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Office Holders

President	Tony Bosworth	18 Raymer Road, Penenden Heath, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 2JQ	atonybos@btinternet.com
Editor	Nick Coverdale	38 Hillcrest Avenue, Whitehaven, Cumbria, CA28 6ST	nick@rhubarb1.demon.co.uk
General Secretary	Michael Hampson	36 Jay Close, Eastbourne, BN23 7RW	michael_hampson@hotmail.co.uk
Membership Secretary / Treasurer	Michael Chant	8 Ullswater Road, London, SW13 9PJ	meac@familychant.freeserve.co.uk
Librarian	David Treby	28 Ham Meadow, Marnhull, Sturminster Newton, Dorset DT10 1LR.	d.treby123@btinternet.com
Auctioneer	Steve Woolnough	Moon Cottage, Mendlesham Green, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 5RN	woolnough.mooncottage@btinternet.com
Webmaster	David Studholme	65 Sheppard Road Exeter EX4 5DD	webmaster@yugosg.org

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From the President

URGENT APPEAL: In the last Jugopošta I made an appeal for a member to volunteer for the position of Auction Manager. So far I have not had an offer. I cannot emphasise enough the importance of running an auction for the benefit of the members. In the first instance you get the opportunity to improve your collection at a very reasonable cost, and you can also recirculate your surplus material, which you may feel is not exciting, but bear in mind what is common to you is new to another person. It is also important to note that for a Society such as ours losing one of its key activities could discourage people from joining the Group.

So please think about this, you do not necessarily need experience, and help in starting you up would be forthcoming from our current incumbent.

The committee is currently discussing the possibility of a "get together" of the Group, possibly somewhere in the Midlands. It would be useful to know who is interested in such a venture, and would potentially support it. Please let me know by email, letter or telephone.

A J Bosworth FRPSL

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Cover Story

King Alexander of Yugoslavia was assassinated in Marseille, France, on 9 October 1934 during the beginning of an official state visit to France. In the beginning of the mourning period, for most official and partly also for private correspondence, envelopes with black frames were used.

This cover, dated 13.XI.34, is sent from Vardar, a patriotic society in Skoplje, to Minister of the Court M Antic at the Royal Palace of Belgrade (see article on Page 5 by J. Veličković).

From the Editor

This edition I have included an article by Jovan Veličković where he takes a detailed look at the 1934 Yugoslavia mourning issue. The “Kingdom” period of Yugoslavia has not featured a great deal in Jugopošta in recent times. Also included is an article by Milan Radovanović on the French medical missions in Serbia following on from his article in the last edition on British medical missions of the same period. Finally there is an article by Tony Bosworth about his main collecting interest, the Independent State of Croatia 1941, and a short article by myself.

It is good to see that specialist journals in Yugoslav philately, such as this one, and also related specialist journals, are able to share articles from time to time, often having been translated into a different language. The article by Jovan Veličković in this edition, for example, was originally published in a Slovenian journal in that language and an article in the previous edition of Jugopošta is to appear in future in a Dutch journal.

Having said all that, I need more articles to maintain the 32-page colour edition of Jugopošta that you get every 3 months. Please consider producing an article for me – anything from one page upwards would be welcome. I would welcome articles about your collection, articles about particular stamp issues, articles about interesting covers, your experience of giving talks to societies or exhibiting as well as original and detailed research. You might be surprised by what is of interest to your fellow members. If your writing or spelling is a bit ropey I am quite happy to help knock the article into shape. I am happy to receive articles that are handwritten, typed, or in Word or similar. Preferably keep the text and the illustrations separate as it makes it easier for me to set the article up for publication. Not only do I need articles but I also need offers of subjects for our annual monograph. At the moment I have no offers to produce a monograph beyond 2013 so can you help?

Correction

In Jugopošta 104 there was an error in the article “The Development of Slovenian Post Office Handstamps 1919-1921: From Austrian to National Handstamps”. On Page 31, the text and the caption under Figure 27 state that the earliest known date of the handstamp is 3-1-1921. The correct date is 5-1-1921.

Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the 1934 Mourning Issue

Dr Jovan Veličković AIJP

King Alexander Karajordjević was assassinated in Marseille, France, on 9th October 1934 during the beginning of an official state visit to France. His last spoken words were “Guard Yugoslavia”. The throne was inherited by his eldest son, King Peter II, a minor at the time. A Regency of three ruled the country until his legal age. Peter was proclaimed of age on 27th March 1941, after an overthrow of the Cvetkovic-Macek government, shortly before Yugoslavia was attacked in April 1941 by the Axis powers.

The Marseille event had severe consequences involving all momentary and future aspects of life and existence of the Kingdom. Regarding the postal authorities, already two days after the assassination it was proposed to introduce stamps overprinted with a black cross and the date “9.X.1934” (Figure 1).



Figure 1: A non-adopted proposal from a Belgrade philatelic club

By analogy with the reactions of certain European postal authorities of the period, in cases of the death of the ruler or of a leading personality of the country (e.g. Soviet Russia, Germany, Belgium and others), the PTT Ministry already on 13th October decided to overprint 8 lower values of the current set of stamps with a black frame. The current set showed the portrait of the King facing left, 10 values without the engraver's name on the bottom and 4 supplementary values showing the two authors' names.



Figure 2: The 1934 current stamps (1) with engraver's name (D Vagner) issued 1931, (2) without engraver's name, issued 1932 (3) with Stoicevic Vagner, issued 1932/34. Only varieties (2) and (3) were overprinted

Three days later the decision was extended to the remaining high values without restriction of validity. The overprinting of the lower values was terminated on 17th October; 4, 5 and 10 dinars on 24th October and 15, 20 and 30 dinars on 4th November 1934. The earliest cancelled copies known are from 18th October 7 pm (Figure 3).



Figure 3: First (or second) day of issue, cancelled to order

They could be used together with all other existing regular, provisional and special stamps of the period, until exhausted. Uses of higher values on postal forms were still recorded in 1939. No official or private first day covers exist, only single stamps fixed on envelopes and favour cancels of the first and second day of validity.

In the beginning of the mourning period, for most official and partly also for private correspondence, envelopes with black frames were used (Figure 4).



Figure 4: An envelope of condolences, a letter sent from a patriotic society Vardar in Skoplje to Mr Minister of the Court M. Antic, in the Royal Palace of Belgrade

The State printing works in Belgrade, implementing the orders, produced in a very short time new basic printing plates of 100 of all the 14 existing values of the set, and also a second plate consisting of $10 \times 10 = 100$ black frames, fitting onto the white margins of the stamps. In a short period, about 80 million stamps were produced in a two-phase letterpress process. More than half of the whole printing represented the most-demanded denominations – 0.50, 0.75, 1, 1.50 and 3 dinars (internal and external simple postcard and letter rates). However, the overprinted amount of 15 and 30 dinar stamps hardly reached a sum of 500 thousand.

In the following text, this way of printing will be denoted as **Method I**. A scheme of the two plates, each of $10 \times 10 = 100$ fields, will be omitted.

All 100 stamps from a sheet by Method I are identical, the basic sheets were overprinted without removing the sheet margins, therefore the stamps from the outer rows (36) may possess sheet margins on one or two edges: the 4 corner pieces showing two margins in positions North/West (NW), North/East (NE), SW and SE and 4 x 8 stamps showing margins in position N, E, S or W only. Stamps with sheet margins are shown in Figure 5.



Figure 5: Marginal and corner copies with preserved sheet margins

All 100 stamps from one sheet are identical; all the central parts of the stamps within the black frames are equal in size. Varieties within a group of stamps produced by this method, from various sheets, may involve bad centring or leaving a white line on one of the inner edges of the frame. A strong upward shift may reveal the full engraver's name on the bottom of the supplementary values, which is a much desired collector's variety (Figure 6).



Figure 6: Stamps by Method I – shifted frames, 1.50 and 1.75 dinar with strong shifts downward revealing the STOICEVIC VAGNER inscription

Several further characteristics of all stamps produced by Method I are the following: the paper is rather thin and slightly transparent; the colours of all 14 values deviate slightly from those of the regular previous printings; the colours are lighter, the image is slightly cloudy. From the reverse, as normal in letterpress, one can often observe the impression of the black frame into the paper. Also characteristic are several plate flaws of individual values, present only in the later-produced basic 14 plates for the black frames issue. The last are perforation varieties, mostly linked to Method I only. Examples are shown in Figure 7.



Figure 7: Perforation varieties, one vertical margin perforated 9 or imperforate

All printed sheets were comb perforated 12½. It sometimes happened that the last strike of the comb was omitted or the sheet fell out from the device, producing the **one vertical side imperforated** variety. Such items sometimes reached the counter or the sheet was corrected in the printing works, with a line perforation 9 or 11½. The described perforation varieties are not possible in the later Method II.

Before describing the next Method II some general remarks. The recognition of the method of printing on single stamps, the recognition of regular and accidental varieties and the discovery of the great rarities represented an extreme challenge for collectors of the period, ready to devote much time, money and effort to master the field. In the late thirties there was much of this material on the market, mostly used from daily correspondence and parcel cards, which was carefully searched by specialists. Unused material was not abundant because of the rather high face value. Collectors were ready to spend money for the popular sets of the time – the Sokol issues, Pen Club sets or Rowing Championships, popular and demanded all over Europe. In the literature of the period there existed only one single but very exhaustive study of the issue, written by a splendid author, Sergije Manzelej, and very little was added to

the knowledge of the issue after his publication. Although popular among collectors, there were only three exhibits mentioned in pre-war national exhibitions until 1941. In post war times, from 1945, the period of the Kingdom was tacitly suppressed in national philately and only one 5-frames exhibit of 99% used material was shown about 2000. Single unused and hinged sets can be found in auctions but mint sets in blocks of four are impossible to find. Even unused stamps with corner sheet margins are rare to find. In the last 20 years since I became interested in the issue I have not been able to complete the sets of 14 with all versions of the sheet margins – and I never will.

Very soon after printing sufficient stamps by Method I, to meet the demand in the future period the printing works, in order to economise, decided to overprint also the large stocks of regular stamps stored in the depot. It was evident that these would never be used in the future as the next regular issue would have to show the new king. The black frames plate from Method I unfortunately could not be used, as a good part of the sheets in the depot were without sheet margins, partly curled, incomplete and/or uneven, to which we refer as **Method II** (four variations).

The problem was solved by introducing the sheets of 100, with margins removed, into a rather simple letterpress device. In order to hold the sheet firm in position during the later overprinting, two clamps/holders were used, fixing position 51 and position 100 of the sheet on the support. The plate to print the black frame, which we simply call **Plate 81** with 81 fields and **Plate 17** with 17 fields only. In overprinting, in the first run only 17 stamps were overprinted and, in the second run, the remaining 81. This printing method is shown in Figure 8. The two black frame overprinting plates 17 and 81 used in Method II-A are shown

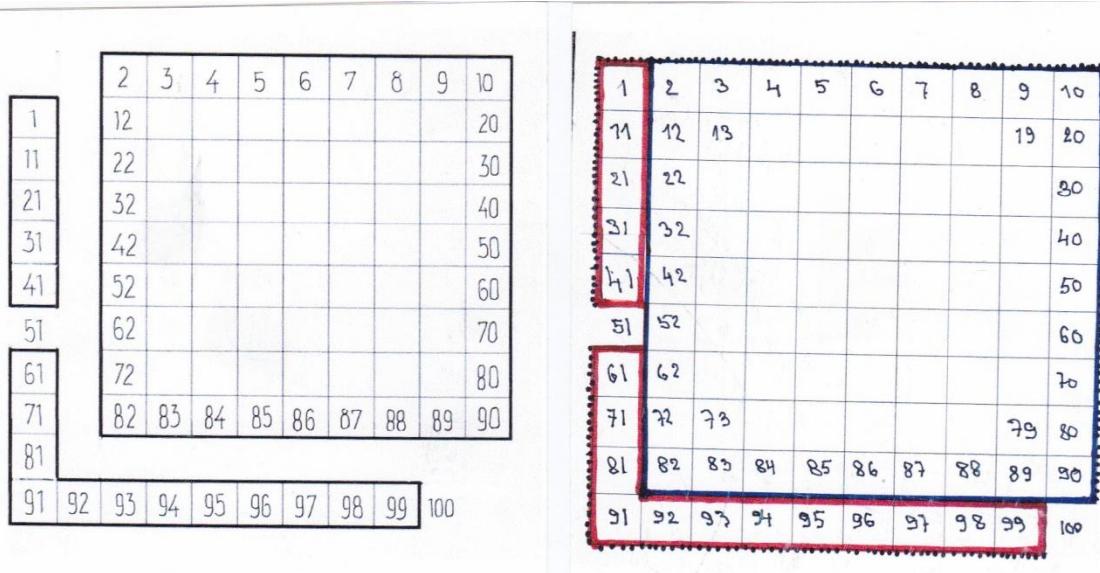


Figure 8: The two black frame overprinting Plates 17 and 81 used in Method II-A

on the left as separated and on the right as impressed on the sheet. The red lines are from Plate 17, black lines from Plate 81. Wherever a red line is adjacent to a black, it is a double print along the stamp's separation. At this instance, one characteristic feature of stamps produced by Method II should be mentioned. Those copies coming from the outer sheet rows show from the reverse in most cases a black colouring of the perforation tips along one side

due to the overflow of printing ink (Figure 9). Regular colouring indicates Method II, irregular and partial colouring mostly faked black margins.



Figure 9: Examples of coloured perforation tips on the reverse – a pair of 1.50 dinar from plate positions 1-2. From the reverse the outer margins are heavily coloured

One should bear in mind that, according to this method, only 98 out of 100 were correctly overprinted with black margins on all 4 sides. Position 51 remained blank on the left (West) side, position 100 on its E and S margins. The N and S black margin of position 51 comes from Plate 17 and the E margin from Plate 81. The N margin of position 100 comes from Plate 81 and the W margin from Plate 17.

Second, observe e.g. a horizontal pair from position 1-2 of the sheet. Both stamps have correct margins on all four sides; however the vertical black frame between 1 and 2 is a doubled frame line, being formed by overlapping printing strikes of both Plate 17 and Plate 81. The same observation applies to 8 + 8 more pairs, from vertical adjacent rows 1 and 2 and horizontal rows 9 and 10. Observe however that all four black margins of sheet position 91 result from Plate 17.

According to internal regulations all incomplete sheet positions 51 and 100 had to be removed from the sheets and replaced with sound copies. The new single items were inserted with glued paper into the sheets and the errors taken out and discarded as printers waste. The rule was quite strictly followed for position 100, but less strictly for position 51, which sometimes may be mistaken to be a strong horizontal overprint shift to the left. From time to time one may find positions 51 but positions 100 are extreme rarities, especially unused. Method II was performed in 4 varieties, denoted as A, described previously, and three others, denoted B, B-1 and C, which will be discussed later.

It is important to know that all 14 values were overprinted only by Method I; the four varieties of Method II involve only 13 values and Method III only 3, as outlined in Table I.

Printing method		Value 0.25	0.50	0.75	1	1.50	1.75	3	3.50	4	5	10	15	20	30
I		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
II-A		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X		
II-B				X	X						X	X	X		X
II-B1					X									X	
II-C					X						X	X			
III			X	X											

Table I: The overprinting of different values by Methods I, II and III (X = overprinted, blank = not overprinted)

The 1.75 dinar was overprinted only by Method I. The value became obsolete during early 1935, when the international post-card rate rose to 2 dinar.

The most easily found variety of Method II-A is position 51 with a black frame on three sides only. Examples are shown in Figure 10.



Figure 10: Sheet position 51 and positions 51/52 with one blank margin

The much bigger rarity is position 100. In the period when the issue was intensively studied, only 20 (0.25) to only 2 (3.50) copies of some of the existing values were recorded (Figure 11).

Because of inaccurate mutual centring of Plate 17 versus Plate 81 in any of the Method II printings, it often happens that in pairs or multiples the frames are mutually shifted. Examples are shown in Figure 12. In Figure 12(1) the multiple of 6 of the 0.25 dinar value results from any non-marginal overprint by Plate 81. It is strongly shifted to the left, leaving all 6 vertical left stamp margins blank. The position 1 in the multiple is definitely not a position 51 with a left blank, if it were a position 51 then the bottom stamp would have a normal black margin. In Figure 12(2), the two left hand side stamps of the 3.50 dinar block of four result from the overprint by Plate 17, while the two right hand side stamps result from the overprint by Plate 81, which was shifted downwards and reveals therefore the engraver's signature on both stamps.



Figure 11: Method II-A, sheet position 100, 0.50, 4 dinar unused and 3.50 used on fragment (one of the two known)

A further feature of overprinting by Methods II is the appearance of a small black square in one of the inside corners of the black frame. To describe this phenomenon, consider again position 91 from Figure 8. If both plate parts 17 and 81 are well-centred one against the other, all four inside corners of the frame are normal. If however in Method II version A plate 81 is shifted to the SW, its SW corner will protrude into the NE corner of position 91 and leave a visible small black square. The appearance of such a square is possible also in the NW or SW inner corner of positions 52 and 90, depending on the direction of the shift. An example is shown in Figure 13.

In Figure 13, the detail is actually an enlargement of the 0.50 dinar green block of four shown in Figure 11. Observe the small black square in the SW inner corner on the NE stamp. It is actually a protrusion of the NE corner of position 17 of the Plate 17 into field 90. Corners are also possible in positions 42 and 62.

For stamps with engraver's name D. Vagner, observe in Table I that the 20 dinar value was overprinted only with plate arrangement B and the 30 dinar value only with plate arrangement B-1.

In the printing works depot there were not many 20 dinar sheets left (without engraver's name), some of them defective and incomplete. For completing them for the press, the missing positions were supplemented with single stamps from the depot by fixing them with tape into position. It happened that some of these singles were with the engraver's name, as in Figure 2. If properly overprinted, the engraver's name remains hidden under the black frame, however, if the overprint is shifted downwards, it becomes visible. This is one of the



Figure 12: Examples of mutual overprint shifts

rarest and best known varieties of the issue, of which only very few used copies are known. The same happened also with a very few other values. In a collection, I have also seen a copy of each of the 1 and the 5 dinar, both used, which are definitely unique (Figure 14).

Regarding the 30 dinar, a value which was rarely used, in the depot there were still available many complete sheets with the engraver's name. These were overprinted together with all other 30 dinar sheets. In the case of a downward overprint shift, the engraver's name becomes visible. These items are rare but can still be found, except mint copies. In the majority of overprinted 30 dinar stamps with the engraver's name, this remains hidden under the correctly-positioned south black margin (Figure 14).

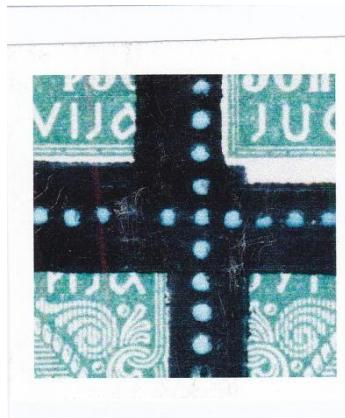


Figure 13: Enlargement of 0.50 dinar green block of 4 shown in Figure 11



Figure 14: 1, 5, 20 and 30 dinar with engraver's name

As Method II, version A was not a very good solution. Improvement was attempted by eliminating the holder in position 100. In **Method II-B** the plate part 17 was replaced by a plate part 18, which now has a full bottom row of 10. The holder remained only in position 51. In this method, only one stamp (position 51) is a waste. It was, however, necessary to introduce spacings between two pairs of bottom black fields, a slight distancing now appears between fields 91/92 and 95/96, leaving a narrow vertical white line between each, which are not identical in appearance. The new plates arrangement is shown in Figure 15, including a detailed drawing of the SW corner. Copies with dividing lines are shown in Figure 16.

From Table I it can be concluded that such separations can appear only on 6 values of the set. Most of those preserved are used. Further changes in version B are a slightly-narrower than usual vertical east margin of position 100 and a narrowing of the east vertical frame lines of positions 41 and 61, minimising the possibility of a small black square in field 52. Sometimes between positions 41/42 or 61/62 a sharp white line becomes visible. The unused

reconstructed 15 dinar block of four shown in Figure 17, showing positions 31/32 and 41/42 is quite certainly unique.

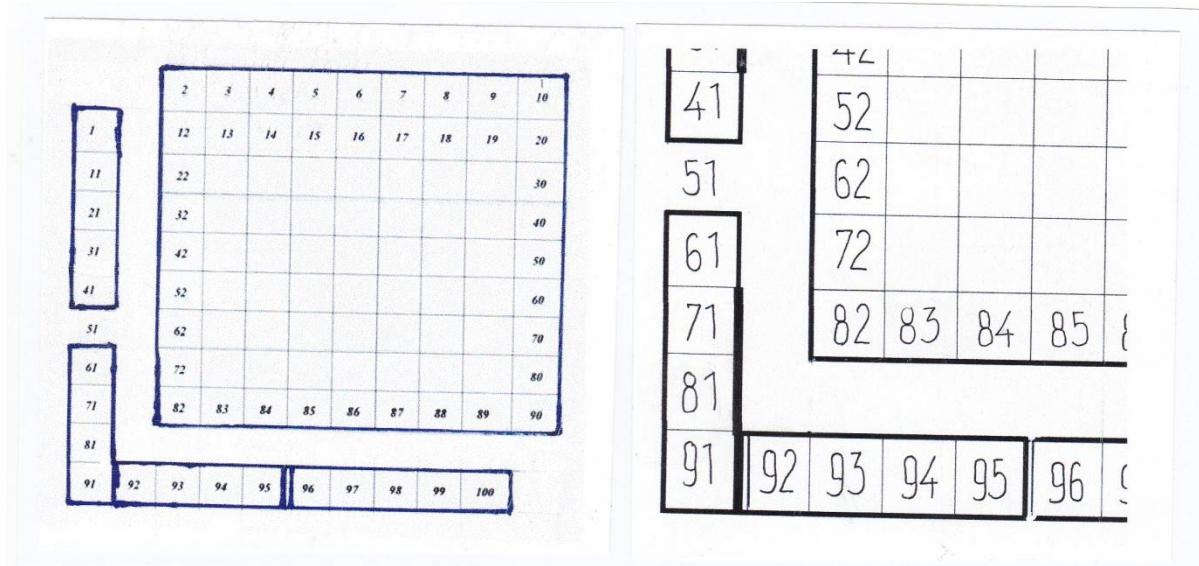


Figure 15: The plates arrangement for Method II version B



Figure 16: White separations between sheet positions 91/92 and 95/96

Method II version B-1 was used only for the 1 and 20 dinar values. The changes are insignificant for the collector, the distancing between positions 91/92 and 95/96 was reduced, the white lines however remain, and the east margin of position 100 was widened to normal. Method II version C is closely related to version A. Probably once after cleaning the worn plate parts, plate part 17 appears on the top and plate part 81 in the lower part of the sheet. In this arrangement, the holders had to be put onto fields 41 and 10. On single stamps with blank W margin it is very difficult to distinguish between position 41 and 51. However, the spectacular new rarity is position 10 with two blank margins. Figure 18 shows the plate arrangement and Figure 19 some of the very few recorded copies from position 10. These varieties are only possible for the 1, 5 and 10 dinar values.



Figure 17: The rare visible white spacing between positions 41/42

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11									
21	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
31	22							30	
41	32						40		
51	42						50		
61	52						60		
71	62						70		
81	72						80		
91	82						90		
	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100

Figure 18: The plate arrangement for Method II version C

Finishing the description of Method II, it should be emphasised that in this short presentation nothing is said about double overprints, cases where the sheet passed twice through the press and either Plate 17 or Plate 81, or both, were doubled. In such cases, the inner blank unoverprinted surface is always reduced in size. Examples of double overprint are shown in Figure 20. In addition, offsets of the overprint and other printing errors may be found. Misperforated copies from Method II practically do not exist, as only fully perforated sheets from the depot were used.



Figure 19: Sheet positions 10 from Method II-C, 1 and 5 dinar, slipped through to the counter



Figure 20: Examples of double overprint, compared to the normal overprint on 1 dinar in the middle

Method III was adopted to overprint (unfinished) imperforated sheets of 0.75, 1 and 1.50 dinar stored in the depot. For this purpose the black frames plate of 100 from Method I was used. The stamps have all the characteristics as those from Method I, except that the colours match exactly those of the regular issue, including the positions of typical plate flaws. To distinguish them from copies produced by Method I is sometimes very difficult and of no great significance.

The 3 dinar airmail stamp. On 15th October 1934 it was decided to overprint 100 thousand 3 dinar stamps from the existing 5 values airmail set, showing the Oplenac church where all Karađordjević were buried. The stamp was issued on 1st January 1935 with a restricted validity of only 4 months, but permitted both for airmail and regular traffic. A new basic 3 dinar plate was produced, overprinted with the black frames plate of 100 from Method I; however the sheets were line-perforated 12½, contrary to the usual comb perforation utilised for all regular stamps. The sheets are with sheet margins, covered partly with the black overprint.

During the printing process the sheet position 41 was damaged by developing a small blue spot in the region of the top Cyrillic inscription ЈУГОСЛАВИЈА, changing the B into a 3, so

the name of the state is changed to JUGOSLAZIJA. Although only on a part of the printing, dealers of the period included it into catalogues and so it became very popular, hard to find and quite expensive. A part sheet of the airmail stamp and the enlarged flaw are shown in Figure 21. Other small plate flaws of the basic stamp are insignificant and not yet described in the literature.



Figure 21: The 3 dinar airmail stamp and the enlarged error, position 41

Forgeries. In the late thirties, the issue was of great interest for collectors in the country, looking mostly for big rarities, sheet positions 10, 41, 51 and 100 with blank sides, and for those with the engraver's name on the bottom. As always in such cases, swindlers immediately produced forgeries, especially the 20 dinar with engraver's name, mostly on parcel card cuttings, imitating the black margin with china ink, printing ink or pencil. Such forged items were mixed into big lots of genuine cheap material. They can easily be recognised by examining the overprint by microscope or looking at the back, where the irregular patches reveal the fakes (Figure 22).

To summarise, in a very short time a total of 129 million stamps were produced, 67% by Method 1, 15.5% by Method II and 15.5% by Method III. On 6th September 1935 a new regular issue of 15 values with the portrait of King Peter II followed and on 9th October 1935 a commemorative set of 5 with King Alexander in an admiral's uniform.

This manuscript was first published in a slightly different form in the Slovenian Journal NOVA FILATELIJA, No. 4, 2011, Ljubljana, written originally in Serbian and translated into Slovenian by Mr. Igor Pirc. The text is mainly based on research published by Sergije Manzelej, published in the Journal FILATELISTA, Belgrade, in the period 1935/36, the collection of Mr D. P. shown in Belgrade some 15 years ago and my own research collection exhibited in 2010 and 2011. Manuscript finished 21st July 2012.



Figure 22: Forgeries – 20 dinar with engraver's name, a single and on fragment, also the reverse with bleeding ink; the non-existent position 10 of the 3.50 and 30 dinar (which the forger was not aware of)

A Tale of Two Uncles

Nick Coverdale

Recently, I bought a small auction lot of covers, some from early 1900s Serbia and some PoW mail. It was only when I started looking that I found an apparent connection between two of the covers 30 years apart. The first (Figure 1) was sent from Belgrade on 14 April 1910 to an address in Paris. This cover is registered and carries a 50 para stamp, although my understanding (Ref 1) is that the rate should be 150 para. The front has a "CENSURE MILITAIRE SERBE" cachet. The cover is from a firm called "JACOB M. ALCALAY".



Figure 1

(Continued on Page 31)

French Medical Mission in Serbia in 1915

Prof.dr.Milan Radovanović

At the beginning of December, 1914, after the battles on the Kolubara and Suvobor, Serbia rejected the Austrians beyond their borders with a significant war booty and 50,000-60,000 prisoners of war including 3,000 of wounded and sick soldiers from typhus. Serbian soldiers, exhausted in two consecutive wars, needed rest.

At the same time the Serbian state needed time to reorganize military forces and to fill the reserve ammunition. Instead of the rest, a new enemy transmitted by the Austro-Hungarian prisoners of war – typhus appeared (Fig 1). Day by day the numbers of ill were rising. The disease reached epidemic proportions in February and March. Hospitals were soon overwhelmed. The patients were lying in corridors, on the stairs, and even in stables. Doctors and nurses were directly affected, too. During the epidemic of typhus in Serbia 200,000 people died. More than two hundred Serbian doctors were all suffering and deaths were 125 (4). Serbia asked the Allies for help because Serbian military forces were helpless against this enemy.



Figure 1: New York Times, 26 March 1915 (5)

Medical missions arrived from Russia, England, France, USA, Switzerland and others. In France, the Minister of War called upon those doctors who were willing to expose themselves to the danger of typhus in Serbia. Eventually, 3400 doctors responded. Those who had already had experience with infectious diseases, especially in the French colonies, had the advantage. The French medical mission under direction of Colonel Jaubert consisted of over 100 doctors whose main task was to combat typhoid fever. In hospitals in Belgrade and Niš, and with the help of all other medical missions, the death rate from typhoid was reduced from 35% to 4% (2).

French doctors were situated in Old and New Serbia, except Skopje and Bitola. Niš was the headquarters of the mission. The whole of Serbia was divided into seven health sectors to which French doctors were distributed and stationed, as follows: Belgrade, Užice, Valjevo, Kruševac, Kragujevac, Niš and Zaječar. In each of these cities there was a doctor - Head of the Department. Lots of the French doctors were transported on horses, mules and carts visiting in this way the most remote villages (4).

The opinion over the work of the medical mission is particularly given by Ch. Vopicka, U.S. Ambassador to the Balkans during this period - the period in which the United States was still neutral: " I am particularly pleased that I was able to note that the medical missions of the United States, France and Britain cooperated in perfect harmony to help the unfortunates. Those were dark days for the Serbs. While the soldiers exercised victory on the battlefield, their parents, women and children at home died of typhoid fever and other diseases" (3).

Without going into other details, because there is extensive literature and memoirs in Serbian, English and French (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7), the postal correspondence of the mission members and some of its characteristics will be discussed further on. For those who want to know more, a comprehensive work of the group of authors (1, 4, and 5) writing about all medical missions in Serbia at that time is recommended.

Further, postal witnesses of the presence of French missions on Serbian territory



Figure 2: Serbian Warriors postcard written in Zaječar, sent via Niš to Tours, France and showing the mark of the French Medical Mission in Serbia

will be shown as follows.

The first item (Figure 2) shows the well-known multi-coloured Postcard of Serbian Warriors edited in 1915, written in Zaječar and sent via Niš (postmark September 21 1915) to Tours, France. In departure the card is censored in Niš with circular seal of the Main Military Censorship in red and with blue initials of the censors (Figure 2). The postcard travelled in the usual way via Greece to Marseilles, as evidenced by a circular mark " MINISTÈRE DA LA GUERRE / CONTROL POSTAL MARSEILLE" in black colour. At the top of the left corner there is a two-row mark of the French medical mission in Serbia "MISSION

MEDICALE FRANCAISE / EN SERBIE". The card is not franked as the military post was free of postage.



Figure 3: Postal stationery card sent from Zaječar to St. Radegonde, France and showing the mark of the French Medical Mission in Serbia

The second card shown in Figure 3 is a postal stationery card for foreign postal traffic issued in 1910 (Vuković br.66) sent from Zaječar (August 15, 1915 postmark) to St.Radegonde, France and redirected to another address in the same place. The card was twice censured with a two row censor mark "By military censorship checked" in purple and with two initials of censors: in blue and gray-black. On the card are Marseille's circular mark "MINISTÈRE DA LA GUERRE / POSTAL CONTROLE MARSEILLE" in purple colour and incoming postmark Radegonde (13:09:15). In the lower left corner there is a sloping two-row mark of the French medical mission in Serbia "MISSION MEDICALE FRANCAISE / EN SERBIE" in purple colour, as well as the signature of the French doctor (unfortunately unknown).

The third item (Figure 4) is a Serbian picture postcard used as field postcard ("Franchise militaire" written in the upper left part of the PPC) and sent from a French doctor (captain)



Figure 4: Serbian picture post card used as fieldpost card and sent from a doctor to Castelnaudary, France

(written in the upper right part of the PPC) to Castelnaudary, France. The card bears the military postmark of the Serbian General Head Quarters (June 14, 1915) situated in Kragujevac and Kragujevac's censor mark "By military control / checked" ("VOJNOM KONTROLOM / PREGLEDANO") in purple colour, as well as censor initials in red. In the middle of the card one can see very weak French administrative mark of the French medical mission in Serbia covered by military postmark of the GHQ. However, it is even possible to read "EN SERBIE". This administrative mark is shown in Figure 5.



Figure 5: Administrative mark of the French Medical Mission in Serbia

The entire text on this circular administrative mark is, as follows: "MISSION MEDICALE FRANCAISE EN SERBIE / SECTOR DE BELGRADE". This administrative mark is taken from the PPC (Courtesy of Mr. J.Bourguignat) sent from Petrovac on June 19, 1915 (date according to Gregorian calendar) handwritten by sender because the postmark of Petrovac was covered with Kragujevac's censor mark 'By military control / checked' ("VOJNOM KONTROLOM / PREGLEDANO") in purple colour to Mailly le Port, France (Figure 6). Additionally, the card bears the mark of the GHQ dated June 8, 1915 (according to the Julian calendar).



Figure 6: From the collection "La France au secours de la Serbie" of Mr. J.Bourguignat



Figure 7: Letter from the collection of Mr. J.Bourguignat exhibited in Paris "La France au secours de la Serbie"

The similar circular administrative mark, but in the Serbian language in cyrillic, is shown in Figure 7 on a letter sent from Belgrade (September 6, 1915) to French military post "Sector postale 156", France. The letter bears the mark "FRENCH DOCTORS MISSION" and in the middle "Belgrade (Francuska lekarska misija / Beograd) and Serbian two-line censor mark "BY MILITARY CONTROL / CHECKED" ("Vojnom kontrolom / pregledano") in purple as well as two censor initials in blue.

The next mark "Mission medicale militaire Francaise / en Serbie" shown in Figure 8 has been taken from a PPC (Figure 9). Additionally, on the front of the PPC there is a stamp of the 10 para "King Peter with the Cap" issue cancelled with postmark of Kruševac (May 20, 1915).

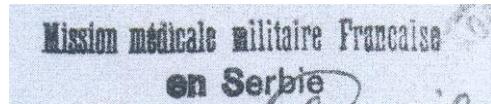


Figure 8: Straight 2-line mark, French Medical Military Mission in Serbia



Figure 9: PPC showing French Medical Military Mission in Serbia mark on the front

This story could be ended with the French charity picture postcard (Figure 10) sold in France to support the French Medical Mission in Serbia painted by Baron d'Ange d'Astre according to the photo recorded in Kraljevo town, Serbia.

According to the text printed on the PPC: a warrior son with both legs amputated will be discharged from hospital and transported by his father on a donkey. After coming back home, the father returns to the military forces to take the son's position in the Serbian Army.

Finally, one can conclude that during the stay of the French Medical Mission in Serbia in 1915 at least four different administrative marks were used:

- two circular and two two-line marks, and
- three in French and one in Serbian language

In addition, one needs to take into account the fact that other similar administrative marks could exist too.

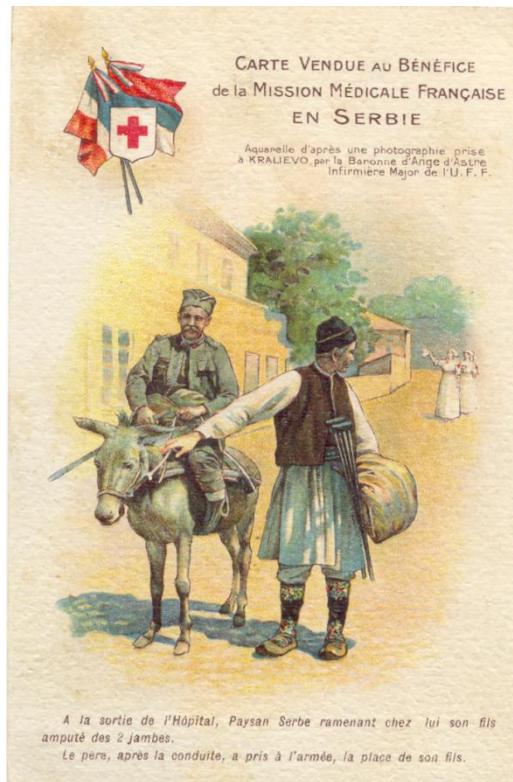


Figure 10: Charity PPC to support the French Medical Mission in Serbia

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The Independent State of Croatia 1941 – 45: the collection that has everything!

A.J.Bosworth FRPSL

I began collecting generally in 1990, and in 1993 I purchased a few WW2 Croatian stamps, which was the start of a long-term obsession with this short lived country. I am mainly a collector of postal history, but with Croatia I have become fascinated by the stamp issues and their varieties, as well as other aspects of philately, which will be covered later. I will begin with a “potted” history of the State:

Formation of the new State

After the First World War the victorious powers, through the Treaty of Trianon, created the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, which later became the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. From the beginning the Serbs were constantly at loggerheads with the Croats, the latter feeling that they were not treated fairly by the Serb dominated government. There were other differences between the two: the Croats were staunch Roman Catholic and the Serbs were Serbian Orthodox; and the Croats used Latin script and the Serbs Cyrillic. Many Croats were exiled or imprisoned if they were considered troublemakers.

At the outbreak of WW2 the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, under its regent Prince Paul, remained neutral; but upon the German invasion of the Balkans on 6th April 1941 Serbia and Montenegro were occupied by Germany, and other parts were absorbed by Germany's allies Hungary, Italy, Albania and Bulgaria (see map figure 1); and the new Independent State of Croatia was created on 10th April incorporating Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, excluding various coastal provinces taken over by Italy. These areas reverted to Croatia upon the Italian capitulation in September 1943. The Croatian name for the new State was **Nezavisna Država Hrvatska**, the initials for which **NDH** will be used in the article to refer to it.



Figure 1.

The new country was to be a Kingdom, the Italian Duke of Savoy and Aosta being nominated to rule as King Tomislav II; but he never set foot in the country, leaving the power in the hands of Ante Pavelić and the Ustaša fascist party.

During the war Croatia fought alongside the Axis powers on the Eastern Front, but they also had to fight a civil war against Tito and his communist partisans and Mihailović and his Chetniks. Croatia was finally defeated in May 1945 and incorporated into the Republic of Yugoslavia.

The Postal Service

Croatia had welcomed the German invasion and was not affected by bombing, therefore its post offices were intact and postal workers were used to running their system, and carried on more enthusiastically than ever in their own independent country.

Initially the postal rates were those from the old Kingdom of Yugoslavia; this lasted until 16th November 1941, when the first set of revised rates was issued, followed by major revisions on 1st July 1941 and 1st January 1943.

Cyrillic script was banned in NDH from the beginning, this applied to postage stamps, registration and express labels and any other philatelic items.

On 7th July the currency was changed from Dinars and Para to Kuna and Banica, at par.

Stamp Issues

The first stamps, issued two days after the founding of NDH, were overprints on Kingdom of Yugoslavia issues; this was followed by several more overprints. There are many collectible errors and varieties in these mainly due to hasty enthusiastic printing and lack of initial experience in stamp production.

The first proper definitives “The Landscape” series was issued from August 1941, and depicted views from all parts of NDH. Subsequently there were thirty more definitive and commemorative issues, three sets of postage dues, one set of official (dienstpost), and three lots of compulsory tax stamps.

Many of the sets included mini sheets; some issues were printed on two types of paper and others had different perforations. There are sufficient errors and colour changes to keep the keen “stamp” man interested.

For many of the issues the Post Office produced “Ministerial Albums” for promotion purposes, which were presented to VIP’s. These albums included perforate, imperforate and partly perforate sheets of stamps and phase printing for the issue. These albums are very difficult (and expensive to acquire), but many of them were broken up, or extra sheets printed so these varieties are available to collectors.

The standard of design and engraving on NDH stamps was high, making them a worthy addition to any collection; to the extent that an inveterate postal historian such as me became an enthusiastic stamp collector.

One caveat that potential collectors must accept is that printing plates were taken out of Croatia at the end of the war, and there are inevitably many forgeries, particularly of the expensive stamps. It is advisable in the case of rarer items to buy only those with a certificate.

Postal History

If you are interested in postal rates there is an enormous amount of material available. There were three inland rate bands from 10th April 1941, 16th November 1941 and 1st January 1943; for foreign rates the only exception to this was mail to Germany and occupied countries had a major change from 1st July 1942 in line with UPU regulations.

The scope of rates includes postcards, letters, insured mail, registered, express, airmail, parcels and cash on delivery. The mail from the transitional period in first few weeks of NDH is worthy of study, because this early “grey” area throws up some very interesting forerunners; this is particularly so for airmails to destinations outside Europe which make a very important and welcome addition to one’s collection. I therefore felt it was important to bring together several conflicting sources of information in an attempt to formalise the NDH rates. I did this with the help of many members of the Group, and from examples from my own and other collections, and the results were published by our Society as Monograph no. 6 in March 2008. This of course must always be open to revision.

There were a wide range of post office CDS cancels, but only four slogan postmarks. Meter machines were used by businesses, but fortunately there are not too many so they make a good addition to your collection without overwhelming it. There are a wide variety of registration, express, cash on delivery and airmail labels to collect. Mail with mixed franking of Kingdom of Yugoslavia, NDH overprints and regular issues are also available. Here is a picture of one of my favourite covers:



Figure 2: A letter to Skopje, Macedonia, which was in Yugoslavia until taken over by Bulgaria in April 1941. This letter now therefore had to be sent as foreign mail.

For those interested in censorship marks there is a wealth of material available: Internally there were censorship offices in the main towns, each with its own cachet, as well as those used by government and the military; and mail sent abroad would be censored by the Germans and Croats.

NDH had a system of “Official” post (Dienstpost) for use by government, local government, and the military. Up to 5th February 1942 this was allowed to be sent free of charge, but thereafter special stamps were issued for this purpose and had to be sent at normal postal rates.

There were three types of mail which were exempt from postage, namely Post Office mail, Red Cross mail and Fieldpost. An interesting extension of this was its authorized use by Italian internees after Italy capitulated in September 1943. The study of Fieldpost for Croatia is a large subject, part of which was comprehensively covered in our recent Monograph no. 10.

By 1944 the NDH finances were in a parlous state; so to combat this the Government introduced, on 1st January 1944, a compulsory postal tax on inland mail. Officially the tax was said to be for the benefit of war victims, but in reality was used to bolster the war effort. The tax was collected by means of a set of special stamps, which were obligatory on inland mail as an addition to normal postage. The escalating financial demands of the war necessitated two increases to the tax charges on 15th June 1944 and 1st January 1945. The first piece of postal history that I acquired will always hold a special place in my collection and is a good example of this mail:



Figure 3: A local registered letter from Zagreb dated 29th June 1944, with the 10 Kuna War Relief stamp in addition to normal postage, reflecting the rate increase on 15th June 1944.

The final aspect of postal history that I will cover is the use of parcel cards. Parcel cards provide a rich source of used high value stamps. The postage charged does not always agree with the published rates, leaving a great deal for the “rates” man to research.

I hope that the foregoing gives an indication of the rich variety of material available to the collector of NDH, which covers all aspects of philately.



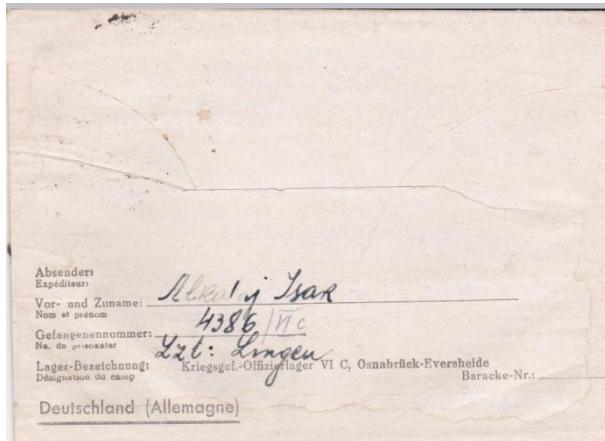
Figure 4. A valued declared COD parcel card for goods to the value of 27.000 Kuna, weighing 10.5 Kilos, with cash to pay on delivery of 1,000 Kuna.

A Tale of Two Uncles continued

On doing a bit of research, I found extracts on the internet from a book called “The Persistence of Hope” by Albert Alcalay, which are the memoirs of a Jewish soldier in the Yugoslav army in 1941. He refers to 7 uncles, brothers of his father, including one called Jacob (who died in Switzerland shortly after the war) and another called Isaac (of whom more later). Is this Albert’s Uncle Jacob?

I then noticed that one of the PoW covers from Oflag VIc (Osnabrück, Germany) had the name “ISAK ALCALAJ” on it (Figure 2). There was also a small form pinned inside with the same name on it. Allowing for the above anglicisation of the names, is this Albert’s Uncle Isaac? Albert’s book notes that Isaac was a PoW. Oflag VIc held about 5000 Serb officers in 1941, about 10% of them being Jewish.

It is this sort of story behind the cover that makes postal history interesting for me.



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