

## ICAO TIE-INS

By Albert Pelsser

### German Presence in South America

This story of the series titled “**ICAO TIE-INS**” focuses on the noticeable and indirect influence that the German diaspora in Latin America had on the production of stamps and covers in the ICAO collection. However, the story is intentionally limited as regards to the history of the German emigration to Latin America and the multitude of philatelic items that may express any link with the German communities established there.

Economic hardships, the agricultural colonization movement, and political persecutions during the entire 19<sup>th</sup> century and well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century caused a great number of Germans to leave their country to seek a new life in foreign countries. Although the USA was the main focal point for emigration, Germans turned in a lesser proportion to South America. The history of Germans in Latin America is correspondingly complex. Nevertheless, German immigration and adaptation to Latin America followed certain patterns, as the vast majority of Germans who came to Latin America pertained to two sectors: business and agricultural colonies. The development of steam ships significantly reduced the cost of passage making trans-Atlantic migration more accessible.

At least one million German speakers live today in Latin America. There are German speaking minorities in almost every Latin American country, mainly in Brazil (50%), Argentina (25%) and 25% in other countries, primarily in Chile. German workmanship and merchandise were highly esteemed almost everywhere in Latin America.

Strong ties of the Germans with their former homeland constituted an important factor justifying the development of political, cultural and economic bonds with Germany. In the five years before WWII, Germany assumed the second place among countries supplying Latin American countries; at the same time, Latin American exports (mainly raw materials) to Germany increased significantly; the success of the commercial partnership with this part of the world became an opportunity to develop new activities for the airline companies.

Around 1950 in Brazil, German continued to be spoken in many homes, especially in isolated rural areas; although Portuguese was the official language of instruction at schools, some German-Brazilian students who spoke German at home failed to become literate in either language. In some Brazilian regions, the German ethnic group still comprised a quarter of the population between 1950 and 1975.

The German populations of the Republics of Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay were augmented substantially in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. By the turn of the century, most German immigrants in those Republics tended to be thoroughly urbanized, and if they decided to go any further than the large cities, they were well equipped for farm work. Most of the Germans who settle in Paraguay came from the larger German colonies from neighboring Brazil and Argentina. Another large group of Germans who immigrated to Paraguay are Russian Mennonites, i.e. Germans who immigrated to Russia under the rule of the ethnic German Czarina Catherine the Great.

In the German communities of Venezuela and Colombia, the commercial sectors always predominated. In the late nineteenth century, German coffee planters joined directors of commercial firms and diplomats as members of the elite German communities of Colombia and Venezuela. European immigration to Colombia and Venezuela trailed off by the twentieth century. Bolivia's German population involved primarily in commerce and mining was small and assimilated quickly.

A group of German and Colombian businessman created on 5 December 1919 in Barranquilla, Colombia, the

Sociedad Colombo-Alemana de Transportes Aéreos (SCADTA), precursor of Avianca; SCADTA long remained the leading airline in Colombia. In close cooperation with Lufthansa, the CONDOR airline company was founded to operate in Brazil; it used primarily German aircraft and its personnel were mostly Germans. On 5 May 1924, the Condor Syndikat was created in Berlin by SCADTA and the Deutsche Aero-Lloyd (one of the forerunner of Lufthansa); it was to play a major role in the development of commercial aviation in South America. Varig (Impresa de Viação Aérea Rio Grandese) airline was created on 7 May 1927 with the main stakeholder being Condor Syndikat; on 1 December 1927, it was handed over to a subsidiary of Lufthansa: Sindicato Condor Ltda. Like SCADTA in Colombia, Condor Syndikat and Sindicato Condor were authorized to issue and use their own private stamps for the payment of airmail surcharges.

On 6 January 1926, the Deutsche Luft Hansa AG was founded in Berlin; from the beginning, one of declared aims of Lufthansa was to bridge the South Atlantic in order to open a route connecting Germany with pro-German countries and with regions in South-America to which Germans had traditionally emigrated. Like the French, the Germans did not have an aircraft capable of crossing the ocean; they were also obliged to proceed in stages and were handicapped by not having colonies of the route, but they had maintained good relationships with Spain. The large group of ethnic Germans as well as Germany's interests played a key role for the development of Lufthansa's business with South America.

On 18 May 1930, after several experimental crossings of the South Atlantic, a dirigible Graf Zeppelin LZ 127 (built by Luftschiffbau Zeppelin G.m.b.H) left Friedrichshafen and reached Rio de Janeiro on 25 May 1930, with a stop in Recife; it was one of the most beautiful flying machines of all times. In 1932, the Graf Zeppelin inaugurated a regular service to Brazil with approximately 20 trips per year. The Zeppelin became one of the main symbols for the recovered Germany and very important for international recognition.

After carrying out a number of tests, Lufthansa decided from 3 February 1934 to introduce in the South Atlantic a combined airmail transport using seaplanes and steamships with a catapult-launching facility; the steamship was the Westfalen cargo specially equipped to launch and retrieve the Dornier Dornier Do J Wal floating boat. The employment of the three means of air transport (land-based planes, seaplanes and dirigible balloons) became integrated from 1935. Later, Dornier Do 18 and Do 26 flying boats were used from 1935 and 1938 respectively.

Although competing with Air France (Aéropostale) as regards to airmail services to South America, Lufthansa signed in 1935 two conventions with this company; those conventions contained provisions on fixing departure days, equalization of rates, coordinated publicity and mutual technical assistance.

The above historical review serves as foundation to describe the designs found on the stamps and covers of several countries in Latin America, as it can be seen on the following items.



The above miniature sheet was issued on 13 June 1978 by Uruguay to commemorate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of first engine-powered flight by the Wright Brothers.

Depicted on the left side, the Dornier Do X was the largest, heaviest and most powerful flying boat in the world when it was produced in 1929 by the Dornier Company of Germany; it was powered by twelve radial engines in tandem mountings. On 20 June 1931, it landed for the first time in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where the crew was greeted by the local German communities.

The center part shows the Graf Zeppelin LZ 127 (Registered D-LZ127, Deutsches Luftschiff Zeppelin #127). The Graf Zeppelin LZ 127 flew on 30 June 1934 over Montevideo, Uruguay on the return flight from Argentina to Brazil; it was the only time the LZ 127 came to Buenos Ayres, Argentina.



The above first-day cover was issued on 16 March 1979 by Bolivia to commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of civil aviation. It reproduces eight rare stamps issued by Bolivia.

Three of these stamps shown in the lower row are of interest to the story of German presence in Latin America:

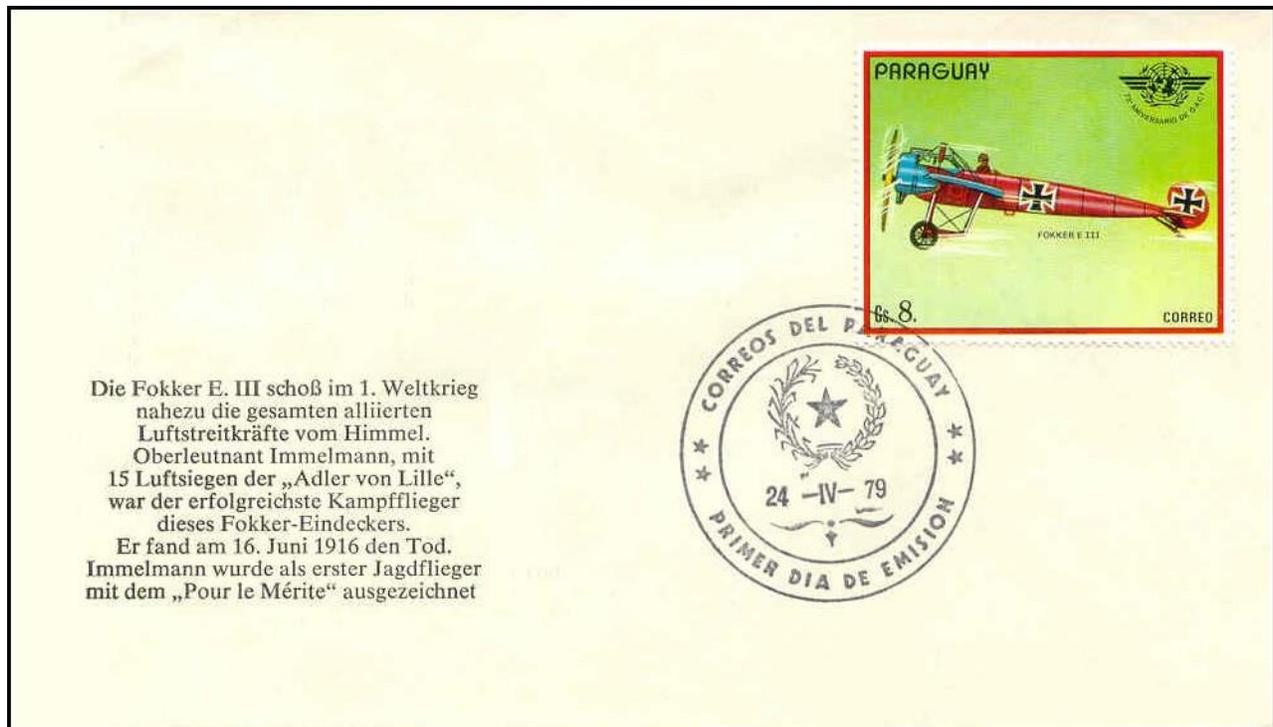
1. At the lower left: 10-centavo stamp overprinted on 6 May 1930 in commemoration of the Europe-Pan America flight of the airship Graf Zeppelin with: "CORREO AERO/R.S./6-V-1930" (in azure-blue). The original stamp was issued in December 1924 for the establishment of the National Aviation School in La Paz; the aircraft is a Morane Saulnier Type P.  
In May 1930, the Graf Zeppelin LZ 127 made its first visit to South America as part of a triangular flight (named the Europe-Pan America flight) between Spain, Brazil, and the United States. Providing passenger, express freight, and air mail service between Germany, Spain and South America was an early concern in the design of LZ 127. The 1930 flight originated in Friedrichshafen on 18 May and stopped first in Seville, Spain before continuing on to South America. The Graf arrived first in Brazil at Recife (Pernambuco) docking at Campo do Jiquiá on 22 May before proceeding on to Rio de Janeiro. The airship then flew back north to Lakehurst, New Jersey, before heading east over the Atlantic on 2 June to return to Germany with another stop in Seville. This flight led two years later to the establishment of the airship's regular scheduled commercial passenger, mail, and freight service between Germany and Brazil which operated from 1932 to May 1937.
2. Next to the above stamp: 35-sobretasa stamp overprinted and surcharged on 6 May 1930 with: "Z/1930/Bs. 6.-" (in black), in commemoration of the connection service to the airship Graf Zeppelin. The original stamp was issued on 13 June 1928 to pay tribute to the Lloyd Aero Boliviano airline (with its coat of arms depicted on the stamp), founded on 15 September 1925.
3. In the middle: stamp issued on 24 April 1976 commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Lufthansa (1926-1976). It shows a DC-10 airliner of the Lufthansa air company, and the Bolivian and German national colours.

On 24 April 1979, Paraguay issued a set of 9 stamps and a souvenir sheet to commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of first engined-powered flight of Wright Brothers and the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ICAO. The design of these stamps depicts rare stamps of early flights from around the world. All the stamps of this series show the ICAO emblem surrounded by the text: 75<sup>o</sup> ANIVERSARIO DE O.A.C.I.

Paraguay inadvertently confused the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Wright brothers' triumph, who made the first successful flight of a manned heavier-than-air vehicle on 17 December 1903, with ICAO which, even today, has not yet reached such a milestone. Furthermore, it should be noted that the date of issuance of this set by Paraguay did not correspond to an anniversary of the first flight (which should have been in 1978) nor to an anniversary celebrated by ICAO. This issue should have more rightly commemorated the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ICAO (in April 1977), and not its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

The presence of a large German community in Paraguay and the fact that several aircraft of this series relate to the WWI German Air Force may have triggered the release of first day covers (FDCs) with German text. Each FDC covered only one subject or one stamp, thus a total of 9 FDCs were released. Only two of those are shown here. The complete set of FDCs can be viewed at the following link:

[http://www.icao.int/secretariat/PostalHistory/paraguay\\_1979\\_history\\_of\\_aviation.htm](http://www.icao.int/secretariat/PostalHistory/paraguay_1979_history_of_aviation.htm).



Das Albatros-Flugboot war ein verstreber Doppeldecker in Holzbauweise und Leinwandbespannung. Die obere Fläche hatte gegenüber der unteren eine größere Spannweite, die zudem eine V-Stellung aufwies. Das aus Holz gefertigte Boot hatte zwei nebeneinander liegende Sitze im Bug und war mit aufblasbaren Luftsäcken ausgerüstet. Als Antrieb diente ein Daimler Motor von 100 PS, der im Boot untergebracht war und über eine Fernwelle den zwischen den Tragflächen liegenden Druckpropeller antrieb.



As part of the above issue of 9 stamps is the souvenir sheet (with a 50x40mm stamp) reproducing two commemorative cancels related to the Graf Zeppelin LZ 127 round-the-world flight in 1929.



On 8 August 1929, the LZ 127 Graf Zeppelin departed on a grand adventure: a complete circumnavigation of the globe. The growing popularity of the "giant of the air" made it easy for Dr. Eckener to find sponsors. One of these was the American press tycoon William Randolph Hearst, who requested the tour officially start in Lakehurst, New Jersey. From there, the Graf Zeppelin flew to Friedrichshafen first, continued across Russian Siberia to Tokyo, then across the northern Pacific to San Francisco and Los Angeles, and across America back to Lakehurst. Finally, the Graf Zeppelin crossed again the Atlantic to her home port of Friedrichshafen, arriving there on 4 September 1929. The voyage was a triumph; she completed a circumnavigation of the globe. Including the initial and final trips from Friedrichshafen to Lakehurst and back, the Graf travelled 49,618 km.



On 11 June 1979, Paraguay issued a set of 9 stamps and a souvenir sheet to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Sir Rowland Hill death, the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of civil aviation and anniversary of ICAO. The design of this stamps-on-stamps issue depicts rare stamps of early flights from around the world. All the stamps of this series show Sir Rowland Hill's picture and are overprinted by ICAO emblem surrounded by the text: 75<sup>o</sup> ANIVERSARIO DE O.A.C.I.; this issue should have more rightly commemorated the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ICAO (in April 1977), and not its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

A few of these related to the subject of this story are shown hereafter.



Stamp-on-stamp reproducing an Ecuador's unlisted stamp (issued on 28 August 1928) which was overprinted (with "ECUADOR") and surcharged (with "15") from the Columbian carmine stamp issued in 1925 by the Colombian airline Sociedad Colombo-Alemana de Transportes Aéreos, SCADTA; it shows a Junkers F13 seaplane over Magdalena River and the Andes.

SCADTA was authorized to issue and use its own stamps for a period of 10 years, in return of a royalty of 2% of the face value of the stamps to the Colombian Government; this went on until 1931 when the Airmail Administration of the Republic of Colombia was created. SCADTA had also its own post offices in Colombia and undertook the delivery of the airmail to the addressee's door.

In response to USA's competition felt in Latin America, SCADTA responded with an unprecedented growth within Colombia between the years 1927 and 1929, and by opening in 1928 a new line between Buenaventura, Colombia to Guayaquil, Ecuador; this was the company's first regular service beyond its borders. The Ecuador stamp reproduced here was intended for use on the Ecuador flights of SCADTA.



Stamp-on-stamp reproducing Brazil private issue of the Luftschiffbau Zeppelin GmgH., Friedrichshaven, for the 1930 LZ 127 Zeppelin South-American commercial flight between Brazil and Europe, surcharged on 25 May 1930 with handstamp print of "5" reis. Only 13 stamps were surcharged.

Originally three basic values of the Zeppelin series intended for use on the Pan-American Flight were produced, with some additionally overprinted "Graf Zeppelin/U. S. A.". It soon became apparent that there was a shortage of the lower values, particularly the 5,000reis. Therefore 20,000reis values and other Condor stamps were surcharged to meet this shortage. In Parahyba (capital of the province of Parahyba, Brazil), all the 5,000reis stamps had been used, so an order was given to surcharge the 20,000reis stamp with a large "5" hand-stamp. Records show that only 13 stamps were so surcharged with some of them being sold in Parahyba and others forwarded to Recife where they were used.



Stamp-on-stamp reproducing two Paraguayan stamps:

1. The first was issued on 5 May 1933; the original colour of this stamp was brown;
2. The second was issued on 13 April 1935, but the colour was changed from the original brown to violet and it was overprinted in black with "1935".

These stamps were issued in relation to the Graf Zeppelin airship's flights to South America.

On 8 April 80, Paraguay issued a set of 9 stamps and a souvenir sheet to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Sir Rowland Hill death and the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of aviation. The stamps show military airplanes used during WWI carrying mail during wartime, as indicated on the stamps: *Tambien en tiempos de guerra los aviones militares transportaban correspondencia*. All the stamps of this series show Sir Rowland Hill's picture and are overprinted by ICAO emblem surrounded by the text: 75° ANIVERSARIO DE O.A.C.I.; this issue should have more rightly commemorated the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ICAO (in April 1977), and not its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

One of the stamps of this series depicts the Zeppelin LZ 104-L.59 (designated L.59 by the German Imperial Navy and nicknamed *Das Afrika-Schiff*, "The Africa Ship"), which was a World War I German dirigible, famous for attempting a long-distance resupply mission to the beleaguered garrison of Germany's East Africa colony. Although the mission to East Africa was ultimately unsuccessful, the Afrika-Schiff demonstrated the feasibility of intercontinental flight.

The following first day cover shows a cancel which commemorates the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first flight of the Graff Zeppelin to America in 1930. In May 1930, the Graf Zeppelin LZ 127 made its first visit to South America as part of a triangular flight (named the Europe-Pan America flight) between Spain, Brazil, and the United States.



- END -