design of Poznań's Old Town, and to honor the VIth National Stamps Exhibition the same stamps appeared in a form of miniature sheets of 2 + 1 zł. and 3 + 1 zł. (Scott's No. 682, 683, B-102, B-103.)

From this period several fairs were honored by stamp issues as follows: Honoring the XXVIth International Fair in 1957 were two stamps of 60 gr. and 2.50 zł., with design of emblem of the XXVIth Fair; ; honoring the XXVIIIth International Fair was one stamp of 2.50 zł., with the design of the emblem of the Fair; honoring the last XXXth International Fair on May 25th were two stamps of 40 gr. and 1.50 zł.

Stamps exhibitions honoring the International Fair at Poznań

To honor the International Fairs in Poznań at the same time there were celebrations, various solemnities, and stamp exhibitions also.

During the International Fairs in Poznań various local stamp exhibitions took place in 1948, and 1950 organized



Specially prepared cover bearing stamps and souvenir sheet issued in connection with the International Trade Fairs held at Poznań.

by Wielkopolski Klub Filatelistów, or in 1955 the VIth Polish National Stamp Exhibition, honored by two miniature sheets (Scott No. B-102 and 103) in a design of current stamps, honoring the Fair (Scott No. 682 and 683.)

In 1959 an idea was inaugurated of organizing philatelic exhibitions in connection with the Fairs in various Fair cities of Europe, but due to political causes this idea assumed actual form first in 1960. The first stamp exhibitions were held at fair cities. Intermess during the Autumn Leipzig Fair took place in September 1960. Intermess II took place in 1961 in Poznań and was honored by an issue of a miniature sheet, bearing two stamps of 1.50 zł. each. The design of the stamps, honored the XXXth International Fair.

Intermess III will probably take place in Brno, in Czechoslovakia.

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A young Polonus aspirant attended a recent meeting. Miss Renette Banasiak, daughter of member Anthony A. Banasiak, may be only 12 years old but she is very serious about her collecting of U.S. and U.N. stamps.

* * *

Two Polish exhibits were displayed at the New Zealand National Philatelic Exhibition held in Christ Church, Aug. 21-26. Both were shown by Polonus members and both won Silver Medals: Chester Makowski with his Poland Postal History 18th Century and I. Gust with Poland Pre-stamp to Modern, Proofs and Essays.

* * *

Member A. Schwanderla of 108-OS Spa Place, Jamaica 35, N. Y., is convalescing at home after a serious coronary attack and hospitalizing.

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THE POLES IN ITALY

by Pierson Ostrow

(Reprinted from LINN'S Weekly Stamp News)

Facts are often stranger than fiction, and the philatelic story of Gen. Anders' Polish Army Corps in Italy is no exception to the dictum.

When Poland was overrun by the Germans at the outset of World War II, the Russians also stepped in and occupied the eastern portion of that unhappy land. Polish soldiers who were found in the Russian zone were deported eastward into Russia. Some escaped and fled southward to the Levant.

When Hitler later broke his pact with Stalin, the Russians freed many of the exiles. Some of them served their erstwhile captors; others made their way westward to join the Allies. Eventually, a goodly number of them ended up in Italy in the Second Polish Army Corps, which owed allegiance to the Polish Government in Exile in London.

In Italy, these Polish warriors gave a brave account of themselves serving with particular distinction at the terrible battle of Monte Cassino, and elsewhere.

Then came the Stamps—

On December 30, 1945 General Anders issued Ordinance No. 162 decreeing the creation of four stamps, which went on sale on January 1, 1946. The 45 groszy green shows Monte Cassino, and is inscribed with the dates November 11-18, 1944 during which time the Poles took part in the battle for that bloody mountain peak.

The 55 gr. blue shows Ancona and the dates July 15-18, 1946. The one zloty grey shows Bologna, and is dated April 9-21, 1945.

The high value is a 2 Zloty reddish brown, which shows a vignette of Gen. Anders. Each stamp is inscribed "Poczta Polowa 2go Korpusu" (2nd Polish Corps).

All values of the set are known imperforate, and a special printing in the form of an imperforate souvenir sheet containing one of each of the stamps was later run off.

Both the 45 and 55 gr. values exist in vertical pairs, imperforate between. The 45 gr. and 2zł. also exist in horizontal pairs, similarly imperforate between. The 45 gr., 1zł. and 2zł. are found imperforate on one side.

Finally, the 55 gr. exists in violet



instead of in blue, and, in this color, in vertical pairs, imperforate between. The 2zł. is known exists in a light brown color.

Two printings were made of the set; one on coarse, grayish paper, gummed; the other on ungummed white paper.

Reissues — On January 18, 1946, the stamps were reissued in new colors: The 45 gr. is now gray; the 55 gr. red brown; the 2zł. blackish brown.

...and an Airmail — Finally, on February 17, 1946, an airmail stamp was created by overprinting the first 2zł. with new, 5zł. value.

This airmail exists with inverted overprint, and with various different defective overprints, and comes on both papers. Copies are also known in pairs, one stamp without overprint.

Personal Recollections — Immediately after the close of World War II, the writer met a stamp dealer who has since vanished from sight, and who told a peculiar story about the Anders stamps.

According to this man, he was on good terms with the Army Command headquarters, and was called upon one evening with the news that the Polish Army was planning an issue of stamps, but lacked money to pay for the printing. Would our friend care to help with the financing?

If so, a second printing would be made, in altered colors, and the bulk of these created scarcities would be reserved for the financial angel. Our friend said that he had refused, but, as we have seen, the second printing appeared nonetheless.

Usage — It appears that the "General Anders" issues saw a short and limited postal usage in Italy and in the Polish Army camps of the Middle East, being employed to frank registered letters and parcels, since ordinary letters needed no stamps.

They were, however, repudiated by the Polish London Government, and were thereafter withdrawn from circulation, the date of withdrawal being given as February 28, 1946. Dr. Luigi Sassone has stated that the first set had an over-all printing of 85,000,

which includes both paper types.

The writer has not seen any figures for the other stamps. Of the 2zł. in blackish brown, only 200 copies are supposed to have been issued, of which fully half were miserably centered.

Ten Years After — Two interesting souvenirs of the Anders stamps exist, officially sponsored by the Polish Government in Exile in London in 1954 to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the battle of Monte Cassino.

For it, 5000 copies of the original 45 groszy green were overprinted in red, "Dziesięciolecie 1944-54" (Tenth Anniversary, 1944-54) and an equal number of the airmail stamp was inscribed "Poczta Lotnicza Monte Cassino 1944-54".

By this time, the Government in Exile consisted of a forlorn and shabby London office, for the Communists had long since taken over in Poland. The Government in Exile claimed that the overprints were valid for franking letters between itself and its "ambassadors", and on ships (?) adhering loyally to it.

In Italy the Ministry of Posts authorized a special cancellation, "Decimo Anniversario del 1a Battaglia di Monte Cassino 2o Corpo Polacco - 13 Maggio 1945", and 545 postal cards were prepared with mixed frankings of an Italian stamp and the overprinted Anders stamp.

So ends the strange story of the Polish Military Post in Italy. We add only the warning that the stamps described above should not be confused with the phantasy "interment camp" labels ostensibly issued at Barletta and



Trani, which have been adequately documented and exposed in past issues of "Italian Philatelist" and elsewhere.

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PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

CHESTER A. SCHAFER, Editor
854 N. Ashland Ave. Chicago 22, Ill.

WALTER SZYMLEK
2341 W. Moffat St. Chicago 47, Ill.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE:

Dr. Rayall de Ragan, Dr. R. Wurth, W. Kolakowski, Pierson Ostrow.

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