

In Memory Dr. Ferenc Nagy

1934-2026

We received sad news in mid-March, the exceptional genius of Hungarian philately is no more, he has finished his earthly career.

He was already infected by the mysterious world of stamps at the age of 10, which was no wonder, since his father was already a renowned stamp collector of his time, who between 1975 and 1988 participated in 15 world exhibitions with his exceptional airmail material and brought home glittering medals, and finally left us here at the age of 99.

In the closing years of the World War, he was a daily visitor to Budapest's Post Office No. 4, about which he later wrote: *"A unique stamp collecting subculture could have formed at the entrance to the Main Post Office on Petőfi Sándor Street. There, not only did we gladly and willingly join the never-shortening line, but there was also a gossip exchange, which at that time, in the absence of any other medium, was the only source of news for us little stamp collectors. It was there that the news spread that on November 9, 1945, we could witness a unique sensation, because under the name of „Reconstruction”, the first Hungarian stamp was published, half of the sheet of which was printed upside down, so an inverted pair appeared in the middle of the sheet."* Thus, at the age of 10-11, he became a person who was excitedly researching philately!

Before the 1956 revolution, he was already a conscripted soldier and assigned to the medical corps. In October, we find him in Budapest, where he transported injured people to hospitals in a Red Cross car. Of course, he also knew where the weapons were stored in the barracks and delivered a truckload of them to the revolutionaries.

For this reason, after the suppression of the revolution, it was not advisable for him to stay at home, so he crossed the border and settled in Vienna, where he graduated from medical school and became a general practitioner. Among his patients were famous philatelists of the time, such as Anton Jerger.

After his life was consolidated, his unforgettable childhood hobby, stamp collecting, turned to a great intensity. He was primarily interested in Hungarian-related topics that no one had dealt with before. For example, he noticed how rare the 25 and 50 Kreuzer stamps with Hungarian cancellations were within the 1867 issue and put together a unique collection of them. He was the one who presented the history of Hungarian post offices in Romania between 1867 and 1869 in his exhibition collection, and then wrote two books about it, the first with black and white illustrations, together with Mrs. Józsefné Sipos in 1992, and then independently in 2012, now with colour illustrations and in two languages.

The world of Transylvania particularly excited him, he presented a unique exhibition about the Transylvanian hotel post offices. There was a post office in Predeal on the Romanian side of the border, which also housed Hungarian postal clerks, and of course he researched its operation. But he was equally excited by the postal history of the various occupied territories after World War I, be it Romanian, Serbian or Czechoslovak territory.

He is also credited with presenting the history of the "Balaton stamps". His unique collection has been presented in several special books. He was the first to draw the attention of the collecting community to the Peterdi letters and in a new article he presented their beauty.

He also dealt with the documents of the 1848-49 War of Independence in a separate exhibition, which was then on display for several months at the National Museum in Budapest. It is also obvious that this topic also testified to his deep patriotism, which was no wonder, since he had lived in a foreign country for 70 years.

He wrote about his patriotism and his relationship with his new homeland in the 2017 special issue of Philatelica:

“After the tragic events of 1956, I had to flee my homeland because my life was in danger. I took part in the revolution carelessly in my military uniform, not thinking that an uprising could be lost. So, after they defeated us in November and started to round up my comrades, I did not expect this, I had to flee my beloved Budapest.

Austria received me with great understanding and did everything to allow me to start a new life with them. As a Hungarian, they considered me a member of a related people and I had no difficulty in full and successful integration. For this reason, I will be eternally grateful to the Republic of Austria and its people and can assure them of my unconditional loyalty.

However, this does not prevent me from analysing, researching, and making public certain historical injustices. In all friendships and relationships It's better to discuss, debate, and illuminate problems instead of sweeping them under the rug.”

He maintained close ties with domestic philatelic organizations, it is no coincidence that MABÉOSZ elected him an honorary member in 2018. But he was the one who, together with professors Dr. László Makkai and Dr. István Láng, raised the need to found the Hungarian Philatelic Scientific Society (Academy) in 1988, which was realized a year later.

He was also a proud member of the venerable Vindobona Club in Vienna, founded in 1880, for several decades, where he regularly participated in the club's life, gave lectures, organized symposia and excursions, and held convincing debates with prominent representatives of Austrian philatelic life on the recognition of the Hungarian nature of the 1867 edition. In this regard, he was also a signatory in 1983 to the declaration signed by 26 renowned stamp collectors and experts from around the world in order to clarify the circumstances of the 1867 edition.

His 25 prestigious articles, spanning several hundred pages, were published in the Philatelica magazine, and the special issue published on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the 1867 edition contained only his writings. In addition, he wrote numerous articles in the Filatéiai Szemle and even in the Austrian monthly magazine “Die Briefmarke”. In the last years of his life, he also turned to antique numismatics and his enjoyable writings on this topic were published in both Hungarian and German.

After 2000, he returned to his childhood topic, the 1945-46 Budapest and national postal history, which he personally experienced. He compiled unforgettable exhibition materials from these topics, as well as others, and won outstanding medals at national and world exhibitions. Even at the age of 90, he compiled several new exhibition materials, in which his main guiding principle was always to present the diversity of Hungarian philately by imparting new knowledge. We will miss him for many, many years to come!

God bless you Feri! Rest in peace!

CZD.