AUSTRIA

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Edited by Andy Taylor

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A word from the President

Back in 1965, John Giblin, the editor of the Bulletin of the Austrian Stamp Club (as we were called then) decided that the bulletin needed a facelift. For the first issue of 1966, he renamed the bulletin AUSTRIA and re-started the issue-numbering at 1. With this issue we have reached the landmark issue 200.

Amazingly, in those fifty-one years we have had only three editors. The (London) Times has got through ten during that period! What an outstanding job John Giblin, Nick Harty and Andy Taylor have done in improving the content and presentation of our journal! Looking back at issue no.1 now, it seems primitive in terms of its small size, poor paper-quality, printing and reproduction of photos. And yet it included articles by Tchilinghirian on the Austrian Post Abroad and Coleman on the 1906 compound perforations of Bosnia & Herzegovina, both part of works which are still essential references today. Now we have a digitally-produced journal of high quality and full colour, still including important research into Austrian philately and postal history. Long may it continue.

Editorial 2☺☺

Two Hundred Issues of our journal! Who would have expected that! Eminent historians have proclaimed the End Of History; philatelic pundits have stated that There Is Nothing Left To Publish. Yet we're still here, and have every intention of continuing. Indeed, the records of organised Austrian Philately in Great Britain go even further back, and our Librarian has produced the first-ever Bulletin of the ASCGB.

Feb 2nd 1948. Dear Members, for some years I have toyed with the idea of starting an Austrian Stamp Club which would cater fully for the wants of collectors … On Jan 1st 1948 the Austrian stamp club was formed … in time we shall have a club of which we shall be proud. … (signed) Major C.B.E. Cowie
[*There was a Stamp Exchange section in the Bulletin; offers included "WIPA (mint) Ordinary £5, granite £9".*]

I thought it might be of interest to look back at how each of Austria's three editors began their stint. "Compare and contrast", as they say. An increasingly strident theme is the need for others to contribute long or short articles; currently some years of editorial arm-twisting has produced a pleasing plethora of polymathic pieces but the bottom of the barrel is becoming visible again. Recent developments in technology have made it much easier to turn a display into an article. The editor will happily discuss with you how to achieve this: a volunteer is better than ten pressed men, although the application of pressure is not ruled out – as some readers know.

"Austria" issue 1, Editorial by John Giblin. The word AUSTRIA, by which this bulletin is in future to be called, is a name ancient and glorious in history. Charlemagne had instituted frontier districts, or marches, for the express purpose of withstanding the ravages of the unconquered tribes outside his huge empire. The country between the Enns and the Raab, that is modern Austria proper, became the East Mark, the nucleus of the subsequent East Realm and was given to Geroldt, the military ruler of Bavaria. Later this Bavarian Ostmark received a regent of its own and then, in 996, the Emperor Otho III re-organised it as the Margraveship of Austria and bestowed it upon Leopold I of Babenburg; using the words: "in regione vulgari nomine Osterrchi" in the document of enfeoffment. [usw usf]

"Austria" issue 107, Editorial by Nick Harty. Prosit Neujahr! Since the previous edition of AUSTRIA I have attempted to read every edition from AUSTRIA No. 1 up to No. 100 to acquaint myself with all that has been published. The intention was to give me possible ideas for future topics and also subjects which may be worth a facelift. Consistently in editorials was the request for active participation from members whose expertise would be beneficial to the membership as a whole. So once again the request goes out to all members to submit something for inclusion in Austria; whether it be a highly technical treatise, extensively researched, or a short letter to the editor asking for help with a topic. (and so on)

"Austria" issue 127, Editorial by Andy Taylor. It is with some trepidation that I sit looking at a blank ream of paper and begin to contemplate my first Editorial. 126 editions of AUSTRIA have set a standard of breadth, depth and diversity of coverage that will be difficult to follow; but I will try. My aim will be to publish each quarter a mixture of new work, new ways of looking at old topics, Philatelic Intelligence (ie informed gossip), as well as older material which is in a language, publication or location inaccessible to most of our members. So, I shall remorselessly harass each and every one of you, to share your expertise with your fellow members and with the philatelic world. (etc)

So while you are reading this, preparation of Austria 201 is well under way, and there's a folder labelled 202.

Disclaimer: the views expressed above are those of the writers, not the APS's official opinion!

I record with sadness the death of Brian Madeley, Hon Life Member, Philatelist, and Friend. The APS has made a donation of £50 to Cancer Research in his memory. A tribute by Martin Brumby appears below. Many colleagues have sent their thoughts:

HS: *"One of nature's gentlemen, always cheerful, friendly and keen to show his collection. An asset to the Society by whom he will be greatly missed.".* Mrs MB: *"He was always such a friendly man, so pleasant and east to talk with."* MB: *"..what he didn't know about the material of the Empire wasn't worth knowing"* KB: *I was pleased to see six APS Members and two partners at the service. It is testament to the high esteem and affection which we all feel for Brian.* CT: *I agree with everyone's sentiments, a very nice gesture not only as a long-standing member but a thoroughly pleasant person.*

The proceedings of the Peterborough Fest will be reported in the next issue.

Yorkie Bars: Once again the ABPS held a competitive exhibition at York, coinciding with the summer staging of the biannual Stamp Fair. The 2017 exhibition was sponsored by Corbitts; it was oversubscribed, and noteworthy for the large number of never-seen-before entries, many in 1 or 2 frames. APS results are in the Newsletter.

The Treasurer says I can't have a 52-page issue even if it's the 200th, so Part 3 of "The Austro- Hungarian Navy in World War I" will appear in the next issue.

Andy Taylor

Disclaimer: the views expressed above are those of the writers, not the APS's official opinion!

BRIAN MADELEY 4-5-1932 – 21-7-2017

Brian Madeley describes his Austro-Hungarian field post issues

I knew Brian after I joined the ASCGB in 1982. Having his own butcher's shop, he had to put his skates on to clean up and get to meetings (in Cross Street Chapel, Manchester) before they ended. But he turned up fairly regularly, especially as he got older and 'delegated' more to his son - although he was always torn when Manchester City were playing at home....

Although he had some nice postal history, he was always (in my experience) primarily a stamp collector, albeit one who also happily collected postal stationery, nice postmarks and interesting covers. I think the Austro-Hungarian Empire was his first love but he was always tempted by obscure territories both hither and yon, and always seemed to know what to look for and how hard to haggle with dealers!

After he retired and moved to Lincoln with Ann, we probably saw even more of him and he was a regular attender of 'Northern Group' meetings, often in our house. The medical problems he suffered from, over what must have been the last 25 years or more, necessitated many painful and debilitating procedures, initially as an outpatient but, increasingly as an inpatient. Nevertheless, he was always ready with a broad smile, a chat, rooting through a pocket to show some recently acquired material, usually acquired for a song from some dealer who wasn't quite sure what he was selling!

As time went on, meetings in York & Yorkshire became less frequent (and as travelling became more problematic) we saw each other less frequently. But every now and then there would be a phone call, or a postcard would drop on the mat. Whilst he seemed always cheerful, the death of one of his sons was a particularly heavy blow. But when we met, now annually at Lincoln, occasionally at York Racecourse, we were always able to chat about stamps, Grandkids and Great-Grandkids

Both Annette and I were privileged to have Brian as a friend. He will be sorely missed.

Martin Brumby

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To purchase any of these items, contact the <u>Librarian</u>. If paying by Paypal remember to **add their 4.5% fee.** NOTES: (1) If you pay by credit card, it will appear as "German Railway Society" on your card statement. (2) **the Librarian has a new email address** – library@austrianphilately.com **-** the old one no longer works.

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❖ *All CDs cost £10 or €15 including postage to anywhere in the world.*

❖ "**The History of Austrian Revenue Stamps**" by Dr. Stephan Koczynski. Enhanced and published on CD in fully-text-searchable form. It is ISBN 978-0-900118-07-4.

❖ **1910 Post Office Index.** This is the "*Verzeichnis der Post- und Telegraphen-Ämter in Österreich, Ungarn und in Bosnien-Hercegovina sowie der österreichischen Postanstalten im Fürstentum Liechtenstein und in der Levante*", published in Vienna in 1910. It lists all the Austrian post offices open anywhere at that date; with symbols indicating the facilities available at each. The CD contains cleaned-up pictures of the original pages, not searchable text. It is ISBN 978-0-900118-08-1.

❖ **"Rohrpost" – the pneumatic post in Vienna**. Second completely revised edition, now in web-site format in full colour with numerous added appendices. ISBN 978-0-900118-10-4.

Books

❖ "**The Austrian Post Offices in the Levant**: Tchilinghirian and Stephen Revisited". by Hans Smith. Written in English and in full colour throughout, with over 200 A4 pages of text and illustrations and a comprehensive listing of all known postmarks of the consular offices. Price **£50.** ISBN 978-0-900118-09-8

❖ "**A Celebration of Austrian Philately**": the APS 60th anniversary 'Festschrift'. viii+162pp. A4 in full colour. ISBN 978-0-900118-05-0. Price **£15.**

❖ *To these add P&P. For GB: Levant £5, Festshrift £3. Everything at cost to other destinations.*

Other items

❖ **Back numbers** of "Austria" are **£1** each to members **(£5** to non-members), subject to us having stock. Some may be facsimiles or second-hand originals. Postage extra at cost. Bulk orders by negotiation.

❖ "**The Postal History of the Anschluss, The German Annexation of Austria**" by Tony Hickey, Ian Nutley, David Taylor and Colin Tobitt. Contact the Librarian.

From Austro- Hungarian Empire
to independent Czechoslovakia

By Hartmut Liebermann

The Austro-Hungarian Empire, established in 1867, as well as its predecessor states (the Hapsburg monarchy within the Holy Roman Empire from the 16th century until 1806 and later the Austrian Empire) had always been multinational states. During the middle ages and in the period of absolutism this structure did not lead to major problems, but in the period of industrialization and increasing self-consciousness of the citizenship during the 19th century the ideas of mono-ethnic national identities spread all over Europe. This became more and more a problem for the Austrian-Empire which included 12 different nationalities (Fig 1).The foundation of the dual monarchy in 1867 complied with the interests of Germans and Hungarians but could not satisfy the upcoming national movements of the other nationalities. It is also important to know that while the Czech part of what became Czechoslovakia belonged to the Austrian part of the dual monarchy ("Cis-Leithanien"), the Slovakian part belonged to the Hungarian part ("Trans-Leithanien"). Czechs and Slovaks never had a common state in their history before 1918, they just had related languages.
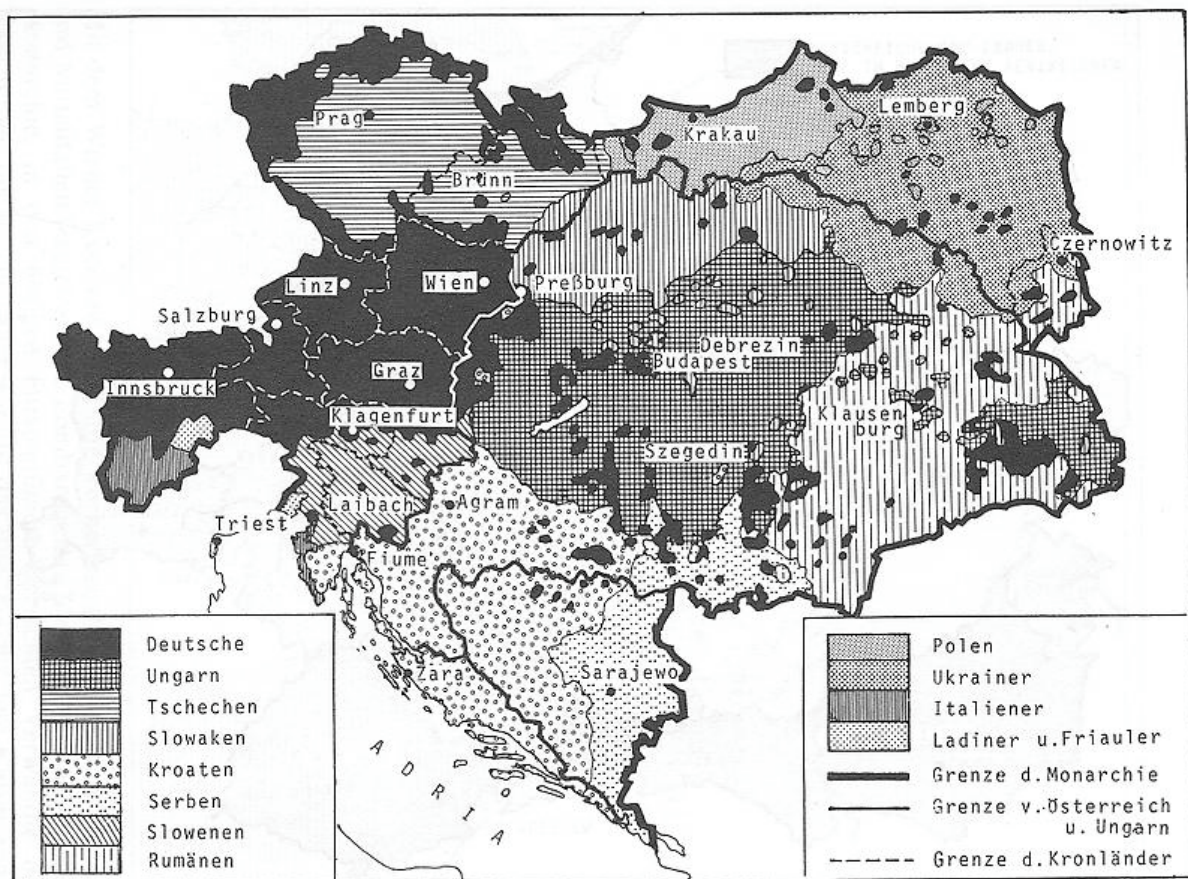
Fig 1: Map of the different nationalities (languages) in Austria-Hungary

The formation of a Czech national movement

As to the Czech part of the population (the third largest in the Empire), **František Palacký**, a teacher and editor, made important contributions to the development of a Czech national consciousness during the 19th century. He wrote a "*History of the Czech people in Bohemia and Moravia*" and was co-founder of the cultural association "Matice Česká" (Czech National Club). In 1848 he was co-organizer of the "Congress of Slavs" in Prague. He became a member of the "Reichstag" (Parliament of the empire during the revolution of 1848) in Vienna and in Kremsier (Kroměříž). 1861 he became a member of the Austrian House of Lords ("Herrenhaus") and deputy of the Bohemian "Landtag" (state parliament). There he was a leading member of the parliamentary

party of the "Staročeši" ("Old Czechs") and advocated a transformation of the Hapsburg Monarchy into a federation, in which the Slavic peoples would have played a leading part. After the Austrian-Hungarian Compromise (1867, Dual Monarchy) the Old Czech Party aimed at a similar arrangement for Bohemia ("Triple Monarchy"), but they didn't succeed.

Fig 2: Registered letter from Prague to F. Palacký in Vienna, 1861, receiving postmark of the House of Lords
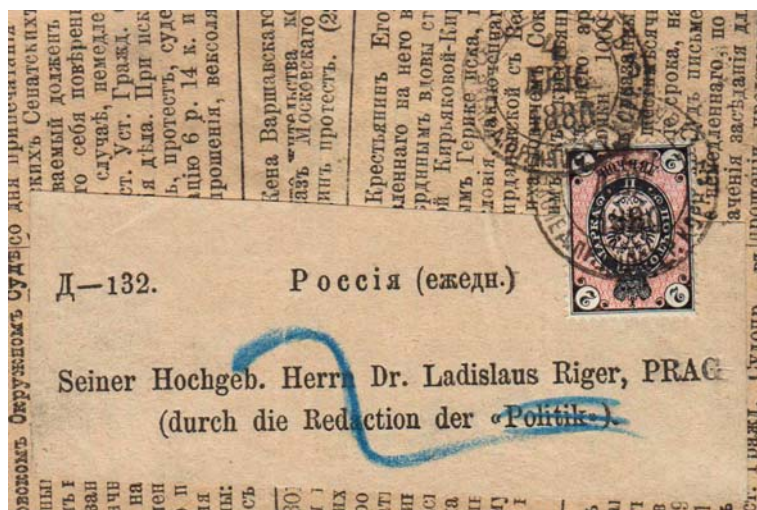
František Rieger, lawyer and son-in-law of F. Palacký, was also a member of the National committee in Prague 1848, participant of the "Congress of Slavs" and deputy in the Kroměříž Parliament – as his father-in-law. He also promoted the transformation of the Hapsburg Monarchy into a federal state. As a leading member of the Old Czech Party (founded in 1860) he was deputy of the Bohemian state parliament (1861-71 and 1878-95), of the Reichsrat (parliament of the empire, 1861-63) and the House of Lords (from 1897) in Vienna.

Left: Fig 3: Newspaper address strip, sent from Russia to F. Rieger in Prag (1880)

More radical than the Old Czech party, the **Young Czech Party** ("Mladočeši", founded in 1874) stood up for the greatest possible independence of the country. Furthermore they demanded universal suffrage. After the elections of 1889 they were the largest parliamentary party in the Bohemian Landtag and forestalled the Czech-German balance which Prime Minister Taaffe and the Old Czech Party had negotiated. After the discharge of Taaffe his successor Badeni enforced an extended regulation for the use of languages, in order to gain the agreement of the Young Czechs. According to this regulation the Czech language should have become equitable with German everywhere in Bohemia, even in parts with more than 90% German speaking inhabitants. Thus all officials should have been obliged to have knowledge in both languages. This led to massive protests of German deputies in the Vienna Reichsrat; they tried to prevent the implementation of the new law by means of parliamentary obstruction. At the same time there were big demonstrations in the German speaking parts of Bohemia and Moravia ("Badeni-Krawalle", the "Badeni riots"), which led to the dismissal of Badeni and the withdrawal of his regulation.

Fig 4: German propaganda postcards against Badeni's regulation of language use, 1897

Increasing national differences, sometimes even hate and contempt between Czechs and Germans, were characteristic for the last three decades before WWI. We can get an idea of it from these propaganda picture postcards which are typical for this era.

Dr.Alois Rašín belonged to the radical-autonomist wing of the Young Czech Party. Already in 1884 he was sentenced to 2 years prison in the course of a process against young Czech radicals. In 1911 he was elected in the Reichsrat. After the beginning of WWI he supported the Czech independence movement, and in 1915 he was arrested and sentenced to death. After the death of Emperor Franz Josef I in 1916 the death sentence was changed into a prison sentence, and in 1917 he benefitted from an amnesty. In 1918 he was co-founder of the new Czechoslovak state and was nominated as its first minister for financial affairs.

Fig 5 (below): Letter from Dr. Rašín, sent from the garrison arrest in Vienna
to his wife in Prague, March 31st 1916; on the reverse a censorship mark

During WWI a Czech opposition was formed abroad. The objective was the dissolution of the Hapsburg Monarchy and national independence for Czechs. Key areas were Paris, London and the USA. In Paris the opposition was focused around the "Czech National Committee", which later turned into the "Czech committee abroad".

Above: Fig 5.
Below: Fig 6: Censored telegram from Bordeaux to the Czech Committee in Paris, September 16th, 1914

Who were the main protagonists of the Czech opposition abroad?

Tomáš G. Masaryk was elected to the Reichsrat as a member of the Young Czech Party in 1891, but resigned in 1893 because of dissension with the party line. In 1900 he founded the "Realistic Party" ("Česká strana lidová realistická") , which he represented in the Reichsrat from 1900 to 1914. After the beginning of WWI he pursued the target of an independent state. He escaped from being arrested in 1914 by a trip abroad. In Geneva he started to organize an exile movement. In the autumn of 1915 he was co-founder of the "Czech committee abroad". His most important co-worker as a secretary of the committee was **Dr. Eduard Beneš**, who followed him to Paris on September 3rd 1915. He was also a member of the "Realistic Party".

The transition to a movement for Czecho-Slovak independence

The Slovak **Milan Rastislav Štefánik** (1880-1919) met T.G. Masaryk and his thoughts as a student in Prague. He emigrated, went to Paris, became a French citizen in 1912 and fought as a fighter pilot in the French army during WWI. In 1915 he met with the Masaryk group. They shared the objectives of the dissolution of the Hapsburg Monarchy and the founding of a common Czecho-Slovak state. The Czech Committee changed into the "Czecho-Slovak National Council" in February 1916.

Štefánik was mandated by the Committee to establish an army, consisting of Czech and Slovakian war prisoners and of emigrants. He received support from the French state, but also from Slovakian emigrants in the USA. Štefánik subsequently organized Czecho-Slovak legions in Russia, France and Italy. In 1918 he was nominated for Minister of Defence by the provisional government, but in 1919 he died in an airplane crash.

The independence of Czechoslovakia

In April 1918, after some months stay in Russia, Masaryk went to the USA. On the one hand he needed the support of the American government for his plans, on the other hand there were important Czech and Slovakian emigrant associations in the USA, which he intended to unify. Important contact persons in the USA were Karel Pengler (press office, liaison office between the associations in America) and Vojta Beneš, brother of E. Beneš and responsible for financial affairs of the emigrant associations. On May 31st 1918, Czech and Slovakian exile groups concluded in Pittsburgh a basic agreement about the new Czecho-Slovakian state to be founded. The Slovakians were promised autonomy and equal rights.
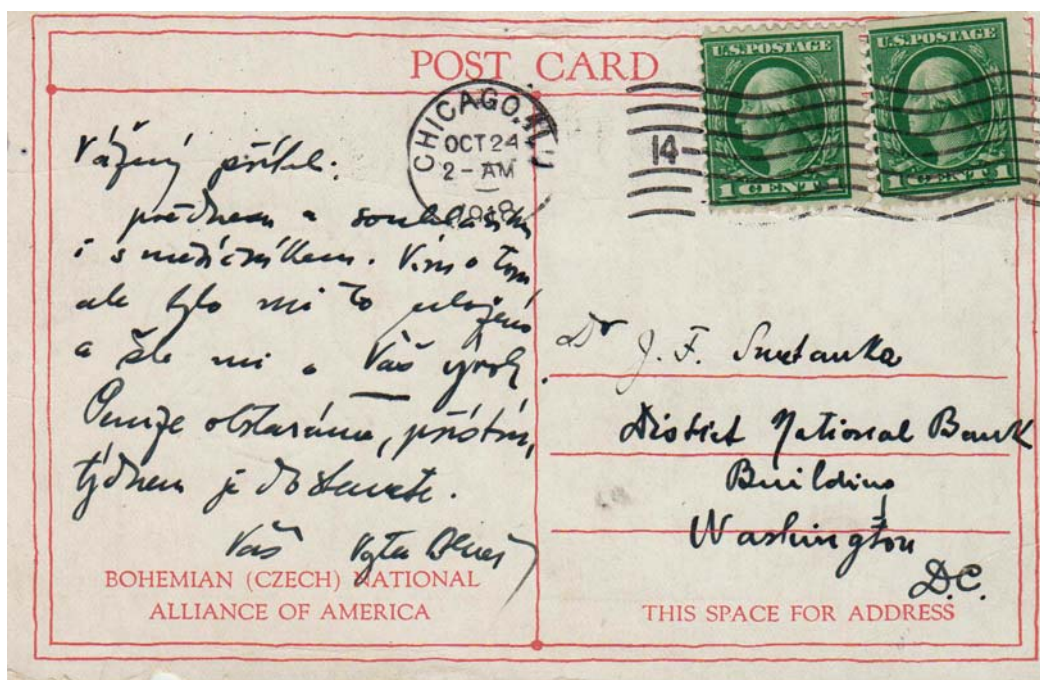
Fig 8: Autograph Postcard of Vojta Beneš, written from Chicago to Washington, October 24th 1918
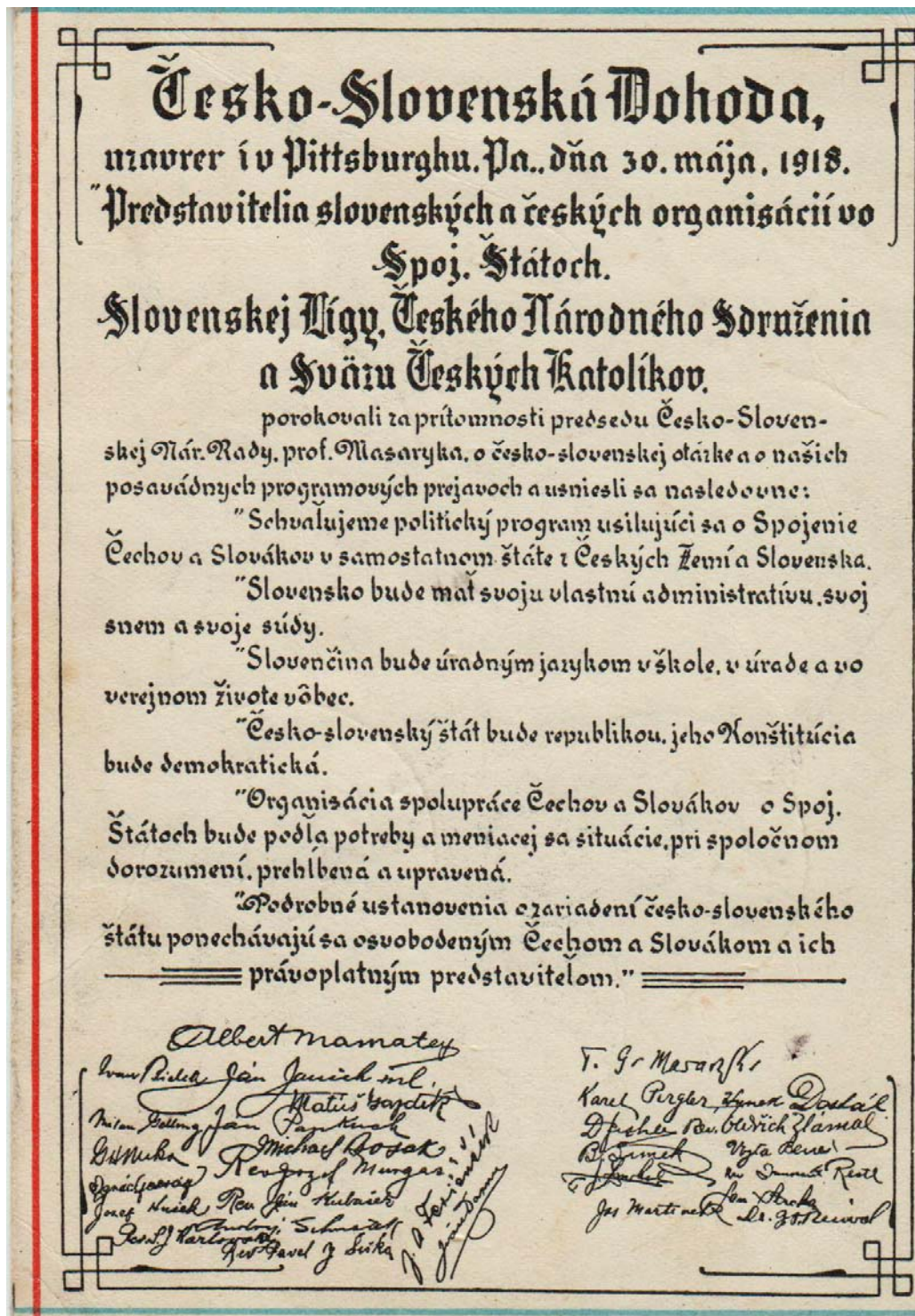
Fig 7: Picture postcard: The Pittsburgh agreement

After the conclusion of the Pittsburgh agreement Masaryk succeeded in getting the recognition of the Allies for the Czecho-Slovak National Council as the base of the future government. France agreed on June 29th, Great Britain did so on August 9th and the USA on September 3rd 1918. On October 14th, 1918, Edvard Beneš declared the Council for Provisional Government with T.G. Masaryk as Prime Minister. On October 18th Masaryk proclaimed the independent Czechoslovak state ("Washington declaration").

Decisive factors for the recognition were:

❑ The interest of the Allies in the destruction of the Hapsburg Monarchy,

❑ The confirmation that the new state would have democratic structures and would guarantee the rights of minorities

❑ Last but not least the military importance of the Czechoslovak legions.

Fig 9: Censored postcard from the USA, addressed to a second lieutenant of the Czechoslovak army in France, October 21st 1918

On October 28th 1918, the Austro-Hungarian government accepted the conditions of the American President Wilson for the termination of the war. One of these conditions was the right of self-determination for peoples. On the same day independent Czechoslovakia was proclaimed, simultaneously in Prague, Washington D.C. and Geneva, where members of the provisional Czechoslovak government and representatives of the internal opposition met for the first time.

Fig 10: Historic document from the first meeting in Geneva: greetings card sent to Prague, October 28th 1918. Addressee was Jan Svečený , deputy of the Reichsrat. The card is signed by G. Habrman, E. Beneš, Karel Kramař, Štefan Osusky, Antonin Kalina and František Staněk.
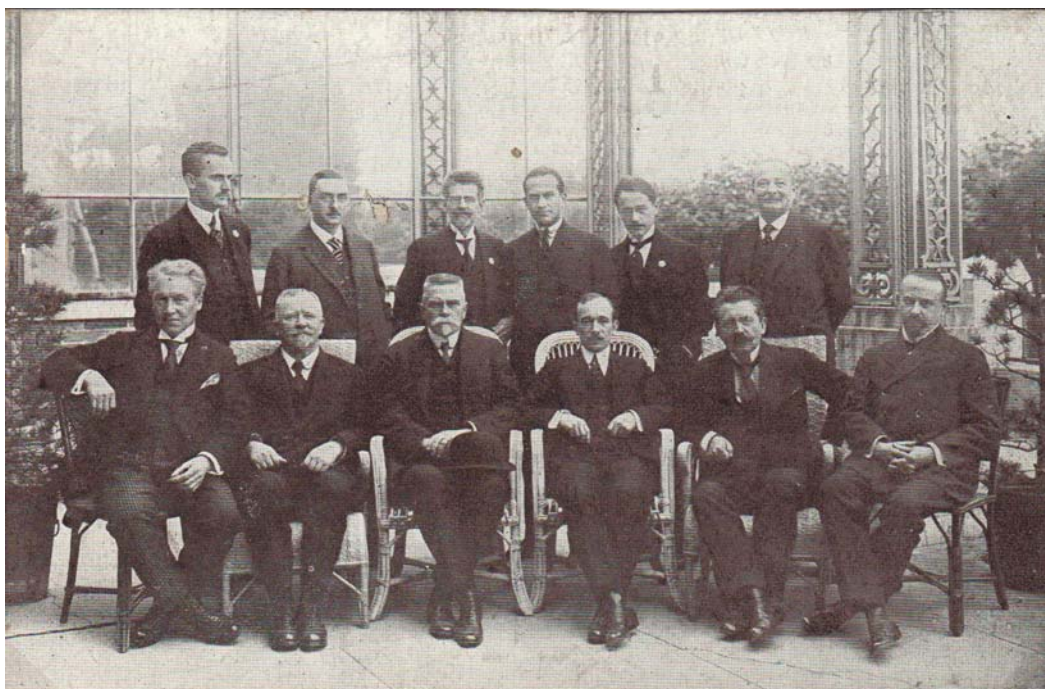
Fig 11: Picture postcard showing the members of the Czechoslovak delegation in Geneva
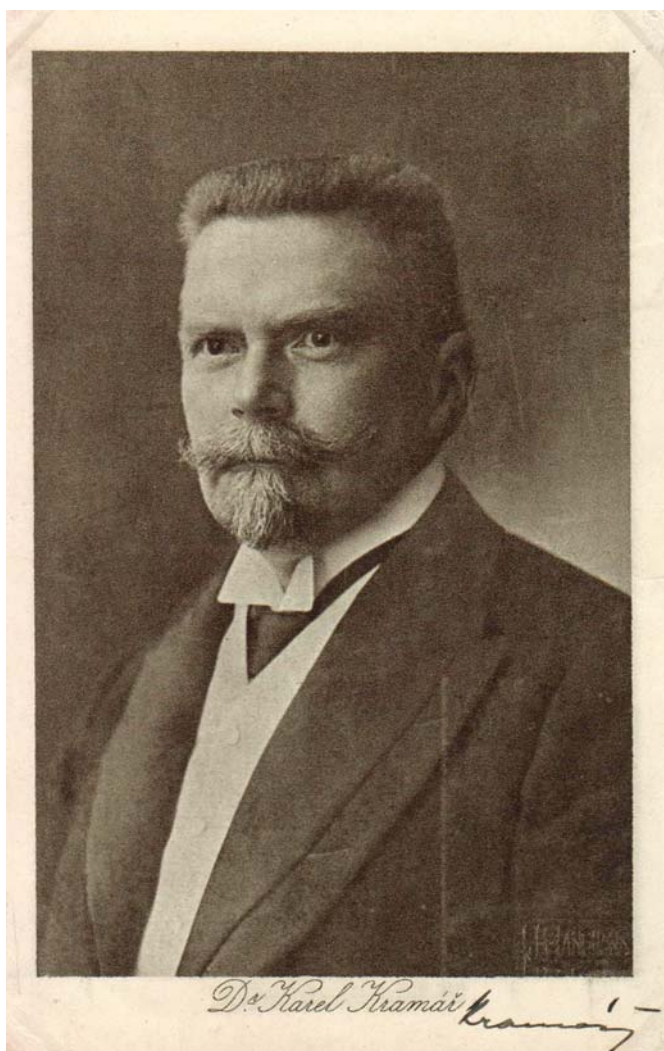
Karel Kramař was a member of the Young Czech Party and deputy of the Reichsrat since 1891; from 1901 he was group chairman and from 1907 also vice-president of the Reichsrat. After the beginning of the war he stood up for the independence of Czechs and Slovaks. In 1915 he was sentenced to death because of high treason, but later he benefitted from the imperial amnesty in 1917. In the summer of 1918 the Czech deputies of the Reichsrat elected him as chairman of the National Committee. On October 26th 1918 he went to Geneva, as leader of the delegation of the National Committee. Two days later he proclaimed the independence of Czechoslovakia. From November 1918 until June 1919 he was the first Prime Minister of the new state.

Fig 12: Picture postcard, signed by Kramař

Slovakia had no clear borders before the war (it was part of "Upper Hungary"). During the war there was hardly any movement for independence. The convergence with the Czechs was mainly supported by emigrants. It was only at the manifestation of the Social Democrats on the occasion of May 1st 1918, when Dr. V. Šrobar claimed the right of self-determination "also for the Hungarian part of the Czechoslovak tribe". In mid-October a Slovakian National Council was created ("Slovenskej národnej rady"). At a meeting of some 100 representatives of different groups in Turčiansky Sv. Martin this National Council passed a declaration for the unity of the Czechoslovak people based on complete equality. The Hungarian offer for Slovakian autonomy within Hungary was rejected. A respective telegram, signed by Matúš Dúla, chairman of the Council, was sent to the National Committee in Prague.

Fig 13: Letter of November 16th 1918 to M. Dúla; postmark "Hungarian Republic"

Fig 14: Commemorative Postcard from 1988 on the occasion of
the 70th Anniversary of the Turčiansky Sv. Martin telegram

On October 18th Emperor Charles I issued a manifesto on the transformation of the monarchy into a federation. This came too late. On October 28th the independence of Czechoslovakia was proclaimed. Slovenes and Croatians became co-founder of the new South Slavic state on October 29th. Hungary terminated the Union with Austria on October 31st. Thereby Austria-Hungary was dissolved. Charles I resigned on November 11th and the "Republik Deutsch-Österreich" was proclaimed. The majority-German-speaking regions of Bohemia and Moravia declared their intention to join Deutsch-Österreich. Czechoslovak military prevented this connection by December 18th. The Treaty of St. Germain confirmed that these regions should belong to Czechoslovakia. The new Republic of Austria was forced to give up the prefix "Deutsch".

Fig 15: Letter from Manetin (Manětín), October 30th 1918; German-excised cancel (originally bilingual); stamps of the empire overprinted "Finis Austriae" ("The end of Austria")

On November 14th 1918, a revolutionary National Assembly passed a provisional constitution and elected T.G. Masaryk as President and Karel Kramař as Prime Minister. This assembly consisted of 216 Czech members (representatives of Czech political parties according to the 1911 election results) and 40 co-opted Slovaks. There were no members of German nationality or from the other minorities involved. On February 29th 1920 the National assembly (which had meanwhile expanded to 300 deputies) passed the definitive constitution of the Č.S.R. Only at the following elections to the parliament did Germans and other minorities participate.

Fig 16: Registered express letter from Nový Jičín (Neu-Titschein) to
the president of the National Assembly, F. Tomášek (July 3rd 1919).

Problems of the new state: minorities, borderlines and separatist movements

The Czecho-Slovak movement for independence strove for a nation state, since the multinational state Austria-Hungary was no longer (or not in adequate time) able to solve the problems of its smaller nations. The problem: the newly-founded Czechoslovakia was just another multinational state – even if the protagonists of the new state had another self-conception. According to the census of 1921 there were Czechs (51.5%), Slovaks (14%), Germans (23.4%), Hungarians (5.6%), Ruthenians and Ukrainians (3.5%), Poles and others (2.1%). The circumstances of Czechoslovakia's formation were problematic:

□   Germans, Hungarians and Poles were not involved in the elaboration of the constitution (the German parties boycotted the constitutional assembly);

□   The preamble of the constitution mentions a "Czechoslovak People", and only this one;

□   The "Czechoslovak language" (does it exist?) was declared to be the only official language of the country.
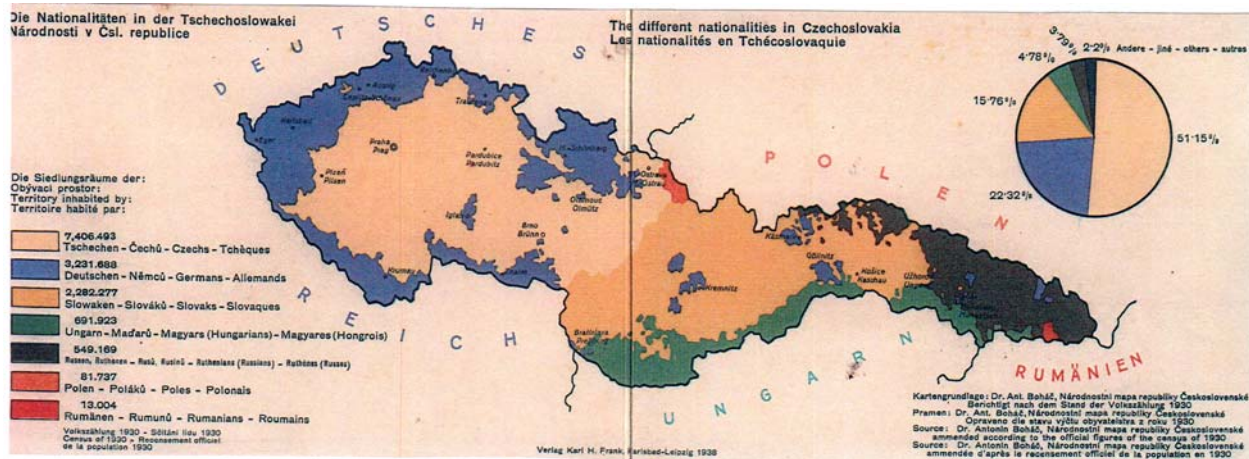
Fig 17: Map of the nationalities in Czechoslovakia

The numerically most important minority, the Germans, referred to the right of self-determination which had been proclaimed by President Wilson, and they contrasted it with the historic-territorial right of the state which was claimed by the Czechs. On October 29th and 30th 1918 the German deputies from Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia which had been elected for the Reichsrat in Vienna proclaimed for their settlement areas the provinces **"Deutschböhmen"** (capital Reichenberg/Liberec) and **"Sudetenland"**(capital Troppau/Opava) as parts of Deutsch-Österreich. On November 3rd the provinces **"Böhmerwaldgau"** in South Bohemia and **"Deutschsüdmähren"** in Moravia followed. So the new state was threatened by separation.
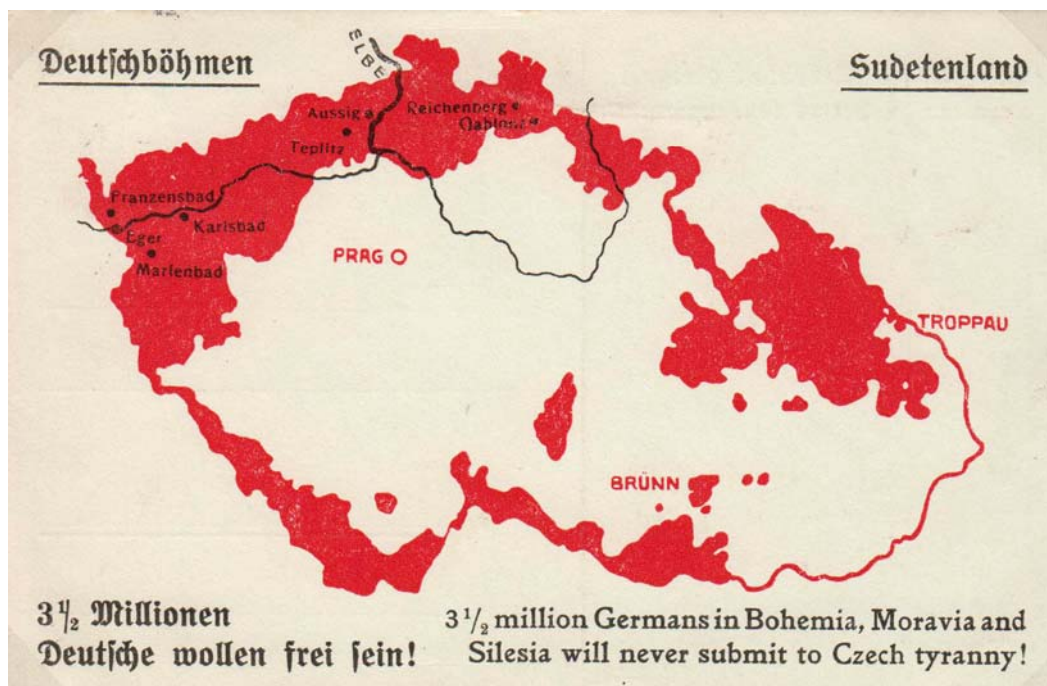
Fig 18: Propaganda postcard from 1919, showing the areas of Bohemia,
Moravia and Silesia which were settled mainly by Germans

Deutschböhmen, the largest of the disloyal provinces, had some 2.23 million inhabitants; 2.07 million of them considered themselves as Germans (according to the 1919 census). Following the proclamation of the province as a part of Deutsch-Österreich, a Provincial Government was formed in Reichenberg (Liberec), on October 29th 1918. The Governor was Rudolf Lodgman van Auen, from November 5th. Administrative bodies were established which were focused on Vienna, not on Prague. As to the Postal service, the "Deutsch-Österreichische Postdirektion" for Deutschböhmen was established in Aussig (Ústi nad labem) by decree of the General Postal direction in Vienna, November 10th 1918.
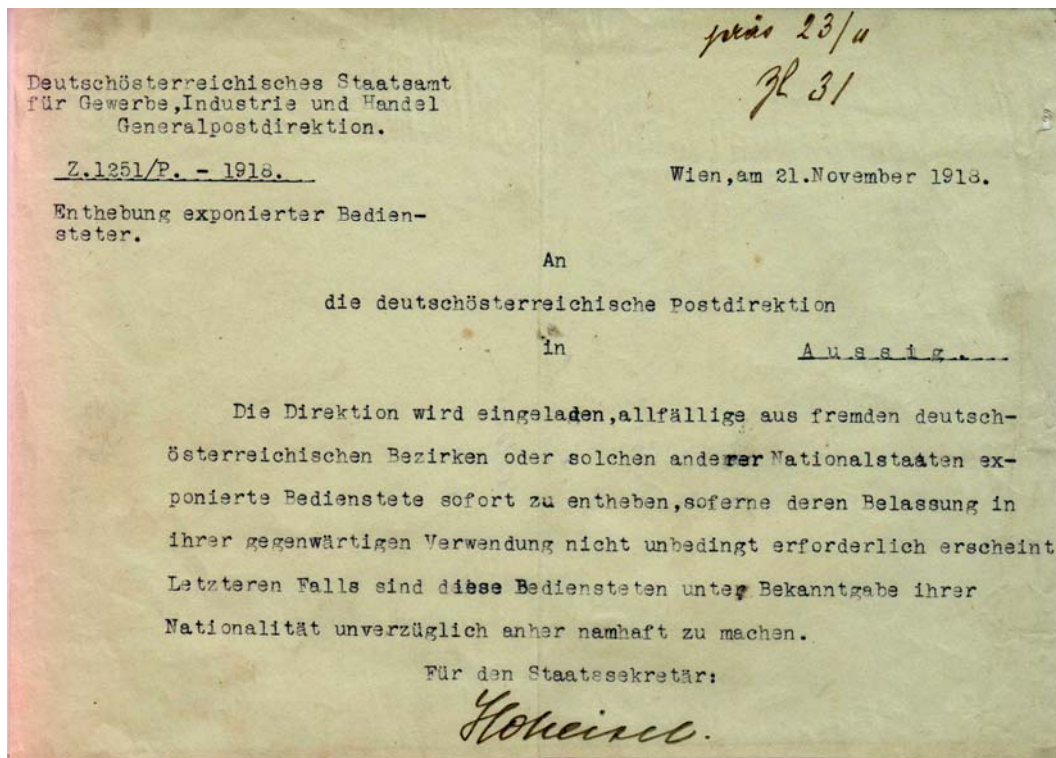
Fig 19: Official instruction by the General Postal Direction in Vienna to the Postal Direction at Aussig, November 21st 1918, concerning procedures with non-German employees
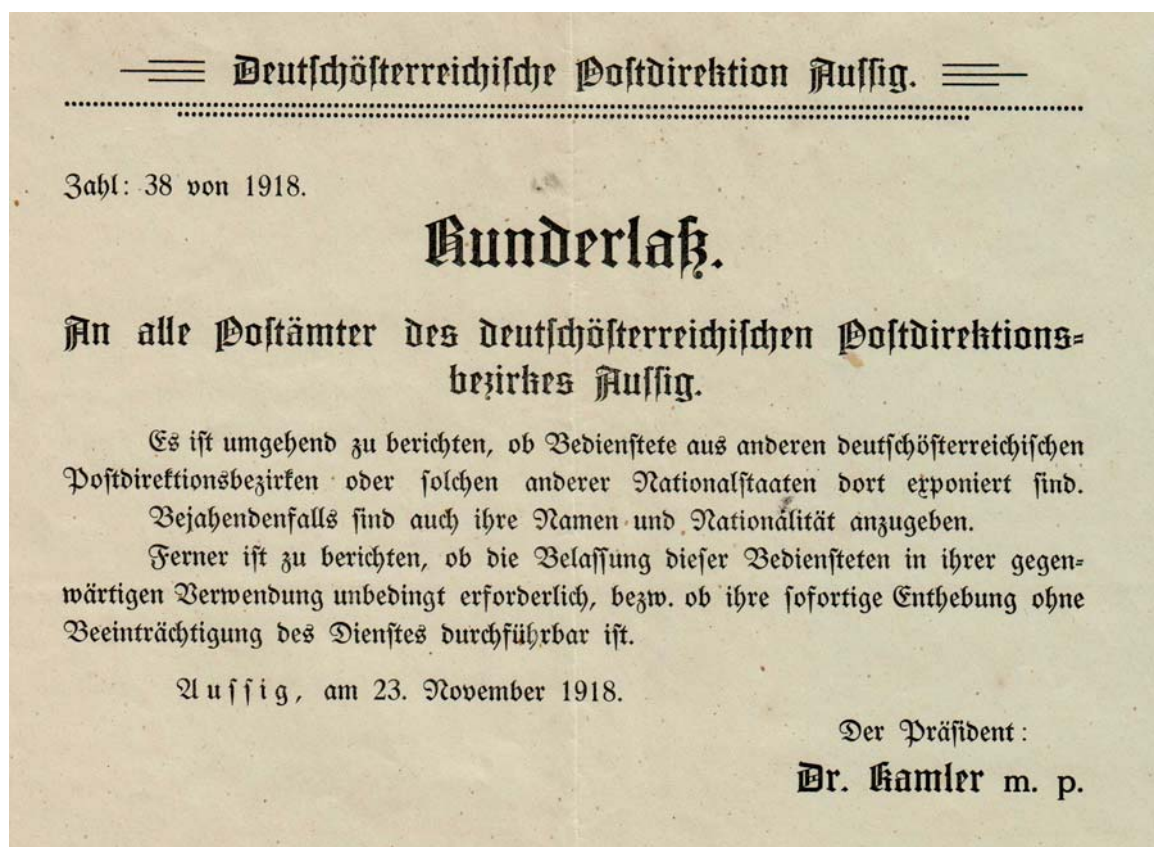
Fig 20: Circular by the Postdirektion Aussig fulfilling the instruction from Vienna, November 23rd 1918

Fig 21: Answer by the Postal office Marschendorf (Maršov), December 3rd 1918

Employees of post offices in Deutschböhmen were supposed to take an oath through which they pledged loyalty to the German-Austrian state. This created conflicts for those who felt as a member of the new Czechoslovak state. If they refused the oath they were dismissed.

Fig 22: Statement of a postal assistant from Leitmeritz (Litoměřice)
about his refusal of the oath, November 25th 1918

From mid-November Czechoslovak military started to recapture the separatist provinces. By December 19th 1918, all regions were occupied and *de facto* subjected to Czechoslovak sovereignty. According to the Treaty of St. Germain Austria was supposed to give up all Bohemian and Moravian regions.
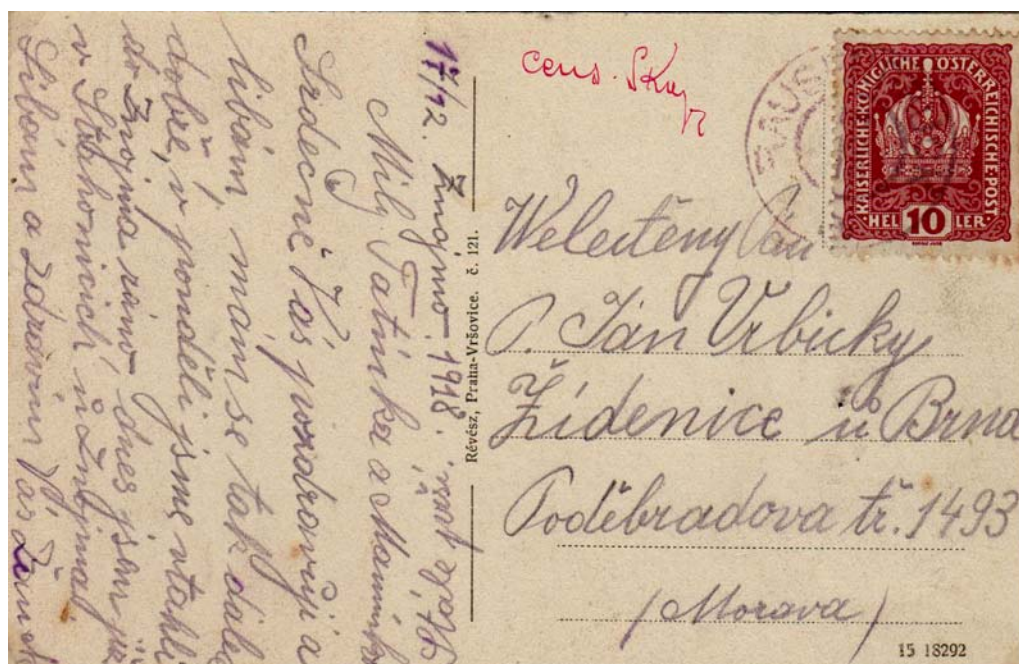
Fig 23: Censored picture postcard written by a Czechoslovak soldier
from Znojmo (Znaim), December 17th 1918: "...on Monday we moved into Znojmo..."

The Slovakian territory had no historic borders. In its South-Eastern part there were armed conflicts with Hungary about the demarcation lines. On July 4th 1919, the Hungarian troops were forced to withdraw. Under the peace treaty of Trianon (June 4th 1920) Hungary had to hand over important parts of the former Upper Hungary to Czechoslovakia, among them regions with a majority Hungarian population.

Fig 24: Military courier mail from the headquarters in Prague (January 4th 1919), sent to "Wilsonove Město", as the Slovak capital was briefly called in 1919 in honour of the American president. The former official name of the city was Pressburg until 1867, then Poszony; from 1919 it was Bratislava.

Fig 25: Fieldpost card from Csap (Čop) in South-Eastern Slovakia, sent by a
soldier from the 88th Czechoslovak infantry regiment, May 21st 1919

For the settlement of **border disputes between (German-)Austria and Czechoslovakia** an international
border commission was constituted. It settled in Horní Dvořiště (Oberhaid) close to the border with Upper
Austria. Horní Dvořiště was a frontier station and the first place which was passed by T.G. Masaryk when he
came back from his exile on December 20th 1918.
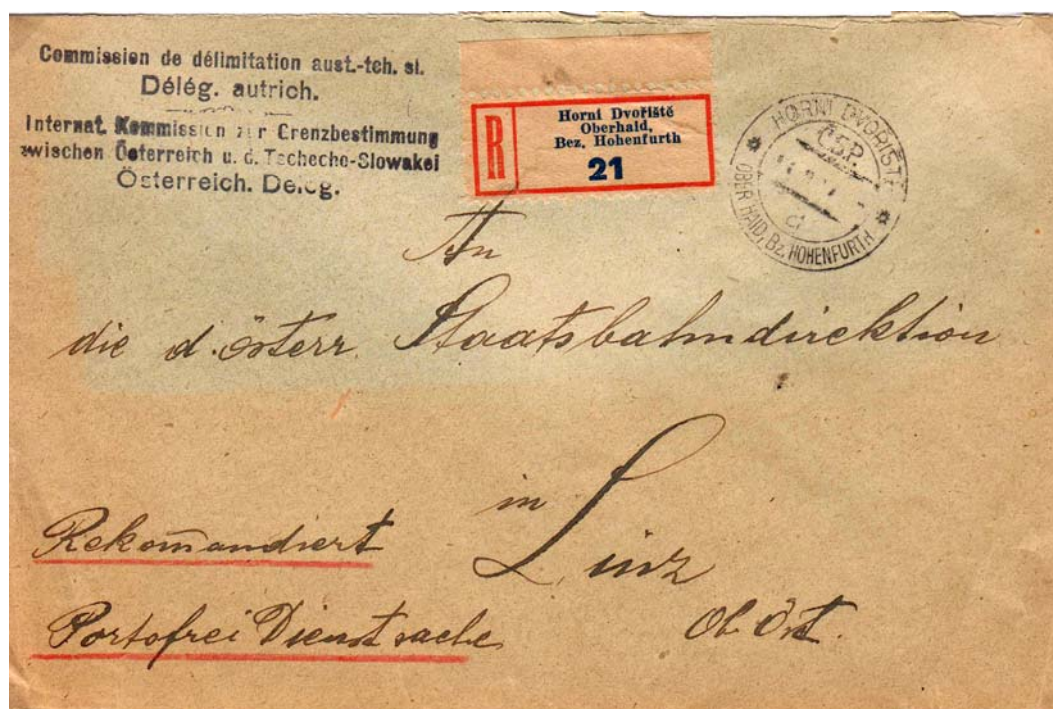
Fig 26: Letter from the Austrian delegation at the international border
commission in Horní Dvořiště, sent to Linz

Fig 27: Philatelic influenced postcard, sent July 31st 1920 from Gmunt v Čechách; mixed franking of Czechoslovak and German-Austrian stamps. This was possible only for 3 days, after the transfer of Gmunt (which used to be part of the Lower Austrian Gmund) to Czechoslovakia. In 1920 Gmunt was renamed "České Velenice".

Fig 28: The map shows the plebiscite area with the final border line

The former administrative district **Ostschlesien (Eastern Silesia)** of the Crown land Austrian Silesia (the former duchy of Teschen) was a controversial region between Poland and Czechoslovakia. That's why during the peace negotiations in Paris the decision was made to organize a plebiscite. An inter-allied commission was established for the supervision of the plebiscite. The commission arrived in Teschen on February 1st 1920, and gave the order to use Polish or Czech stamps with the overprint "SO 1920" (for the Czech administrative district, according to a provisional demarcation line from 1918) and "S.O. 1920" (for the Polish district). The stamps were used from February 13th 1920. The planned plebiscite did not take place because the differences were solved by arbitration award on July 28th 1920. The stamps were officially valid until August 11th 1920 in Czechoslovakia, until September 1st 1920 in Poland.

Fig 29: Letter from Oderberg 2 (Bohumin 2), sent March 2nd 1920;
mixed franking of Czech stamps with and without **SO 1920** overprint

Fig 30: Letter with Polish **S.O. 1920** overprints from the divided city of Teschen (Cieszyn),
sent to Prague on April 11th with bilingual (German-Polish) postmarks.

Postal services of the new republic: The beginning

During the first weeks after the declaration of independence **Scouts** managed the local postal service for some time. For this purpose particular stamps were used (November 7th – 25th 1918). The postage was paid to the courier by the recipient.

Fig 31: Stamps of Scout's Postal service (showing different shades of blue)
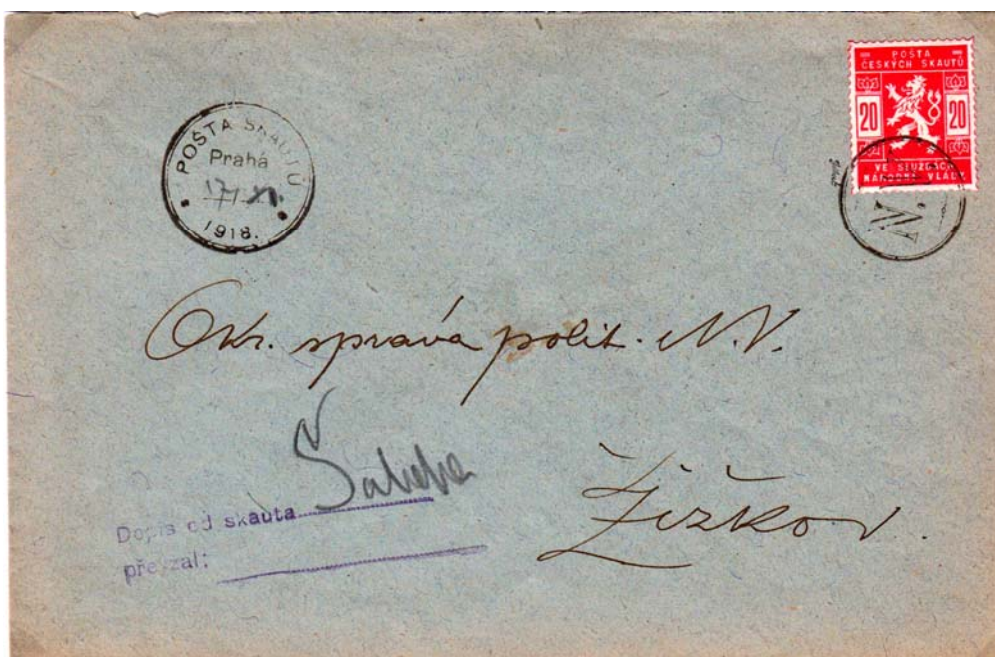
Fig 32: Letter from November 17th 1918, franked with 20h, postmark "POŠTA SKAUTU 1918" and "NV" (Národní Výbor), handwritten marking of delivery by the courier

From December 18th 1918, **the first set of stamps** was **issued by the Czechoslovak Post**. The famous Art Nouveau artist **Alfons Mucha** (1860 – 1939) designed the up-to-now most popular motif of Czechoslovak stamps, **the Hradčany issue**.

Fig 33: Black print with picture of A. Mucha, issued on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Hradčany issue (1958)

[Original margins trimmed. Ed.]
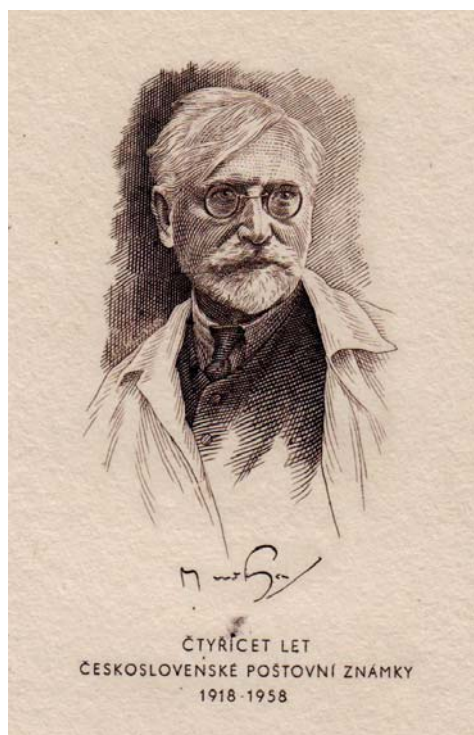
Fig 34: Express letter from Kralovice u Plzně (Kralowitz bei Pilsen),
February 12th 1919; Hradčany mixed franking, German name excised from postmark

The constitution of Czechoslovakia

The circumstances of Czechoslovakia's formation were complicated. Nonetheless during the following years a functioning parliamentary democracy developed, to which also the members of the other nations eventually contributed. The system was based on the principles of sovereignty of the people and separation of powers. Legislation was allocated to the National Assembly, which had two Houses, the House of Deputies and the Senate; elections were based on universal suffrage.
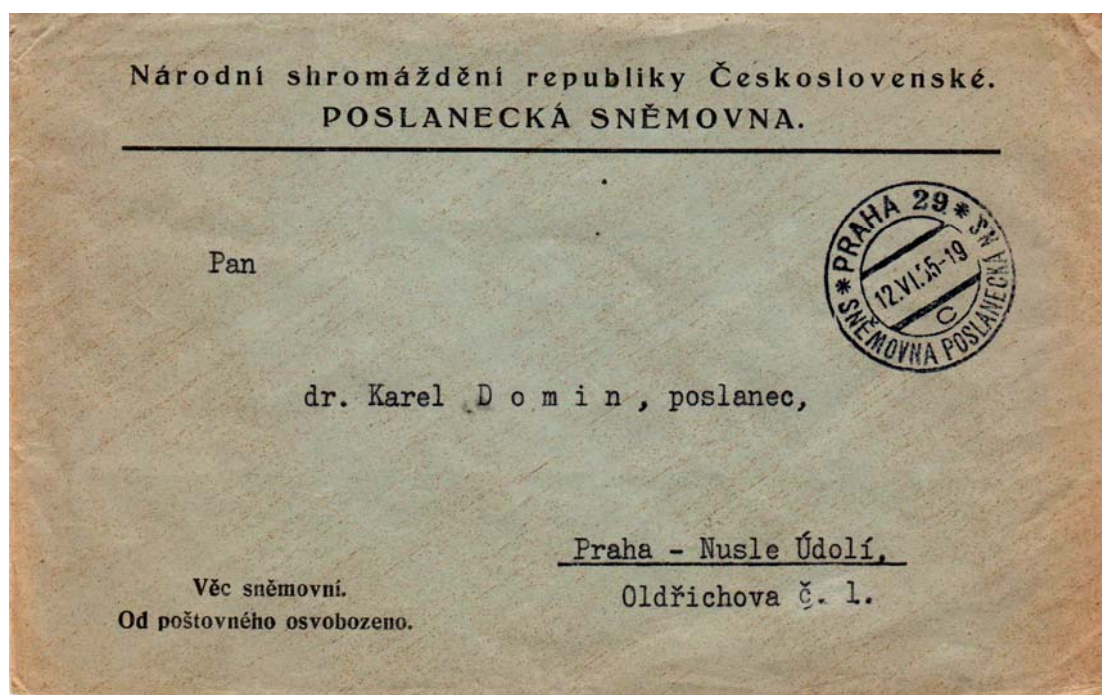
Fig 35: Letter from the House of Deputies, sent to a deputy (1935);
postmark of the House of Deputies (Praha 29, Sněmovna Poslanecká)

The president of the Republic was the head of state. He was not only representative of the state, but he also appointed the government and was supreme commander of the army. The first president was T.G. Masaryk (1920-35), his successor was Edvard Beneš (1935-38), who held the office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs during the reign of Masaryk (1918-35).

Fig 36: Registered letter from March 1930, sent to President Masaryk, franked with a stamp of 3 KČ, issued on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of Masaryk; receiving cancellation of the president's office.

Czechoslovakia received approximately 20% of the area and 25% of the population of the Hapsburg monarchy, but 66% of the industrial capacity. It developed into one of the most industrialized countries of Europe during the 20s. During the 30s it was the only democratic state in Central Europa, surrounded by fascist and authoritarian states, until its destruction by Hitler in 1938/39.

Hartmut Liebermann, 19/06/2017

THE END OF WWI – COLLAPSE
OF THE ITALIAN FRONT

by Roger Morrell

Introduction

During WWI the Italian Front fluctuated in location, back and forth, except for the western end (Trentino) where it was remarkably static. After suffering huge casualties in the alpine fighting during 1916-1917, after the Battle of Caporetto in October 1917 the Italians found themselves pushed well south of the pre-WWI border, and rather depleted in men and arms. The Austrian side, supported by the Germans, however, outran their supply lines, and had to retreat somewhat to regroup. Around this time the British and French started to reinforce the Italian effort, both with troops and with war matériel. The balance in favour of the Italians turned when the Germans redeployed their support to the Western Front ready for the upcoming spring 1918 offensive, which left the Austrians on their own to decide how to win the war on this front. A two-pronged attack was planned in June 1918, but was immediately repulsed by the Italians at the Second Battle of Piave, the sequence of events leaving a large number of unsupported Austrian troops on the west bank of the swollen Piave River and no means of retreat with all the bridges destroyed. An estimated 20,000 drowned trying to cross the river.

However, the Italians were in no position to take the advantage and press home a decisive attack because Piave River was recognised as presenting the same problem to the Italians as it did to the Austrians – the lack of support lines once crossed. The advantage only came after consolidation of Italian and Allied forces from the Western Front.

By October 1918, Italy finally had enough soldiers to mount an offensive, by which time Austro-Hungary was falling apart. Czechoslovakia, Croatia, and Slovenia were proclaiming their independence and troops started deserting, disobeying orders and retreating. The Italian attack targeted Vittorio Veneto, across the Piave River (Fig.1). The Italian Army broke through a gap near Sacile and poured in reinforcements that crushed the Austrian defensive line. On 3 November, 300,000 Austrian soldiers surrendered, and an Armistice was agreed which was signed in the Villa Giusti, near Padua, on 3 November, taking effect at 3 pm on 4 November. Also on 3 November, the Italian Navy took control Trieste. By the end of hostilities, Italy had seized control of the entire portion of Dalmatia that had been guaranteed to it by the secret 1915 Treaty of London. From 5–6 November 1918, Italian forces were reported to have reached Lissa, Lagosta, Sebenico, and other towns on the Dalmatian coast. Admiral Enrico Millo declared himself Italy's 'Governor of Dalmatia'.

The Italian army also marched north uncontested into the North Tyrol, and occupied Innsbruck for a period. The former Austrian provinces of Südtirol (Trentino-Alto Adige), Friaul-Julisch Venetien (Fruili-Venezia-Giulia, but nowadays only Pordenone, Udine, Gorizia and Trieste provinces), the whole of Istria, and parts of the Dalmatian coast and islands as far south as Lissa / Viš became part of the expanded Italy. However, tensions with the new Yugoslavia resulted in the 1920 Treaty of Rapallo, which made some adjustments to Italy's Dalmatian holding, limiting it to Zara, the island of Arbe / Rab and a few other islands. Eventually, the former Hungarian seaport of Fiume and nearby Sušak were formally ceded to Italy by the 1924 Treaty of Rome. The Italians also marched north uncontested through most of South Tirol (accompanied by some British forces: see 'Austria' 195 pp 2-8, and Ref 2) and occupied Innsbruck for a period.

Philatelic goings-on

In addition to the Italian military post system being extended into the occupied zone (e.g. Fig.2), the immediate impact of the Italian occupation was, of course a degree of chaos in the civilian postal service. For one thing, the currency in the occupied areas was different to normal Italian centisimi and lira. To mark the occupation, the Austrian stamps and postal stationery available at post offices were gathered up and overprinted in three lines: 'Regno d'Italia / Trentino /3 nov.18 /' (appearing on 11 November 1918, Fig.3), or the error-prone 'Regno d'Italia / 3.XI.18 / Venezia-Giulia' (14 November 1918, Fig.4).

Fig 1: Battle of Vittorio Veneto, 24 October – 3 November 1918 (see Ref 1)
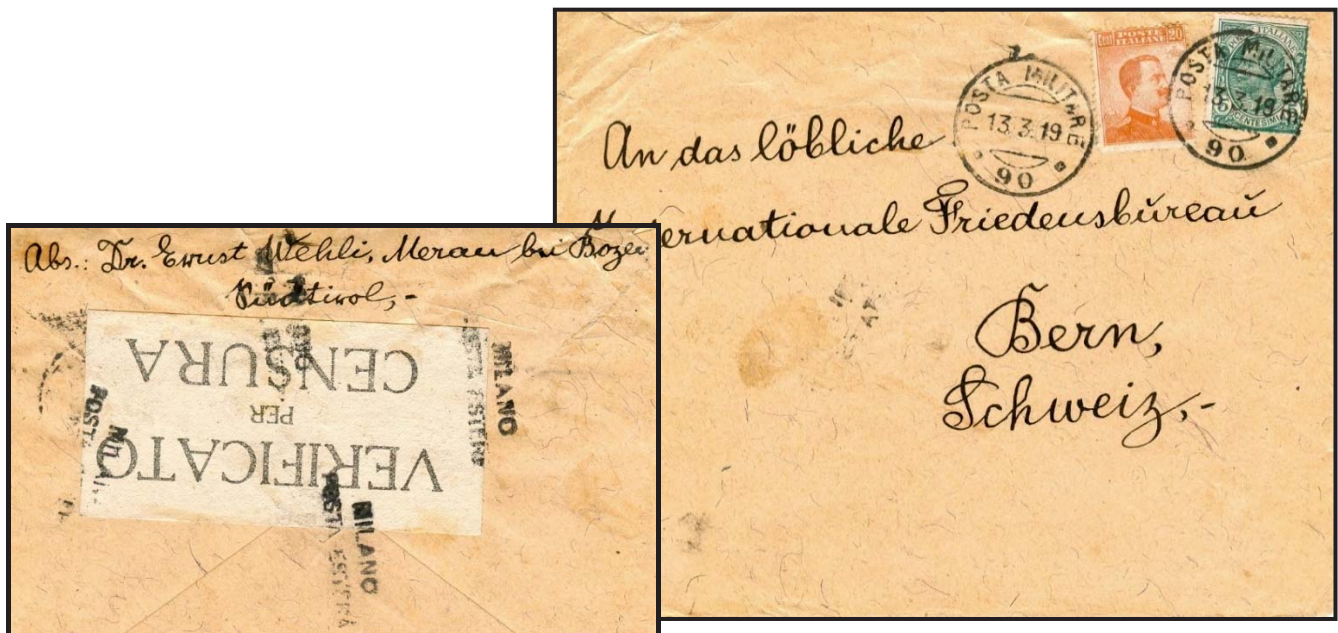
Fig.2 : Letter sent from 'Meran bei Bozen' to Switzerland via the Italian military postal system with Italian stamps and Posta Militare 90 datestamps of 13 March 1919, opened and censored in Milan.

These issues saw some non-philatelic use, but despite the straitened times philatelists were soon on the scene, and much mail is philatelic (Fig.5). The 10h postal stationery card was similarly treated (Fig.6), but in a different font.

Fig.3: Trentino overprints on Austrian stamps – guarantees required! (11 only known of the 10Kr).

(a)   (b)   (c)

(d)

(e)

(f)

Fig.4: (a, b) Venezia Giulia sheet overprint on Austrian stamps; (c) the hand overprint on only 37 of the 10Kr value; examples of errors: (d) missing dot after '18', (e) missing '3. XI', (f) serifed 'X' and weak 'I'.

Fig.5: Venezia Giulia overprint stamps used in Trieste on 20 November 1918 on a registered letter to Bâle/Basel. Censored in Bologna.
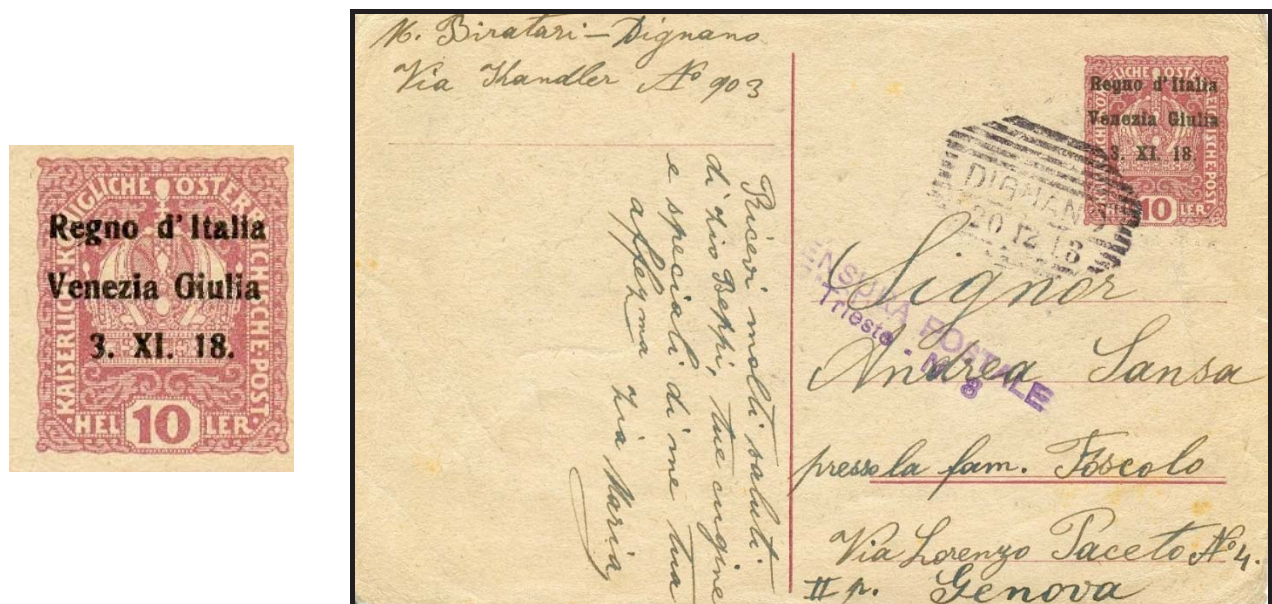
Fig 6: Overprinted Austrian postal stationery using a different typeface to that for the stamps (although similar to that on the 10Kr value), and an example used in Dignano on 20 December 1918 and sent to Genova (Genua), censored in Trieste.

These Austrian stamps were quickly substituted on 20 December 1918 by a series of nine Italian stamps overprinted 'Venezia Tridentina' [1] (Italian currency implied, for use in Trentino, Fig.7a) added to which were three further stamps surcharged in Austrian currency, centisimi di corona, issued on 1 February 1919 (SG says January), Fig.7b. There was a similar series overprinted 'Venezia Giulia' (Italian currency implied, Fig.8a) issued on 6 December 1918, and two further stamps additionally surcharged in centisimi on 20 February 1919

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[1] 'Tridentina' as the province name comes from the name of the Roman town Tridentum (now Trento), a convenient stop on the Roman Road north to Innsbruck. It was named thus in honour of the god Neptune, usually depicted with a trident.

(Fig.8b). Postage due stamps were also overprinted for Venezia Giulia. From January 1919 onwards these issues were replaced by a unified issue of Italian stamps (postage, express and postage due) surcharged only in Austrian currency (centisimi di corona and corona, Fig.9). In Italian occupied Dalmatia, the Trentino and Venezia Giulia corona overprints were used until they were replaced in February 1921 by similar stamps but with the overprint in a sans-serif typeface, rather than serifed (Fig.10). The exception was the 1 lire stamp, which used an 'una corona' overprint from 1 May 1919, rather than the '1 corona' overprint used in Trentino and Venezia Giulia. Italian postal stationery was similarly treated in Venezia Giulia (Fig.11). Some examples of covers and cards are given in Figs. 12-15.

(a)   (b)

Fig.7: Venezia Tridentina overprint on Italian stamps.

(a)   (b)

Fig.8: Venezia Giulia overprint on Italian stamps

Fig.9: General issue in Austrian currency only

Fig.10: Dalmatian coast issues in Austrian currency only, using spelled out 'una corona' on the initial issue, and san-serif font on the later issues.

Fig.11: Italian 10 *centisimi* postal stationery card with overprints (a) 'Venezia Giulia' in serifed font with 3 November date, (b) 'Venezia Giulia' in block font, (c) 'Venezia Giulia' with Austrian currency added, (d) general issue in bold font, and (e) a variety in a weaker, uneven font.

Fig.12: (left) Letter mailed on 3 February 1919 from Meran/Merano to Amsterdam franked with mixed Italian overprint issues. Censored in Bologna.

Fig.13: (below) Insured letter mailed from Trieste Centro to 'Lucerna' / Luzern, Switzerland on 14 March 1919, franked with 65 *h* in general issue Austrian currency stamps. Censored in Trieste and Bologna.

Fig.14: Austrian currency overprinted Italian postal stationery card sent registered from Trieste Centro to Lucerne, Switzerland on 13 March 1919. Censored in Milan. Austrian registration label.

Fig.15: Italian postal stationery card overprinted with Austrian currency used from (Sveti) Filip Jakov (south of Zara/Zadar) on 1 November 1919 to Menzingen, Switzerland. Censored in Zara. An example from the short period of Italian rule before losing the town to Yugoslavia by the 1920 Treaty of Rapallo.

Fun and games with postage due stamps ensued in Trentino province. Apparently with official agreement, two post offices in Bozen / Bolzano (1 and 3) and also in a number of small offices including Algund, Naturns, Partschins, Tisens, Tscherms, Dorf Tirol / Tirolo and Lana (all near Meran / Merano), overcame a shortage of the overprinted Italian stamps to variously place handstamped 'T' or 'T in a circle' or 'T value' (Bozen 1), '(Value) / PORTO / S.T.' (S.T. = Segnatassa) (Bozen 3), 'TAXE' (Bozen), or 'Nachzahlung / Heller' (Dorf Tirol / Tirolo) on Austrian or Italian postage stamps. Some of these are represented in the Michel Austria Specialised catalogue, but for a full listing the reader is referred to the Sassone specialised catalogue. Some of the higher values were probably made for collectors, and never saw formal use. A selection of stamps is shown in Figs. 16-18.

Fig.16: provisional postage dues used in Bozen and Meran (a) plain 'T' handstamp, (b) 'T in a circle', (c) 'PORTO', (d) 'PORTO / S.T.' with or without figure, (e) 'TAXE and number', (f) plain number, (g) 'T number and bars'.

Fig.16: Provisional overprints on Austrian stamps made in Bozen / Bolzano. The cancelled-by-favour cover is dated 11 December 1918.

Fig.18: Unfranked letter posted in Kardaun / Cardano (east of Bozen) on 6 April 1919 to Bozen, and 'decorated' with 40h–worth of provisional postage due stamps (correct double deficiency) all postmarked Bozen 3 on the same day.
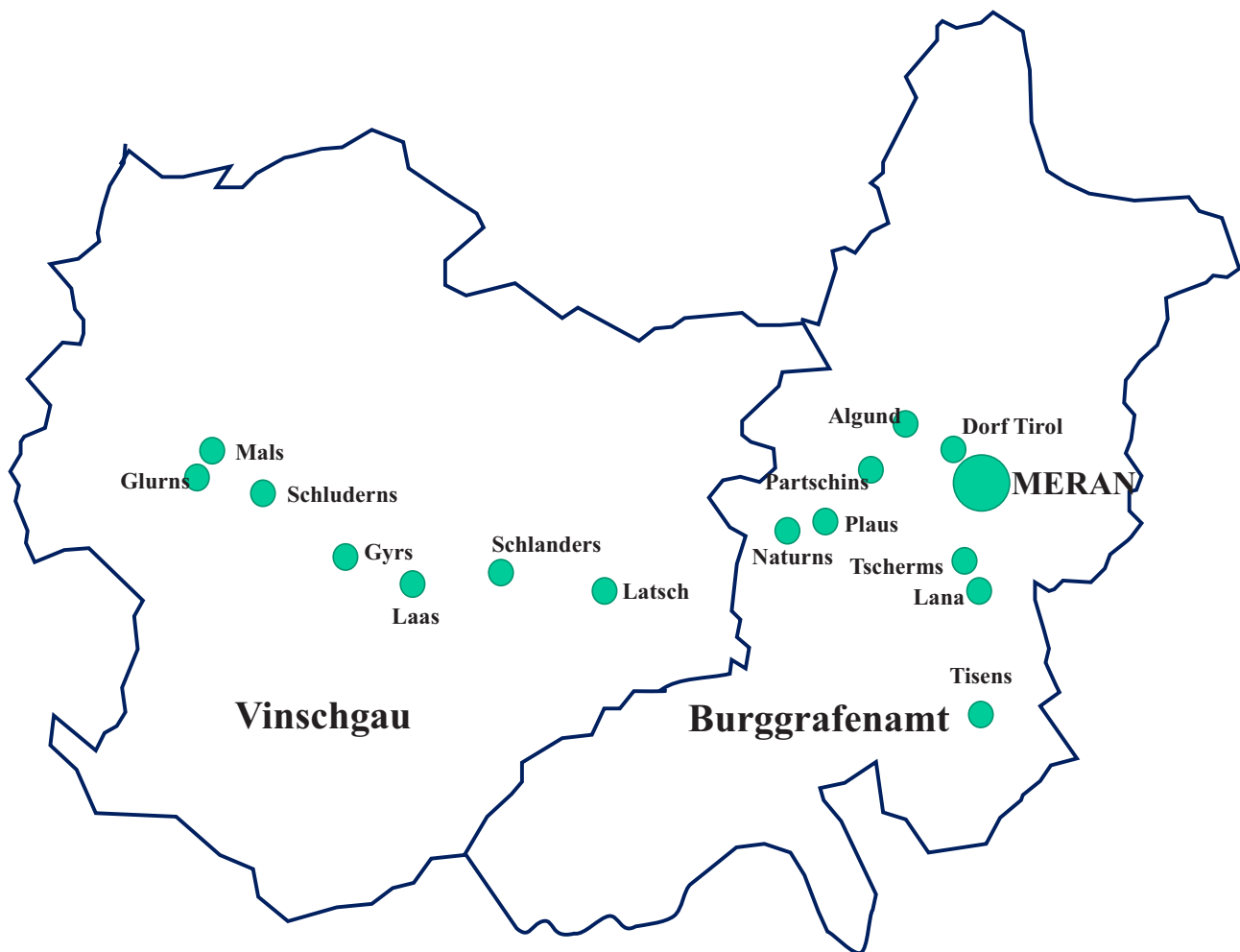
Fig.19: Sketch map of Meran and the upper Adige valley, with villages named.

The business community in the upper part of the Adige valley, the Vinschgau above Meran / Merano (Fig.19), decided that in the immediate aftermath of the Armistice when the postal services temporarily collapsed, a local service would be introduced to maintain communication, for which permission was granted by the occupying Italian military authorities. On 25 November 1918, a series of three stamps 2h, 5h and 10h bearing a numeral, and a rectangular border of Gothic script reading Hilfspost des Handelsgremium des Kurbezirkes Meran (Emergency post of the Business Committee of the Spa Region Meran) and the date '1918' was issued for use as a surcharge to be used in addition to the normal postal rate on, respectively, newspapers, postcards and letters travelling along the Adige valley, in order to fund a courier system (Fig.20). On 30 November 1918, the design was changed (Figs. 21, 22). The value in the centre was replaced by the Meran / Merano coat of arms, the text round the border became Gremium der Kaufmannschaft des Kurbezirkes Meran, and the value was written across the bottom in place of '1918'. These stamps were printed in Meran by the Pleticha book printing company in sheetlets of 9, 10 or 12 on coloured paper, with curious uneven tête-bêche positioning (Fig.23). The first issue was on gummed shiny paper, the second on plain paper not gummed. According to the Michel catalogue, postmarks are known from Algund / Lagundo, Partschins / Parcines, Naturs / Naturno, Schlanders / Silandro, Mals / Males Venosta and Töll / Tel, although there may be others (e.g. Fig.21b). This service finished on 15 December 1918 when normal post was restored. Numbers of stamps printed are in the low hundreds, with some particularly scarce paper colour varieties, and properly mailed items are sought after. Forgeries are known (e.g. Fig.24), and are recognisable by their consistent appearance, with more uniform alignment of the border bars, which are in short lengths. In the examples shown, the crescent-shaped marks to the lower left and upper right of the shield are missing.

Fig.20: First Merano local issue (a) 2h value used in Algund / Alguno, (b) same value used in Glurns / Glorenza, (c) 5h unused on matt paper (d) 10h value unused on shiny paper, (e) 2h correctly used on a newspaper sent from Algund to Schlanders, Vinschgau [2].

(a)   (b)   (c)   (d)

(e)

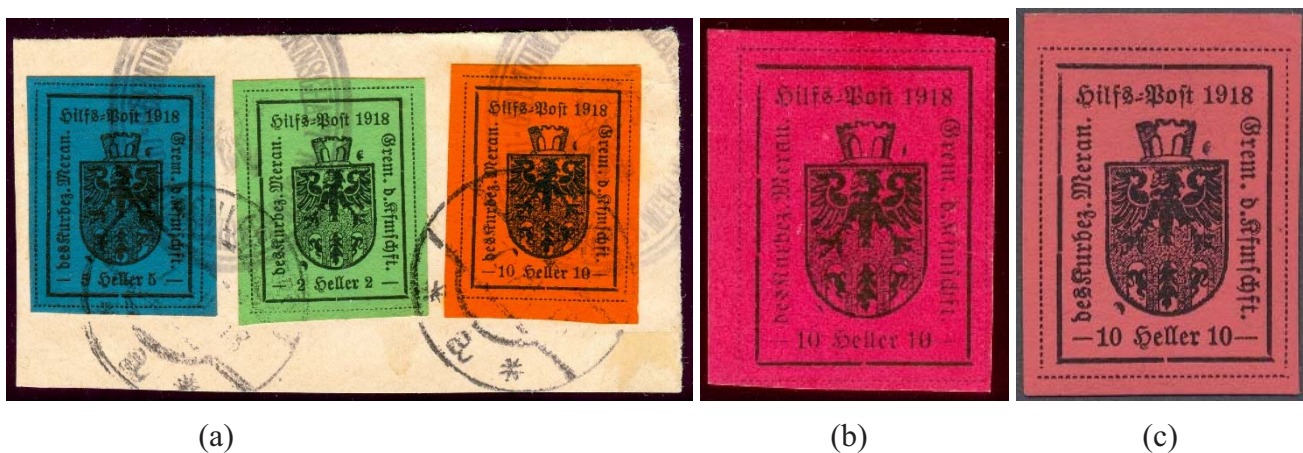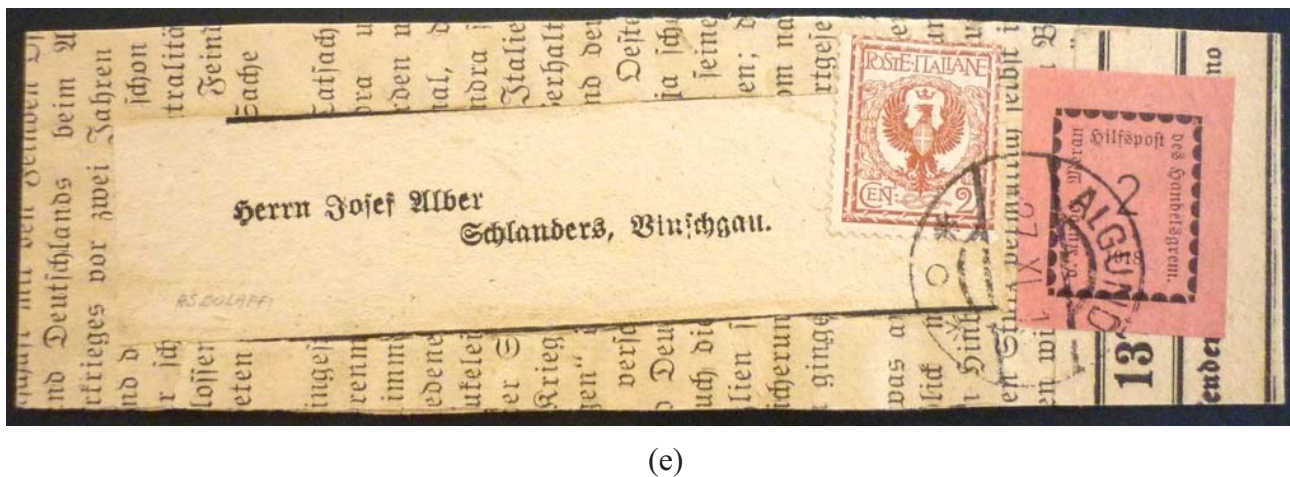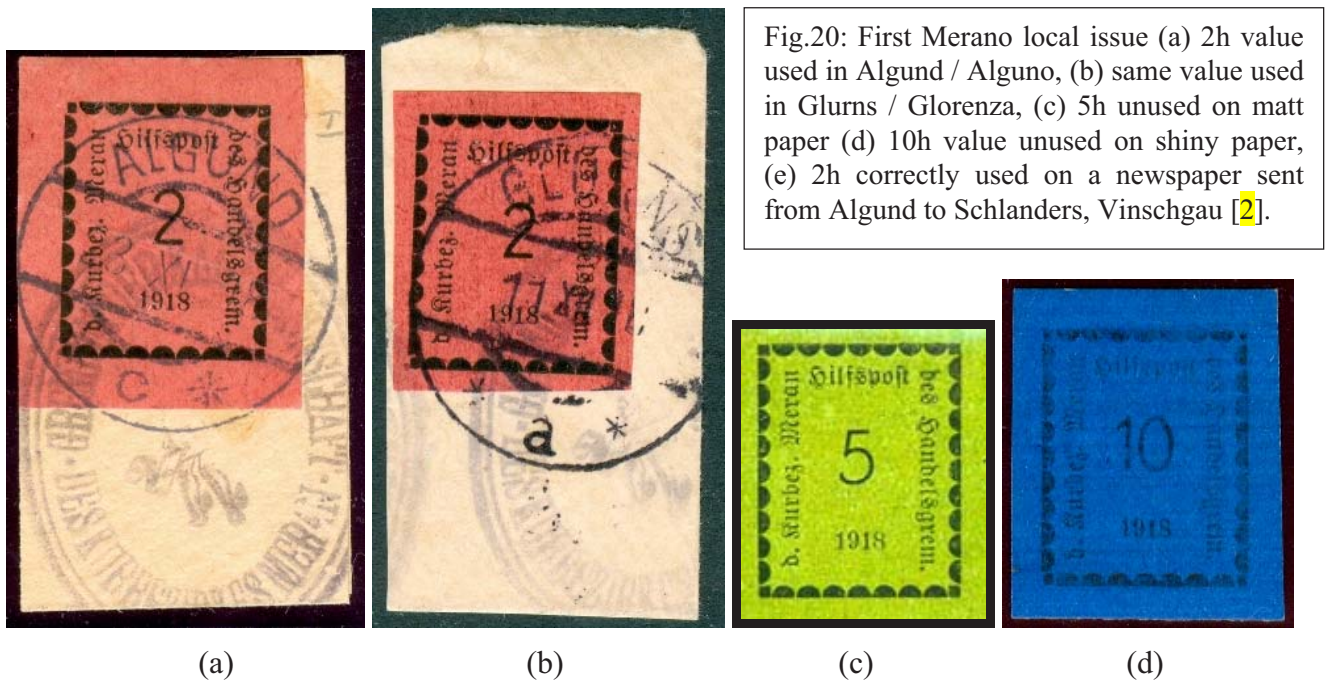(a)   (b)   (c)

Fig.21: Second Merano local issue (a) all three values (shown at 100%) used philatelically in Schlanders on 7 December 1918, (b, c) paper shades of the 10h value (shown at 150%).

Fig.22: Second Merano issue 5h correctly used on a local letter from Naturns to Schlanders. The large oval cachet, also seen in Figures 20a,b and 21a, is of the *Kaufmannschaft*.
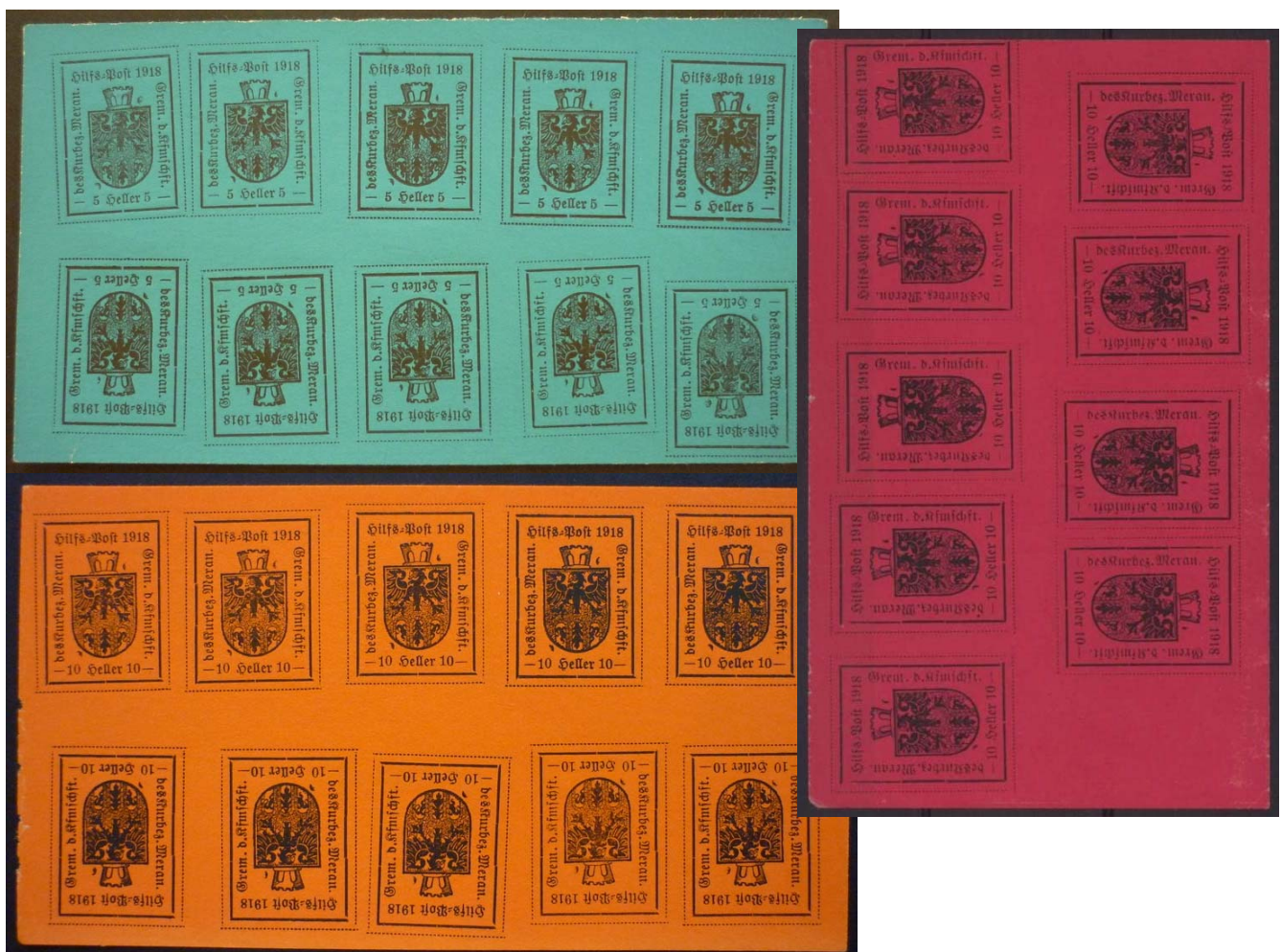

Fig.23: Example sheetlet layouts of the second Merano issue: 5h on green paper; 10h on purple paper; and 10h on orange paper.

Fig 24: Forgeries of the Merano issue. All the stamps in the sheetlet have the same frame line gap at the upper left (which varies considerably in the originals, red arrow), and are missing the two crescent moon features to the lower left and upper right of the shield (positions marked with white arrows).

Conclusions

While the average collector can never hope to 'complete' his collection of this material (as a glance at the catalogue will confirm), this is a fascinating short period of takeover by the Italian authorities. The Treaty of St Germain confirmed the transfer of the Südtirol, Friaul–Julisch Venetien, the Istrian peninsular, a strip of the Dalmatian coast and some of the islands to Italy. Italy also had a strong hand in Albania. Eventually Italy also annexed the former Hungarian seaport of Fiume. However, as a consequence of WWII, it lost most of the Istrian peninsular (except Trieste), Fiume and the Dalmatian coast to an enlarged Yugoslavia, but retained the alpine areas. Nevertheless, even a century later when one tours the Südtirol one still finds a very distinct Austrian flavour. I even saw models of Franz Josef and Sissi in a souvenir shop!

References

[1]   http://www.emersonkent.com/map_archive/battle_of_vittorio_veneto.htm (Figure 1)

[2]   http://www.europeana1914-1918.eu/en/contributions/16581#prettyPhoto (Figure 20d)

PATRIOTIC FRANKINGS?

by Keith Brandon

When postage stamps were first issued for the Austrian Empire on 1 June 1850, the five values had these specific purposes:

Empire except Lombardy & Venetia (kreuzer)		Lombardy & Venetia (centesimi)
1	yellow - printed matter to any destination (per loth)	5
2	black - local letter-rate, regardless of weight	10
3	red - for up to ten Austrian miles (per loth)	15
6	brown - for ten to twenty Austrian miles (per loth)	30
9	blue - for more than twenty Austrian miles (per loth)	45

It was of course possible to make up the distance rates with a combination of lower values rather than the single stamp provided. Such covers are scarcer than mail bearing a single red, brown or blue stamp. Covers bearing a combination of 1 and 2 kreuzer (or 5 and 10 centesimi) values are often described by dealers and auctioneers as "patriotic frankings" because the black and yellow stamps used together reflect the Habsburg colours.

In November 1858, the currency was reformed and a new series of stamps was issued, with the same colours for the same five purposes. In 1859, the black value was replaced by a green stamp, and the opportunity to post mail in the Habsburg colours was lost.

Although we are familiar with the red and white colours of the modern Austrian flag, the *national flag* (in a modern sense) of the Austrian Habsburg Monarchy, and the later Austrian Empire and the Cisleithanian part of Austro-Hungary until 1918, was black and yellow. These were the family colours of the Imperial House of Habsburg, and were themselves in part derived from the banner of the Holy Roman Empire. Everything official in the Austrian Empire, if it bore any colour at all, was black and yellow. As far as the postal service was concerned, the mail-coaches were black and yellow, as were registration labels when they were introduced. (Even today, the house-colours of the Austrian Post Office are black and yellow).

It is natural therefore that in the mid-nineteenth century these colours should be associated with the Imperial regime and Emperor Franz Josef. But the Empire was not a homogenous Habsburg-loving, German-speaking entity. Many national groupings either wanted to have their own country (such as the Czechs) or to be part of another country (as in the Italian-speaking areas). Insurrection ranged from protests, demonstrations and even revolution to silent protest such as putting the Emperor's-head stamps upside-down on the envelope.

Faced with this, the Habsburg loyalists (usually the German-speakers) had their own cause for concern, particularly if they were the minority in a part of the Empire, and they wanted to show their support for the regime.

It is entirely plausible that Habsburg supporters would want to show their feelings by franking a letter in the Habsburg colours, but how can we tell? Maybe the sender, or their post-office, had run out of the higher value, or just wanted to use up some lower values in the desk drawer. In the writer's view we cannot tell if a black-and-yellow franking has patriotic intent, and there is no justification for describing them as patriotic frankings.

The first cover is typical - a folded letter dated 1854, from Ostiglia to Mantova (both in the Mantova district of Lombardy) and bearing the black and yellow stamps to make up the 15 centes rate. The letter is written in Italian from one Italian-speaking community to another, and there is no obvious reason to suspect pro-Habsburg patriotic intent. But we can never be sure.

A distinguished Hungarian philatelist, Dr. Ferenc Nagy, has recently debunked such descriptions in a journal article [1]. The cover below is scanned from a lot in the catalogue of Corinphila, the Swiss auction-house. In the auction description, also below, it is described as having a "so-called patriotic franking".

1853: Faltbrief mit Inhalt frankiert mit zwei Werten 1 Kr. gelbocker (Type Ia) + zwei Werten 2 Kr. schwarz (Type Ia - rechte Marke mit Plattenfehler oben: Rahmenbruch) alternierend geklebt als sog. „Patriotische Frankatur", in leuchtend tiefen frischen Farben und allseits breit gerandet (linke Marke Randlinie links unten minimal touchiert), jeder Wert zentrisch und übergehend entwertet mit Zweikreisstempel „Istvandy 12/6", nach Warasdin mit rückseitigem Übergangsstempel von Nagy Kanisa sowie Ankunftsstempel. Dekorative Frankatur für den Spezialisten. Attest Ferchenbauer

The cover, dated 1853, travelled from Istvandy in Hungary to Warasdin in Croatia-Slavonia, and was franked with two first-issue 1kr values and two 2kr values to make up the 6kr. rate. In 1850, Istvandy was a village of

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[1] Dr Ferenc Nagy - "Patriotic Frankings" - *Philatelica*, the journal of *Magyar Filatéliai Tudományos Tátarsaság* (the Hungarian Society for Philatelic Research), issue 2017/2.

some 1250 people in Hungary-proper, where most of the population would be Magyar. A few years before, in 1848/49, Hungary rose against the Austrian regime, and their insurrection was put down by the Austrians with the help of the Russians. Nagy suggests that the villagers of Istvandy would have no reason to show support for Franz Joseph. Yet he says that over the years he has seen several black-and-yellow frankings from Istvandy.

Furthermore, he has never seen a cover from Istvandy with a 1kr or 2 kr stamp used for its primary purpose; prepaying printed matter or local postage. There would be no need for the villagers of Istvandy to post a letter locally when they could walk down the street and deliver it. There were no businesses or large institutions in Istvandy, and therefore little material to post at the printed-matter rate. He concludes that the post-offices (in Hungary at least) must have been allocated a quantity of all five values of stamps by the postal directorate, and that the smaller offices would have no use for the lower-value stamps except to make up the higher-value rates.

Dr Nagy concludes his article by imagining himself posting a letter in the Istvandy post-office in 1853. The postmaster explains that he has no 3kr stamps, but only 1kr and 2kr values. Nagy accepts them, but explains that he is no friend of Franz Joseph. They have a good laugh when the postmaster predicts that "in a hundred years' time these will probably be known as patriotic frankings"!

So are there any patriotic frankings? Probably <u>some</u> of the black-and-yellow covers are, but it is difficult to know which. On the other hand, the writer believes that the following two letters <u>do</u> bear patriotic frankings.

The first is a printed, semi-illustrated invoice from a paper-factory in Rovereto (Trentino district, South Tirol) to Ferrara in Italy. It was franked 16kr in accordance with the Austro-Italian Postal Treaty. The Treaty required "odd" frankings of 16, 21, 28kr, etc. and therefore usually needed more than one stamp, but is this franking of 3 + 5 + 3 + 5 kr significant?

The letter has travelled between two Italian-speaking towns to an addressee with an Italian name. The date, 1863, was shortly after the unification of most of Italy. Most of Austrian Lombardy had been lost in 1859, and the remaining Italian-speaking areas under Austrian control wanted to join the unified Italy. Austria's third, fourth and fifth issues, used during the immediate post-unification period, comprised a coloured oval design, with white space in the four corner-quadrants. In the writer's view, the green, rose, green, rose stamps, with plenty of white in the design, are a representation of the Italian flag.

The next cover, from 1865, was mailed from Trieste (still Austrian) to Milan (gained by the Kingdom of Sardinia in 1859) and franked at the Austro-Italian Treaty rate of 21kr, made up of 5 + 3 + 5 + 3 + 5 kr values. The sender and addressee have Italian names, the letter is written in Italian, and it travelled between two Italian-speaking cities in the unification period. Again this seems designed to represent the Italian "tricolore".

If we accept that the black-and-yellow frankings are not usually patriotic, why should we regard the green-white-rose combinations any differently? The main reason is the ethno-political background. Most of the Italian-speaking communities wanted to be part of Italy. With the exception of parts of South Tirol, which remain steadfastly German-speaking to the present day, the Italian-speaking areas of the Austrian Empire felt left out and passionately wanted to be freed of the Austrian yoke. Moreover, in large commercial cities like Trieste and Roveredo, there would be plenty of opportunities to use the local-rate stamps without needing to use them up in higher frankings. But we cannot say with 100% certainty that these are patriotic frankings.

There is no doubt about the loyalty of the sender of the next item! As official, local-government mail, this 1860 cover enjoyed a free-frank privilege and bears no postage stamps. However the sender has applied strips of red and green paper to the cover to improvise an Italian flag. Moreover the "flag" is tied to the cover by the sending institution's cachet.
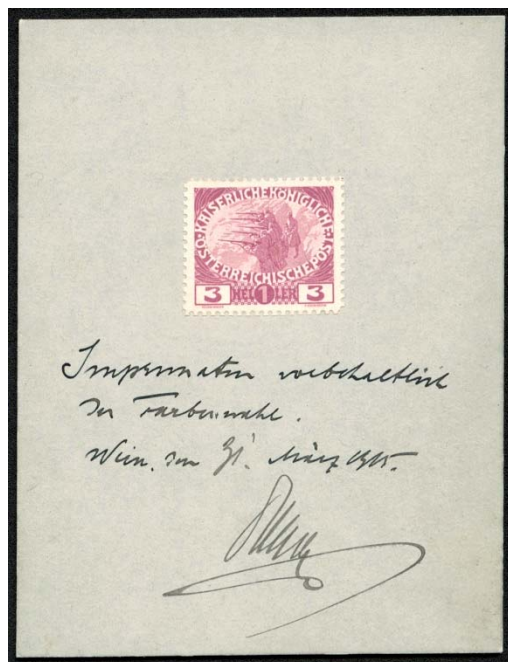
The date and the geography explain the patriotic Italian feeling shown here. In 1859, Austria lost almost all of the province of Lombardy. However, a small part of Lombardy, the district of Mantova, was retained and was administratively bolted on to the province of Venetia for the next seven years until Venetia too was lost to Italy. The cover above was posted from San Benedotto to Borgoforte, a few kilometres to the west, both places being in the district of Mantova. No doubt the almost-entirely Italian population of the Mantovana were rather disgruntled that their little corner of Lombardy had been unable to become part of Italian unification the previous year.

The Habsburg supporters were unable to respond with their own patriotic frankings after the black value was withdrawn in 1859. However, half a century later, the 1908 Jubilee set of definitives included both a black and a yellow stamp. The cover below is a mourning cover from Vienna to Belgium, correctly franked with 25 hellers in an unusual 6 + 6 + 1 + 6 + 6 configuration.

Almost certainly this is a patriotic cover. The letter is from the Habsburg capital and it is difficult to see any other reason for this contrived franking. In the years leading up to the First World War, pressure intensified from various national groupings for independence from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Equally vociferous were the German-speaking loyalists who were content with the status quo.

We can never be 100% certain that a particular combination of stamps constitutes a patriotic franking. However, we can assign a higher or lower probability to this, depending upon the date of a cover and the background historical, geographical, political, language and ethnicity factors. The writer would be pleased to see other covers that readers feel may have a patriotic franking.