

RED CROSS TAX AND RED CROSS TAX POSTAGE DUE (PORTO) STAMPS

Every attempt has been made to weave a cohesive picture of healthcare-related philately within selected segments of The Balkans and subsequent Geo-political entities. It begins in 1914 and ends arbitrarily in 1985 when commercialism and the regional designation system appears to have kicked in with gusto.

Prior to the end of WWII, there were many Red Cross non-postal charity labels issued by various regional branches of the Red Cross, the purpose being to advertise the charitable work of the organisation and raise funds. After WWII, Pošta Srbije (Post of Serbia or PTT) took over the release of issues, the famous OBLIGATORY Postal Tax (or surcharge) and Postage Due (Porto) Tax (or surcharge) stamps. Throughout this period, aligned with the original philosophy, there were still many issues released by the regional divisions of the Red Cross. This was especially so in the late 1950's and early 1960's, and caused some confusion for the public, the postal authorities and collectors alike.

In the late 1970's, concerns were raised regarding the distribution of the funds raised from these stamps. From 1977, the annual campaign saw the introduction of a series of issues of different values by the PTT, but with specific values designated by the individual republics and autonomous regions. Authoritative catalogues reacted to the designation system and increasingly ambiguous nature of these stamps by ceasing to list many of them. SCOTT, GIBBONS and others stated that they no longer considered the stamps "national" issues. In recent years, with the breakup of the State of Yugoslavia, some catalogues appear to have relented and seen fit to return to including such issues in their publications.

Red Cross Tax and Red Cross Tax Postage Due (Porto) stamps are categorised by the PTT (and thus the editors of most catalogues) as follows:

- Red Cross Charity and later Red Cross Week: these stamps can be found in the main body of the collection 1933-1985
- Red Cross Children's Week, later International Children's Day and "The Joy of Europe" stamps are displayed separately from the main collection in the supplementary album 1950-1985
- Red Cross Anti-Tuberculosis Week stamps are displayed separately from the main collection in the supplementary album 1950-1985
The Yugoslav League against Tuberculosis 1929-1937
- Red Cross Solidarity Week (issued 1975 onward; only represented is the 1985 set of 3 is recognised for postal use "Montenegro and nationwide")
- Red Cross Aids Awareness Week stamps were introduced in years outside the scope of this collection (not represented; dated labels issued 1999 onward)
- Red Cross Anti-Cancer Week stamps were introduced in years outside the scope of this collection (not represented; issued 1986 onward)