

Warsaw town post



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Introduction to Warsaw's town post 1915-1916

History and establishment

From September 1915 until November 1916 a town post office operated in the capital of occupied Poland. During its relatively short period of existence a number of local stamps were issued.

Poland had been partitioned by Russia, Prussia and Austria. Russian occupied Poland became a Russian province. Until World War I the delivery and the censorship of mail in Poland was in Russian hands. In 1914, Germany and Austria-Hungary conquered Russian Poland and in the course of 1915 the entire area was taken from the Russians. In German occupied Poland, German stamps overprinted "Russisch-Polen" were used. In Austrian occupied Poland, Austro-Hungarian fieldpost stamps were issued. Warsaw, the capital of Poland, was taken from the Russians by Germany on 5 August 1915. In the turbulent times at the beginning of World War I it was quite difficult to run and to maintain a regular post office.

The Polish initiative to establish a local post office came from the Citizens Committee of the capital Warsaw (in Polish: "Komitet Obywatelski miasta stołecznego Warszawy", abbreviated as "K.O.m.st.W."). The German postal authorities allowed Warsaw's Citizens Committee to establish a town post office for the delivery of regular mail that arrived from outside the city's boundaries and had to be delivered in the city. The Poles continued the old Russian post office and at the same time extended the German Reichspost. The new Polish postal employees had very little experience since the former Russian postal authorities had left the city with the Russian troops in August 1915. The post office was established on 23 September 1915 at 5 PM in Mazowiecki street 7. From 21 October 1915, the German authorities allowed them to deliver internal mail in Warsaw as well. Initially, letters sent within Warsaw first had to be sent to a German post office with German occupation stamps ("Russisch-Polen" or "Gen.-Gouv. Warschau" overprints) from where they were transferred to Warsaw's town post office for internal delivery with local stamps added.

Two stamps (5 groszy and 10 groszy) were produced and these stamps were overprinted several times.

Registered mail and money orders were kept at the German post office and were reported with message cards, delivered by Warsaw's town post office, paid by the recipient. The registered mail and money orders had to be collected personally from the German post office.

5 groszy stamps could be bought at the counter of Warsaw's town post office. Initially, the stamps that were bought at the office were attached to the mail and then cancelled by the post office employees. Later though, the stamps were sold directly to the customers allowing the people to attach their stamps to the mail themselves. In general, a "Wręczenie opłacone" (Delivery paid) postmark was placed near the cancelled stamp, indicating that the delivery had been paid in advance.



Wręczenie opłacone (Delivery paid) postmark

To stop the endless production of new town post stamps or overprints by the Citizens Committee, the German postal authorities forced Warsaw to discontinue the use of local stamps. As of 27 October 1916, the production, issue and selling of town post stamps was prohibited.

Although a new series of stamps was produced at the end of October 1916 with images of monuments and symbols (Fischer III, IV, V and VI), these stamps were not approved by the Germans and the stamps were not brought into postal circulation. In November 1918, these stamps were overprinted "Poczta Polska" and were issued as national Polish postage stamps.

From 20 October 1916 until November 1918, the Citizens Committee used postmarks instead of stamps.

On 16 November 1918, Warsaw's town post was abandoned. The national Polish post took over its duties and postal rates for local delivery were no longer used.

Fischer I-II | Michel I-II | Issued 20 September 1915

The very first issue of Warsaw's town post stamps was available for just a couple of days. The issue was cancelled almost immediately.



I
Syrena
(coat of arms of Warsaw)



II
Eagle
(coat of arms of Poland)

Glossary

The issue was cancelled probably because they feared confusion caused by the similarity of colours used in both stamps. The colours and the print quality of these stamps needed enhancement. The improved stamps were officially issued and overprinted several times later.

The proofs however had already been sold for their face values by post offices between 20 and 23 September 1915. Despite the decision not to officially issue these stamps, the post offices were forced to accept them as legal stamps.

Only 2,800 of the Syrena stamps and 3,600 of the Eagle stamps were produced before the establishment of Warsaw's town post office. Because of the great demand, forgeries and reprints appeared rather quickly.

The image displayed on the 5 groszy stamp is the old coat of arms of the city of Warsaw and the 10 groszy stamp shows the Polish eagle, the national symbol and the coat of arms of Poland. The stamps were designed by artist and painter Edward Trojanowski. Because Trojanowski was given very little time to design the images (both designs had to be ready next morning), he decided to use two symbols from the work of Braun and Hogemberg's "Theatrum urbium praecipuarum mundi", Colonia, Germany. He found both symbols, the mermaid figure and the white eagle, on a panoramic drawing of Warsaw's 16th century skyline.

Translations

K.O.M.W. (Komitet Obywatelski miasta stołecznego Warszawy) = Citizens Committee of the capital Warsaw.

Fischer I-II colour variations | Michel I-II colour variations



Colour variations of Fischer I



Colour variations of Fischer II

Fischer I-II proofs | Michel I-II proofs

**Image
wanted**



Perforate proof of Fischer II
Eagle
(coat of arms of Poland)



Imperforate proof of Fischer I
Syrena
(coat of arms of Warsaw)



Imperforate proof of Fischer II
Eagle
(coat of arms of Poland)



Sheet of imperforate proofs of Fischer I



Sheet of imperforate proofs of Fischer II

Fischer I-II colour variations of proofs | Michel I-II colour variations of proofs



Colour variations of proofs of Fischer I

Fischer 1-2 | Michel 1-2 | Issued 23 September 1915

The first official Warsaw stamps were issued with improved printing quality and more vibrant colours.



1
Syrena
(coat of arms of Warsaw)



2
Polish eagle
(coat of arms of Poland)

Translations

K.O.M.W. (Komitet Obywatelski miasta stołecznego Warszawy) = Citizens Committee of the capital Warsaw.

Fischer 1-2 proofs | Michel 1-2 proofs | Issued 23 September 1915



Proof of Fischer 1
Syrena
(coat of arms of Warsaw)



Proof of Fischer 2
Polish eagle
(coat of arms of Poland)

Fischer 1 bisects | Michel 1 bisects | Issued 23 September 1915

No special stamp was produced for the delivery of printer matter. The postal rate for printed matter in 1915 Warsaw was 2 grosze. To overcome the problem, a 5 groszy stamp was cut in half. Stamps were always bisected diagonally to keep the face value visible in either the lower left or the lower right corner.



Bisect of Fischer 1
Syrena
(coat of arms of Warsaw)



Bisect of Fischer 1
Syrena
(coat of arms of Warsaw)



Bisect of Fischer 1
 Syrena
 (coat of arms of Warsaw)

Fischer 3 | Michel 3 | Issued 23 September 1915

Fischer 1 surcharged with a small diagonal "6 Groszy" overprint in two colour variations (lilac and black).



Overprint lilac



Overprint black

3
 Syrena
 (coat of arms of Warsaw)

Glossary

When Warsaw's town post office was established, the postal rate for letters and postcards was set to 5 groszy. Five groszy however could not be paid in Russian currency. Converted to Russian currency, 5 groszy was equal to 2½ kopecks. But ½ kopeck coins were difficult to find in 1915 Warsaw. To solve this problem, the German postal authorities agreed to increase the postal rate from 5 groszy to 6 groszy. 6 groszy was equal to 3 kopecks and kopeck coins were available in Warsaw at that time.

5 groszy stamps were simply overprinted 6 groszy with a rubber handstamp and with red or lilac ink. The overprinting was done quite carelessly and in all possible directions. No rules were set for the overprint colour. In some cases, the overprint was made with black ink which was actually restricted for cancellations. The rubber of the handstamps was subject to wear, making overprints indistinct. Therefore, stamps were sometimes overprinted twice.

Fischer 3 bisects | Michel 3 bisects | Issued 20 September 1915

For the postal rate for printer matter, Fischer 3 stamps were bisected.



Bisect of Fischer 3
Syrena
(coat of arms of Warsaw)

Fischer 4 | Michel 4 | Issued 30 September 1915

Fischer 1 surcharged with a larger diagonal "6 Groszy" overprint in a rectangular frame in two colour variations (black and lilac).



Overprint lilac



Overprint black

4

Syrena
(coat of arms of Warsaw)

Glossary

Probably because of the rapid wear of the handstamp used for the first overprint (Fischer 3) and because the overprint was small and indistinct, a new overprint was produced which was larger and more clear. Again, no overprint colour was prescribed. The overprints were made with red or lilac ink, but occasionally black ink was used, although black ink was restricted for cancellations.

Fischer 4 bisects | Michel 4 bisects | Issued 30 September 1915

For the postal rate for printer matter, Fischer 4 stamps were bisected.



Bisect of Fischer 4
Syrena
(coat of arms of Warsaw)

Fischer 5 | Michel 6 | Issued 13 October 1915

Fischer 1 surcharged with a black "6 6" overprint. Fischer 5 comes in two variations. Type I is narrow, type II is wide. Fischer 5 should not be confused with Fischer 7, where the overprint is small and bold.



5 type I



5 type II

Syrena
(coat of arms of Warsaw)

Fischer 5 bisects | Michel 5 bisects | Issued 13 October 1915

For the postal rate for printer matter, bisected Fischer 5 stamps were still tolerated by the town post.



Bisect of Fischer 5 type I
Syrena
(coat of arms of Warsaw)



Bisect of Fischer 5 type II
Syrena
(coat of arms of Warsaw)

Fischer 6 | Michel 5 | Issued 10 November 1915

Fischer 2 surcharged with a black "2 2" overprint. The foot of the number 2 is wavy. Fischer 6 should not be confused with Fischer 8, on which the foot of the number 2 is a straight line.



6
Polish eagle

Glossary

Finally, a 2 grosze overprint was issued for the delivery of printed matter.

Fischer 7 | Michel 8 | Issued 22 November 1915

Fischer 1 surcharged with a black "6 6" overprint. The number 6 is wide. Fischer 7 should not be confused with Fischer 5, on which the number 6 is narrow (type I) or wide (type II), but not bold.



7
Syrena

Fischer 7 bisects | Michel 8 bisects | Issued 22 November 1915

Although 2 grosze overprints could be used since 10 November 1915 (and a second 2 grosze overprint was issued 18 December 1915), it was still allowed to bisect 5 groszy stamps for the postal rate of printer matter.



Fischer 7 bisected

Fischer 7 print errors | Michel 8 print errors | Issued 22 November 1915



7
Print error

Fischer 8 | Michel 7 | Issued 18 December 1915

Fischer 2 surcharged with a black "2 2" overprint.
The lower part of the number 2 is flat and not shaped like a wave, like on Fischer 6.



8 (perforate)
Polish eagle



8 (imperforate)
Polish eagle

Glossary

A new 2 grosze overprint ("2" with a straight foot) replaced Fischer 6 ("2" with a wavy foot) for the delivery of printed matter. Fischer 6 was however still allowed to be used.

Fischer 9-10 | Michel 9-10 | Issued 2 February 1916

Fischer 1 and 2 surcharged with black "2 gr." and "6 gr." overprints with two rosettes.



9
Polish eagle



10
Syrena

Fischer 9-10 proofs | Michel 9-10 proofs | Issued 2 February 1916

Proofs of Fischer 1 and 2 surcharged with black "2 gr." and "6 gr." overprints with two asterisks.



Proof of Fischer 9



Proof of Fischer 10

Fischer 9-10 print errors | Michel 9-10 print errors | Issued 2 February 1916

Print errors of Fischer 1 and 2 surcharged with black "2 gr." and "6 gr." overprints with two asterisks.



Inverted overprint of Fischer 9



Inverted overprint of Fischer 10



Double overprint of Fischer 9



Shifted overprint of Fischer 9



Shifted print of Fischer 9

**Image
wanted**

Double overprint of Fischer 10

**Image
wanted**

Shifted overprint of Fischer 10

**Image
wanted**

Shifted print of Fischer 10

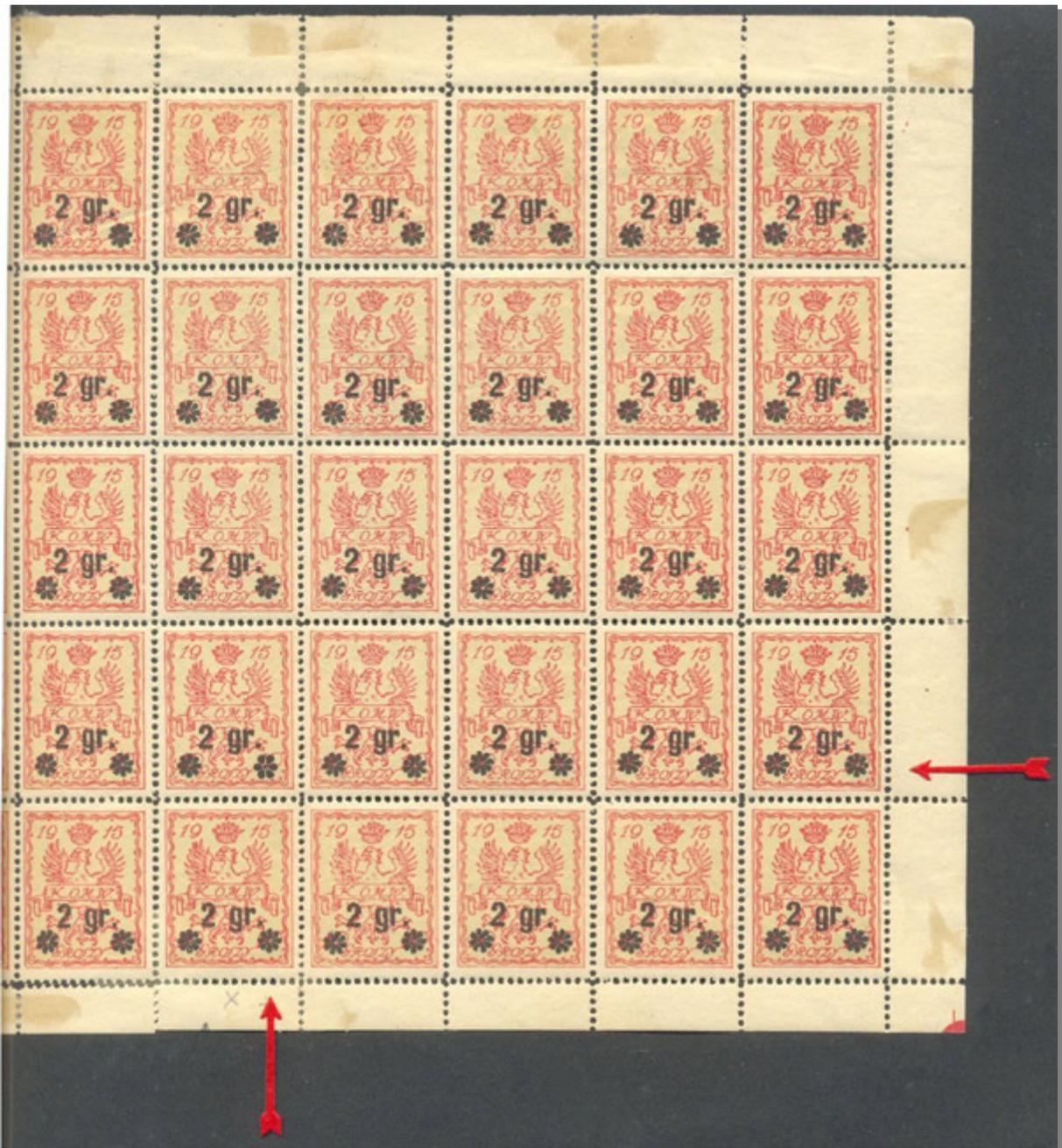
Extremely rare is Fischer 9 with a rosette in the lower right corner with 6 rays (petals) instead of 8.



This stamp appears on position number 28 in the first print. The red arrows in the following image show the row and the column of this stamp.



In all other prints, the rosette in the lower right corner has 8 rays (petals).



on position number 28

Fischer 9-10 print errors | Michel 9-10 print errors | Issued 2 February 1916

Print errors of the proofs of Fischer 1 and 2 surcharged with black "2 gr." and "6 gr." overprints with two asterisks.



Inverted overprint of Fischer 9 proof



Inverted overprint of Fischer 10 proof



Double overprint of Fischer 9 proof



Double overprint of Fischer 10 proof



Shifted overprint of Fischer 9 proof



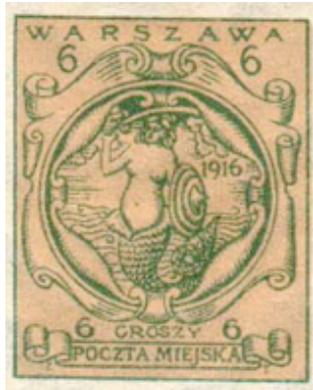
Shifted overprint of Fischer 10 proof

Fischer III-VI | Michel III-VI | Issued October 1916

Non-issued stamps with Warsaw monuments. These stamps were overprinted 'Pocztą Polska' to become postage stamps after World War I when Poland recovered its independence.



III A
Zygmunt column



IV A
Syrena on a
baroque shield



V A
Polish eagle



VI A
Jan III Sobieski
monument in
Łazienki park



III B
Zygmunt column



IV B
Syrena on a
baroque shield



V B
Polish eagle



VI B
Jan III Sobieski
monument in
Łazienki park

Introduction to the cancellations of Warsaw's town post stamps

Four postal cancellations and one revenue cancellation of Warsaw's town post stamps are known. Cancellations should have been made with black ink.



However, occasionally red, violet or lilac ink was used by mistake. These colours should have been used for overprints and not for cancellations.



Syrena cancellation
(the coat of arms of Warsaw)

Translations

K.O.m.W. (Komitet Obywatelski miasta Warszawy) = Citizens Committee of the city Warsaw.

Poczta Miejska = Town post.



Circular date cancellation "a"

Translations

K.O.m.st.W. (Komitet Obywatelski miasta stołecznego Warszawy) = Citizens Committee of the capital city Warsaw.

Poczta Miejska = Town post.



Circular date cancellation "b"

Translations

K.O.m.st.W. (Komitet Obywatelski miasta stołecznego Warszawy) = Citizens Committee of the capital city Warsaw.

Poczta Miejska = Town post.



Oval cancellation

Translations

K.O.ST.M. Warszawy (Komitet Obywatelski Stołecznego Miasta) Warszawy = Citizens Committee of the capital city Warsaw.

Poczta Miejska = Town post.

10 groszy stamps were sometimes cancelled with a so-called police cancellation. This is not a postal cancellation. Stamps that were cancelled this way were used as revenues for the payment of government tax.



Police cancellation
(Commissioner's office III)



Police cancellation
(Commissioner's office IV)



Police cancellation
(Commissioner's office VI)



Police cancellation
(Commissioner's office VIII)



Police cancellation
(Commissioner's office X)



Police cancellation
(Commissioner's office XI)



Police cancellation
(Commissioner's office XIII)

Translations

Milicja Miejska M(iasta) St(ołecznego) Warszawy = Police post of the capital city Warsaw.

Komisariat = Commissioner's office.

Introduction to the postmarks of Warsaw's town post

To stop the endless production of new town post stamps by the Citizens Committee, the German postal authorities forced Warsaw to discontinue the use of local stamps. As of 27 October 1916, the production, issue and selling of town post stamps was prohibited.

Although a new series of stamps was produced at the end of October 1916 with images of monuments and symbols (Fischer III, IV, V and VI), these stamps were not approved by the Germans and the stamps were not brought into postal circulation. In November 1918, these stamps were overprinted "Poczta Polska" and were issued as national Polish postage stamps.

Instead of stamps, the Citizens Committee from now on had to use postmarks. The postmarks were produced in four different postal rates and shapes. On 20 October 1916, the rates and shapes were as follows:

2 grosze - triangular
6 groszy - square
10 groszy - hexagonal
20 groszy - circular

The postmarks were made in two colours. The early shift of the office employees used violet ink until afternoon and the late shift used red.

On 26 April 1917, the postal rates were changed to 7, 11 and 22 groszy. The currency in Poland was changed to marka (mark) and fenig (pfennig) and on 1 May 1917, new postmarks with face values in fenigów were issued. At the end of 1917, a pay increase for postal employees caused an increase of the postal rates to 5, 10, 20 and 30 fenigów. In July 1918, the Polish eagle was added to the postmarks.

Postmarks Fischer 1-4 | Issued 20 October 1916



1a
2 grosze violet



2a
6 groszy violet



3a
10 groszy violet



4a
20 groszy violet



1b
2 grosze red



2b
6 groszy red



3b
10 groszy red



4b
20 groszy red

Postmarks Fischer 5-7 | Issued 26 April 1917



5a
7 groszy red lilac



6a
11 groszy red lilac



7a
22 groszy red lilac



5b
7 groszy violet



6b
11 groszy violet



7b
22 groszy violet

5c
7 groszy red

7c
22 groszy red

Postmarks Fischer 8-11 | Issued 1 May 1917



8a
2 fenygi dark lilac



9a
6 fenygów red lilac



10a
11 fenygów red lilac



11a
22 fenygów red lilac



8b
2 fenygi violet



9b
6 fenygów violet



10b
11 fenygów violet



11b
22 fenygów violet

8c
2 fenygi red

9c
6 fenygów red

10c
11 fenygów red

11c
22 fenygów red

Postmarks Fischer 12-15 | Issued 1 December 1917



12a
5 fenygów red lilac



13a
10 fenygów red lilac



14a
20 fenygów red lilac



15a
30 fenygów red lilac



12b
5 fenygów violet



13b
10 fenygów violet



14b
20 fenygów violet



15b
30 fenygów violet

12c
5 fenygów red

13c
10 fenygów red

14c
20 fenygów red

15c
30 fenygów red

Postmarks Fischer 16-19 | Issued 1 July 1918

Postmarks Fischer 16, 18 and 19 have two colour variations: red lilac and violet. Fischer 17 (10 fenygów) has three colours: red lilac, violet and red.



16
5 fenygów



17
10 fenygów



18
20 fenygów



19
30 fenygów

Postmarks Fischer 20-23 | Issued 8 September 1918

Postmarks Fischer 20-23 have three colour variations: red lilac, violet and red.



20
5 fenygów



21
10 fenygów



22
20 fenygów



23
30 fenygów

Postmarks Fischer 24

Oval postmark Fischer 24 (Wręczenie opłacone P.M.) has three colour variations: red lilac, violet and red.

**Image
wanted**

24a

**Image
wanted**

24b

**Image
wanted**

24c

Postmarks Fischer 25

Postmark Fischer 25 (Wręczenie opłacone in two rows in a box) has three colour variations: red lilac, violet and red.

**Image
wanted**

25a

**Image
wanted**

25b

**Image
wanted**

25c

Postmarks Fischer 26

Postmark Fischer 26 (Wręczenie opłacone in single row and in a single lined box) has three colour variations (a: red lilac, b: violet and c: red) and two sizes (type I: 62 x 10½ mm and type II: 80 x 11 mm).



**Image
wanted**

26 Ia

**Image
wanted**

26 Ib

**Image
wanted**

26 Ic

**Image
wanted**

26 IIa

**Image
wanted**

26 IIb

**Image
wanted**

26 IIc

two sizes (type I: 83 x 12 mm and type II: 98 x 17 mm).

**Image
wanted**

26 Ia

**Image
wanted**

26 Ib

**Image
wanted**

26 Ic

**Image
wanted**

26 IIa

**Image
wanted**

26 IIb

**Image
wanted**

26 IIc

Postmarks Fischer 27

Postmark Fischer 27 (Wręczenie opłacone in single row and in a double lined box) has three colour variations (a: red lilac, b: violet and c: red) and two sizes (type I: 83 x 12 mm and type II: 98 x 17 mm).



**Image
wanted**

27 Ia

**Image
wanted**

27 Ib

**Image
wanted**

27 Ic

**Image
wanted**

27 IIa

**Image
wanted**

27 IIb

**Image
wanted**

27 IIc

Postmarks Fischer 28

Postmark Fischer 28 is red and sized 57 x 35 mm.

**Image
wanted**

28

Postmarks Fischer 29

Postmark Fischer 29 is black and sized 18 x 10 mm.

**Image
wanted**

29

Postmarks Fischer 30

Postmark Fischer 30 is black.

**Image
wanted**

30