

PHILATELIC LAXITY

by Albert Pelsser

SPELLING ERRORS IN AN ICAO THEMATIC COLLECTION

An unusual topical collection is the one on ICAO-related stamps, as a sub-category of United Nations and aviation themes. In searching for spelling errors, falling in the category of design errors which are consistent throughout the print run of a stamp, the collector may be amazed by the high error rate (12.4%) on a limited number of stamps and souvenir sheets (a total of 386) composing the ICAO theme.

Signed by 52 States on 7 December 1944 in Chicago, Illinois, the Convention on International Civil Aviation (also called Chicago Convention) was established by Article 43 as an organization to be named the *International Civil Aviation Organization* (ICAO). Its French and Spanish names were defined at that time as *Organisation de l'aviation civile internationale* and *Organización de Aviación Civil Internacional*, respectively. ICAO's Headquarters have been located in Montreal since 1945. Most of the spelling errors in an ICAO topical collection are due to a misuse of ICAO's official name.

MISSPELLED NAME

It is to be noted that the word *organization* in ICAO's name was spelled with the letter *z*. Several countries spelled that word with the letter *s*, which is an error according to Article 43 of the Convention. Being an older spelling, the word *organisation* is usually used by countries which were part of the British Colonies. A comprehensive list of those stamps displaying the misspelled name can be found in the checklist that follows.



Figure 1

Both issued for the 20th anniversary of ICAO in 1967, Cameroon Scott #457 (Figure 1) and Gabon Scott #C53 presented the same error in the French spelling of

ICAO's name, which should have been *Organisation de l'aviation civile internationale*. Later, Cameroon and Togo made the same mistake in Scott #771 and Scott #1279-1282, respectively, issued for the 40th anniversary of ICAO; it is to be noted that ICAO's name on Togo's souvenir sheet Scott #1283, issued at the same time as the set of stamps, was correctly spelled.



Figure 2

Cuba issued one stamp Scott #3609 (Figure 2) to commemorate ICAO's 50th anniversary. As written on the stamp (*Organización de la Aviación Civil Internacional*), the Organization's name is not an error in the Spanish language; however, according to the Chicago Convention, the full name of the Organization was erroneously spelled, as the article *la* is superfluous.

Worse is that words composing ICAO's name are missing in some of the issues. For example, Yemen Scott #438-441 issued for the 40th anniversary of ICAO has omitted the word *civil*, whereas the latter word was not missing on the miniature sheet Scott #441a issued at the same time. Afghanistan had omitted many words of ICAO's name by printing *40e anniversaire de l'aviation* on its issue for the 40th anniversary (Scott #1090-6). Another serious omission in this line was produced on the Canadian stamp Scott #1528 issued for the 50th anniversary of ICAO, which displays *International Civil Aviation* and *L'aviation civile internationale*. In Stanley Gibbons #418 issued for the 50th anniversary of ICAO, Oman omitted to print the word *Organization*.

OTHER SPELLING ERRORS

As already identified in a prior article in *The Canadian Connection*, issued in Volume 12, Number 3 (September 1998), Cameroon Scott #768 and Gabon Scott #572 spelled the name of Hans Erni, the artist who created

the design of the stamps (Icarus), with an *H* in front of his last name.

Grenada issued a set of stamps and one miniature sheet for the 40th anniversary of ICAO; Scott #1273 of this series shows a De Havilland DHC-6 TWIN OTTER, built in Canada and operated by LIAT company, based in Antigua; LIAT was established in 1974 as the successor of Leeward Islands Air Transport Services and is owned by 11 Caribbean governments. De Havilland is printed on that stamp with one letter *l*.



Figure 3

Paraguay Michel #3156 (Figure 3), issued on 24 April 1979, shows a Curtiss Hudson Flier biplane, which had been flown by Eugene B. Ely from the U.S.A., Curtiss's exhibition pilot. On 14 November 1910, Eugene Ely took off from the deck of the American light cruiser USS Birmingham in the above-mentioned airplane, for the first-ever take-off from a ship; he touched the water and damaged the propeller, but managed to maintain control and landed four kilometres away. The aircraft carrier was born. Later on 18 January 1911, Eugene Ely also became the first to land on a ship, with the Curtiss aeroplane. The first name of Eugene Ely is erroneously spelled with two *n*'s on the stamp.



Figure 4

On Libya Scott #1227f (Figure 4) issued on 7 December 1984, the collector may have his/her attention drawn by the model of the aircraft: *Shorts 360*. The Short Brothers were air pioneers; in 1897, they purchased a used balloon and thought themselves to fly it. Founded in 1901, their company, located in Belfast, Northern Ireland, received in 1909 the first aircraft production contract in history from the Wright Brothers. In October 1989, Bombardier acquired Short Brothers PLC, which was the oldest established aircraft manufacturer in the world. One would have expected that the aircraft name on the Libyan stamp to be *Short 360*; however, in fact from the many aviation encyclopaedias, there is no doubt that the spelling, as shown on the stamp, is correct. A few aircraft produced by Short Brothers bear the name *Shorts*, as the Short Brothers were commonly called Shorts.

CONCLUSION

The above numerous examples of spelling errors are simply due to sloppiness or ignorance. Starting from its 40th anniversary in 1984, ICAO's Public Information Office had sent to the various countries instructions and design suggestions which could have avoided many errors. Scrutinizing stamps in depth is both educational and a lot of fun; it shows that the hobby of stamp collecting is always fascinating.

CHECKLIST

Afghanistan	1090-1096	1984 Jun 29	'40e anniversaire de l'aviation' is printed.
Cameroon	457	1967 Mar 15	'de la' missing in the French name of ICAO
Cameroon	768	1984 Dec 12	Erni is spelled with H in front
Cameroon	771	1984 Dec 12	'de la' missing in the French name of ICAO
Canada	1528	1994 Sep 16	Organization and organisation are missing in the English and French names of ICAO
Cuba	3609	1994 Nov 09	'la' not needed in Spanish name of ICAO
Gabon	C53	1967 May 19	'de la' missing in the French name of ICAO
Gabon	572	1984 Dec 01	Erni is spelled with H in front
Ghana	1766-1768	1994 Dec 20	Organization spelled with s
Grenada	1273	1985 May 15	De Havilland is spelled with one 'l'
Malta	841-842	1994 Jul 02	Organization spelled with s
Nigeria	465A-465B	1984 Dec 07	Organization spelled with s
Oman	SG418	1994 Dec 07	'Organization' is missing
Paraguay	Mi3156	1979 Apr 24	Name of Eugene Ely is spelled with two 'n's

Qatar	666-667	1984 Dec 07	Organization spelled with s
Qatar	856-857	1994 Dec 07	Organization spelled with s
Singapore	703-706	1994 Oct 05	Organization spelled with s
Togo	1279-1282	1984 Oct 15	'de la' missing in the French name of ICAO
Turks & Caicos	660	1985 Feb 21	Organization spelled with s
Vanuatu	641-644	1994 Dec 07	Organization spelled with s
Yemen	352-353	1979 Nov 15	Organization spelled with s
Yemen	353a	1979 Nov 15	Organization spelled with s
Yemen	438-441	1985 Sep 20	'Civil' is missing in ICAO's name

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- Taylor, Michael J. H. *History of Flight*. London: Brian Trodd Publishing House Limited, 1990.
- Prendergast, Curtis. *The First Aviators*. Alexandria, Virginia: Time-Life Books, 1981.



ICAO CORRIGENDUM

[Editor's Note: We regret that the following information was inadvertently omitted by us in the ICAO story by Albert Pelsser in the December 1999 issue.]

Spelling errors in the ICAO thematic collection - Corrigendum:

Paragraph to be inserted before figure 4 in second column of page 17: Libya's set Stanley Gibbons #2413-4, issued to commemorate the 50th anniversary of ICAO, indicates that the anniversary occurred in 1995 (Figure 4), when in fact it was commemorated on 7 December 1994 - the anniversary date of the signing of the Chicago Convention.

In the first paragraph of the second column of page 17, the reference to figure 4 should be deleted.

In the published checklist, the following items are to be added:

Libya SG#2413-4 1995 Nov 15 Incorrect anniversary date: 1995 instead of 1994.

St. Vincent and The Grenadines #2150 1994 Dec 01 "International" and "Organization" are missing.

Uruguay #989 1977 Oct 17 "de" is missing in the Spanish name of ICAO.