The disintegration of the Hapsburg Empire 1918–1923

By Alfred F. Kugel

The historical background

Starting with a few small German-speaking districts in the eastern Alps and the upper Danube valley, a chieftain of the Hapsburg family declared himself Rudolf I of Austria in 1278. From this modest beginning in the so-called hereditary lands, the dynasty gradually expanded by marriage, conquest and other means, first becoming a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural entity under a single leader when Ferdinand I added the titles of King of Bohemia and King of Hungary/Croatia in 1526.

Following Napoleon's example, Francis I decided to enhance his standing among the European royal families by proclaiming Austria as an empire in 1804. Shortly thereafter, the country reached its peak level of influence at the Congress of Vienna in 1815. From then on, it was gradually downhill relative to the other European powers, especially when Austria was defeated by France and Sardinia in 1859 (thus losing Lombardy) and then by Prussia and Italy in 1866 (giving up Venetia), as its fundamental military weakness was exposed.

To stabilize the country following those defeats, the Austrians were compelled to accept the Hungarians as a full partner in a dual monarchy in 1867, which made sense because the Emperor of Austria was already the King of Hungary. In 1882, Austria-Hungary became a junior partner of Germany in the Triple Alliance (which included Italy) that was designed as a counterweight to the Triple Entente consisting of Britain, France and Russia.

When World War I broke out, Italy elected not to join Austria-Hungary and Germany in the fighting but to remain neutral. While the terms of the alliance required a member to support its allies if they were attacked by a third party, in this instance the Italian position was that Austria had started the war by its invasion of Serbia on July 28, 1914, so it was not obliged to participate. In fact, in May 1915 the Italians entered the war on the side of the Allies after promises of significant territorial enhancement at the expense of Austria-Hungary afterward.

The war did not go well for the Hapsburg monarchy. On the positive side, its forces were able to occupy northern and western Serbia, Montenegro, northern and central Albania, as well as parts of Russian Poland, Romania and Ukraine. It also sent a military mission to Turkey to help that country in its fight against the Allies. However, more than a million of

Figure 1. *Map of territories lost by Austria-Hungary. Remainder of Austria and Hungary: 1—German Austria, 2—Hungary; countries enlarged: 3—Italy, 4—Romania; free city created: 5—Fiume; new nations created: 6—Czechoslovakia, 7—Serb, Croat and Slovene Kingdom, 8—Poland.*

its best soldiers were killed and over two million became prisoners of war as a result of the Russian invasions of Galicia and Bukovina. Still others became bogged down in three years of generally inconclusive fighting on the Italian front. Most of what on paper appeared as a formidable navy was neutralized when the warships were bottled up in the Adriatic after Italy joined the Allies.

Later in the war, morale deteriorated due to shortages of food and other supplies as well as the rising tide of nationalism. As a result, when the Italians—stiffened by infusions of American, British and French troops—finally mounted a successful advance on the southern front in late 1918, the Austro-Hungarian army and government essentially disintegrated overnight into various ethnic components. Thereupon, Emperor Karl gave up his powers to rule, thus bringing to an end the 640-year Hapsburg dynasty.

The end of the war

The ethnic dispersion

It can be said that Austria-Hungary was a country without a dominant ethnic group. Indeed, it is probable that the Dual Monarchy embraced the most widely diverse population in a single political entity since the Roman Empire. As an example, the Austrian currency was printed with wording in nine different languages. Based on the 1910 census, even together the ruling Germans (24%) and Magyars (20%) represented a minority of the total population of fifty-two million in the Empire.

Most of the people remained loyal to the Emperor until quite late in the game. However, some regional leaders were preparing to go their own way if Austria-Hungary lost the war and the Empire collapsed. In fact, the Czechoslovaks (on October 28) and the South Slavs (on October 29) declared their independence even before the Dual Monarchy signed the Armistice on November 3, 1918. The Poles in Galicia moved to join their ethnic brothers when Polish independence was declared on November 11, and the Romanians in Transylvania and Italians in the South Tyrol and Istria acted quickly to join their ethnic homelands. German Austria was declared a separate republic on November 12 and the declaration of a republic and separation from Austria was proclaimed by Hungary on the sixteenth. For the territorial impact of the break-up of the empire, see the sketch map labeled Figure 1.

The peace treaties

The negotiations leading to the peace treaties between the Allies and the Central Powers took place in and around Paris and involved a large number of participants, including representatives of the countries that had supported the Allies as well as a variety of other groups seeking recognition, including Armenians, Kurds, etc. However, most of the key decisions were made by the Council of Four—Premier Clemenceau of France, Prime Minister Lloyd George of Great Britain, President Wilson of the United States and Premier Orlando of Italy.

In fact, the major Allies were very sympathetic to the cause of ethnic separation and generally supported the breaking away of the various minority groups from the Empire. As a result, the former political structure disintegrated and only small, rump Austrian and Hungarian entities survived. In fact, the break-up was so complete and the new boundaries drawn so severely that millions of ethnic Germans and Magyars ended up as minorities in the successor states of Czechoslovakia, Jugoslavia and Romania, thus creating new problems for the future.

The Peace Conference gave first priority to settling the questions relating to Germany, then provided an outline for dealing with the lesser members of the Central Powers, leaving the specifics to be resolved by working groups. In general, input was not sought from either the Austrians or Hungarians, who were essentially ordered to sign the final terms and were not in a position to resist. As a result, Austria agreed to the Treaty of St. Germain on September 10, 1919, and Hungary eventually signed the Trianon Treaty on June 4, 1920. Figures 2 and 3 show examples of mail from the Austrian and Hungarian delegations to the peace conferences.

The next section of this article will review the disintegration of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire into the remainder states, successor states and the augmentation of neighboring countries. It will be organized geographically from west to east, starting with the remainder Austria and Hungary and the closely associated territories of Carinthia and West Hungary (Burgenland), and ending up with the Balkan territories and Ukraine on the south and east. Of course, many of the changes that took place at the end of World War I became subject to renewed turmoil in the period immediately proceeding and during World War II starting just two decades later.

German-Austria

On October 30, 1918, with defeat staring them in the face, the German-speaking members of the Parliament proclaimed the state of German-Austria (Deutschösterreich), without specifying the form that it should take. When Emperor Karl renounced his rights to govern on November 11, German-Austria was declared a republic on the following day. Under the St. Germain Treaty, the new entity could not enter into political or economic union with Germany, so its name was subsequently changed to the Republic of Austria.
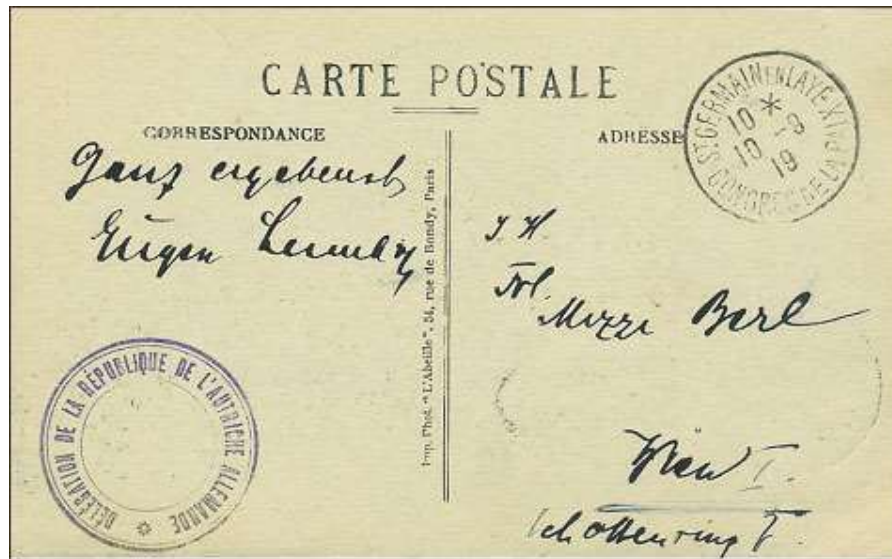

Figure 2. *Picture Postcard of the Chateau of St. Germain-en-Laye sent by a member of the Austrian Peace Delegation.*

Austria was forced to agree to the transfer of Bohemia-Moravia and Eastern Silesia to the new Czechoslovak Republic; of Slovenia, Dalmatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina to the new South Slav Kingdom; of Galicia to Poland; of the Trentino, Trieste and Istria to Italy; and of Bukovina to Romania. As a result, the new boundaries left about five million ethnic Germans under the control of other governments, mostly in the Sudetenland and the South Tyrol.

Carinthia

The Treaty did not specifically address the question of Carinthia, a border area in southern Austria, which was in dispute with the South Slavs. Part of the area had been occupied by troops from Slovenia in 1919, but this was resisted by the local inhabitants. In the end, a plebiscite was held on October 10, 1920, in which the inhabitants voted to remain with Austria.

Hungary

When it became obvious that the Dual Monarchy was doomed, Count Karolyi formed a democratic government in Budapest on October 31, 1918. After King Karl renounced his rights to govern on November 13, Hungary was declared a republic on the sixteenth. Under the Trianon Treaty, Hungary was required to agree to the transfer of Transylvania and the Eastern Banat to Romania; of Slovakia and Ruthenia to the Czechoslovak Republic; and of Croatia and the Western Banat to the South Slavs. These cessions were so severe that they reduced the country's area and population to roughly one-third of their prewar levels.

The final signing of the treaty with Hungary was delayed because a Communist regime took over power in Budapest for a temporary period between March and August 1919. The

Figure 3. *Picture Postcard of Paris sent by a member of the Hungarian Peace Delegation.*

bottom line was that at the end of all this activity, three million ethnic Magyars were left under the control of other governments, thus providing the groundwork for future conflict just two decades hence.

The Allies couldn't decide what to do with Fiume (Rijeka today), Hungary's only port on the Adriatic, because the situation involved a city populated mainly by ethnic Italians but with a heavily Slavic hinterland. As a result, this territory was initially set up as a free city as had been done with Danzig, where there were competing interests between the Germans and Poles. However, it was subsequently annexed by Italy in 1924.

West Hungary

The German-speaking area of Burgenland, also known as West Hungary (Lajtabansag in Hungarian), was awarded to Austria in the Trianon Treaty. However, the implementation was delayed because of the activities of local Hungarian insurgents. In the end, the transfer was made except for the area around the city of Sopron, where a plebiscite was held and the inhabitants voted to remain with Hungary. The transfer of ownership was completed on November 13, 1921.

Italy

Unlike the Czechoslovaks, Poles and South Slavs, who had to create entirely new nations in the aftermath of the war, Italy was an already existing entity with its own government and armed forces. It had long desired to annex Austrian lands populated with ethnic Italians (Italia Irredenta), and its troops moved swiftly to occupy the new lands as soon as possible after the Austrians signed the armistice agreement on November 3, 1918. Included were the Trentino (South Tyrol), Venezia Giulia (Istria) and Dalmatia. Some occupation troops also moved into Austria proper, with bases at Innsbruck and Vienna.

Figure 4. *Map of Territories Promised to Italy by the Treaty of London in 1915.*

At the Peace Conference, the Italians demanded a significant portion of the Dalmatian coast to which it claimed an historical right as the natural political heir to the former Venetian territories as well as based on the 1915 Treaty of London, in which Britain, France and Russia had promised these areas to Italy as a bonus for entering the war on the Allied side. (See sketch map of these territories in Figure 4.) However, a substantial majority of the local population in Dalmatia was Slavic, and President Wilson would not countenance handing them over to Italy. In the end, the Italians had to come to a compromise with the South Slavs over the area, in which it ended up with a very disappointing portion, comprising a small enclave around the city of Zara and some of the offshore islands.

Czechoslovakia

The first part of the Hapsburg Empire to break away was Czechoslovakia, which declared its independence on October 28, 1918. The new nation was created entirely out of Austria-Hungary and consisted of five areas. Bohemia, Moravia and Eastern Silesia had been parts of Austria, while Slovakia and Ruthenia were parts of Hungary. Although the creation of the new republic went relatively smoothly in spite of certain unease by the Slovaks as to whether they would be "second class" citizens in the new entity, there was fighting for some months along the southern border with soldiers of the Communist regime in Hungary.

Eastern Silesia

At the eastern end of Austrian Silesia and the northern fringe of Hungary there were three small former Austro-Hungarian territories that came into dispute between Czechoslovakia

and Poland. The most significant was the district of Teschen (Tecin in Czech; Cieszyn in Polish) located in the valley of the Olsa River. The other two were the Zips and Arva (Spisz and Orava) districts that were located to the east in the Carpathian Mountains. Because of local fighting between forces of the two antagonists, an Allied Control Commission had to be sent to the area. Initially, a plebiscite was planned but, at a ministerial conference in Spa, Belgium, on July 10, 1920, a division of the territories was proposed to which the Czechoslovaks and Poles agreed, so no voting was required.

Poland

With the surrender of the Germans on November 11, 1918, a Polish regency council assumed executive power in Warsaw. Galicia and part of Austrian Silesia were annexed by the Polish state. However, both areas were in dispute with the neighbors—Ukraine and Romania in the first instance and Czechoslovakia in the latter—so the final borders were unsettled for some time. In fact, the area around Lemberg (Lwow), the capital of eastern Galicia, was fought over with Ukrainian partisans before being annexed to Poland.

Romania

As was the case with Italy, Romania already had a functioning government. However, its territory was massively expanded with the addition of Bukovina from Austria, Transylvania and the Eastern Banat from Hungary, as well as Bessarabia from Russia, which more than doubled its size. For the most part, these territories were simply occupied by the Romanian army at the end of 1918 and then officially annexed later in accordance with the peace treaties.

In addition to the annexed territories, the Romanians also occupied large parts of eastern and central Hungary, including the area around the city of Debreczen. After a Communist regime took control in Budapest, they were expelled by the Romanian army that occupied the capital on August 3, 1919. These forces withdrew on November 14 when the Hungarian National government was able to move back into Budapest. The Romanians also occupied part of eastern Galicia around Kolomea, which was known as Pokutia. However, they withdrew in favor of Poland on August 20, 1919.

South Slavs

A new South Slav state came to be proclaimed in Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, on October 29, 1918. Although the Croats and Slovenes would likely have preferred independence, they were willing to accept amalgamation with the Serbs as an alternative to the aggressive territorial designs of the Italians. Thus, on December 1 King Peter of Serbia was declared King of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes—later to be named the Kingdom of Jugoslavia in 1929. The new nation consisted of the formerly independent countries of Serbia and Montenegro as well as Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the Western Banat, Dalmatia, Croatia and Slovenia that were formerly part of Austria-Hungary.

Western Ukraine

The situation in Galicia was even more confused, reflecting the mixture of ethnic Poles and Ukrainians. However, on November 1, 1918, a Western Ukrainian National Republic was declared in the eastern and central portions of Galicia. Nevertheless, Polish forces were able

to occupy Lemberg (Lwow, Lviv) on November 23, thus confining the area controlled by the Ukrainians to the extreme eastern part of Galicia around Stanislau (Stanislawow, Stanislaviv). In July 1919, the Poles were able to occupy this area as well, thus taking over the final portion of the former Austrian territory.

The philatelic consequences

Needless to say, all of the territorial changes outlined in the prior sections were reflected in the postal situations on the ground in the respective areas. The Italian government, in

Figure 5. *Cover sent from Carinthia franked with the Austrian Propaganda Stamps.*

particular, was highly aware of the propaganda value of publicizing the extension of its control to new territories through the issuance of special postage stamps. This policy of self-promotion was seen as having benefits both domestically (to take political credit for the expansion of the motherland) and internationally (to enhance the country's image as a significant power).

Italy had adopted just such a program following the Italo-Turkish War in 1912–1913. At that time, stamps were provided for the newly acquired colony of Libya as well as for each of the thirteen Aegean Islands that were captured from the Ottoman Empire. It seemed natural, then, that this procedure should be applied to the new areas taken over following World War I. Indeed, the Italians initiated the wave of stamp-issuing activity just eight days after the signing of the Armistice, when they began to overprint Austrian definitives that were found in stock in the post offices in the occupied territory.

Most of the stamps that were issued in the annexed and occupied territories during this period are adequately covered in the major philatelic catalogues. Therefore, emphasis in this article has been given to the more unusual issues, including a number of stamps that were prepared but not actually issued for one reason or another. Because of the very limited quantity of some of these that managed to get into philatelic hands, certain examples have become major twentieth century philatelic rarities.

Comments on the postal activities in the various former Austro-Hungarian territories follow, generally in the same order as the political comments provided above.

German-Austria

Although the stamps of the monarchy continued to be valid for postage, the authorities of the republic were desirous of emphasizing the new circumstances. As a result, nineteen

Figure 6. *Card from Carinthia franked with the Slovenian Propaganda Stamps.*

regular postage, three special delivery and five newspaper stamps of the prior regime were quickly overprinted "Deutschösterreich" and issued during the period from December 1918 to June 1919. These, as well as the unoverprinted stamps, were valid for postage until October 31, 1920. In due course, the provisionals were followed by a new series of similarly inscribed definitive stamps issued in July 1919. However, once the Treaty of St. Germain became effective, the "German Austria" designation was no longer politically correct, so stamps issued from January 1922 on were inscribed simply "Österreich."

Carinthia

Control of this southernmost province of Austria was in dispute with the Slovenians, causing the Allies to hold a plebiscite to determine where the boundary should be set. As propaganda for the vote, Austria issued a set of overprints reading "Carinthia/Plebiscite" on September 16, 1920. Although these were valid for postage throughout Austria, most of them were used in Klagenfurt, the capital of the province. Figure 5 shows a cover franked with the "Plebiscite" stamps. After the voting settled matters, Carinthia reverted to the use of normal Austrian stamps.

Slovenian troops occupied parts of Carinthia in 1919 and a post office was in operation for about six weeks in June and July. It utilized a postmark inscribed "Military Post Office Celovec (the Slavic name for Klagenfurt)" which was applied to Croatian regional stamps.

Later, in September 1920, the Slovenians saw fit to issue a set of six overprints on newspaper stamps as their own propaganda for the plebiscite. A card franked with these stamps is shown in Figure 6. These were reportedly used until October 21 in several towns then occupied by the South Slav forces.

Figure 7. *Cover of the Hungarian Soviet Republic with stamps depicting famous leftists.*

Hungary

The first philatelic indication of the change in regime was a special commemorative postmark inscribed "Hungarian Republic" that was used in Budapest on November 16, 1918, the day that the republic was declared. In fact, except for those depicting the former King Karl and Queen Zita, which were demonetized a week later, all of the other issues of the monarchy (inscribed "Magyar Kir. Posta (Hungarian Royal Posts)" remained valid for postage until September 30, 1922.

As in Austria, the first new stamps in Hungary were overprints on the previous issues of the monarchy, with the inscription reading "Koztarsasag (Republic)." In all, nineteen regular postage, one special delivery and three semi-postal stamps were so overprinted, and they were valid for postage from November 23, 1918, to December 31, 1920. In January 1919, the first new definitives were released, using the same wheat harvesting and parliament building designs as the former stamps but inscribed "Hungarian Posts" without the "Kir." for Royal.

On March 21, 1919, under the leadership of Bela Kun, a Soviet Republic was established in Budapest, forcing the national government to move temporarily to Szeged in southern Hungary. This regime lasted until the arrival of the Romanian army in August, but in the meantime issued provisional overprints reading "Magyar Tanacskoztarsasag (Hungarian Soviet Republic)" and a set of five definitives depicting various Communists—see Figure 7 for a cover franked with this set. These were all demonetized as of November 30, 1919, after the restoration of the Horthy government, with the remainders of the overprinted sets being reoverprinted with sheaves of wheat to blot out the Communist inscription and issued on January 26, 1920.

Figure 8. *Cover from West Hungary franked with "Lajtabansag" overprints.*

West Hungary

Another of the disputed territories of the old empire was the borderland between Austria and Hungary. Called Lajtabansag (Leitha District) by the Magyars and Burgenland by the Austrians, it had a largely German-speaking population. On this basis, the Allies decided to award it to Austria when they drew up the terms of the Trianon Treaty. This transfer was strongly opposed by some local residents, who declared independence for West Hungary on October 4, 1921, with a governing council being set up to govern the areas held by the pro-Hungarian forces. Various sets of local stamps were issued in the ensuing weeks, the most official of which involved overprints reading "Lajtabansag Posta" issued by the council on October 5. (Figure 8 shows a cover franked with these stamps.) However, Allied pressure forced the Hungarians to bring the insurgents under control and evacuate the territory, which was completed on November 13, 1921.

Italy

As suggested earlier, the Italians were the first to issue new stamps for the former Austro-Hungarian territories. The initial ones were overprints on eighteen denominations each for the Trentino and Venezia Giulia on Austrian definitives. These were already available only eight and eleven days, respectively, after the armistice agreement. Shortly afterward, the authorities concluded that it would be more politically correct to have Italian stamps depicting King Victor Emmanuel III appropriately overprinted for use in the new territories. Some of the Italian adhesives were even surcharged in Austrian currency (which was still in circulation) and, thus, could be used in all of the occupied areas, including Dalmatia and the Adriatic islands. Overprints on Hungarian stamps were used in the port of Fiume, which will be discussed separately.

Figure 9. *(Left) Unissued 90 heller overprinted Austrian stamp.*

Figure 10. *Provisionally overprinted 20 filler stamp overprinted "FIUME."*

Figure 11. *Unissued "FIUME" overprint on 15 filler King Karl stamp.*

Figure 12. *Unissued 2 corona stamp inscribed "POSTA FIUME."*

Actually, a substantial mix of stamps was used in the new territories, including both overprinted and unoverprinted Austrian and Hungarian adhesives as well as overprinted and unoverprinted Italian ones. Similarly, there was a mixture of postmarks used, including old cancels (both in their original version and as mutilated to remove German or Slavic names) as well as new Italian ones.

In the Trentino, a large Alpine region extending from the former Italian border northward to the Brenner Pass, the overprints on Austrian stamps were inscribed "Kingdom of Italy/Trentino/3 nov. 1918." These were placed on sale as early as November 11. Available supplies of the high values were limited to 110 to 900 pieces of each of the kronen denominations, except that there were only eleven examples on hand for the initial overprinting of the 10 kronen highest value. (Bolaffi reports that this denomination was not sold at the post offices but given out to high officials in December 1918; when this was revealed, there was a sufficient clamor for additional examples of this stamp that twenty more copies were found and a second overprinting made.)

For Venezia Giulia, a territory at the head of the Adriatic Sea known today as Istria, the new stamps were Austrian adhesives overprinted "Kingdom of Italy/Venezia Giulia/3. XI. 18," and placed on sale between November 14 and December 4. Quantities printed of the high values range from 1,600 to 22,000 except for the 10 kronen denomination, which is rarely seen since only thirty-seven pieces were produced. Some copies of the 90 heller value were also overprinted but not actually placed on sale due to the limited supply available—estimated at twenty pieces—see Figure 9 for an illustration.

Because the status of Dalmatia and the Adriatic islands were subject to the negotiations underway in Paris, no new stamps were issued with the name of this territory. However, Italian stamps surcharged in Austrian currency were issued in early 1919 for all of the occupied territories.

Fiume

The city of Fiume proved to be a separate story in itself. The first stamp especially for the area was a 20 filler Hungarian value overprinted by hand "Fiume" in thick letters. Although it was intended as a trial printing, the political pressure to have new stamps was so great that 300 copies were overprinted and placed on sale on December 2, 1918 (Figure 10). Starting on the next day and continuing through January 7, 1919, twenty-eight different Hungarian stamps overprinted "Fiume" were sold in the post offices. In addition, a handful of stamps in four additional denominations—a 4 filler depicting wheat harvesting, 15 and 25 filler with the portrait of King Karl and 50 filler showing Queen Zita—were overprinted but not placed in use. Surviving quantities of these unissued stamps are extremely small, ranging from two to five examples each. (Figure 11 shows an example of the 15 filler value.)

A pictorial set then followed, depicting allegorical subjects and scenes of the city. These were inscribed "Fiume" and issued on January 30, 1919. It was later decided that the stamps should reflect the fact that they were to pay postage, so this series was replaced with an identical set inscribed "Posta Fiume" on July 28, 1919. However, quantities of five values of this new series had been stolen from the printing works in Trieste, so these denominations were invalidated and never issued as such (although those remaining on hand were subsequently used up by overprinting). One of these stamps is shown as Figure 12.

On September 12, 1919, Legionnaires headed by Gabriele d'Annunzio seized control of the city and proceeded to issue their own stamps, including overprints for the occupied islands of Arbe and Veglia. After these irregular forces were dislodged at the end of 1920 by Italian troops in what became known as "bloody Christmas," Fiume functioned as a Free City until it was annexed by Italy on February 22, 1924. At that time, sets of Fiume pictorial stamps were overprinted to commemorate the occasion.

Czechoslovakia

Stamps of the Hapsburg monarchy continued to be valid in the successor state of Czechoslovakia for four months from the declaration of independence on October 28, 1918, through February 28, 1919, either on their own or in mixed franking with the new Czechoslovak definitives. In addition, there were various local provisional overprints in use even though not officially sanctioned. The Czechoslovaks were, of course, anxious to have their own postal paper. Thus, the first two denominations of definitives depicting the Hradcˇany, the

Figure 13. *Insured cover with 10 koruna Austrian stamp overprinted "Posta Ceskoslovenska 1919."*

Figure 14. *Czech stamps overprinted for Eastern Silesia used from Zips district*

Figure 15. *Cover with Polish stamps overprinted for Eastern Silesia used from Teschen*

palace of the former kings of Bohemia, and the St. Vitus cathedral, were issued on December 18, 1918—followed by many additional values in the ensuing months.

Unlike the other successor states, the Czechs did not officially overprint the old imperial stamps in the early days of the republic. However, after the end of February demonetized stamps with a face value of 7 million koruna were sent in to the postal authorities from post offices throughout the country. In order not to waste this potentially valuable asset and to meet demands from the philatelic community, sixty-four different Austrian and fifty-five Hungarian stamps were overprinted "Czechoslovak Posts 1919" and placed on sale at the philatelic window in Prague at a 50% premium over face. These overprints were valid until January 31, 1920, but, because of the premium price, very few were used other than philatelically (Figure 13).

Eastern Silesia

Initially, the old stamps of the monarchy—Austrian issues in Teschen and Hungarian in the Zips-Arva districts—remained valid for postage in this disputed territory, but the Allied Control Commission decided that special overprints reading "S.O. (Silesie Orientale) 1920" should be used instead of the stamps of the two contending parties. In response, such overprints on thirty Czechoslovak postage stamps and eleven postage dues were issued in mid-February 1920. (See Figure 14 for a cover franked with these stamps.) Similar overprints on ten different Polish stamps were issued on April 15, 1920, for the area to the north (Figure 15).

Figure 16. *Cover with 10 koruna Austrian stamp overprinted "Poczta Polska."*

Figure 17. *Cover with Hungarian stamps overprinted for use in Transylvania.*

Poland

In the former Austrian territories that were incorporated in the Polish state, imperial stamps continued on sale until January 20, 1919. The first new stamps for use in the Austrian-

occupied area of the former Russian Poland (known during the war as the General Government Lublin) were overprints of an eagle and "Poczta Polska (Polish Posts)" on Austrian fieldpost stamps, some with new denominations as well. These were issued on December 5, 1918. For the former Austrian territories of Galicia and Silesia, nineteen Austrian definitives were overprinted "Poczta Polska" in Krakow and issued on January 10, 1919. Some of these stamps are quite elusive since printing quantities depended on the remainders in post office stocks and ran as low as 440 pieces for the 10 korona denomination (Figure 16). The first definitive set for this area consisted of eleven stamps depicting a Polish eagle, which were placed on sale in the following month.

On January 27, 1919, an entirely new set of twelve allegorical definitives was issued with denominations in Austrian currency, i.e. halerzy and korona. This matched an identical set issued in the former German area but which had denominations in fenigow and marka. (In fact, all of Poland was converted over to the latter currency in 1920 and then to groszy and zloty in 1924.)

Romania

For whatever reasons, the Romanians did not rush to issue new stamps for the territories that they occupied. In Transylvania, Hungarian stamps continued in use initially,

Figure 18. *Cover with "C.M.T." stamps used during Romanian occupation of Galicia.*

but starting in June 1919 the authorities began to issue provisional stamps. The remaining stocks involving seventy different postage stamps and eleven postage dues were overprinted "Romanian Administration PTT" and surcharged with new denominations in Romanian currency. Two different versions were issued: the Oradea printing in which the Romanian currency was expressed in mixed upper and lower case letters and the Cluj printing using only capital letters. (See Figure 17 which depicts a cover with these issues.) They were valid

for postage until January 1, 1922. Although the new ownership of the Banat was in dispute with the South Slav Kingdom, the area was eventually divided, with Romania acquiring the eastern portion. In 1919, a total of forty-six Hungarian regular postage stamps and six postage dues were overprinted "Banat, Bacska" and used there.

As to the former Austrian territories, Bukovina was awarded to Romania under the Treaty of St. Germain signed in September 1919. Shortly thereafter, regular Romanian postage was introduced for use there. In addition, Romanian forces occupied part of eastern Galicia around Kolomea, which was known as Pocutia. For use there, forty-one Austrian regular postage stamps and seventeen postage dues were hand overprinted with "C.M.T. (Territorial Military Command)" and a new value. These stamps were issued on June 28, 1919, and were valid only until the Romanians withdrew in favor of Poland on August 20, 1919 (Figure 18). Additional provisional overprints inscribed "Pocutia" were prepared on the high denomination stamps but not issued due to the withdrawal; a few examples have come on the philatelic market, but they are rarely seen—Figure 19 shows one of these overprints.

Figure 19. *Unissued overprint for Pokutia on Austrian 3 kronen stamp.*

In addition to the annexed areas, the Romanian army also occu- pied large parts of eastern and southern Hungary. For the area around Debreczen, about nineteen different stamps were provided in 1919 and 1920 by overprinting various Hungarian stamps "Romanian Occupation Zone PTT" in an oval or circle (Figure 20).

Serb-Croat-Slovene Kingdom

Following the declaration of a new South Slav state on October 29, 1918, the stamps of the monarchy remained valid for postage for some months after the end of the war, either on their own or in mixed franking with SHS provisionals and definitives. There were regional issues for Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina as well as various local issues in circulation before

they were replaced by stamps of the new Kingdom (Figure 21). In addition to the stamps for the territories that were immediately annexed, there were issues for occupied areas, such as the western Banat and the Baranya district.

There are extensive listings of these stamps in the major catalogues as well as warnings against fake overprints, which appeared almost immediately as forgers attempted to defraud postal authorities as well as collectors eager to acquire the new issues. In the Banat, there were surcharges of new denominations on Hungarian stamps. Overprints of "Baranya 1919" were

Figure 20. *Cover with oval overprints used during Romanian occupation.*

Figure 21. *Parcel address card with overprinted Bosnian 10 kronen stamp.*

made on sixty regular Hungarian postage stamps (not counting six unissued denominations) and four postage dues for use in that territory. These were placed on sale on May 5, 1919, and remained valid until August 21, 1921 (Figure 22). The territory was officially turned back to Hungary on August 20, 1920, after the signing of the Trianon Treaty.

Western Ukraine

As in the other break-away territories, imperial stamps remained valid for postage for an interim period. However, on November 20, 1918, some 2,200 sets of overprints were issued, comprising four Austrian definitives with a lion and the Cyrillic inscription "Western Ukrainian National Republic." However, these were used for only two days and just in Stanislau, Chodorow and Kolomea. In December, four additional stamps overprinted "Ukr. N. R." and surcharged with new denominations, as well as a new provisional regis- tration label, were issued (Figure 23). Additional sets of overprints on Austrian definitives and Austrian Fieldpost stamps were issued in March and May 1919. Subsequently, a set of Western Ukraine definitives was prepared in Vienna, but remained unissued as they didn't arrive before the Polish Army occupied the territory on July 15, 1919.

Figure 22. *Cover with Baranya overprints used during Serbian occupation.*

Because of the unsettled geopolitical conditions in the area at the time, many of the West- ern Ukrainian stamps are very elusive, and some are extreme rarities as can be deduced from the fact that only two pieces exist of the fourth overprint on the 10 korona denomination. Stamps of this territory properly used on cover are highly sought after by specialists.

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