Approximately 500 different postage stamps have been issued in Germany since the beginning of the occupation.

Among the diverse designs, denominations and differentiating overprints that the collector can find in Germany are many which were distributed in eastern Germany under questionable authority during and immediately after the war. But post-office cancellations indicating that they were used to transmit mail make them all official from the philatelic standpoint.

Today, in various parts of Germany five different types of postage stamps representing three different monetary systems are in use.

The Deutsche mark is the basis for three of the stamp varieties—the precurrency conversion stamp overprinted “Berlin” being used in the three western sectors, the architectural issue in use in the Bizonal Area, and the current French Zone stamps. The French franc is the basic unit for stamps being used in the Saar area, and stamps in the Soviet Zone and materials that unconventional postal methods were adopted to prevent profiteering by speculators who might attempt to corner complete issues. Stamps were paid for at post-office windows, affixed to letters, and cancelled as they were presented for mailing. Post-office attendants who had no stamps of any description simply marked the letters with a hand stamp impression to indicate that postage had been collected. Besides the threat of wildcat speculation in rare stamps, the possibilities of counterfeiting and other local abuses were of deep concern to Military Government.

Article

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The Soviet Sector of Berlin are in East-mark denominations.

But this is a relatively well-ordered condition as compared with the chaotic situation in Germany near and immediately after the end of the war. The only unity which characterized the postage stamp problem as the liberating armies advanced over German territory was the prohibition by each of the Allied powers of continued use of stamps of the Third Reich.

As one step toward the Allied objective of removing all traces of Nazism from Germany, the use of anything symbolic of the Nazi regime was prohibited. This policy necessitated the invalidation of all stamps in current use, and resulted finally in the adoption of ACA Law No. 48 ordering the destruction of Nazi postage stamps and plates by the Deutsche Post and other government agencies and prohibiting the “sale, purchase, exchange or display” of Nazi stamps.

The minimum level of communications which was of necessity maintained in the liberated areas via civil postal channels required that an expedient method for controlling and financing the postal services be devised. Stamps had been printed for this purpose by the liberating powers, but without uniformity. US-printed German postage stamps were put on sale at Aachen in March 1945, and later in other areas controlled by US troops, but the supply proved to be insufficient. To supplement these initial quantities, various hastily-improved designs were circulated locally.

The variety of these community issues was so great and the supply so limited by shortage of

Design of the Cologne Cathedral stamp. Issued originally to commemorate the 700th anniversary of the cathedral, it bore a surcharge to raise revenue for reconstruction. The stamp is now one of the bizonal permanent designs.

Because communications officials of the occupying powers were agreed on the urgency of the situation the approval of standard designs for postage stamps was among the earliest quadripartite actions in the communications field. The first designs, adopted only as a temporary measure while quadripartite committees selected suitable permanent designs, were without symbolism, with large numbers

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most common request was for the issuance of stamps for sale at the postage value plus a surcharge to produce revenue for specific reconstruction projects. Among such envisaged projects in the US Zone were the reconstruction of the “Old Bridge” at Heidelberg, and the restoration of St. Paul’s Church in Frankfurt.

Revenue from surcharges was also sought for various beneficent activities by welfare agencies such as the Bavarian Red Cross, the Caritas Verband and similar organizations. A request from Berlin officials outlined an ambitious program calling for four special issues each year, one each commemorating the Day of the Post, May Day, Victims of Fascism Day and Youth Day. With the requests, designs were usually submitted or described in detail. One graphic description of a proposed Victims of Fascism Day stamp design was “hyena devouring human being.”

There were many additional requests for special issues from organizations and local governments merely for commemorative stamps to be sold without surcharge. Some events which promoters felt would merit issuance of a special commemorative stamp were an industrial exhibition at Stuttgart, the 400th anniversary of the death of Martin Luther, the 300th anniversary of the end of the Thirty Years’ War and many others of varying impressiveness.

Because of this deluge of special issue applications, the quadrupartite working parties, committees and directorates concerned with the issuance of postage stamps adopted a highly selective set of standards in the light of which each request was judged.

NOT UNTIL the fall of 1946 was quadrupartite approval given for the issuance of special stamps. At that time three current denominations of the temporary postage stamp then in use in the US, British and Soviet Zones and Berlin were printed in a rectangle of plain white paper and sold at a price in excess of the combined face value of the stamps, with the added revenue, or surcharge, contributing toward relief of refugees and the aged in Berlin.

Quadrupartite approval was granted about the same time for the first of a series of stamps to commemorate the Leipzig Fair. An institution which had its beginnings in the Middle Ages about 1170, the Leipzig Fair was accepted then by the quadrupartite bodies as of Germany-wide significance both traditionally and economically. This series was continued by special issues for the 1947 and 1948 fairs, the latter being approved and in production before the suspension of quadrupartite meetings.

In April 1947 a special issue went on sale commemorating the 50th anniversary of the death of Heinrich von Stephan, the founder of the Universal Postal Union, and the last special stamp to receive quadrupartite approval was distributed for sale in May 1948 in conjunction with the opening of the Hanover Trade Fair.

All quadrupartite-approved postage stamps were produced at the state printing office in the US Sector of Berlin. Materials for the production of stamps were furnished by the US, British and Soviet Zones as was most available to each. By complicated allocation among the three zones the total value of materials required from each was equalized.

BETWEEN March 20, 1948, when quadrupartite meetings were suspended, and August, postage stamp production remained on a self-sustaining basis, with no new issues introduced. Recognizing that this static condition could not prevail indefinitely, Military Government initiated action to transfer responsibility for all

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postage stamp matters to German authority.

In August, by joint decision of US and British Military Governments, responsibility for the issuance of postage stamps in the Bizonal Area without prior approval of Military Government was placed with the German Bizonal Economic Council, which in turn delegated the responsibility to the German Bizonal Department for Posts and Telecommunications. This delegation to German authority of a responsibility which had previously been vested exclusively in Military Government represented an advance toward the restoration of complete responsibility for their own communications system to the German people.

Under the current policy, the Department for Posts and Telecommunications is responsible for keeping Military Government informed of pertinent developments concerning postage stamps and for insuring that stamps issued are for use in accordance with normal postal practices and for distribution only through the Deutsche Post.

The first act taken by the department under this new authority was the issuance of a special stamp picturing, in commemoration of its 700th anniversary, the Cologne cathedral. The stamp was sold in the Bizonal Area with a surcharge to provide funds for the cathedral’s repair. It went on sale Aug. 15, and subsequently the surcharge was eliminated and the design was adopted for permanent use.

Currency conversion in the western zones directly involved the issuance of postage stamps. Planning for the reform recognized that it would be necessary to invalidate stamps purchased for the old Reichsmarks to foil possible attempts to circumvent the devaluation by converting currency into stamps.

A complete new issue of stamps was deemed unnecessary, but a means of differentiating between stamps purchased prior to the conversion with Reichsmarks and those after the conversion with Deutsche marks had to be devised. In the Bizonal Area the solution reached was that the permanent design, quadruplicate-applied stamps already in use there would be overprinted with the postal horn—a symbol of the Deutsche Post (German postal system).

Many German postal employees worked on the project without knowing its significance. The preparation of printing presses and dyes for the overprinting was accomplished without arousing undue speculation, as was the procurement of inks and other materials necessary for the job. Only those persons actually engaged in the printing and packaging of the overprinted stamps had eyewitness evidence that preparations for a change were being made, but even they had no indication of the date.

When monetary reform was promulgated, postage stamps, like the Reichsmark, were devalued to one-tenth of their face value. On June 23

![Luftbrücke Berlin](image)

To mark 100 days of the Berlin blockade and show confidence in the airlift, the Deutsche Post of the western sectors of Berlin used this "Luftbrücke" (air bridge) cancellation during October.

the old stamp became void and the new overprinted stamps assumed their face value in Deutsche marks.

The same procedure was followed in the monetary reform of the three western sectors of Berlin. It soon became apparent, however, that use of the same stamps in the zone, where they could be purchased only for Deutsche marks, as in Berlin, where East marks were also legal tender, presented the possibility of financial manipulation by the transmission of Berlin-purchased stamps to the Bizonal Area. To obviate this practice a new overprint—"Berlin"—was adopted for Berlin stamps to distinguish them from those purchased in the zone. Stamps with the "Berlin" overprint were not valid in the zone.

A complete new series of stamps replaced those overprinted with the postal horn in the Bizonal Area on Sept. 1. Printed at Brunswick in the British Zone, the new series pictures five famous German architectural landmarks. In addition to the Cologne cathedral, pictures on various denominations of stamps are the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, the Holsten Gate at Lubeck, Frankfurt's Roemer (Coronation Hall) and Munich's Frauenkirche (Cathedral of the Holy Virgin).

Special service to stamp collectors is provided by the Deutsche Post through its philatelic office in Frankfurt.* When outgoing airmail service was initiated for the Germans in the Bizonal Area on May 1, 1948, US and UK residents who desired special first flight covers obtained them by mailing requests with envelopes and international reply coupons to that office. The philatelic office receives allocations of all special issues of postage stamps and has on hand supplies of current bizonal stamps for sale to collectors.

The most recent German additions to a collector's stamp book are the 2-pfennig (six-tenths of one cent) tax stamp and the "Help Berlin" overprinted Brandenburg Gate stamp being sold with a surcharge, both of which went into use in the Bizonal Area in December. The 2-pfennig stamp is affixed to every piece of mail posted in the Bizonal Area, and the revenue which it yields, like that from the surcharge on the Brandenburg Gate stamp, will be used for relief of the blockaded western sectors of Berlin.

Issuance of these stamps were not acts of sympathy on the part of the Germans in the Bizonal Area, but avowals of respect. For the Berliners had demonstrated two months earlier, also from their post offices, that they were not soliciting sympathy. Instead of displaying self-pity in their plight they paid a public tribute to the US and British fliers of the airlift by adopting for use throughout October a special stamp cancellation marking 100 days of the "Luftbrücke" (air bridge).

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