At the beginning of 1922 there were only four airfields serving Hungary. It must, of course, be remembered that in this era it was a routine occurrence for aircraft to use a plowed field as a landing strip when circumstances demanded it. The recognized airfields were at Matyasfold (serving Budapest and its environs), Miskolc, Szombathely, and Szeged. There were about 40 civil aviators in Hungary at this time. Additional airports were established in Budapest (for seaplanes) in 1923 and in Szekesfehervar in 1925.

The prohibition on aircraft construction in Hungary, that had been imposed as a result of the Treaty of Trianon, was lifted on January 26, 1922. Certain restrictions on speed and size of aircraft were maintained, however, by the Allies. These restrictions made commercial aircraft manufacture competitively impractical, and therefore no significant aircraft industry developed during these years.

The flying restrictions imposed after the Treaty of Trianon were in effect until November 1922. Therefore, the only air service provided in Hungary during 1922 was by the French company - Compagnie Franco-Roumaine de Navigation Aerienne - the Franco-Roumanian Air Navigation Company. Two Hungarian companies were formed to provide air service shortly after the restrictions were lifted. They were Magyar Legiforgalmi RT founded on November 19, 1922 and the Aeroexpress Company founded on January 1, 1923. These three were the only airlines to serve Hungary during this period. Charles Vassel was Hungary's Director of Air Traffic during the period under consideration.

The Aeroexpress Company was formed on
January 1, 1923. Its chief director was Dr. Odon Deghy. It received concessions to operate scheduled air service to Prague, Czechoslovakia; Bucharest, Roumania; and Zagreb, Yugoslavia; as well as to provide seaplane service along the Danube to Vienna and on Lake Balaton. Because of Czech, Roumanian, and Yugoslav objections, the routes to those countries were not established. The seaplane services were established, and for political reasons were operated by the Austrian arm of the Aeroexpress Company - Oesterriche Luftverkehrs AG. The Aeroexpress Company was from the beginning associated with the Trans-Europa Union. This is an association of airlines and air routes in northern and central Europe headed by Germany's Junkers Luftverkehrs AG.

Limited service was operated between Vienna and Budapest in 1923. The service was provided from July 15 until September 30. Junkers seaplanes were used, which seated six passengers. Landings were made on the Danube river near the center of each city. During this period 124 trips were made from Budapest. 187 passengers were carried, as was 39kg of mail. Also in 1923 a special trip was made to Rome, Italy carrying the Bishop of Szombathely and his aides to the Vatican.

Using eight of the above mentioned Junkers seaplanes, 1924 was a very good year for the Aeroexpress Company. Between July and November, 430 daily trips were made from Budapest to Vienna (heavy traffic necessitated an extra flight on many days). These aircraft actually proceeded on the Trans-Europa Union route from Vienna to Munich, Germany and then on to Zurich, Lusanne, and Geneva, Switzerland. The aircraft then made the return flight to Budapest which required flares to be used (32)
to permit the night landings on the Danube. There were connections at Munich to the Trans-Europa Union route Munich-Frankfort-Berlin. There were 1393 passengers, 6300kg of luggage, 110kg of goods, and 823kg of mail carried from Budapest on this route in 1924. During the summer there was extensive traffic to Lake Balaton, and many other domestic pleasure flights. One special flight was made with two passengers to Ankara, Turkey from Budapest via Sofia, Bulgaria and Constantinople. Lazlo Ujvary was pilot on this flight.

In 1925 traffic dropped off considerably. The Aeroexpress Company made 250 flights from Budapest to Vienna. 597 passengers were carried, as well as 597 parcels, 130kg of newspapers and 80kg of mail. In addition, this company and MALERT together made 347 domestic flights carrying newspapers from Budapest to Szeged, Miskolc and Debrecin, and Nagy Kanizsa. These flights carried passengers on the return trip.

On November 19, 1922 the Magyar Legiforgalmi RT was formed. Its chief director was Count Frederick Wilczek. It was authorized to establish routes from Budapest to Vienna and Belgrade. The Yugoslav government refused landing rights and the Budapest-Belgrade service was not established. This airline, popularly known as MALERT, initiated Budapest-Vienna service on July 3, 1923. The equipment used was five Fokker 6-seater monoplanes. The daily service to Vienna operated until October 20 in 1923, and a total of 136 trips were made carrying 296 passengers. No mail was recorded as having been carried that year. (Note that these flights actually went from Matyasfold to Vienna's Aspern airport.)

In 1924 an additional Fokker plane was added, and the Budapest-Vienna service operated from May to November. 347 daily
trips were made with 699 passengers. 600kg of goods and 16300 kg of mail and newspapers were carried. (The bulk of this is obviously newspapers with probably only a few kilograms of letters being carried.) Many domestic pleasure flights were also made that summer.

In 1925 MALERT's business also dropped off, with 264 trips from Budapest to Vienna. 714 passengers, 18700kg of newspapers and 17.7kg of mail were carried. No record of the volume of mail carried on the three domestic routes operated jointly in 1925 by the Aeroflights Company and MALERT could be located.

The "Compagnie Franco-Roumaine de Navigation Aerienne" was founded in Paris on April 23, 1920 with capital supplied by the Roumanian bank "MARMOROSH BLANK et Cie." Its purpose was rapid air transportation between France and the nations of the "Petite Entente", particularly Roumania. In 1920 the company established a Paris-Strasbourg-Prague air route. In 1921 the line was extended from Prague to Warsaw. Finally in 1922 it reached Roumania. The route there was Prague-Vienna-Budapest-Arad-Bucharest. Belgrade was by-passed because the Yugoslav government refused landing rights to any direct flight from Hungary. In 1922 this was the only airline that served Hungary. Small quantities of mail were carried from Hungary on this route in 1922, but its volume was not available in the sources examined.

In the year 1923 Belgrade was added to the route, in the place of Arad which was dropped. Service this year was carried out from February 17 until September 30. 702 trips were made out of Budapest, carrying 262 passengers and 1800kg of mail. This is on the order of 100,000 letters, and it is doubtful that any where near that

(34)
number were dispatched in 1923. I suspect the source to be in error, or else newspapers were included in the weight.

In 1924 the same route was flown. This company used Fvez and Spad 6-seater airplanes on this route. As a matter of interest, passenger fare from Paris to Bucharest was 1350 francs, and from Paris to Warsaw was 900 francs. The airline operated normally on a three trips per week schedule from March to November 1924. 892 trips were made from Budapest carrying 753 passengers, 67,000 kg of luggage, 66,000 kg of goods, and 1400 kg of mail and newspapers.

In their dispute over the Ruhr area, Germany refused air rights to the French airline companies. Therefore in 1925 Strassbourg was dropped from the air route. The new route was Paris-Basle-Zurich-Innsbruck-Vienna-Budapest-Belgrade-Bucharest. A branch line from Vienna to Prague and then on to Warsaw was established. During the year the long-awaited extension of the line to Constantinople was consummated. During 1925, 1175 trips left Budapest carrying 1041 passengers. 1260 kg of mail and newspapers were carried. Also in 1925 the name of this company was changed to "Compagnie Internationale de Navigation Aerienne" or CIDNA.

Events in subsequent years, although not pertinent to this paper, may serve to put the era into better historical perspective.

At the beginning of 1926, the two major German airlines merged to form "Deutsche Luft Hansa AG". The parties were the Deutsche Aero Lloyd group and Junkers Luftverkehrs AG. The associated operating companies, that had been working with Junkers in the Trans-Europa Union and the Nord-Europa Union, remained technically (35)
independent for some time, but all their routes were considered a part of the Luft Hansa system. In the autumn of 1926 an experimental Budapest to Graz, Austria route was initiated. It connected to the Vienna-Klagenfurt-Venice, Italy route and permitted passengers to get from Budapest to Venice in six hours. Eight flights were made that year carrying 37 passengers, no mail is recorded as having been carried.

MALERT expanded its service by adding a Budapest-Belgrade route in 1926.

CIDNA in 1926 came to agreements with the German government, and therefore returned their principal route to include Strassbourg and Prague. Their route was now Paris-Strassbourg-Furth/Nurnberg-Prague-Vienna-Budapest-Belgrade-(Sofia?)-Bucharest-Constantinople. The branch line Prague to Warsaw was restored. CIDNA was one of the companies that formed Air France in a 1933 merger.

Totals for 1926 were 1954 international flights from Budapest. They carried 2718 passengers, 143,600kg of goods, 21700kg of newspapers, 42700kg of luggage and 2271kg of letters.

By an agreement concluded in Paris in 1927, full freedom of civil aviation and aircraft manufacture were restored to Hungary.
VII. Airmail Stamps and Markings

1922-1925.

When airmail service was restored to Hungary in the summer of 1922, no special airmail stamps were issued. The airmail stamps of 1920 were used by some for a very brief period, but these were totally inadequate because of the inflation that had been rampant in the 16 months since they were last used. For example, the airmail rate to Warsaw in 1922 was 60 korona, but the high-value stamp in the 1920 set was only 12 korona. Therefore through 1922 and 1923 most airmail was franked with regular stamps.

On April 4, 1924 a set of four airmail stamps were issued in denominations of 100, 500, 1000, and 2000 korona. The colors respectively are violet-brown and red, blue green and pale green, ochre and dull brown, and deep blue and turquoise blue. The horizontal format stamps were perforated 14 and lithographed on paper with the standard "double-cross" watermark of the period. Individual quantities printed were 1,072,000; 418,000; 1,102,000; and 997,000 respectively. The remainders were overprinted for postage due use on February 27, 1927. The stamps were valid until March 31, 1927. The only oddity known to the author is the 500k value with an albino impression of the center. Crude forgeries of this stamp were made which include grease-pencil "watermarks" and fake Budapest cancellations.

The stamps, shown in figure 7.1, were designed by Antal Megyer-Meyer and picture the mythological "Icarus". Icarus, so the story goes, was the son of an Athenian artificer named Daedalus. Following a murder, they fled to Crete, and were eventually imprisoned in the "Labyrinth" which they had built. They escaped on wings that
Daedalus had designed, and which were held together with wax. Icarus flew too near the sun, the wax melted and he fell into the sea. Daedalus completed the flight to Sicily.

On April 20, 1925 two higher values were issued because of the continuing inflation. 537,000 of the red lilac and light violet 5000k value were printed, as were 661,000 of the red and dull violet 10000k. Both were issued on paper watermarked four double crosses as shown in figure 7.2. In all other respects, the descriptions above apply also to these stamps. Imperforate copies of all six of these stamps (from Ministry files) became available on the philatelic market after World War II.

When the Franco-Roumaine company brought airmail service back to Hungary on June 28, 1922 the postage was cancelled with the standard Budapest 72 airmail cds used in 1920-1. A distinctive red marking, consisting of a 31x23mm rectangle enclosing "PAR AVION / LEGI POSTA", was also used. This mark, shown in figure 7.3, was probably in use through the end of 1923.

In 1924, the expanded air service of the Franco-Roumaine company used a new cachet. It consisted of a black 35x25mm double rectangle enclosing a picture of a biplane with "Legiposta" above the plane and the route terminals below, ie: "Budapest-destination city". The Budapest-Belgrade mark is shown in figure 7.4. The first dates of employment for these marks was April 30, 1924 for Vienna, and May 6 for Belgrade, Paris, Strassbourg, and Warsaw. (These dates for some reason are recorded as the beginning of "regular" airmail service.) The mark may have already been used for "Budapest-Bucharest" in 1923. While the author has seen no mention of them, it seems reasonable that this mark was used to Prague in 1924 and to Innsbruck, Zurich, Basle, and (38)
perhaps even to Constantinople in 1925, since these were stops on the rerouted "Paris-Bucharest" airline.

Figure 7.1  Figure 7.2

Figure 7.3  Figure 7.4

Mail for this period carried by MALERT or the Aeroexpress Company is not as easily identifiable. The same cancellation was used, but no special markings such as those mentioned above were used. Aeroexpress Company mail can frequently can be identified by the receiving mark. Most mail to Germany would have been carried by Aeroexpress, and a Munich (the Trans-Europa Union terminus) receiving mark is common on philatelic covers.

There were three principal domestic airmail events of this period, and the covers from each are fairly common. The first of these were the special flights between Budapest and Esztergom on September 23, 1924. These flights were in conjunction with the first Hungarian Philatelic Day. (This sequence of "Stamp Days" continues to the present.) The cards prepared for the Budapest-Esztergom leg of the flight have the special cancellation and marking shown in figures 7.5 and 7.6. The cards of the
return flight bear an Esztergom cds and the "boxed bi-plane" marking reading "Esztergom-Budapest". Esztergom was certainly selected for this flight because of its great cultural and historic importance. It was the site of St. Stephen's birth and coronation, and served as Hungary's capital until the Mongol invasion. Its well-known, magnificent cathedral is the seat of Hungary's Roman Catholic primate.

April 13, 1925 was the first flight of the domestic air route between Budapest and Szeged. While these flights normally carried newspapers, the first flight carried much specially prepared philatelic mail. The "boxed bi-plane" marking was used in both directions, the "Budapest-Szeged" leg being unique in that the marking is in purple. The normal airmail cds' were used in both cities to cancel the stamps, but Szeged used a special "stamp exhibition" receiving mark. Many of the cards also bore a label which shows two residents of Szeged looking up at a biplane. It is inscribed "Aero Szeged-Budapest". The label is perforated 11 1/2 and appears in two color combinations: light grey and red, and light green and violet. A "Legipostaval Erkezett" ("arrived by airmail") handstamp was also applied. The three types of this mark known to the author are: a) 50mm long, b) in a rectangular 87x11mm box, and c) 118mm long.

![Figure 7.5](image1)

![Figure 7.6](image2)

In conjunction with the Second Hungarian Philatelic Day, a special balloon flight was made to commemorate the Przemysl balloonpost. About 400 cards were sent aloft in small balloons. Each bears a request that it be
placed in the regular mail by the finder. The card has the "Ballonpost Przemysl/1915" cancellation shown in figure 2.7 printed on it. In addition the regular 200k postage will be found, cancelled in the city to which it was taken by the finder. A square, dark green on white label perforated 10½ was also applied. This label pictures a soldier watching a balloon ascend over the wall of a fortress, and is inscribed "A Przemysl Ballonposta Emlékére / II Magyar Filatelistana Nap". This label is "cancelled" with a red double-circle mark picturing a balloon with mail, and reading "II Magyar Filatelistana Nap / Budapest 1925". The dates of the philatelic congress were December 12-14, 1925, but the "balloon cards" are cancelled in early January 1926. The cards have printed on the reverse, in Hungarian and German, a brief summary of the Przemysl "story".

(41)