

FRANCE 1934: ANTI-TUBERCULOSIS “STAMP” CAMPAIGN

The Calmette ‘stamp’, a non-postal label, or Cinderella, shows Albert Calmette flanked by the double-barred crosses, the symbol of the fight against TB.

The label is year dated 1934. The label was produced by the French National Anti-Tuberculosis Committee and printed by *Imprimerie A. Delrieu*.

The labels were printed in sheets of 100 (10 x 10) and booklets of 20 stamps

Larger labels 107mm x 153mm in denominations of 5f, 10f and 50f with die-cut perforations were sold as window decals.

Publicity promoting sales of the labels utilized posters and magazines.

Exhibit Plan

1. Albert Calmette non-postal labels: Booklet
2. Sheet
3. Publicity poster for “stamps” (labels)
4. Larger labels 107mm x 153mm
5. Publicity for larger labels
6. Department and Colonial overprints

1. Albert Calmette non-postal labels: booklet



Imperforate plate proof pair in issued colour without gum

The labels were distributed to schools in France where students sold them in booklets of 20 for 2 francs or ten centimes each in aid of the Committee. The booklet mimics the actual postage stamp booklets issued by the French Post Office.



Booklet cover: back (inverted) with NESTLÉ advertisement, Front (upright) showing price and total of funds raised in 1934, 1,600,000 Francs.

Cover price 2 Francs for the complete booklet (or 10 centimes each).

ALBERT CALMETTE

Albert Calmette (1863-1933), the distinguished and revered French biochemist, gained fame with collaborator veterinarian Camille Guérin (1872-1961), for developing the Bacillus Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine. The BCG vaccine worked against the scourge of Tuberculosis (TB). An evil since ancient times, TB killed millions. In recent times, Bacillus—Mycobacterium tuberculosis was, for more than half a century, thwarted by the BCG vaccine.

Calmette passed away in 1933 at 70 years old. The *Comité National de Défense Contre la Tuberculose* in Paris launched its 8th National Anti-Tuberculosis “Stamp” Campaign the following year. In homage to Calmette, his picture was featured on the 1934 series of non-postal labels sold to raise money to fight the dread disease.

The portrait of Calmette, used on the labels, was engraved by Henri Lucien Cheffer (1880-1957), well known for his fine engravings produced for French postage stamps. Nestle, the Swiss food and beverage firm, famous for baby formula, was a big supporter of the anti-TB ‘Stamp’ campaign, and its logo-type appears in the label selvage, booklet covers, and on glassine envelopes.



France 1934

Anti-
Tuberculosis
"Stamp"
Campaign

The non-
postal sheet
"stamps" have
the NESTLÉ
advertising in
the left and
right margins.

Complete
sheet of 100
(10 x 10
stamps).



France 1934 Anti-Tuberculosis “Stamp” Campaign 3. Publicity

A Calmette Anti-TB label tied on a cover addressed to *Labratorie Zizine* in Paris.



Postmarked PARIS VIII/ 15 30/ 28-XII/ 1934/ 49 RUE DE LA BOETIE with six wavy lines.
Franked with a single 50c stamp and a Calmette label.
Back stamped PARIS XII/ 19 */ 28-XII/1934/ RUE CROZATIER
Labratorie Zizine is a Pharmaceutical company in Paris, France

Sales of the labels were heavily promoted nation wide in France and in it's overseas territories and colonies.

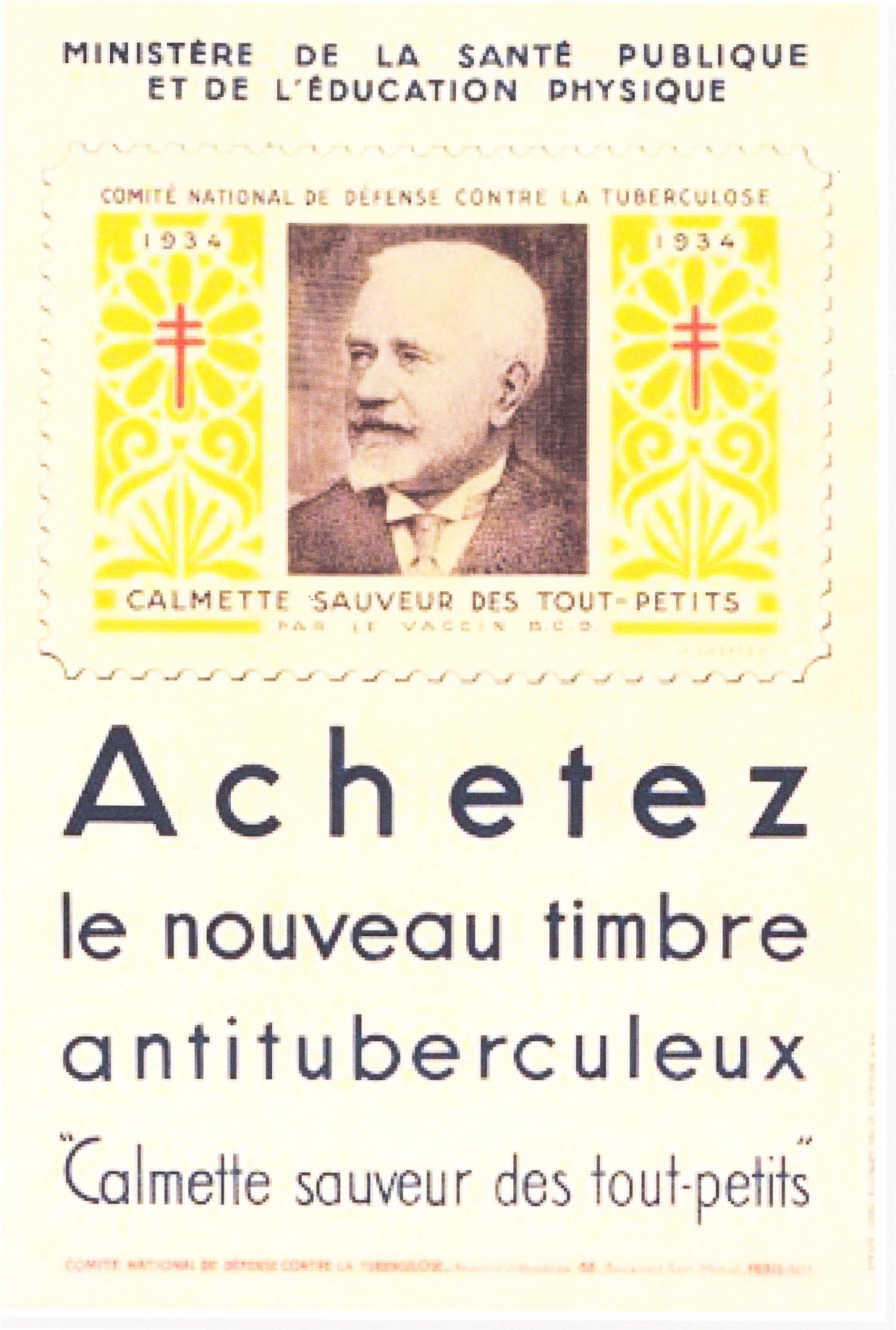
The subject portrayed on the labels, the famous late Doctor Calmette, was a very popular one with the French public at the time. Because of the frequency of TB infection in the 1930s, most individuals were usually personally acquainted with at least one or more TB patients.



Henri Nestlé (1814-1890)
Founder of the “World’s Leading Nutrition, Health and Wellness Company”, sponsor of the French anti-TB Stamp Campaign.

A lithographed publicity poster 800 x 600mm advertised the availability of the sheet and booklet labels is public interest advertising by the French Minister of Public Health. Tan or discolored white poster with black and red lettering. Sponsor information at top of poster. Visual image is a reproduction of the 1934 anti-tuberculosis stamp, featuring a portrait of Albert Calmette flanked by two red Cross of Lorraine symbols. Text at the bottom of the stamp hails Calmette as the savior of children through the BCG vaccine, one of the first vaccines for tuberculosis. Title and publisher information at bottom of poster. Some posters have a handwritten text in Arabic script added at bottom of poster.

Publicity poster shown as a reduced scan. The poster size is 80 x 60 cm.



France 1934 Anti-Tuberculosis “Stamp” Campaign 6. Departmental and Colonial overprints. France Department overprints in lower centre margin in red ink are shown with attached advertising tabs.



BASSES PYRENEES overprint label on a cover postmarked BIDART/ 11 H 23-12/ 1934/ BSES PYRENEES

DOUBS overprint label on an postmarked LUKIER/ 9 45/ 21 –12/ 34/ DOUBS. Back stamped PONTABLIER/ 8 */ 22-12/ 34/ DOUBS

France 1934 Anti-Tuberculosis “Stamp” Campaign 6. Colonial overprints. Use of labels overprinted with locations outside of Metropolitan France are scarce to rare. Overprinted labels are collectable on cover with appropriate postmarks matching the Colonial franking and postmarks.



1935 Registered cover from Bône, Constantine Province (Algeria) to Paris franked 25c + 50c + 1f = 1.75f . 50c postage and 1.25 Registration with label 206.
50% scan of the cover front

Calmette label on the back (left) with **CONSTANTINE** overprint tied with Paris receiving mark



1935 Registered Airmail cover from Meunerie to Tunis franked 50c + 1.50f = 2f. 50c postage and 1.50f Registration with label 156.
50% scan of the cover front
Calmette label on the back (left) with **REGERIES DE TUNIS** repeated in Arabic overprint



In addition to many Metropolitan France Provinces, overprints with the names of several French Territories and Colonies also were similarly applied in red ink on the lower stamp margins. The colonial overprints are more challenging to find and occasionally occur on single stamps on covers such as the example of MAROC on a label attached to a cover (see below).

The Calmette labels are known overprinted from CONSTANTINE) and TUNIS (see left), and GUADAPOUPE. Unoverprinted Calmette labels (no overprint) have been seen on covers, or cover backs, from INDO-CHINA and ST PIERRE ET MIQUELON.

MAROC overprint label on an airmail cover postmarked CASABLANCA-POSTES/ 24 H/ 17 –7/ 35/ MAROC.
Back stamped TOULOUSE/ 17 30/ 18 –VII/ 1935



The portrait of Calmette, used on the large labels, was engraved by Henri Lucien Cheffer (1880-1957)

Proof of engraved vignette by Cheffer on card

France 1934 Anti-Tuberculosis "Stamp" Campaign 4. Larger Labels

Large ungummed labels with simulated die-cut "perforations" in a size 107mm x 153mm were sold with face values of 5, 10 and 50 francs. Too large to attach to letters, these non-postal labels were used as home or automobile window decals to show support for the campaign. Each large anti-TB label was sold enclosed in a printed glassine envelope.

Two years before he died aged 70 in October 1933, Albert Calmette wrote a letter to his children and grandchildren in which he expressed the wish: "I hope that it will be given to me to work until my eyes are closing to the light and that I will fall asleep my soul in peace, conscious of having done that which I have been able." The wish was granted, and since his death Calmette's main contribution to humanity—the live BCG vaccine—has protected millions of people around the world and, together with antibiotics and improved hygiene, has helped turn the tide against tuberculosis. In its tribute, the Pasteur Institute said of Calmette: "...his death deprives science of one of its most illustrious servants".

Set of three 107 x 153mm simulated "stamps" for use as window decals with die cut "perforations"



5 Francs



10 Francs



50 Francs

France 1934 Anti-Tuberculosis “Stamp” Campaign



Front of the glassine envelope with double barred crosses in the corners.



Back of the glassine envelope. Note the NESTLÉ advertisement.

Each large anti-TB label was sold enclosed in a glassine envelope. The glassine envelopes are shown, front and back below, left.

The glassine envelopes with printed text estimated the receipts from the 1934 charitable campaign at 1,600,000 French francs.

The major sponsor of the campaign, the NESTLÉ food company, had the prime advertisement position on the back of the envelope.

The 5 Franc anti-TB label was featured on the front cover (right) for the October 1st, 1934 edition of the weekly Catholic magazine *Le Pèlerin* (translation *The Pilgrim*)

The publicity photograph of the label was distributed by news agencies such as Keystone



Le nouveau timbre antituberculeux à l'effigie du professeur Calmette. (D'après photo Keystone.)

France 1934 Anti-Tuberculosis “Stamp” Campaign Publicity

Calmette Metal Badge



Metal badge issued by the Committee based on the design of the “large stamps”.

A novel item produced for the 1934 Campaign is a metal badge 30 x 20mm. The miniature design, stamped in relief, mimics the large “stamp-like” decals that were sold in 5f, 10f, and 50f denominations. The double-barred crosses are in the upper right and left corners of the badge. Two olive branches flank Calmette’s portrait. The badge with an attached stickpin, itself does not show a face value. The badge was given for a substantial donation or awarded as a decoration or prize.



Enlarged scan showing badge detail

Another novelty, is an attractive item that enlarges and reproduces, in three colors, the Calmette label as a jigsaw puzzle (upper right). The size of the puzzle, on thick cardboard, is 143 x 102 x 1.5 mm. The inscription in tiny letters in the lower-left corner reads PUZZLE J.V.63, Bd DE COURGELLES, PARIS. The puzzle was sold enclosed in a 160 x 112 mm glassine envelope (lower right) inscribed LE TIMBRE ANTITUBERCULEUX / DÉCOUPÉ / PRIX DE VENTE: 1 FRANC in dark blue ink. The Committee name and address, in French, is printed in smaller letters. The familiar double-barred crosses are in the four corners of the envelope. There is no printing on the back of the glassine envelope.

References

Taylor, James R., 2020a, France: 1934 8th National Anti-Tuberculosis “Stamp” Campaign “Calmette the Savior of Children”, France & Colonies Philatelist, n. 340 (v.76 n. 2), April, p. 33-38.
2020b, Calmette 1934 Anti-Tuberculosis - Addendum , France & Colonies Philatelist, n. 340 (v.76 n. 3), July, p. 68.

Calmette Jigsaw Puzzle



The Calmette Anti-Tuberculosis stamp enlarged and reproduced as a jigsaw puzzle. The “Stamp” Puzzle sold for one franc by the Committee and came enclosed in a glassine envelope.