

PHILATELY of OCCUPIED SLOVENIA

Historically, over centuries Slovenia has been the crossroads of Slavic, Germanic, and Romance languages and cultures. At various times, it has been part of many different states, including the Roman Empire, Byzantine Empire, Carolingian Empire and the Holy Roman Empire, the Habsburg Monarchy, Republic of Venice, French-administered Illyrian Provinces of Napoleon I., Austrian Empire and Austria-Hungary.

In October 1918, the Slovenes exercised self-determination for the first time by co-founding the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, merging in December 1918 with the Kingdom of Serbia to form the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. In 1929, it was renamed the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

During World War II, Slovenia was occupied and annexed largely by Germany and Italy. On 8 July 1941, Germany annexed the territory of Lower Styria, the territory extending south of the river Sava, including Maribor, Celje, Kranj and Bled where stamps of Germany were used. Italy occupied Ljubljana and a wedge of Slovenia until September 1943 when German forces occupied the area. The Prekmurje region in the east was annexed to Hungary, and some villages in the Lower Sava Valley were incorporated in the newly created Nazi puppet state, the Independent State of Croatia.

In 1945, liberated by partisans and Russian troops, a reassembled Slovenia became a constituent part of the republic of Yugoslavia.

This collection reflects the healthcare-associated philately of three entities: The Italian Occupation of 1941, The German Occupation of 1943-1945; the Protectorate of Italy (1941-1943) and Independent State of Croatia 1941-1945

The part of Slovenia occupied by the Italians in 1941 was named the Province of Ljubljana (in Italian, Provincia di Lubiana). Italy overprinted existing Yugoslavia stamps; these overprints read '*R. Commissariato Civile Territori Sloveni occupati LUBIANA*', or simply '*Co. Ci.*' (for Commissariato Civile).

In 1943, Lubiana was handed over to Germany. At first, Italian stamps were overprinted with a German eagle and the name of the Province in German and Slovenian: *PROVINZ LAIBACH* and *LJUBLJANSKA POKRAJINA*, respectively. The surcharges were, like the former Italian overprints on Yugoslavian stamps, denominated in lira and centesimi.

In 1945 Germany issued new stamps especially for the Province; these were inscribed again in German and in Slovenian.

All these stamps are scarce and, in unmounted mint condition highly sought after.