

IOC Congresses and sessions

by *Giuseppe Sabelli Fioretti*

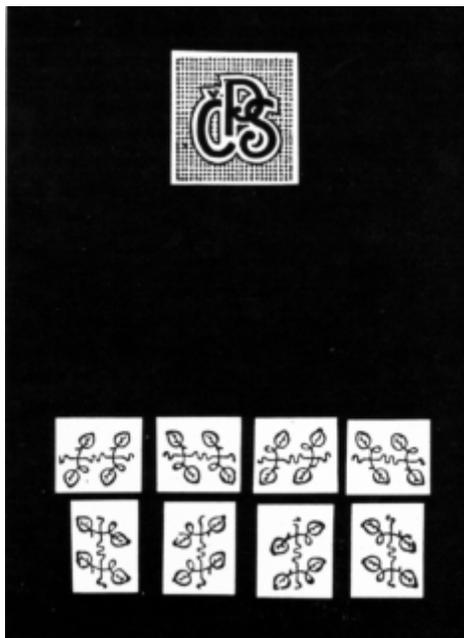
The philatelic history of the IOC Congresses and Sessions begins at the Prague Session, held from 29th May to 4th June 1925. It was the eighth on the list, starting with the Congress held in Paris, at the Sorbonne, from 16th to 24th June 1894 where it was decided to restore the Olympic Games. Before Prague, there had been the Congress at Le Havre (1897), Brussels (1905), Paris (1908), Lausanne (1913), Paris again (1914), and Lausanne-Montbenon (1921). In 1925, the IOC had reached its 23rd Session, but up to that time Philately was not yet an aspect of this type of Olympic event.

The Congress at Prague was the first, and remains the most important in this area of Olympic philately. Thanks to the enthusiasm and activity of Mr. Guth Jarkovski, a former IOC member in Czechoslovakia, the Congress was distinguished by an issue of three stamps celebrating the event obtained by an overprint

(in blue ink on the first two values, in red on the highest value) affixed to three stamps bearing the effigy of Masaryk which had been issued two years previously. The first line of the overprint is in semi-circular form (text: Congress Olymp. Internat.) and forms an outline below the face of Mr. Masaryk. Beneath, between the two indications of face value (50 haleru, green ; 100 h. red ; 200 h. blue) a second line specifies the town and the year : Praha 1925. The number of these items printed was 280,000, 110,000, and 50,000 respectively. In this way 50,000 complete sets were put into circulation.

On the back of them can be found a large monogram, printed in black and composed of three interlaced letters of the alphabet : "P" in the centre, and slightly superimposed a coupled "C" and "S". These are the initials of the "Posta Cesko Slovenska". These stamps were sold for double their face value and the surplus divided between the Czechoslovakian Olympic Committee and the post office employees' benevolent fund.

The Italian specialist Maurizio Tecardi, who has made a penetrating study of this issue from the point of view of the overprint, the paper, the watermark, and the perforation, points out variations in the printing, such as the "C" of the word "Congress", which is incomplete below, the "R" of Praha" without the stroke of the oblique line in he lower part (which makes it look more like a "P") and also the absence of some letters in different words.





One variation which may be considered as constant, but only on the 50 h., is the letter "O" of "Olymp" open on the right, which makes it look like a "C". The three values have in common the absence of a fullstop after "Internat".

As far as the paper is concerned, there are only three types to be found : light, thick and heavy. The latter is one of the rarest. The study of the watermark is much more rewarding. It can be found in eight different positions. It is made up of two pairs of lime-blossom leaves, joined in the middle by an undulating horizontal line. The four positions which can be found with a horizontal watermark are doubled if the paper has been printed with a vertical watermark.

The perforation was treated and controlled by Tecardi with a study carried out on about a hundred sets with a precision idontometer. Here is the series : for the 50 h., 14 1/2 x 14 1/4, 14 x 14 1/2, 14 1/4; for the 100 h., 14 1/2 x 14 1/4, 14 x 14 1/4, 14 1/2; for the 200 h., 13 3/4 x 14 1/2, 14 1/4 x 14 1/2, 14 1/2 x 14 1/2.

According to the usual method, the first number indicates the horizontal perforation, and the second the vertical perforation.

The Czechoslovak postal authorities have not only opened up this Olympic sector in the world of postal stamps but they have also graced it with a set of five postcards (franked at 50 h, green still with the effigy of Masaryk) which carry an overprint (above left) on five lines :

Mezinarodni / Kongres Olympijsky / Congress / Olympique International/ Praha 1925. This overprint was effected in five different colours, exactly the same as those of the Olympic rings, the emblem of the IOC - blue, black, red, yellow, or green. For this reason, there were five different cards.

Finally we come to the cancellations, of which there were two. The first was a

mechanical one, of the type the Spanish call "rodillo" and the Italians "without end". Affixed in a cartouche (undulating lines) can be read the following legend on four lines "Mezinarodni Kongres Olympijsky / Congres Olympique International / 24.v. - 6.VI.1925 / (the five rings), Praha, again the five rings). The manual cancellation is round and comes in three slightly differing types, obviously because of the four different dies.

This, then, is the rich philatelic haul of the Prague congress, which has not been surpassed up to now and which offers us some rarities in different sectors,

After Prague, there came the Berlin Congress (1930) which also left us a philatelic souvenir - a round cancellation, in black, affixed at Berlin W8, illustrated in the centre



by the five rings superimposed on the famous Brandenburg Gate : on top "1930" and below and along the circle "Olympischer Kongress Berlin". Its value is increased if it appears on an envelope used by the German Olympic Committee.

There is a delay of several years before this collection can be enlarged. The next Session to give us this opportunity is the 51 st, held at Cortina d'Ampezzo, during the VIth Olympic Winter Games. Amongst the many manual



cancellations adopted, there was one with the indication "Sede CIO" and the same is borne out by the mechanical cancellations. There is also a linear stamp, reserved for IOC registered letters. It is on two lines: Cortina d'Ampezzo / Sede CIO. These obliterations have a higher value if they have been made on cards issued by the IOC and a higher one again if they appear on envelopes reserved for members of the IOC taking part at the Session, which can be recognised by the inscription on the back "(five rings in white relief) / 51 ° Session du Comité International Olympique / Cortina d'Ampezzo (Italie).

In regard to the cancellations made by hand, the linear stamps are of two types, with slight differences, due to the fact that two dies were used, both hand engraved.

At the Rome Games (1960) there was one single cancellation. It was round with the inscription "Sessione CIO". In this case, it has a higher value if it is found on an official envelope.

The successive stages of this interesting Olympic sub-theme were spread out as follows:

1962: 59th Session. Moscow - a postal envelope with a postage stamp of 4 k. and bearing a design in red and blue on the top left showing the towers of the Kremlin and the emblem of the IOC with the words IOC/Session/Moscow written on the inside.

1964: 61st Session, Innsbruck - circular cancellation (diameter 40 mm) bearing the emblem of the Games and the text



Session Internationales Olymp. Comité, IX Olymp. Winterspiele, Innsbruck I". Twelve dies were used each bearing the same subject but differing numbers from 1 to 12.

1965: 63rd Session, Madrid - a stamp showing the Madrid Sports Palace (facial value 1 peseta) as well as a round manual cancellation.

1967: 65th Session, Tehran - a stamp with a facial value of 6 rials.

1969: 68th Session, Warsaw - a round manual obliteration.

1970: 69th Session, Amsterdam - a rectangular cancellation.

1971: 71st Session, Luxembourg - a stamp issued on 3rd May (facial value 3 fr) far in advance of the date of the annual assembly of the IOC members which took place from 15th to 17th September 1971.

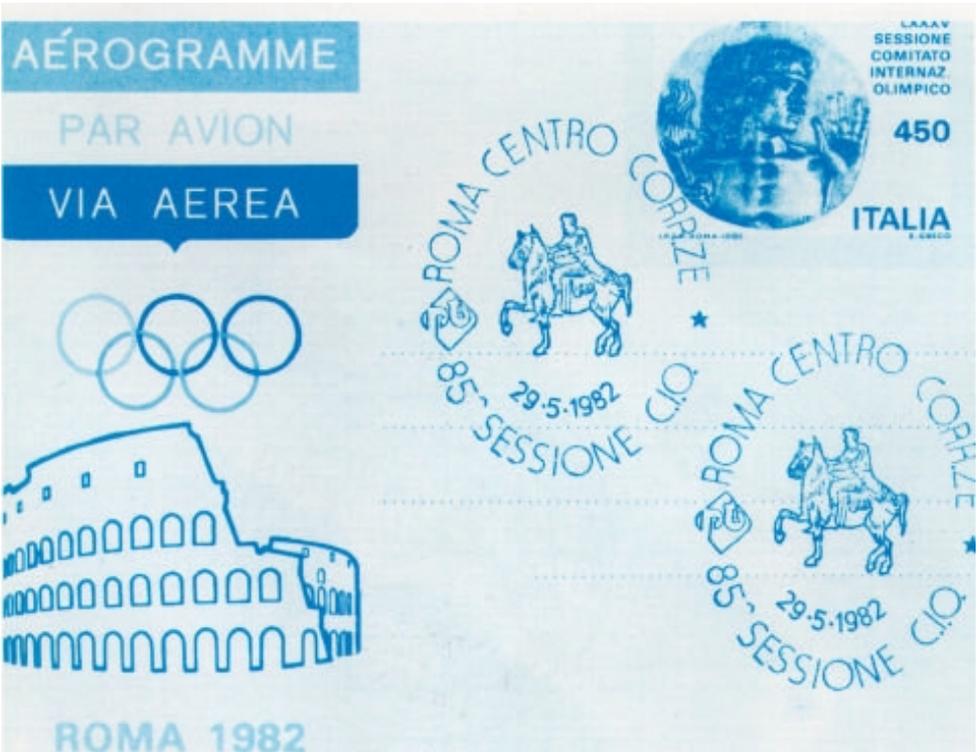
1972: 72nd Session, Sapporo - a large, round, non-postal stamp (diameter 58 mm) in black ink, was used by the Sapporo Japan H El C TV-Radio Network, with the authorisation (No. 155) of the Organising Committee of the

Games. It bears the emblem of the Games and the text "IOC General Assembly".

1972 : 73rd Session, Munich - Round cancellation (diameter 35 mm) bearing the text CIO / 73^e Session / München / 1972. It exists in two versions bearing 1972 and an abridged form, 72.

1973 : Xth Congress and 74th Session, Varna - Two stamps, of 13 stotinki (13c) green, blue, yellow and red, and 28 stotinki (28 c.) blue, green, red and yellow, together with a block of 80 stotinki (80 c.). blue and multicoloured, bearing on the edges the emblem of the Games at Sapporo and Munich (1972) and Innsbruck and Montreal (1976) as well as illustrations of the Intelsat and the Olympic Stadium at Munich, together with the inscription "International Olympic Committee/Olympic Congress Varna 73". The First Day Cancellation (30.9.1973) is thematic and was applied in three colours : black, green and red.

1976: 78th Session, Montreal - an obliteration bearing the text "CIO / IOC / Comité International Olympique / International Olympic Committee" (N. B. On this stamp the word committee is spelt with only one "T").





1977 : 79th Session, Prague - Envelope and postcards, franked (facial value 30 helter = 30 h.) showing a panoramic view of Prague with, on the left, the emblem of the event and the text "79^e Session du CIO / Praha / 1977". There is also a special vertical, rectangular cancellation bearing on the left the text "79^e Session/du CIO" and on the right "Praha / 1977" and below "79. Zasedant / Mezinar-odneho / Olympijskeho / Vyborü / 15.6.1977".

1978: 80th Session, Athens - two stamps : 7 drachmas (subject: lighting of the sacred flame at Olympia) and 13 drachmas (start of the 100 metres flat race at the Games of the 1st Olympiad, Athens, 1896). The First Day Cancellation is thematic : text "80. Session CIO 1978" in Greek, using Greek characters.

1979: 81st Session, Montevideo - Round cancellation bearing the emblem of the event as well as, on the left, "81^a/Session" and, on the right "COI". The Uruguayan O. C. issued an official envelope bearing, on the left, from top to bottom, the emblem of the IOC, then the text "81a Sesion del / CIO / 3 al 8 de Abril 1979" and below, from one side to the other, the emblems of the Games of the XXIInd Olympiad : on the left, that of Lake Placid, and on the right, of Moscow.

1980 : 83rd Session, Moscow - postal envelope and cancellation "83. IOC Session" in Russian written in Cyrillic lettering.

1981: XIth Congress and 84th Session, Baden-Baden : Cancellation (diameter 35 mm) bearing the emblem of the IOC and the indication "II. Olympischer / Kongress". A mechanical obliteration had earlier been carried out at the IOC Headquarters in Lausanne with the text "II^e Congres Olympique / (IOC emblem) / Baden-Baden / 1981" in red ink.

1982: 85th Session at Rome - Airletter franked with a facial value of 450 lire showing a classic medal by the celebrated sculptor Emilio Greco showing an ancient torch and containing the text "LXXXV / Sessione / Comitato / Internaz. / Olimpico" on the right. On the left of the airletter is the usual text which appears on Italian airletters "Aerogramme / par avion / via aerea", printed in the three colours of the Italian flag and followed by the emblem of the IOC (the five rings, with their respective colours), a stylised image of the Coliseum and the text "Roma 1982". The First Day Cancellation (19.5.1982) is oval and shows the same torch as the aerogramme franking. It is thematic for it shows the same torch as the aerogramme franking. It is thematic for it shows the words "LXXXV Sessione Comitato Int Le Olimpico". A second cancellation was affixed on the day of the opening of the Session, 29.5.1982. It is oval and contains the emblem of the Romolympil '82 (equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius) together with the words "185. Sessione CIO".

To complete this current article, it should be pointed out that

- a mechanical franking used at Rome from 12th to 17th May 1975 at the time of the IOWNOC meeting. Franking machine no. PB R CC 266.
- a "Spanish rodillo" applied on 9th October 1976 on post leaving Barcelona at the time of the IOC meeting with the International Federations.
- a very recent cancellation from San Marino (9.11 .1982), on the occasion of the general assembly of European National Olympic Committees.

G. S. F.