



GERMANY PHILATELIC SOCIETY POST WORLD WAR II STUDY AND RESEARCH GROUP

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This and That

No, I am not dead! To all who have written and received no replies, I apologize. I am aware of my inconsideration, and do not mean this as a personal affront to anyone. I was (and to some extent still am) merely suffering a severe case of losing interest. Since my research projects have bogged down (I have gotten most of the "easily acquired" information and am faced with a lot of unanswered questions), material has become ridiculously expensive, and (for the sake of conservation and because of cost) I have almost completely eliminated trips to shows, bourses, etc., I have become lethargic in my stamp activities. For a while I was able to analyze auction catalogs for interesting material, but with my recent lack of purchases most of the catalogs have stopped coming.

I hope to get back in the swing of things (although I now have bowling leagues, school classes and yard projects to compete for the time I used to spend on stamps). I really am sorry that my period of inactivity occurred at a time when interest was picking up amongst the group. Whereas I used to be able to go a year without a bulletin and nobody seemed to give a damn, at least I now get friendly (and some pretty direct) "ticklers".

Well, let's try to get going again.

First, Chuck Blunck has quit as secretary/treasurer; he has personal problems and simply cannot devote any time to the job. I would really like to thank Chuck for his efforts for us. Chuck doesn't have any particular interest in the Local issues, he was primarily helping us just because we needed help and I do appreciate it.



2.

We need somebody to take Chuck's slot. Any volunteers? I currently hold the records Chuck had, but I have not looked them over - apply to me for the job.

Second, concerning membership and dues (which was the subject of most of the "ticklers" sent to me; Al Heinz and Chuck). I hope I have a complete list of members - at least if you receive this you're on it. Guess I'll have to have George Blizil put a blurb in the Specialist to make sure I'm not missing anyone. Chuch has sent me the money collected for dues for the years 1979-80, which, when combined with the monies paid directly to me, totals almost \$750. I have so far put out 3 bulletins dated 1979; this one and (I hope) one in December will be dated 1980. These 5 bulletins will cost in the vicinity of \$350 and should be equivalent to one years wort of bulletins. Therefore, we'll just push the dues paid for 1980 up to 1981 (which will give us around \$400 to work with in 1981). Everyone who paid 1980 dues is paid through 1981.

Third, I'm going to have to get organized (which anyone who knows me knows may be an impossibility) and get some help in preparing the bulletin (i.e. help in cutting down the time I use in getting out a bulletin).

One big problem is that my typing speed (with the 2 finger method) is about one page per half hour (with stops for corrections). The way things are now I receive "articles" as Xerox copies of existing articles, as photographs which need astory written for them, and in German which must be translated and sometimes the translations must be cleaned up a bit. Don't get me wrong - I'm not knocking anybody's efforts or saying that the above are not necessary steps in making up an article, I'm just saying that I may be seeking help in getting some of these steps carried out.

I have a number of articles that require numerous illustrations. Here I have to pay \$12 for 130 copies of a 2 sided page (Xerox or offset about the same price). Can anyone get Xeroxing done cheaper? (of course postage costs to send pages back and forth may wipe out any printing cost savings). Anyone have any suggestions on how we can save printing costs? I currently have an article on AMG's with 27 pages of illustrations and an article on Civilian Internee Censorship that has 22 pages with illustrations.

So we have several problems to overcome. Even if articles are "nicely typed" when I get them things are not always straightforward, for to print from a mimeograph I copy the material onto a stencil, and if I'm going from Pica to Elite type (or vice versa) things don't come out as on the original (lines lengthen or shorten) so the articles dont take up the same area. This is why now I generally start at the front of a bulletin and work my way through in order until I get to the back. It would be quicker if I could know "this article will take 5 pages, pages 8 thru 12" so I could be working on that (or getting it done) and simultaneously working on the article that begins on page 13. In other words, if I could have the bulletin laid out before I start typing the stencils it would help (of course this als means the articles are written and typed rather than being handwritten notes and some photos). Oh well, we'll work out something.

I'll be contacting some of you who expressed a willingness to help with typing and other chores. Also any ideas on how we can save printing costs for illustrations? Also any help available on translations?

"The Trial Prints of DOBELN
(Including some New and Unlisted Varieties)

by Donald E. Slawson

The Michel catalog lists, as P I through P V, five trial prints for the town of Döbeln. I don't know how many of you have ever noticed these or paid any attention to them, but to me they are quite confusing. I have no idea of the appearance of the printing design for two of these issues and no idea of where any of the five fit into the printing process. Let me discuss these issues as Michel lists them.

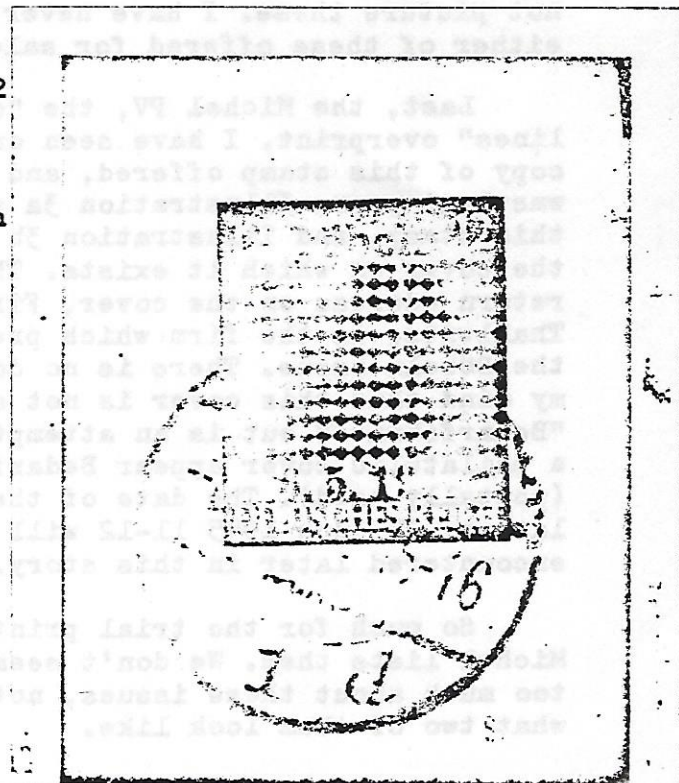
First, P (for "Probedruck" or trial print) I and P II. Michel notes that 100 of each of these exist, so it seems like a reasonable assumption that a plate of 100 dies was prepared and a single sheet of stamps overprinted with each plate. The trial P I is different from the production issue in two respects. First, instead of 12 rows of diamonds there are only 10 rows (each of 16 columns just like the production issue) and second, varieties exist with the name "Döbcln" which are not found in the production issue. This trial die PI was used on the 3Pfg. Civil official series stamp Michel number D166. A copy of PI with the name variety is shown as Illustration 1. The trial PII was evidently made from the same plate as PI, however, two rows of diamonds have been added to each die, making the diamond grid 12 rows x 16 columns, the same as the production plate. This PII trial plate differed from the production plate only in that it still contained the name varieties "Döbcln" which are not found in the production issue. This trial PII was applied to a sheet of 12Pfg. Hitler stamps. Illustration 2 shows a copy of PII with the name variety.



Illustration 1
Michel PI with name
variety Döbcln

Illustration 2

Michel PII
with name
variety Döbcln



I do not know if there is any deliberate significance to the order in which Michel lists these stamps, but the sequence of events was probably as

follows. The plate with dies containing 10 rows of diamonds was prepared, a trial made (PI) and found lacking (it was not "deep" enough to cover the design) so two rows of diamonds were added to each die and another trial made (PII). When this die was deemed sufficient for the purpose of obliteration the plate was then checked carefully, the name varieties were noticed and corrected. The plate was then ready for the production issue.

However, there are two things that distress me about the above assumptions. First, I question that the printing plate was checked carefully enough to eliminate the "c" in the word "Döbeln" unless the variety had been deliberately included. This shows more care than was usually taken in the preparation of an "emergency overprint". The use of a "c" in place of an "e" does not usually happen accidentally, especially if there were quite a few of these "mistakes" - which I assume there were since the variety only rates a 25% price increase. Therefore, I am dubious of the relation of the plate used to make these trials and the plate used for the production issue. Second, the Michel listed issue quantities of 100 of each stamp do not seem to prove out in the marketplace. I have seen at least 20 copies of PI offered over the years yet in over 10 years of trying to keep my eyes open I have seen only 3 copies of PII offered for sale and these have all been within the last three years. These numbers offered for sale do not suggest equal issue quantities. As will be later shown, the above trials are not the only "diamond grid" trials which exist. These later to be shown "diamond grid" trials - which I must assume were prepared before PI and PII - make me question the significance of the PI and PII.

Next, the Michel listed trials PIII and PIV. Unfortunately Michel does not picture these. I have never seen an item offered purporting to be either of these offered for sale, so I have no idea what they look like.

Last, the Michel PV, the "diagonal lines" overprint. I have seen only one copy of this stamp offered, and this was last year. Illustration 3a shows this stamp, and Illustration 3b shows the cover on which it exists. The return address on the cover, Firm Adolph Thallwitz, is the firm which prepared the Döbeln issue. There is no doubt in my mind that this cover is not a "Bedarfsbrief" but is an attempt to make a philatelic cover appear Bedarfs (postally used). The date of the cancellation, 25 June 1945 11-12 will be encountered later in this story.

So much for the trial prints as Michel lists them. We don't seem to know too much about these issues, not even what two of them look like.

During the last few years quite a bit of Michel unlisted material has surfaced. Not knowing exactly how things progressed in Döbeln I will present this material in what seems to me to be a probable sequence of preparation.

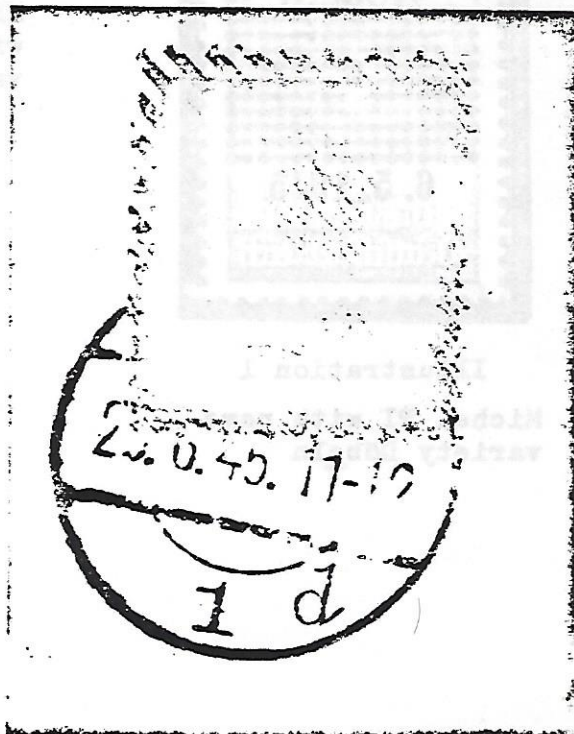


Illustration 3a

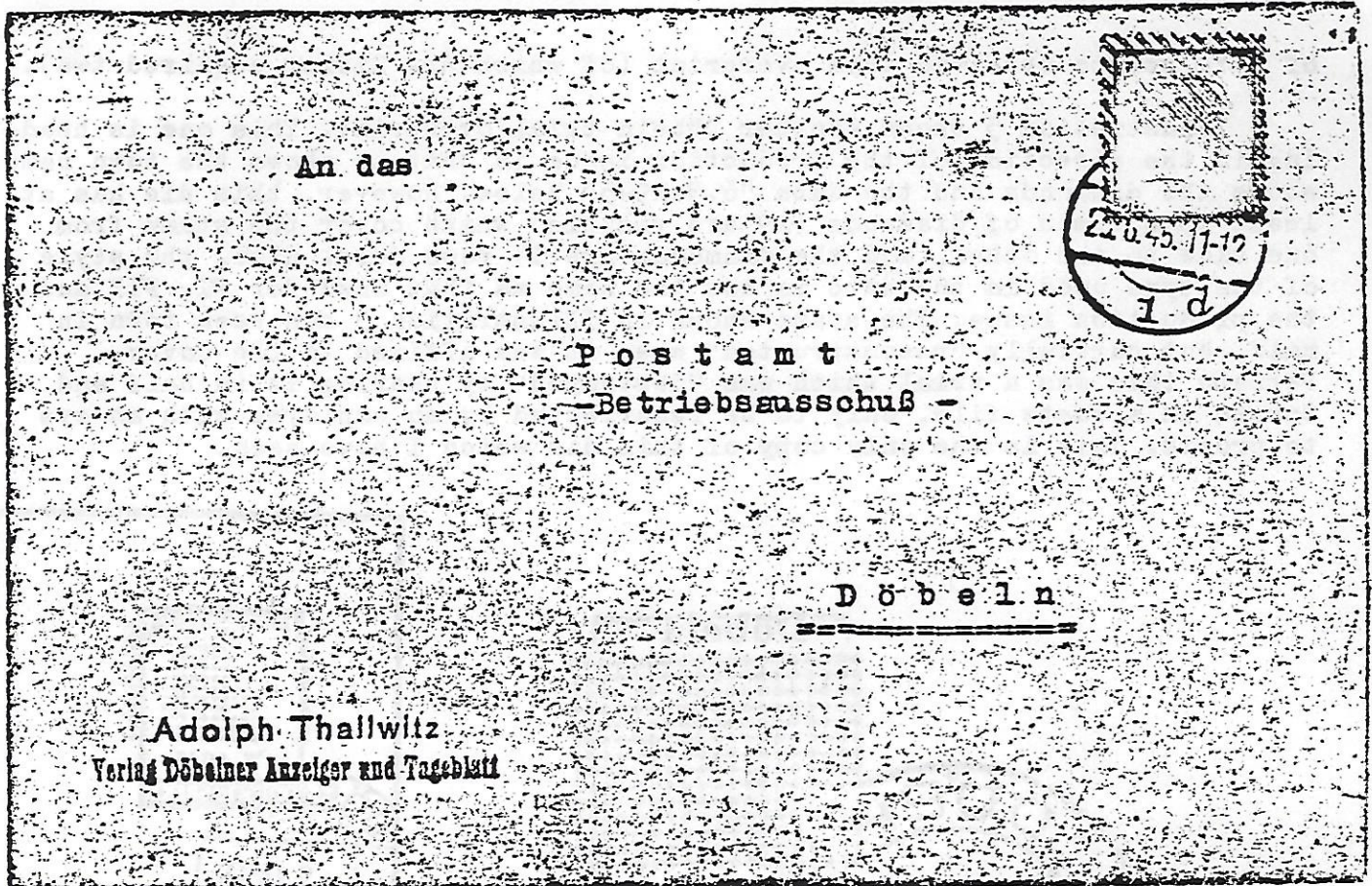


Illustration 3b

Michel P V - "diagonal lines"- on cover

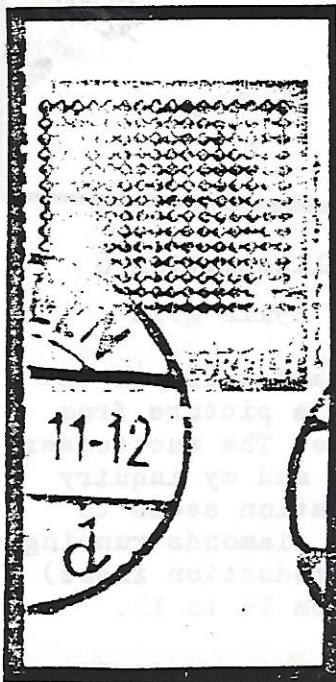


Illustration 4
14x16 grid

Illustration 4 shows a 14 row x 16 column diamond grid overprint. This was evidently made by a single die which was inked and pressed onto the surface of the stamp (or perhaps the die was fixed in place and the stamp pressed onto the die). The ink used for this trial is different than the ink used in all other trials and the production issue, being reddish (or perhaps violett) in color. A number of these trials were offered for sale by the Bundesprüfer H.B. Zierer in late 1975 and 1976. These consisted of two copies of the 6Pfg. Hitler and one copy each of the 12 and 30Pfg. Hitlers. Every one of these stamps was on piece, each carrying the same 25 June 1945 11-12 cancellation shown in Illustrations 3.

Mr. Zierer specifically stated that the two 6Pfg and one 30Pfg were the only examples he had seen of these values, but since he did not make this statement for the 12Pfg stamp it is possible he has seen more than one copy of this value. The copy shown in Illustration 4 was originally the right hand member of a horizontal pair (separated by Mr. Zierer for sale). The fact that the right side of this stamp shows the extreme left of another overprint implies there was originally another stamp to the right of this one which also received an overprint. Thus we must assume that at least 3 copies

of 6Pfg stamps received this overprint (of which Mr. Zierer acquired two).

Illustration 5 shows another Döbeln trial overprint. This one is heading in the direction of the production issue in that it shows the town name above the diamonds and the date "6.5.1945" below. However, this die has at least 19 columns of diamonds (19 are visible) which cover the stamp from one side to the other, and the diamonds are 14 rows deep. Also, the style of the type used in the date is not the same as that used for PI, PII and the production issue. The stamp shown in Illustration 5 has been torn in half, but carefully "reconstructed" when it was affixed to the cover. Perhaps this was a trial which was "destroyed" by tearing it in half and tossed in a waste file, only to be resurrected by an employee with an eye to profit. This is the only copy of this die which I have seen.

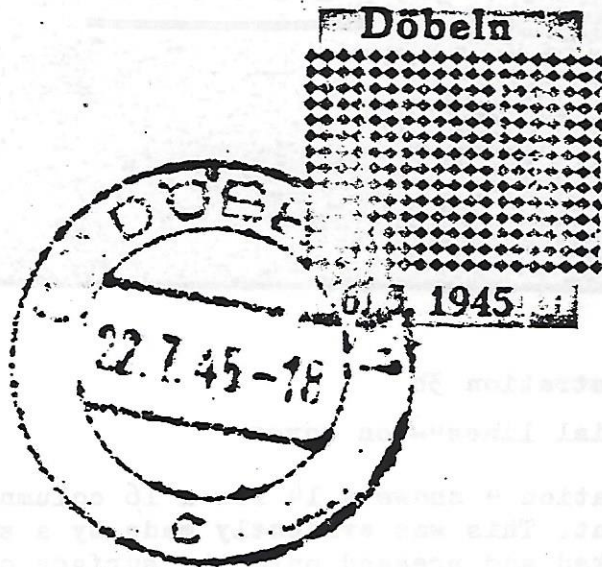


Illustration 5

19x14 grid

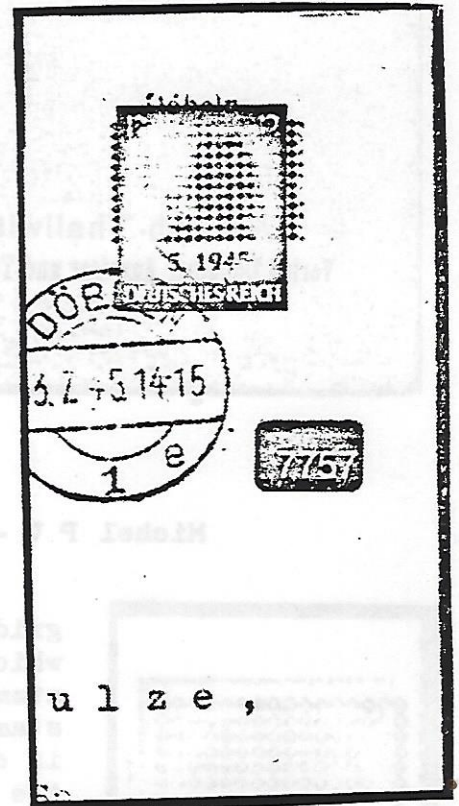


Illustration 6

19x12 grid

Illustration 6 shows a follow on to the previous die and again is the only copy of this die which I have seen. Unfortunately, this picture from an auction catalog is the only picture I have of this piece. The auctioneer did not provide me a picture of this piece as I requested, and my inquiry to the purchaser of this item was unanswered. This obliteration seems to be the same as that shown in Illustration 5 (19 columns of diamonds running the width of the stamp and type style different than the production issue) except that the number of rows of diamonds has been cut from 14 to 12.

To me the following sequence of events would seem to make sense. First, the "basic diamond" die (Illustration 4) of size 14 rows x 16 columns was

prepared. Next, to this was added at least 3 columns of diamonds and the name and date to produce the die in Illustration 5. Evidently this die was considered too "deep" for two rows of diamonds were then removed to produce the die in Illustration 6. Evidently the trials PI and PII then entered the picture. However, as stated earlier, the above previously unreported trials seem to throw a monkey wrench in the works. The unreported trials seem to "home in" on the proper vertical size. Therefore, why the 10 rows of diamonds for trial print PI?

Is it possible that the 100 die plate used for PI and PII was constructed and being tested at the same time that the "single die" trials shown above were being tested?

Perhaps we can someday learn more about exactly what happened in Döbeln while the production issue was being prepared. Perhaps we can also learn exactly where the "diagonal line" trial fits into the story - did it precede or follow the "grid" overprint concept?

A word of caution to anyone who gets interested enough to start watching auction catalogs for these items. Look carefully at the pictures! Every single overprint on a 12Pfg. stamp is offered as a Michel PII. It is only through observing the photograph that you notice it may actually be a print from some different die which is being offered.

Before terminating my discussion I would like to bring up the item pictured as Illustration 7. This is some type of artist's proof sheet, evidently of designs considered for the Döbeln issue. Several things serve to confuse me about this. First, the designs are slightly "larger than life size", being big enough to cover a medium size (25-80Pfg.) Hitler stamp and therefore too large for the small Hitler stamps (1-24Pfg.)

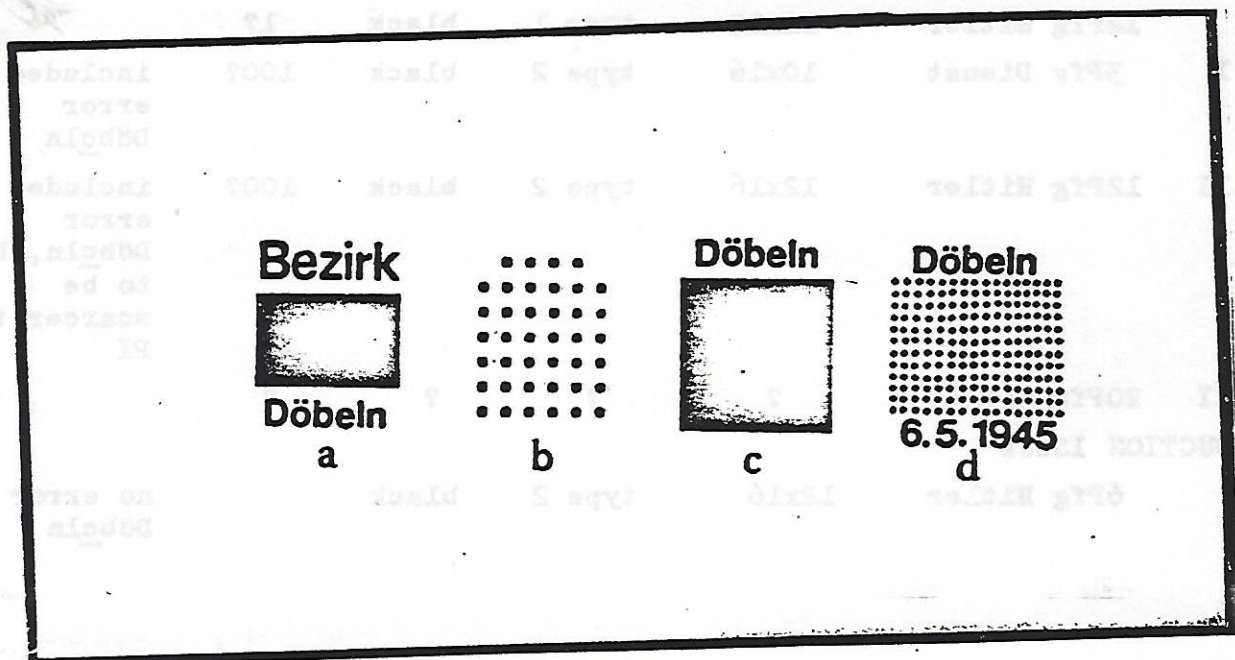


Illustration 7
Döbeln Proof Sheet ?

Second, the designs shown as a, b and c are unknown (at least to me) on stamps. Third, the design d shows a 12 row x 16 column grid - exactly the size grid used on the final production issue. The "trial prints" seem to show that the grid size of 12x16 was not immediately obvious, that it was only arrived at this grid size after some experimentation. This would indicate that this artist's proof sheet was not prepared until after the grid size had been finalized, and quite possibly after the production run was made.

The first indication I saw of the existence of these artist's proof sheets was an illustration in an article titled "The Postal History of the Kreis Döbeln", found in the show catalog for the philatelic exhibition in Leipzig, 8-14 May, 1975. At least two copies of these artist's proof sheets are known to exist.

If anyone can supply any further information on the trial issues of Döbeln or on "artist's proof sheets" such as that shown above I would be very pleased to hear from them.

Listing of (known) Döbeln trials

Michel #	Basic Stamp	Overprint grid size	lettering	color	quantity	remarks
P V	12Pfg Hitler	---diagonal lines---		black	1?	
-	6Pfg Hitler	14x16	none	violett	3?	
-	12Pfg Hitler	14x16	none	violett	1?	
(PIV?)	30Pfg Hitler	14x16	none	violett	1?	
	12Pfg Hitler	14x19	type 1	black	1?	
	12Pfg Hitler	12x19	type 1	black	1?	
P I	3Pfg Dienst	10x16	type 2	black	100?	includes error Döb <u>cl</u> n
P II	12Pfg Hitler	12x16	type 2	black	100?	includes error Döb <u>cl</u> n, has to be scarcer than PI
P III	20Pfg Hitler	?	?	?	?	
PRODUCTION ISSUE						
	6Pfg Hitler	12x16	type 2	black		no error Döb <u>cl</u> n