

EUROPEAN STAMP ISSUES AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR

FALL OF EMPIRES, RISE OF NATIONS

David Parker

European Stamp Issues and the First World War takes a new approach to the dramatic story of the continental empires and nations who became embroiled in the Great War that eventually transformed Europe and created a new patchwork of countries seething with jealousies and discontent.

It does so using the unique perspectives provided by the philatelic images through which each nation projected its vision of itself through the ruling dynasties, military triumphs, breathtaking scenery, cultural achievements and technical advances it chose to highlight. During the uncertain and traumatic decades surrounding the Great War, nothing identified the aspirations and anxieties of a country more than its succession of stamp designs – some very dramatic, others subtle.

Eye-catching new issues were powerful instruments of propaganda as well as revenue. In victory, stamps celebrated the acquisition of new territory, and in adversity they urged unity and promoted charities. From 1918 numerous stamps tracked the savage Red and White Russian Civil War. And, as the great empires collapsed, countries such as Czechoslovakia, Poland and the Baltic States emerged eager to promote their history, culture and independence. While many French and Belgian stamps showed these war-torn nations nursing their recovery, issues in Germany highlighted how its post-war chaos hardened into a new national identity. And across the Balkans lengthy sets reflected the deep divisions within and between the Slav nations that preceded and long outlasted the First World War.

This unparalleled book provides a fascinating portrait of the turbulent decades of the early twentieth century, revealed through miniature works of art that are in themselves important historical sources.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr David Parker was a headteacher and then UK and European Masters Programme Director in the University of Plymouth's Faculty of Arts & Education. He was also engaged in several European Union educational reform projects, primarily in the newly independent Czech Republic and Slovakia. He has written several books and many articles on social, educational and local history, including *European Stamp Issues of the Second World War* and *Images of Triumph, Deceit & Despair*, published in 2015. His *The People of Devon in the First World War* was awarded Devon History Society's W. G. Hoskins Prize for 2013. He has contributed to BBC TV and Radio Devon programmes on World War One themes, and given many talks to local history societies. David Parker and his wife live in Exeter and have two grown up children.

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