

ROSSICA

Fall 2004



Rossica Society of Russian Philately

No. 143

Rossica Journal

EDITOR: JEFF RADCLIFFE

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The Rossica Society of Russian Philately, Inc. is a non-profit, non-political organization incorporated in the state of Maryland, USA, and affiliated with the American Philatelic Society. The Rossica Journal is the official periodic publication of the Rossica Society of Russian Philately, Inc., published twice a year, typically in the Fall and Spring, and mailed "surface rate." Price for non-members is US \$15 per issue. For air mail delivery, please add US \$5. Subscriptions are available for US \$40, which includes air mail postage. Available back issues are listed in the section titled "Society Publications For Sale." Submit articles for consideration directly to the Editor.

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The Rossica Society
ISSN 0035-8363**

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 FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

So, what is your passion? The other day someone said they had heard that I specialized in Russian philately. To be exact, I had a "very specialized collection of Russian stamps." True, but not so true. I have lots of Russian stamps, and some great examples of Russian postal history. Is it my passion? No - I think a long nap and a great meal are more important right now. That does not mean that Russian philately is not an important aspect of my life. It is. Philately in general is a nice distraction from all things in life. Russian philately is interesting — the ups and downs of Russian history make it more interesting. Do I get excited about it? Not really. But many people do — and that's OK with me. If there weren't people out there that were excited about Russian philately, then putting forth ANY effort towards the publication of the Rossica Journal would have no rewards. I know that our members are excited about Russian philately. I know that the contributions in this journal are excellent and exciting and interesting to many people!

Once again, we have several outstanding contributions from our membership for this journal! Flyspecker remains a core article for this journal, and G.G. Werbzky continues to provide us with zemstvo information. Meer Kossoy is a popular author who is able to express his view, opinions, and expertise through the outstanding translation of David Skipton.

One of the more interesting aspects of this job is the privilege of receiving articles, journals, etc. for review from world reknown experts. Ray Ceresa provided me a number of outstanding works on forgeries and varieties of Russia-related stamps. John Barefoot sent me his latest catalog on In addition, whenever possible, you

will find objective reviews of other journals. I also thought it would be appropriate in this issue to review some of our sister-Society web sites. I've provided kudos and constructive criticism where appropriate, realizing the the Rossica web sit is not perfect, by any means, but I believe to be one of the better web sites.

I welcome objective views of our website and publication! I'm disappointed when a sister publication "reviews" the Rossica journal by providing a listing of the table of contents. I like to know what is good and not-so-good about our publication so I can either continue certain aspects or strive to improve others. Unfortunately, if your only real complaint is print quality, the best way to solve that problem is to send money or offer to pay for higher quality printing! We are a not-for-profit organization, so any money or services you provide above your annual dues payment is considered a tax deduction under United States tax codes. Just a thought for any of you with more money than you know what do to with..... I do receive feedback on the quality of our journal from members (see Letters to the Editor) and through literature competitions at stamp shows. The 2003 Journal (issues 140-141) received a number of awards, and plenty of constructive criticism from literature judges. I make every attempt to implement the judges suggested changes.

I would like to point out two important items in this journal that are especially important for future contributors. First, and most importantly, my home address has changed and is updated inside the front cover of this journal and on the website, on the Contacts page.

Next, please note the section on page 23 titled *Submitting Articles and Letters to the Editor*. If you are

a contributor to the Journal, following the basic guidelines in this section will make the transition of your article from paper or disk to the journal much easier. Articles that arrive in my (new!) mailbox on disk and with a paper copy can be included in the journal in a mere few minutes. Others that require scanning, images included, may take hours or even days to process into final form. Since I have limited time to put this wonderful document together, any kind of delay while processing your article may cause an ultimate delay in the publication of the final product. In the past, we have been rather "unselective" when asking our contributors to put their articles in a certain format. I have, in the past, offered to accept articles written in crayon on a restaurant napkin! Really, what was I thinking? Please use the guidelines in this section as general requirements for submitting articles. I was very close to sending back all of the material from one of our more prolific article contributors because the disks provided with the article material was unreadable. I was able to scan each article but I increased my workload by days. As a precaution, please make sure your media is functioning before you send it in. Try the disks on a different computer just to make sure.

Finally, please enjoy this issue of the Rossica Journal. If there is something you do not see, would like to see, would prefer not to see, would like to contribute or comment on, you may send me a postcard, letter, email, or post on the Samovar. If there are comments you would prefer not to share with the world, please let me know and I promise not to share!

Enjoy!

*Jeff Radcliffe
Herndon, Virginia*

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This has been a good year for the Society. Our numbers continue to increase and our knowledge base is growing. Members seeking knowledge about many aspects of this hobby indicate a thirst for knowledge as they attempt to organize their collections.

The journal continues to garner congratulations from around the globe. Please take a minute and tell Jeff if you like what you see. We, as always, are seeking articles on different topics. More articles on stamps are needed.

Our web site remains active on and off. It is a fantastic place to visit and contribute. However, the site will not be used for petty bickering. If you can't contribute philatelically, consider posting elsewhere. We will remove unacceptable items and ban users as required. Of course, one can always secede and apply for independent nation status from the UN.

In the past year, there has been an increase in the number of members coming to shows. This is most refreshing and rewarding. Personally, I really enjoy putting a face to a name or seeing a person in

the flesh, rather than through emails only.

The National meeting was held this year at WESTPEX, with over 30 members dropping by. The turnout was fantastic and a great deal of knowledge was exchanged. Although not as plentiful as desired, the material at the bourse held something for most people. George Shalimoff's presentation on chemical "changelings" was world class and imparted some very good information.

We also had a great number of people at NAPEX. Howard Weinert gave a presentation on items found east of the Urals. Many unique items were shown and explained very well.

All of us have dealt with dealers who have no standard code of ethics other than to empty our wallets. eBay could not care less about dealer ethics. Sadly, there also exist services provided by mail-order dealers or those who send approvals that use questionable tactics. If you do *not* know the dealer, caution is advised. Keep meticulous records of all transactions and photocopies as required. Should you encounter an

unethical dealer, please spread the information. Rossica as a Society does not and cannot recommend any dealer. However, members should exchange pros and cons amongst themselves regarding dealers.

Work is progressing on placing all issues of the journal on the Internet and CD ROM via a portal at the University of Florida. There are a few things I need to do, but time to do them still eludes me.

Ray Ceresa informs us that the number of digital forgeries is on the rise. The people creating the forgeries are getting rather good. As prices drop for equipment such as color laser printers, we can expect to see more. Some of these items are appearing on eBay as well. The process to scan an overprint from an original item and then digitally place it on another item is fairly simple, but takes a fair amount of work to do a single stamp. Covers are easier to fake. What you see on the screen is not necessarily what you get.

*Gary Combs
Millersville, Maryland*

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Rossica cannot assume any liability for transactions resulting from member responses to adlets, nor can it get involved with mediating disputes. Members are cautioned to be fair in offering and in responding. Any material considered to be of value by the sender sent through the mails should be insured or registered for your own protection.

The regulations and prices are

as follows. Member adlets are free to Rossica members only with the following limitations:

- They must not exceed 480 characters. A character is defined as a letter, number, space or punctuation mark. The member's name and address are **NOT** included in this 480-character limitation.
- For adlets that exceed the 480-character limitation, the price is 10 cents per word. Make checks pay-

able to Rossica.

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Arms Envelopes and Letter-cards Overprinted in 1916

By Leonard Tamm

In our various Russian philatelic journals, the bulk of material deals with postal history. Much less is devoted to stamps - or to postal stationery. Postal stationery is very much the poor step-sister in our whole area of Russian philately. Let me say that I am grateful to our friend Alexander Epstein of Tallinn, who has helped with these notes and contributed several items, as will be seen later on.

In September 1914, partly in response to the financial situation of the Russian Empire due to the war, the postal rates were raised; the internal letter fee rose from 7 kopecks to 10 kopecks, and the registration fee rose similarly from 7 kopecks to 10 kopecks. As a result, huge quantities of 7-kopeck and 14-kopeck stamps needed to be augmented for basic internal, registered and foreign rates. This led to the 7-

kopeck and 14-kopeck stamps of the Arms and Romanov issues being overprinted in black with the new rates, issued between September 1916 and early 1917. Millions of these stamps are still around, mint and used, and there are many covers franked with them. The varieties of overprints are interesting, some scarce and valuable.

This article focuses on postal stationery items overprinted, like the postage stamps, with new values in late 1916. There were two items of postal stationery overprinted: the 7-kopeck blue Arms letter-card, perforated around the edges, and the 7-kopeck blue Arms envelope. The Arms stamps were imprinted on the letter-cards and envelopes, overprinted with the new values in black. It must be noted that while it was convenient to be able to buy ready-stamped envelopes, letter-cards and postcards from the post office, there was a 1-kopeck charge over the printed

postage rate. Thus, these overprinted letter-cards and envelopes cost 11 kopecks.

The 7-kopeck letter-card had an overprint reading: **K. 10 K.** (see Figure 1). Although the numeral 7 remained in the top corners, the overprint made clear the new value. Figure 2 shows the overprint on the letter-card shifted to the left. Apart from this, I am not aware of any other variety. The overprint was printed by machine, with stacks of letter-cards or envelopes "squared up" in the machine. Any shifts in the overprint were the result of the letter-card or envelope being out of alignment.

Let us look at used examples of this letter-card. It remained valid for postage, even if augmented with stamps, as long as the ordinary Arms stamps were valid. As far as I can ascertain, use of these letter-cards continued into 1918 and perhaps even later.



Figure 1. Examples of the 7-kopeck letter-card with 10 kopeck overprints.



Figure 2. Overprint on a letter-card shifted to the left.

Figure 3. Lettercard to Petrograd, postmarked Moscow, 34th City Post Branch Office on 8 March 1917.

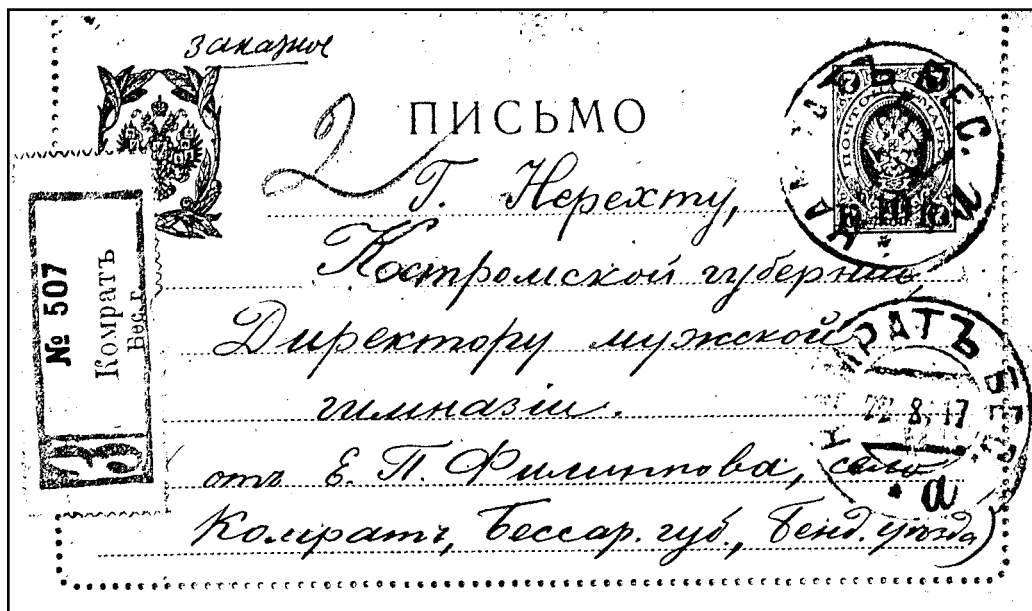


Figure 4. Lettercard registered (augmenting stamps on reverse) Bessarabia to Nerekhta, 22 August 1917.

<http://www.rossica.org>

Figure 5. Letter-card used locally in Moscow, post-marked Moscow, 8th City Post Branch Office on 11 March 1917.

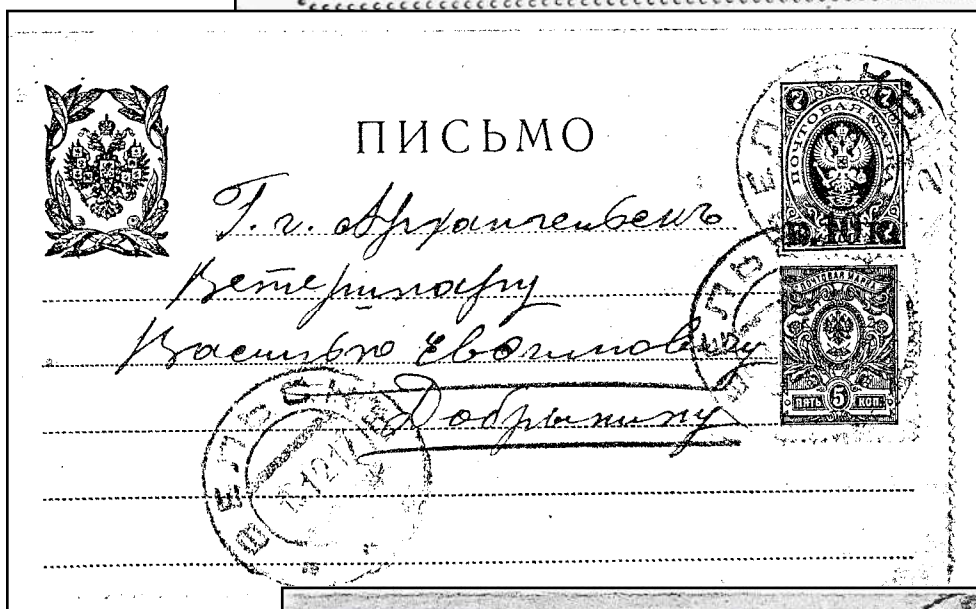


Figure 6. Letter-card to Arkhangel'sk from B'elsk on 19 December 1917, augmented with a 5-kopeck Arms stamp to make up the December 1917 rate of 15 kopecks.

Figure 7. Letter-card to Terioki, Finland, Orel on 10 October 1917, augmented with an additional 5 kopecks of postage to make up the late 1917 rate of 15 kopecks.





Figure 8. From A. Epstein collection.

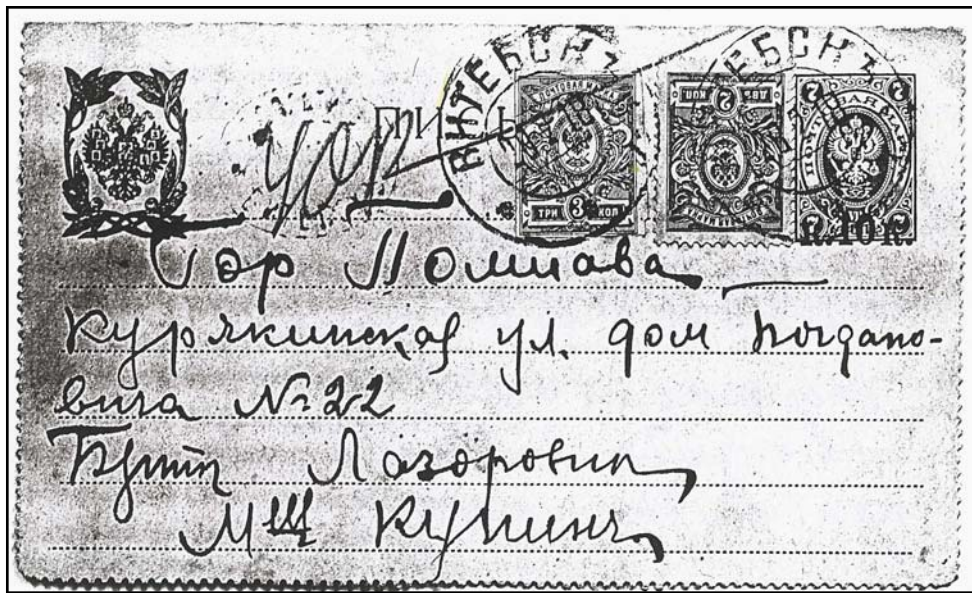


Figure 9. From A. Epstein collection.

Figure 8 shows a letter-card addressed to an aviation battalion of the army in the field, cancelled in Moscow on 6 October 1917.

Figure 9 is a letter-card augmented with an additional 5 kopecks in postage to make up the 15-kopeck rate. This card was addressed to Poltava and sent from Vitebsk on 28 February 1918. However, on this day, the rate for

letter-cards rose to 35 kopecks, hence the rather unclear postage due marking from Vitebsk to the left of the stamps showing a fee of 40 kopecks, which is double the postage due.

Readers are encouraged to contribute similar examples of letter-card use from September/October 1916 or any used into 1919.

Next are examples of the 7-kopeck Arms envelopes overprinted with the number 10 in each corner. There were two sizes of envelopes overprinted in this manner, shown in Figure 10. There are slight shifts in the overprints, resulting from envelopes being slightly out of alignment when the overprint was applied.



Figure 10. 7-kopeck blue Arms envelopes.



Figure 11. Cover to Yur'ev sent on 18 March 1917, post-marked Arensburg (reduced to 70%).

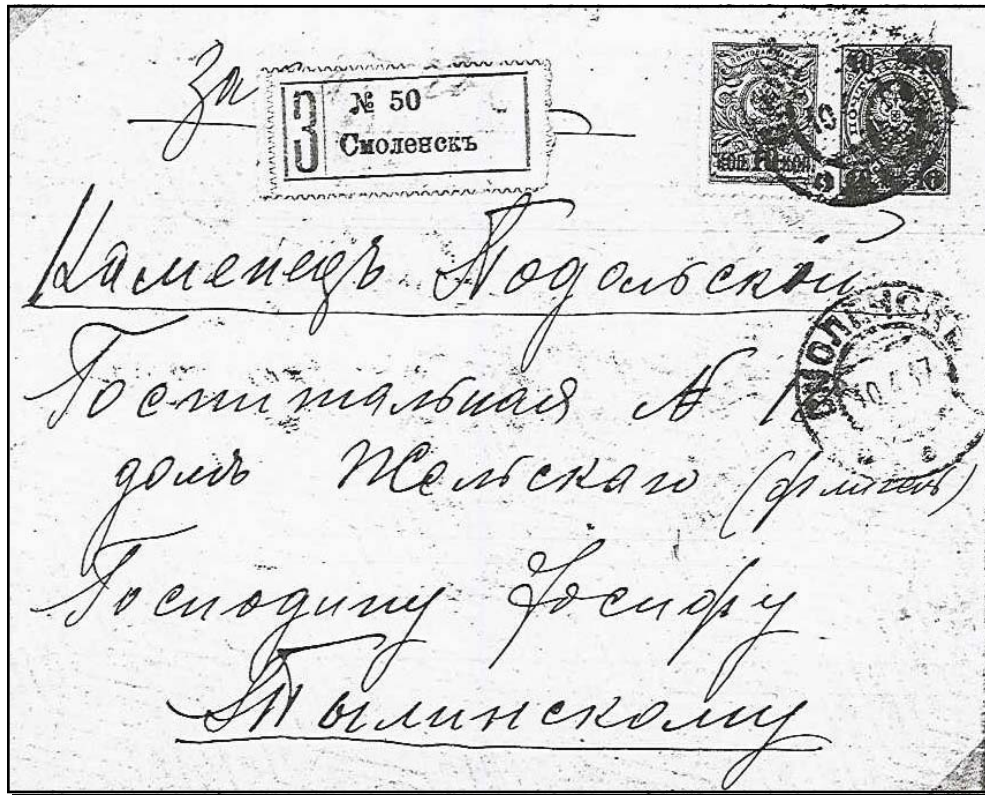


Figure 12. Registered cover augmented by a 7-kopeck Arms stamp with a 10-kopeck overprint.



Figure 13. Another registered cover, missing the registration label from Novostrelitskaya, Sukhum Province during the period of the Kerensky Republic. It is interesting to see an overprinted envelope used in the Caucasus.

<http://www.rossica.org>

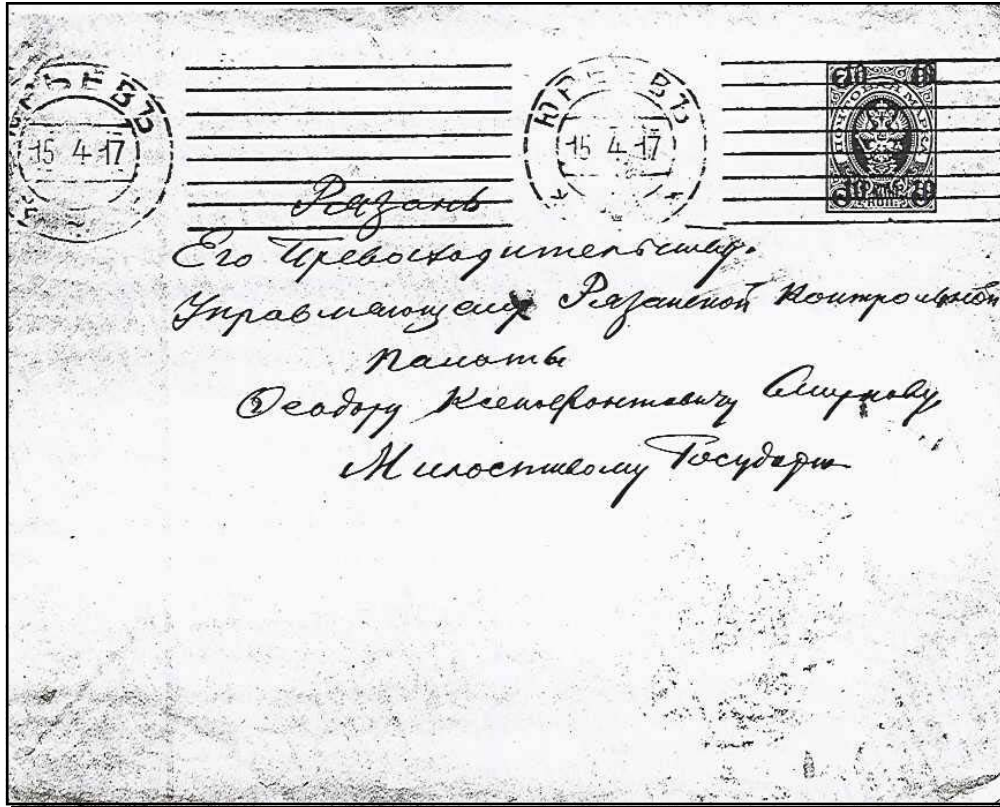
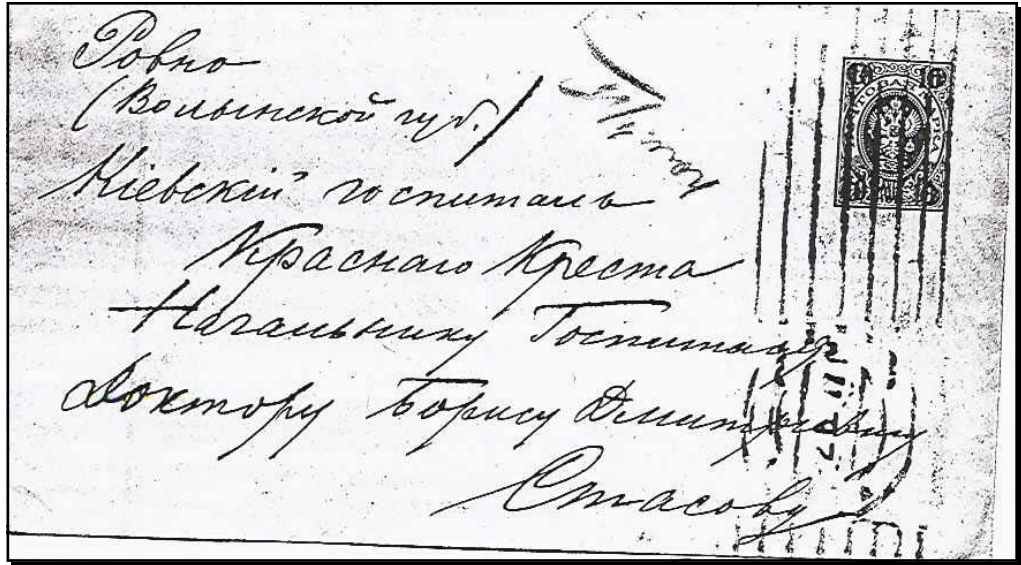


Figure 14. Stationery-envelope with a machine postmarked 15 April 1917 from Yur'ev. (A. Epstein collection)



Figure 15. Registered cover augmented with the overprinted Arms stamp. Postmarked 13 May 1917 from Arensburg, Lifyand to Petrograd. Censored in Arensburg. (A. Epstein collection)

Figure 16.
Smaller envelope
with a machine
postmark from
Kiev to Rovno, 6
July 1917. (A.
Epstein collection)



When I wrote to several collectors in my quest for material to show in this article, not only did I find that many collectors did not have material, I was asked my opinion of their value - since postal-stationery is the 'poor relation,' and these items are given modest ratings in existing catalogs. In my opinion - the 10/7 kopeck letter-card and the overprinted 10/7 kopeck stationery-envelopes in good mint condition are valued around £25/\$38 and in good used condition, from £35/\$48. I have not seen them but it is conceivable that they could have been used at railway station post offices, e.g. Petrograd/Nikol Vokz - adding an additional £10/\$15 premium.

While there must have been a fairly plentiful supply at the time - to take the trouble to overprint them in the first place indicates that there was a pressing need for postal stationery printed for the new rates, and there was an existing supply of the letter-cards and envelopes at the State Printing Office in Petrograd to make overprinting a realistic proposition - however, it seems that the surviving material is sparse...hence my view of their value.

It is nonsense to make any assessments based on material from only 2 collections, which is only a fragment of what exists now and a

fragment of what was available at the time. We are entitled to assume that the overprinted letter-cards and envelopes were widely dispersed - these were the final months of Tsarist rule - September 1916 - March 1917, and during the Kerensky Republic (at least) in March through October 1917. Two further points must be born in mind - to find an item used from a particular location might mean equally that it was on sale/available there, or that it was taken there from somewhere else. A traveler could buy a letter-card/envelope to write his letter while traveling, and then post it en route or at his destination. Post offices had to apply to Petrograd for supplies. Some more distant locations may have found no need for such letter-cards or pre-stamped envelopes. Consequently, the overprinted types would not have been supplied to those areas. The chances of such items being used there would be dependent on the remote possibility of someone taking one there and using it. While it might not be unreasonable to expect to see items used in, say, Perm', Vladivostok, or Tiflis, these items may never have been issued to these locations. However as mentioned, we would expect to see these overprinted letter-cards/

envelopes used with at least one or two of the most 'common' railway station post offices, or on the most widely used railway mail vans. We would certainly expect to see some used in Petrograd and Moscow.

While these notes are concerned with the original issues, we must mention that surviving items in Kiev, Ukraine were overprinted with the Ukraine Trident in the revolutionary period. Reminders in Bobruisk were overprinted for the Polish Corps in White Russia. A 'clue' to the original supplies of these items might lie in the numbers overprinted by revolutionary regimes in the 1918-19 period.

It is worth mentioning in passing that neither the 10/7 kopeck letter-card nor the 10/7 kopeck envelope were officially supplied to the Grand Duchy of Finland - but like all Russian stamps and stationery, they were valid if taken there and used. In the very remote event that these items are found used in Finland, they would be worthy of a hefty premium. The Kerensky 5-kopeck postcard issued in October/November 1917 was never issued to Finland, but several are known used in Finland.

Armenian Overprints - Making Life Easier

Part One: Serebrakian, Framed and Unframed Z's

By Trevor Pateman

In their 1978 book, *Post and Postage Stamps of Armenia*, Zhakian and Saltikov were able to use information in Armenian archives to very good effect, showing, for example, that for the 1920-21 Dashnak overprints, the Armenian authorities had made decisions about which values of Imperial stamps to use and which not to employ. On this basis, the 1994 Michel catalog re-write of its Armenia section discarded swathes of varieties condemned as philatelic counter-productions. In his new (2003) book, *Zakiyan* (note the new transliteration) repeats the essential information.

Now it is always disappointing to have one's cherished stamps thrown out of the catalog, but this story may have a silver lining.

The idea of philatelic counter-production conjures up a picture of crowds of philatelists-cum-dealers standing in line in hope of making a fast ruble. I am afraid that Yerevan in 1920 wasn't like that. The situation in Armenia was desperate, with on-going military conflict, genocidal attacks, poverty and starvation. There were, I believe, only a handful of collectors, dealers and speculators around and each had their own distinctive approach. Souren Serebrakian (1900 - 1990), who left Yerevan in August or September 1920, had his own style. So did the ill-fated Paul Melik-Pasher / Pashaev, who ended up in a Bolshevik jail. So did the Belgian engineer and entrepreneur Gustave Boel, who was the moving force behind the Zangezour (Katarskye Zavody) local overprints of 1919 and who turns up later in some equally remote places (June 1920: Elenovka).

One consequence of this situation - from which one may derive

some comfort - is this. **IF a Dashnak stamp does not fit into the Zakiyan - Michel scheme of things, it is likely to be a forgery UNLESS it can be provenanced or linked in its style to Serebrakian, Melik-Pasher, Boel and maybe a few others.**

Let me give an example of how this line of thinking works out. First of all, we have to get rid of another misleading picture, the one which has hordes of philatelists queuing in Yerevan with folders of Imperial stamps they had been hanging onto waiting for just this opportunity to turn base metal into gold. Just as there were no hordes of philatelists, there were no hoards of stamps, except in Yerevan Post Office itself.

The authorities had a wider range of face values than they were, at first, willing to use for overprinting. For example, they did not want to use the obsolete 7-kopeck remainders because there would be a risk of confusion with the 1916 Imperial 10-kopeck surcharge on this stamp, and the confusion could cost the Post Office three kopecks a time. For the same reason, they would have ruled out the 14-kopeck, though here they may have had few or no copies left.

For different reasons they ruled out the 1916 Imperial 20-on-14-kopeck and the ordinary dark blue 10-kopeck. Here the colors were so dark that a Dashnak overprint would not show up very well.

And for political reasons, they ruled out the Romanovs, of which stocks remained, for example, of the 4-kopeck. There had been rather a shortage of foreign tourists in Yerevan for the past few years, and so not many "Wish You Were Here" postcards winging their way around the world.

Souren Serebrakian did not

come to the Post Office with sheets of stamps under his arms. He found out which stamps were being kept in the post office cupboards, and managed to get at least some of them brought to the counter, overprinted and sold to him. And since they were 100% legitimate post office productions, he was able to use them, for example, on letters to his brother in Tiflis.

Framed and unframed Z overprints on the 7-kopeck and 10-kopeck Imperial Arms stamps, in both violet and black, are either forged or, if genuine, then they are Serebrakian material, because I think he had a monopoly (maybe just a near monopoly) on these lines. Serebrakian did not mark many of his stamps, but the ones which he did mark are, as often as not, examples of his Exclusives. (Serebrakian used at least three different marks in his long career, for each of which I have examples).

Serebrakian may also have worked out unplanned gaps in the post office coverage. For example, Zakiyan does not list any large framed Z overprint as occurring in violet on the 70-kopeck imperforate, but there was at least one in Serebrakian stock I acquired a few years ago, and it is shown on the fourth line of stamps in Figure 1. It would not be too difficult to go through counter stocks and work out such a missing combination and organise its production.

It seems that at this early stage of framed Z production, the Romanovs were taboo, but later the 4-kopeck (and the 10/7-kopeck) were made available in quantity (sheets rather than a handful of individual stamps) for surcharging with unframed Zs or ruble values. However, I associate these productions more with Melik-Pasher than Sere-

(Continued on page 12)



Figure 1.

(Continued from page 11)

brakian - indeed, I don't have one of these stamps with a Serebrakian mark.

Serebrakian would probably have known from his brother in Tiflis that in some parts of former Imperial Russia Postal Savings Bank stamps were doing duty as postage stamps, and he was able to secure overprinted copies of the 1-kopeck. Both my copies (Figure 1, fifth line from top, first two stamps) are signed Serebrakian. It is not

possible to tell whether the Z is a later addition to stamps already surcharged to 60 kopecks or whether we are looking at simultaneous surcharging. However, genuine copies of the 60-kopeck surcharge on 1-kopeck PSB stamp do exist, without the Z, though possibly only with the Alexandropol' style (no dots k 60 k) of the surcharge (my copy shown in Figure 1, fifth line, third stamp, provenance uncertain). Conversely, the 1-kopeck PSB exists with framed Z or

unframed Z only and no uprating surcharge.

All examples of Armenian overprints on the 5-kopeck and 10-kopeck PSB stamps that I have seen have been forgeries. I am doubtful that genuine examples exist. It would be nice to be shown one with a Serebrakian mark to change the picture. This is the only likely source.

The Yerevan Post Office did not have all the imperforate Impe-
(Continued on page 13)

(Continued from page 12)
rial values, at the stage when it was applying framed and unframed Zs. I have never seen genuine Z overprints on the 10-, 20-, 25-, 35- and 50-kopeck stamps imperforate nor on the 10-ruble imperforate. I do

not believe genuine examples are likely to turn up. I have just two examples of the 15-kopeck imperforate with unframed Z, and this belongs with a special group of Serebrakian productions. Later on, Melik - Pasher was able to get over-

prints made on the 20-, 25-, 35- and 50-kopeck imperforate, but to the best of my knowledge and belief, the post office never got a supply of 10 ruble imperforates or else used it up before the Dashnak overprinting (Continued on page 14)



Figure 2.

period - I add this qualification because I have seen the 10-ruble imperforate used at Baku in July 1919. It would be a real find to locate a genuine Dashnak overprint on a 10-ruble imperforate. My guess is that we are not going to see one.

Serebrakian played around with double, sideways and inverted overprints, as Figure 1 shows. Later on, he had the idea of modifying a deteriorating handstamp and organized for a handstamp for the large unframed Z to be trimmed of frayed rubber protrusions. This tidied up handstamp is another Serebrakian exclusive, and the range of values to be found overprinted with this modified handstamp is shown in Figure 2 (the range is considerably greater than Ceresa lists: some are surely very scarce. Three are in violet: on the 2-kopec imperforate, the mint copy of the k 60 k on 1-kopec imperforate, and the 7-ruble perforate. The remainder are in black.

Conclusion. I think that Zakiyan is right to

think that it is the official productions which should attract most of our interest, but the correctness of his analysis is confirmed by the other side - the so-called counter productions. Rather than think of these as some shapeless mass of individually scarce but collectively worthless items, we can use them to build up a fuller picture of what will always be a period of Armenian postal history only imperfectly understood. My main point is that most of these counter - productions are linked to the biographies of a few individuals, during a very limited period of time and can be made sense of in conjunction with those biographies.

References

1. R. J. Ceresa, *The Postage Stamps of Russia, Volume 1, Armenia* 1980
2. Kh. A. Zhakian and S. A. Saltikov, *Post and Postage Stamps of Armenia* [in Russian] Yerevan 1988
3. C. Zakian *Armenia. Postage stamps, fiscal stamps, postage cancels.* [in Armenian, Russian and English] Yerevan 2003.

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RUSSIA



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More Armenian Clarifications Ruble Surcharges

By Trevor Pateman

Zakiyan (2003) repeats the essential information from his earlier joint book with Saltikov: as far as Dashnak ruble surcharges are concerned, there was an official scheme of re-valuation which goes as follows:

Surcharge according to this scheme (Zakiyan 2003, page 46):

- ♦ 1-kopeck and uprated 1-kopeck stamps at 1 ruble
- ♦ 3-kopecks at 3 rubles
- ♦ 2-kopecks, 5-kopecks, 10-kopecks [now pressed into use], 10/7-kopecks, 15-kopecks and 20-kopecks at 5 rubles
- ♦ 25-, 35- and 50-kopecks at 10 rubles
- ♦ 70-kopecks at 25 rubles
- ♦ 1-ruble at 50 rubles
- ♦ 3r 50-, 5r-, 7r- and 10r- at 100 rubles.

Combinations of stamp and surcharge which do not correspond to this scheme are going to be mistakes, forgeries, or counter-productions.

Both Serebrakian and Melik - Pachaev were involved in counter-productions, though Serebrakian's activities end in August or September 1920 (I think August, because there was a great deal of August - cancelled material in his stock but no September).

Now there is a very important feature of the counter-productions: whilst it is relatively common for a stamp to receive a HIGHER value surcharge than it was officially destined for, it is RARE for a stamp to receive a LOWER-value surcharge.

The reason for this asymmetry is probably this: whilst the post office was willing to accept the kind of "premium" payment involved in surcharging a stamp at a higher rate than designated, it was not prepared to trade down and discount its Impe-

rial stamps. I am sure that Serebrakian or Melik-Pachaev would have been quite happy to have the attractive 10-ruble top value Imperial surcharged with lower values from 1 ruble to 50 rubles. In reality, I have never seen a genuine surcharge on this stamp which is other than the official 100 ruble rating - not one! The same goes for the 7 rubles, 5 rubles and 3 rubles 50 kopecks, all of which were reserved exclusively for the 100-ruble overprint. Can any one produce a counter-example? (Pun intended). If you think about it, it is really quite extraordinary that the Dashnak Post Office held the line on what it would and would not surcharge on these high-value ruble stamps. However much influence Serebrakian or Melik-Pachaev may have had, they did not have enough to reverse the direction of surcharging at this top end of the range.

The 1-ruble stamp was scheduled for 50-ruble overprints. Whilst this is found with the HIGHER value of 100 rubles, it is never found with a LOWER value than its designated 50 rubles.

Serebrakian did succeed in reversing the direction of revaluation in a very few cases. In his Handbook volume 1 parts 6/7 plate 66, Ceresa illustrates a Serebrakian philatelic cover produced at the end of Serebrakian's time in Yerevan (cancelled 10 August 1920). Here one can see some reversed-direction philatelic surcharges: reading left to right: 3 rubles on 2 kopecks instead of 5 rubles; 10 rubles and 5 rubles on 3 kopecks set-tenant with the correct 3 rubles; 3 rubles on 50 kopecks (a big mismatch); 5 rubles on 50 kopecks. These productions are so exotic (some may be unique) that Dr. Ceresa does not bother to include them in his check list of overprints. They look like Serebrakian's last fling

before he left, and may have been his reward for having been such a good customer at the Yerevan post office. It is most unlikely that genuine combinations like these are going to turn up anywhere apart from ex-Serebrakian stock and even then very rarely. (I once owned the cover illustrated by Dr. Ceresa; silly me, I sold it).

Additionally, I do have a block of 25-kopecks stamp surcharged 5 rubles, but this does not look like a Serebrakian or Melik-Pachaev production. The surcharge is in an unusually diluted but very oily ink, barely readable. It may have been produced for some other collector-dealer or it may represent a non-philatelic mistake facilitated by the very poor quality ink available at a particular moment.

It follows from this line of argument that in the case of the bottom value surcharge of 1 ruble there is nowhere for this surcharge to go except on the designated 1-kopeck stamps and their 60-kopeck uprated variants. Again, it is remarkable but I have never seen a genuine 1-ruble surcharge on an ordinary Imperial stamp other than the 1-kopeck. Hardly the situation one would expect if the whole show was being run by philatelists!

Conclusion. Once again, my object in this note is to develop some heuristics for assessing Armenian overprints. In this instance, I have tried to show that even the counter-surcharges are more orderly than one might imagine. Except in very rare instances, counter-surcharges will always be at higher values than officially scheduled. The exceptions to this rule are themselves great rarities, so that any supposed example of a "reverse direction" surcharge will require intense scrutiny before being accepted as genuine.

Why Did the Moscow Post Office Ask That The Envelope Be Returned?

By Meer Kossoy
(trans. D. Skipton)

In his article entitled “Société des Moteurs Gnome,”¹ Gary Combs showed an envelope with an interesting official handstamp: “Please return the cover to the Moscow Main Post Office 5th Dispatch Office...” The text of that handstamp differs from the majority of the official handstamps known to us, so it automatically attracts our attention and raises the question, “For what purpose or for what reason was this handstamp applied to the envelope?” If we can answer that question, then we will very likely know the answer to the question posed in Mr. Combs’ article – “Why did the Moscow Post Office ask that the envelope be returned?”

This particular handstamp has occupied philatelic researchers for some time now. For instance, in 1989 B. Kaminsky² showed the reverse of a cover bearing a similar handstamp (see Figure 1), and with it he gave an explanation as to the purpose and reason for the handstamp’s application.

Kaminsky wrote that “...In early 1917 the government abolished the free frank for private letters and postcards sent to soldiers On Active Duty and introduced a rate for them... In the 11 January 1917 announcement about the abolition, postal officials were also required to prevent unfranked private letters and postcards from being dispatched to servicemen.”

The rate for an ordinary letter to a serviceman on active duty was

five kopecks, and two for a postcard. Letters and postcards sent back home from the military could still be sent postage-free.

Basing his reasoning on the requirements given above, i.e., not to allow unfranked ordinary letters and postcards addressed to servicemen, Mr. Kaminsky concluded that the Moscow handstamp was applied because “when several unfranked letters sent from Klin to Moscow (with no return address) arrived at the Moscow Main Post Office on 29 January 1917, the officials there noticed it and appealed to the addressees with a request to return the envelopes to the Main Post Office. The envelopes would have been necessary to determine the reasons why the letters had been sent postage-free.”

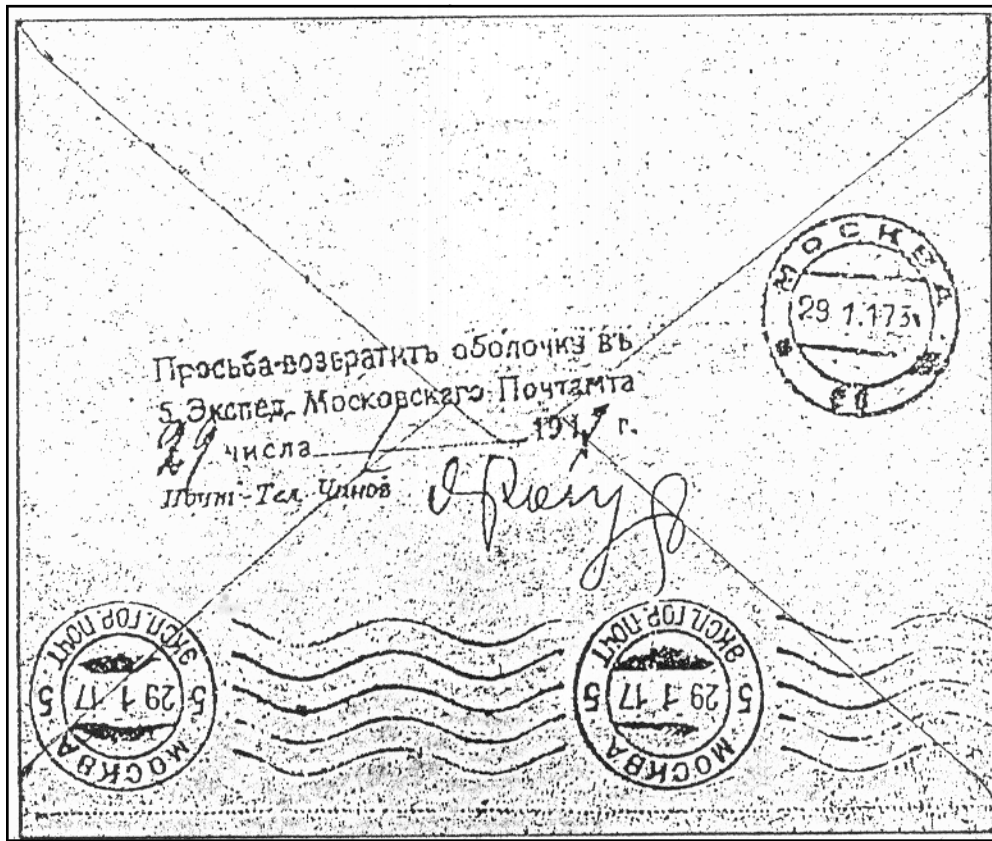


Figure 1.

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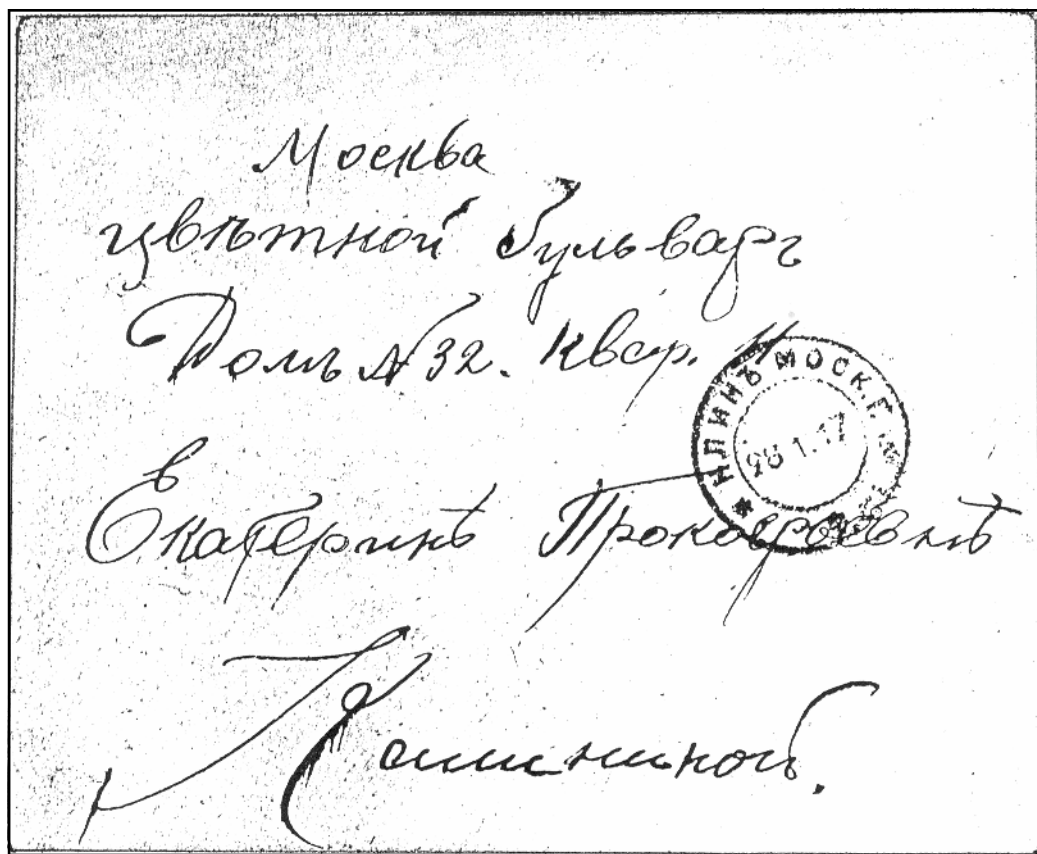


Figure 2a.

Figure 1 shows only the reverse of the envelope, so there is no information as to which military address this letter was sent. But even if the address were known, Mr. Kaminsky's conclusion that "[t]he envelopes would have been necessary to determine the reasons why the letters had been sent postage-free" is in all likelihood incorrect. To help prove this supposition, we should consider the following:

1. There is no return address, so the Main Post Office officials could not have found the sender in Klin and asked him why the letter was sent with no postage.
2. If we assume that the officials were nonetheless able to find the senders in Klin, then in that case all they would have had to do to find out why there was no postage was to ask them directly. It makes no sense to

posit that the officials would have sent the letter on to the addressees, and then requested that they return the envelopes.

To buttress my claim that Mr. Kaminsky's explanation was in error, see Figure 2a, which shows the address side of an envelope bearing a 28 January 1917 dispatch datestamp of Klin, Moscow Province. The letter is addressed to Moscow, and the arrival mark on the reverse (Figure 2b) reads "Moscow / City Post Dispatch Of [fice]," serial "5." There is no return address and the envelope isn't franked, but for some inexplicable reason a postage-due handstamp is lacking. It's possible that this particular envelope was one of those "several unfranked letters" mentioned by Mr. Kaminsky.

Analysis of the item in Figure 2a shows that this is a private letter; it has nothing to do with the military, and this fact alone disproves

Kaminsky's thesis. Further arguments can be marshaled from the envelope shown by Mr. Combs:

1. The Moscow Main Post Office postmark is dated 30 October 1916, two months earlier than the 11 January 1917 announcement that Mr. Kaminsky cites.
2. The letter was sent from Paris, France to the Société des Moteurs Gnome, which was not a military outfit.
3. The letter is properly franked.

From the information cited above, the only conclusion to be drawn is that Mr. Kaminsky was mistaken, and so I offer my opinion as to why this handstamp was applied.

Unfortunately, I know of no postal documents that ushered in the handstamp. However, by analyzing the philatelic material we can offer a suggestion. In order to understand the reason behind the

(Continued from page 17)

handstamp, it is first necessary to consider what kind of operations the Moscow 5th Dispatch Office (DO) ran. Its job was to deliver any kind of ordinary and registered correspondence, as well as notices, from the Main Post Office to the populace. Given this, we can assume that the request to return the envelope to the 5th DO had to do with monitoring how long it took for letters to be delivered. I think this is the answer to Mr. Combs' question.

When this letter was mailed, WWI was already into its third year. In Russia, all of the state institutions including the Post were suffering from economic and other difficulties that affected their operations. Mail delivery times lagged,

which elicited complaints from the public. So, to find out how bad the situation was, the postal authorities evidently picked letters at random out of the mail stream and then stamped them with this return request, which the postal official would sign and write in the date of dispatch. After the envelope came back, the authorities could then determine the total delivery time.

For instance, the item shown in Mr. Combs' article has this handstamp with the date 30 October 1916 written in. The arrival mark is dated 31 October 1916, and the envelope returned to the 5th DO on 2 November 1916. In Figure 1, the request handstamp is dated 29 January 1917; the arrival mark is the same date, as is the return date to the 5th DO. The same dates appear

on the envelope shown in Figure 2b. They show that even during wartime difficulties, the Moscow postal system worked efficiently and fast, getting letters to the addressees within 1-2 days. However, one fact cannot be ignored: the postal workers would certainly have seen the handstamp and known what it meant, so they would have made haste to deliver it to the addressee, with no delays.

1. Combs, "Societe des Moteurs Gnome," *Rossica* No. 139, Fall 2002, pp. 36-37.
2. Kaminsky, *Pochtovyye tarify dorevolucionnoy Rossii*, in *Sovetskiy kollektioner* No. 27, 1989, pp. 26-47.

Figure 2b.



Zemstvo Stamp Errors Varieties on Cover

By George G. Werbizky

There are many zemstvo stamp errors and varieties that remain unrecorded. These include misperforations, missing parts of a design, elaborate frames that differ from stamp to stamp on the same sheet, different fonts for primary numer-

als, etc.

Most of the zemstvo stamps were produced in primitive print shops, and errors in the printing process were common. Nevertheless, errors and varieties are not frequently found on covers. More than likely, most of the errors and varieties were sold to collectors. It appears that early zemstvo collec-

tors primarily collected mint stamps, occasionally collected covers, and were even less interested in collecting postcards.

This article provides examples of errors and varieties of zemstvo stamps on cover from my collection. Other collectors are encouraged to share similar items from their own collection.

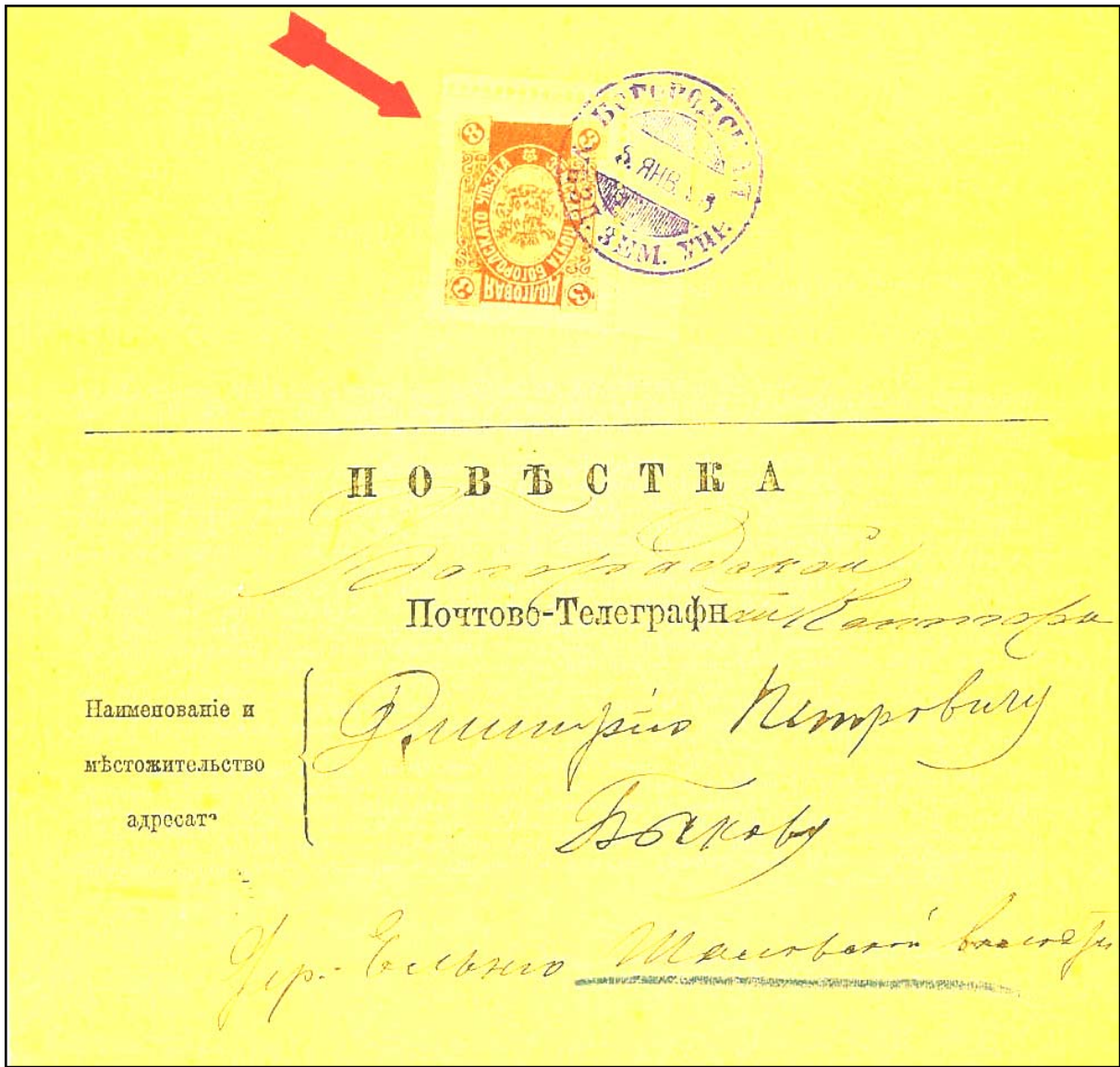


Figure 1. A notice from Bogorodsk Zemstvo, Moscow Province, to a recipient in the village of Yel'nya. The 3-kopeck stamp is a postage due, Chuchin # 26. The “3” in the lower right (arrow) is formed as an “8.”



Figure 2. Irbit Zemstvo, Perm' Province. Letter sent within the Irbit Zemstvo to the village of Antonovskoye. The stamp is Chuchin #2. Note that the "2" is missing in the upper right corner of the stamp. The front and back of the cover are shown.

Figure 3. Irbit Zemstvo, Perm' Province. Another letter sent within Irbit Zemstvo to the Irbit Zemstvo district administration. It was a money letter, as a note in the upper right corner on the front of the cover states "Money (letter) contains one ruble." The stamp is on the back of the cover (shown at inset), Chuchin #7h. The second line reads "емская" with the letter "з" missing. Images are reduced to 75%.



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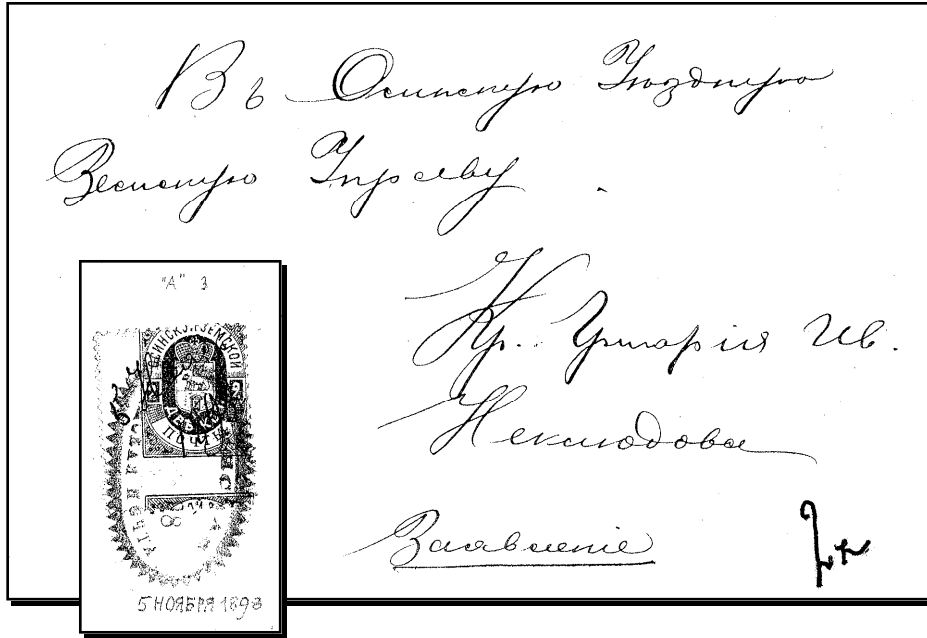


Figure 4. Osa Zemstvo, Perm' Province. Letter sent to the Osa Zemstvo Administration by peasant Gregory Iv. Neklyudov. The letter contained an application. On the reverse of the cover is a Chuchin #16 stamp (shown at inset), badly perforated and cancelled on 5 November 1898. Images are reduced to 75%.

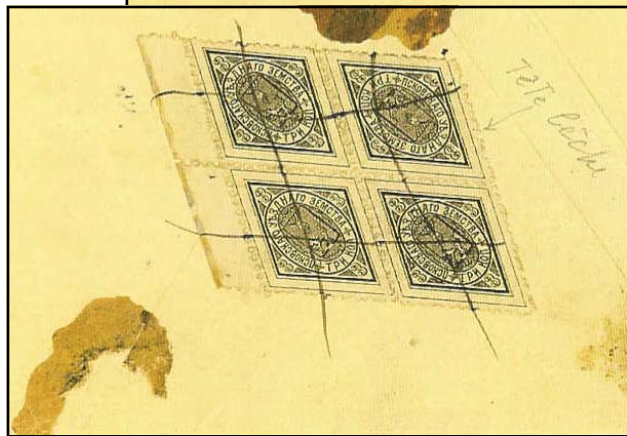
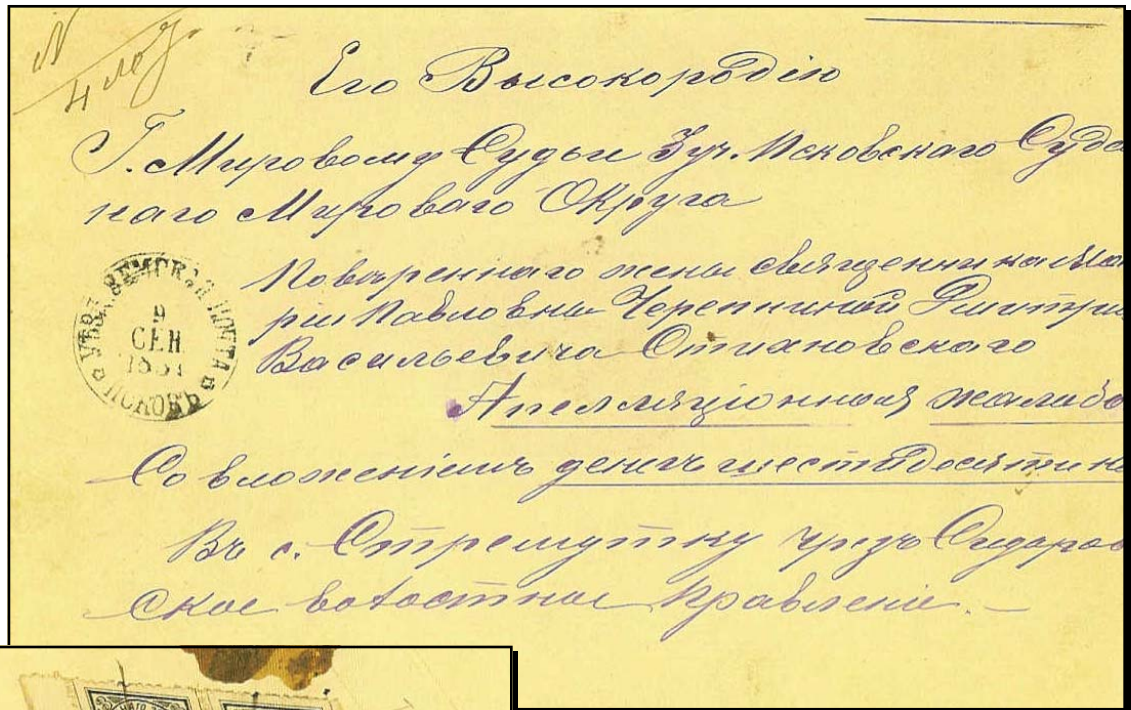


Figure 5. Pskov Zemstvo, Pskov Province. A registered letter containing an appeal, sent by a solicitor to the justice of the peace. The letter was overweight, and four 3-kopec stamps were required. The block of four stamps consists of 4 Chuchin #9, including a tête-bêche, Chuchin #9a. The front cover is shown, while the block of 4 is shown at inset. Images are reduced to 80%.

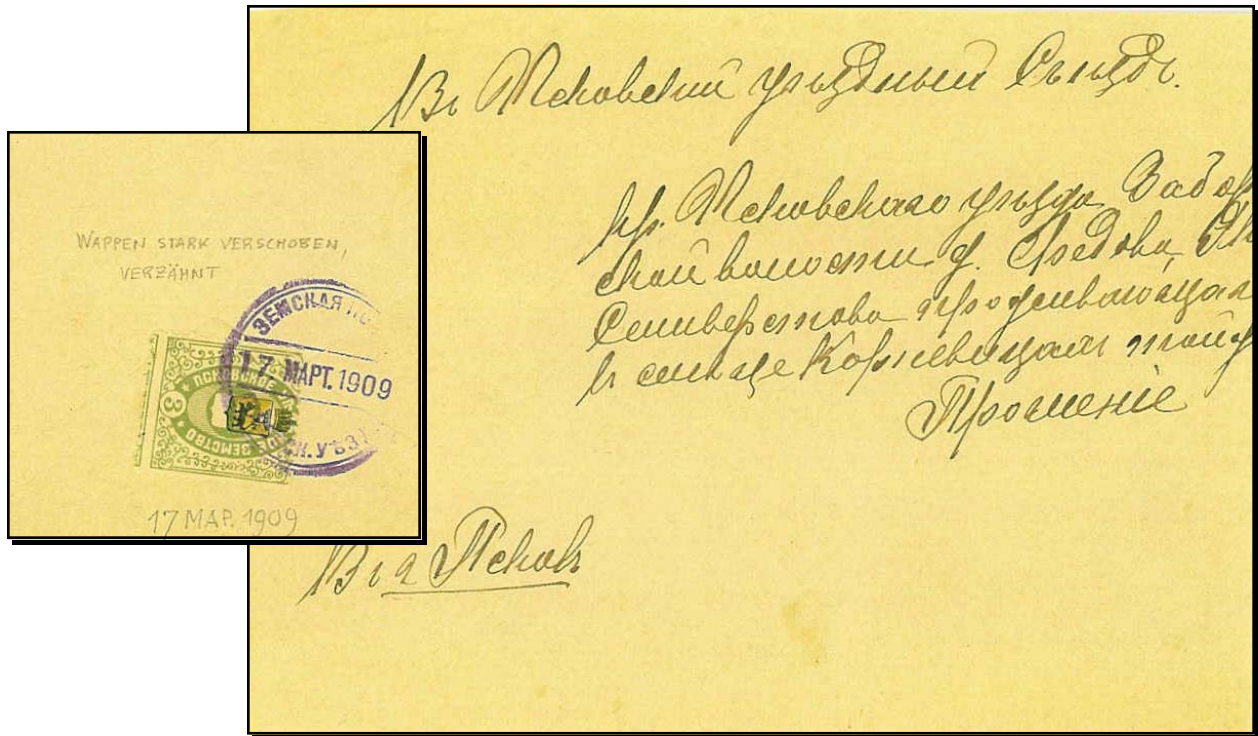


Figure 6. Pskov Zemstvo, Pskov Province. Chuchin #44 on a letter sent from a village to Pskov. The letter contains a petition. The 3-kopec stamp has a significant shift upward of the Pskov coat-of-arms. The arm from the sky points to the lion.

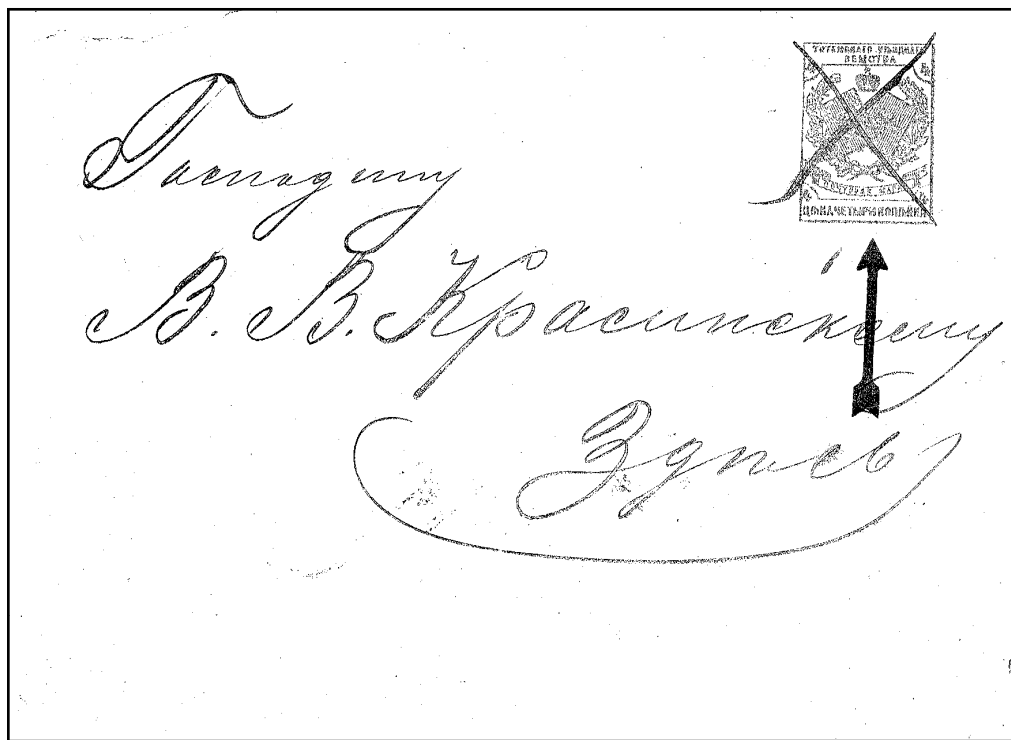


Figure 7. Tot'ma Zemstvo, Vologda Province. This is a stamped envelope, used locally. There is a spelling error on the lower line which states the denomination: Четыри (four) needs to be Четыре (spelling rule). The error must have been detected early because an envelope with this error is difficult to find, while envelopes with the correct spelling are fairly common. Images reduced to 90%.

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Figure 8. Zvenkov Zemstvo, Poltava Province. This postcard was mailed via the Zen'kov Zemstvo to Lubny in the same province, but outside of the zemstvo's boundary. The 1-kopeck stamp, Chuchin #49, has the denomination "1" printed in the center of the stamp but it resembles the letter "I." For comparison, a pair of these stamps (shown as inset) are shown where the left hand stamp has a proper "1."

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- ◆ Send a paper copy of your article so that the editor knows how you intend for the article to appear!
- ◆ Do not use abbreviations (i.e. pmk for postmark, kop. for kopeck, etc. Spell out every word unless the abbreviated form is well-known.
- ◆ Spell check! Send your article to a friend to check for grammar, spelling, common sense, etc.
- ◆ Make sure you check your media (disk, CD ROM, etc.) before sending to the editor to ensure it works.

Basic Guidelines

- ◆ **no abbreviations**
- ◆ **hyphenation examples:**
 - + 15-kopeck stamp
 - + anti-Soviet
- ◆ **quotation marks outside of punctuation:**
 - + *Correct:* "Yelisavetgrad District."
 - + *Not correct:* "Yelisavetgrad District".
- ◆ **Date Format:**
 - + *Correct:* 23 December 1912
 - + *Not correct:* December 23, 1912
- ◆ **Common Misspellings:**
 - + *Tsar not Czar*
 - + *Nicholas not Nicolas*

A Beautiful Octagonal Cancel

By Ed Laveroni

At our recent Rossica meeting at WESTPEX, I was fortunate to find a beautiful octagonal cancel cover at the bourse. It was a registered letter sent to Paris on 6-XII-1908 with 4 octagonal cancels and a receiving cancel of Paris, 22 December 1908. It has the proper 20-kopeck rate for a registered letter sent abroad, and it took three days to reach Paris.

It is a 7-kopeck postal stationery envelope upgraded with a 1-kopeck orange Scott 55 and a 2-kopeck yellow-green Scott 56, and is cancelled with 2 octagonal cancels of previously unrecorded Postal Wagon No. 147 serial 2. (Figure 1) On the back are a 3-kopeck red Scott 57 and a 7-kopeck Scott 59 with 2 more octagonal cancels of Postal Wagon No 147 serial 2 across the stamps. (Figure 2)

What makes this cover so extraordinary is that not only is it an unrecorded octagonal railroad cancel 147 serial 2, but on the front,

written in purple ink by the railroad postal clerk, is the registration number 1 for the first registered cover of the day. This is the only known recorded octagonal cancel that was registered on the train.

Registered letters are common in Russia, but they are rarely registered on the train. Every registered letter had to be entered in the registration book with a number and date of entry, and this was done at the postal district office, or in a large railroad station (vokzal) along the line, or in railroad stations that had been given the authority to register mail. At the station where the mail was registered, the mail would receive a "registration stamp" or "registration label." In this manner, it was easier to have security and control of the registration book.

Line 147-148 ran from Zhmerinka to Novoselitsy in 1908. It had been extended to the Austrian-Hungarian border from Oknitsa and opened officially on 18 April 1904.

According to Anatoly Kiryuskin, the inscriptions, underlined with red crayon, had been done on the train by the railroad

postal clerk. He did not have a registration book. So, he underlined Zakaznoe (registered), Paris (destination) and Poch. V. No 147-6, XII 08 (no number, railroad line and date). This was the signal for the sorting clerk to add a number, and it was most likely added and recorded at Novoselitsy. There the handwritten "registration label" was applied in purple ink: No 1/ P.W. 147.

I wonder if this is correct, because the sorting office should have had registration labels which are normally on registered letters and postcards. Also, from what we think we know, octagonal cancels were used on busy lines acting as another postal office besides the regular Traveling Post Office (TPO) on the train. The TPO did not sell stamps or handle registered items except to sort them. I think that the postal clerk that handled the octagonal cancel on the train would have written the cancel, and the sorting postal clerk at Novoselitsy would have recorded it before it went on to France. Maybe the octagonal postal
(Continued on page 25)



Figure 1.

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(Continued from page 24)
clerk had the authority to sort and send it on its way. (This is another area of Russian Philately that we know very little about. It is open for study). The Roman letters were used, because of the foreign destination. Registration for foreign destinations by U.P. U. regulations had

to have Roman lettering.

References:

1. Russian Railway Postmarks by A.V. Kiryuskin and P.E. Robinson.
2. Mail Registered on TPO/RPO-Imperial and Soviet Times, Rabbi L.L. Tann, The Post-Rider/Yamshchik, No. 48, June 2001, Pages 56-60.

3. Octagonal Pochtovii vagon Marks, Ian L. G. Baillie, The British Journal of Russian Philately No. 66, March 1989, Page 24-27.



Figure 2.

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Unrecognized and Unrecorded Zemstvo Mail

3rd Installment

By George G. Werbizky

In Rossica 138 and 142, I presented examples of mail that was handled by several zemstvos that had postal service, but did not necessarily issue stamps. In this brief installment,

three postal items will be shown that were handled by a zemstvo post, but did not require postage stamps for one reason or another. Up to this point zemstvos that did not issue stamps or stamped envelopes were simply neglected. This whole area of zemstvo postal activ-

ity needs serious research. However, unless one has access to local documentation and or yearly summary reports by the zemstvos under discussion, a question mark will remain, preventing final conclusions of how these zemstvos operated.

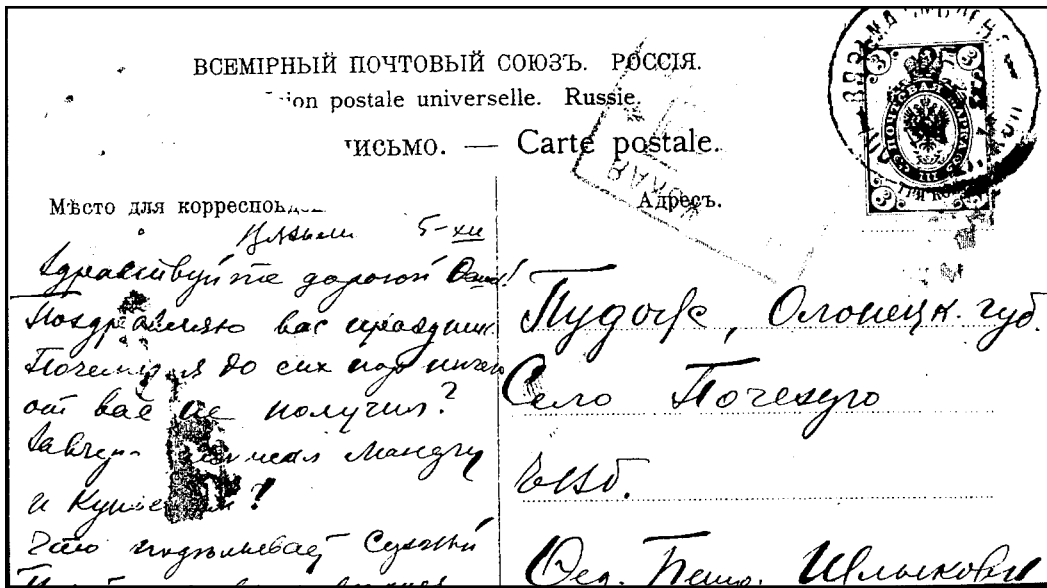


Figure 1. Postcard mailed on 25 December 1908 from Vyaz'ma, Smolensk Province to the village of Pochezugo, via Pudozh, Olonets Province. It arrived there on 6 January 1909, as shown by the rectangular date stamp. Pudozh Zemstvo issued stamps twice, in 1903 and in 1913. Both issues were of the Ardatov type. This zemstvo probably handled incoming mail from the government postal system free of charge, as did many other zemstvos.

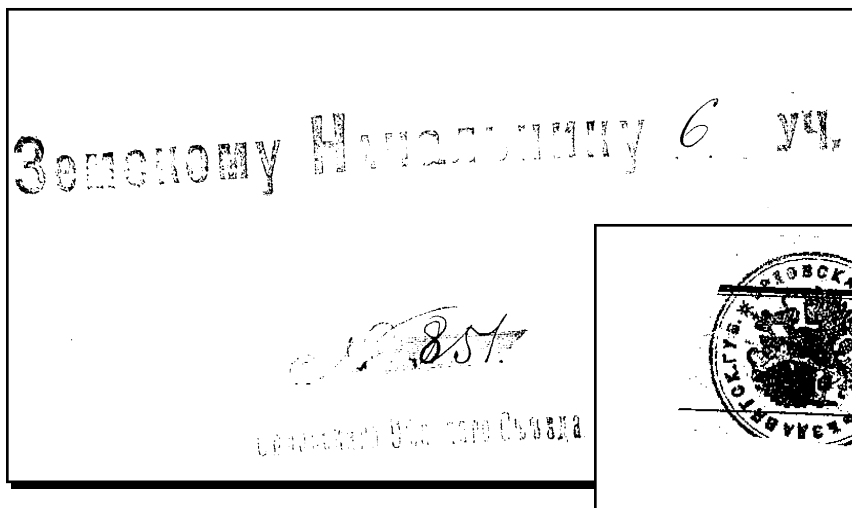


Figure 2. Partial front of a folded letter (at left) sent to the zemstvo chief of the 6th section of the Orlov District Assembly, located within the Vyatka Province. On the reverse (inset) is the Orlov Zemstvo handstamp, dated 8 March 1905. The paper seal is the official seal of the Orlov District Assembly. The seal verifies that this mail is official zemstvo mail, and thus requires no postage. (Images reduced to 80%)

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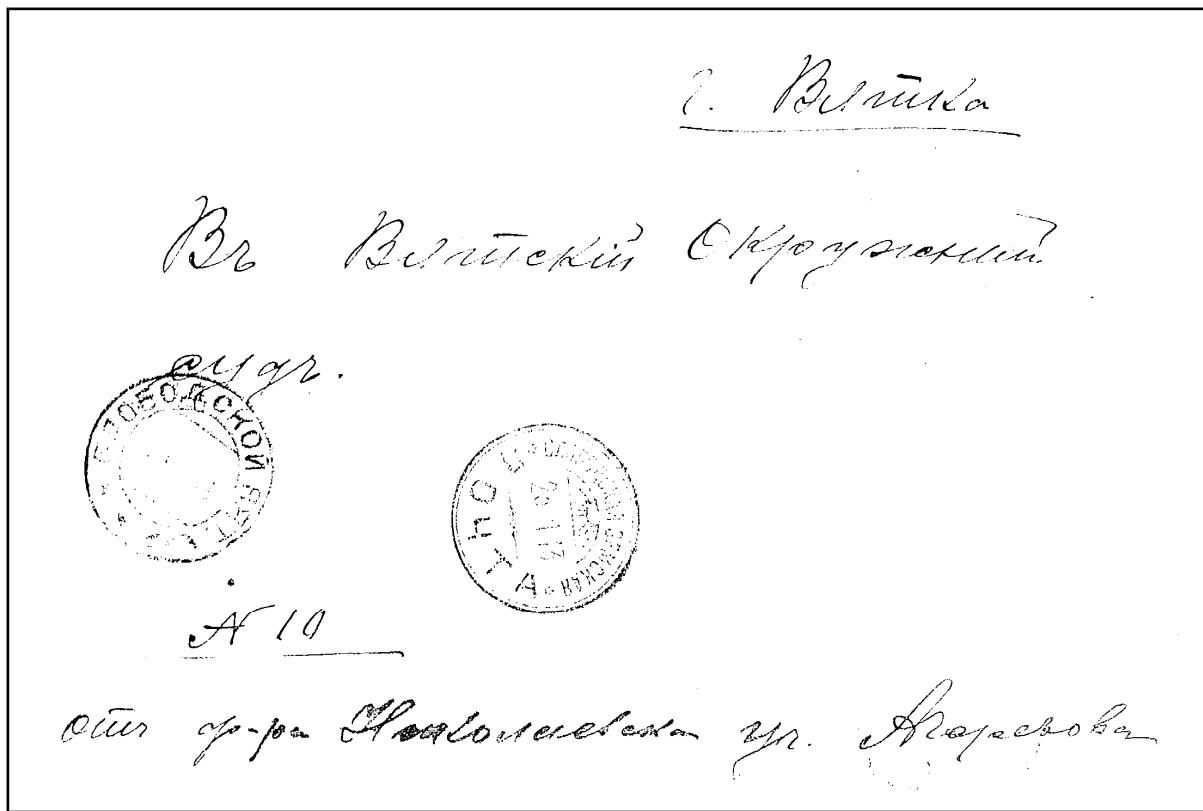


Figure 3. Front of a cover sent to Vyatka District Court. The sender is Medical Assistant Agarezov, at the Nikolaevsk station. The Slobodskoy zemstvo post in Vyatka Province accepted the letter on 25 January 1913 and transferred it on the same day to the Imperial post office of Slobodskoy.

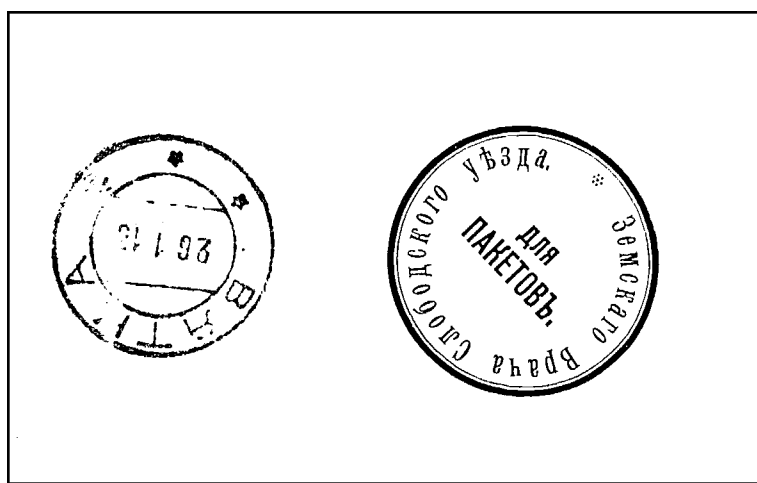


Figure 4. A portion of the reverse side of the cover in Figure 3 showing the arrival postmark of Vyatka, dated 26 January 1913. There is also a label of the Slobodskoy Zemstvo medical doctor, which exempts the sender from paying postage.

Fly Specker 143

By Greg Mirsky and
Dave Waterman

One more variety of the 4th Anniversary of October Revolution issue of 1921. Scott # 188 -190 still have a number of unknown and unlisted varieties. There were several sources listing a variety of the broken upper left ornament on the

100-ruble stamp. Dr. Ceresa, in *The Postage Stamps of Russia 1917-1923* and Ged Seiflow in *Rossica Catalog of RSFSR 1918-1923* did a beautiful job describing this variety for the 100-ruble stamp (Scott #188) with plate positions (position 1 and 24). Recently Greg Mirsky discovered a very similar (not the same!) variety (?) or EFO on two other stamps of the issue (250-ruble

and 1000-ruble). The plate positions are unknown at this point and at the end of the day it may really end up being an EFO, but we hope that we will discover the truth with the help of our readers. It is still unknown if the same “damage of the ornament” exists on the unissued 200-ruble stamp. See Figure 1.

There are a number of varieties
(Continued on page 29)

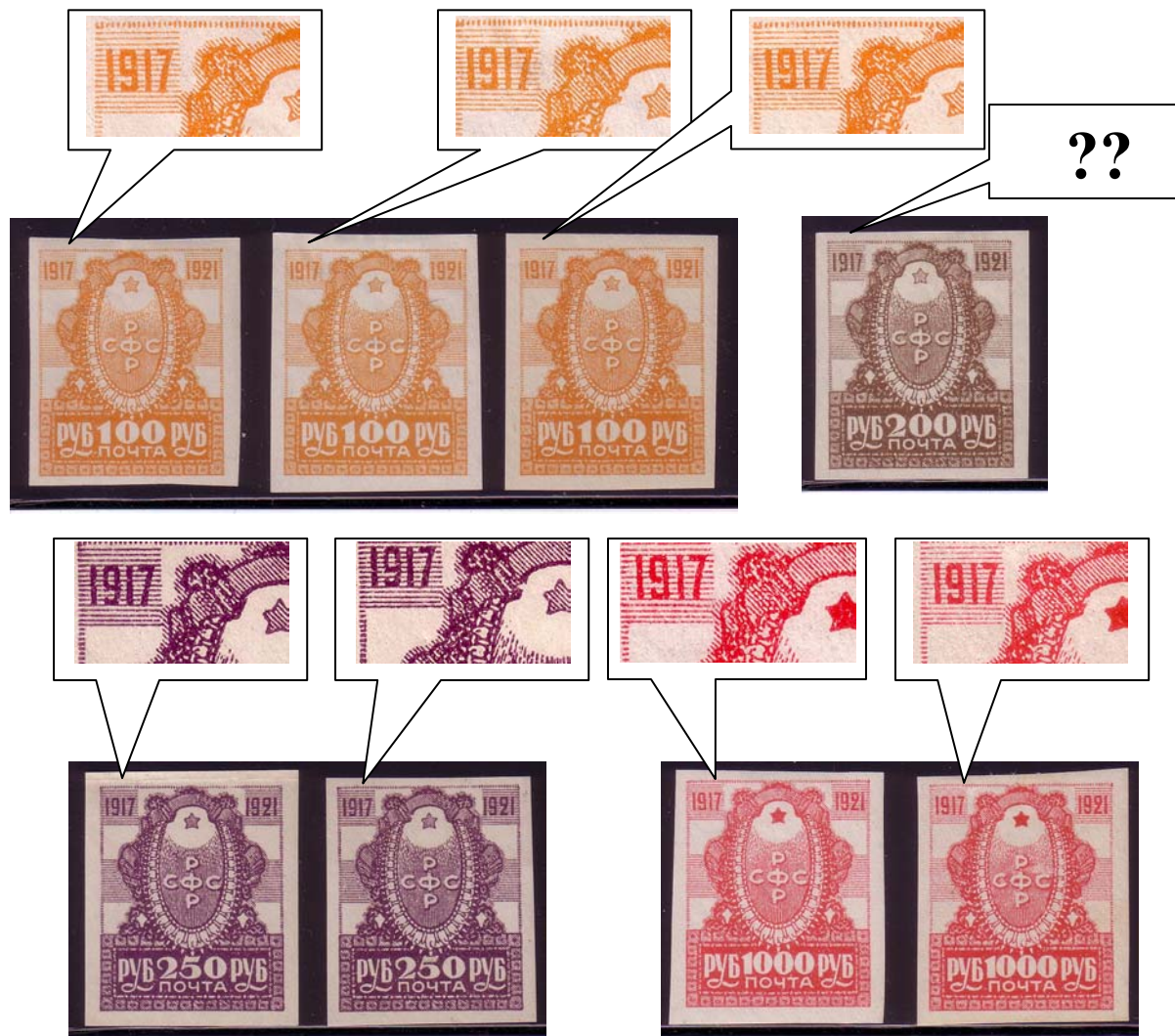
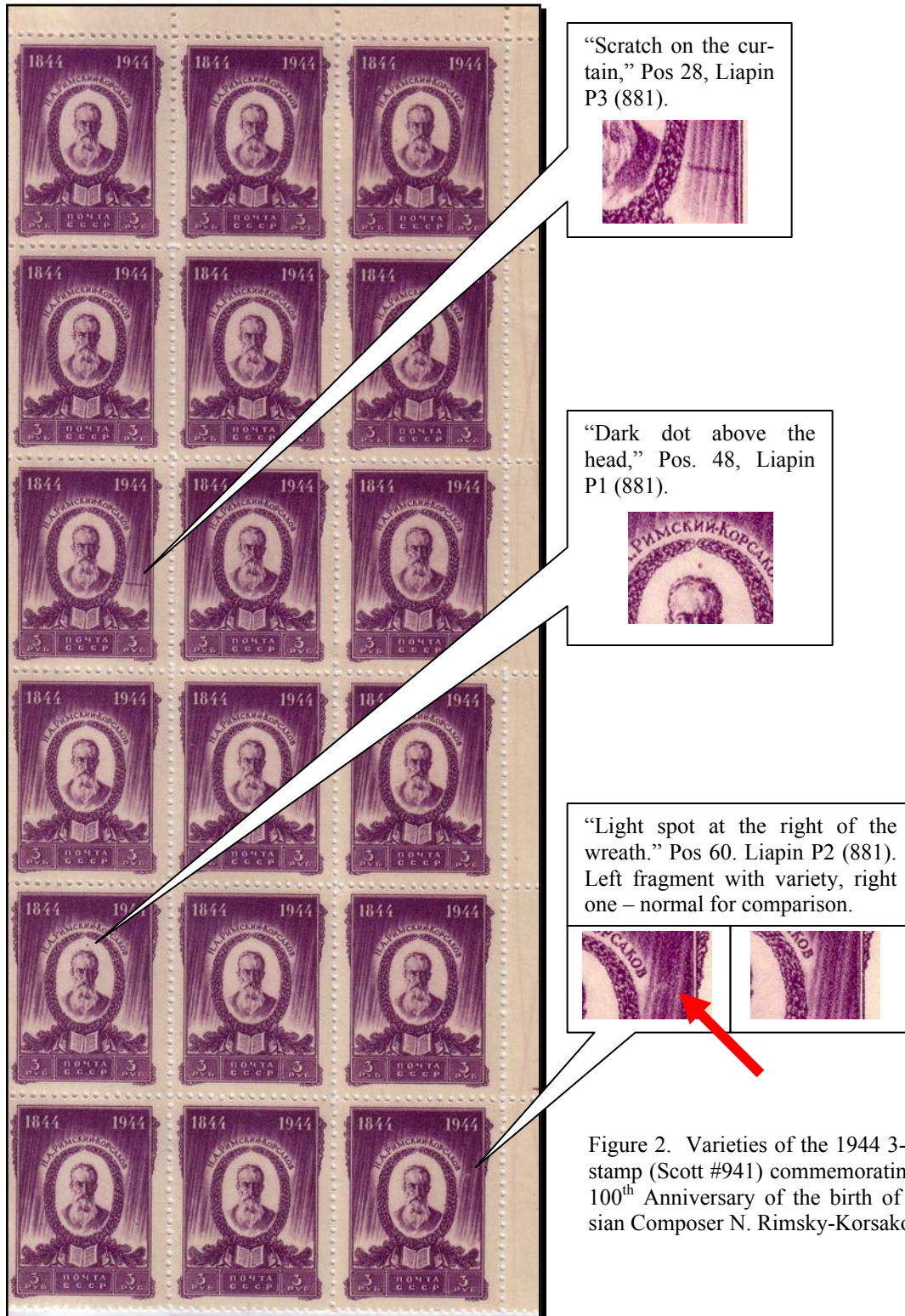


Figure 1. 4th Anniversary of October Revolution issue of 1921 (Scott #188-190). “Broken Upper Left Ornament.” In each illustration, the standard stamp is on the left and the variety is on the right.

(Continued from page 28)
ties listed in specialized Russian Catalogs (Liapin, Soloviev, etc.), where the plate position or a picture of the variety itself is not available.

Sometimes the quality of the picture in the publication does not always allow the reader to discern the variety. We found it useful to publish here some of the stamps and provide pictures of the actual variety.

In several cases we were able to identify an earlier unknown or unlisted plate position of the variety. See Figures 2-9.



“Scratch on the curtain,” Pos 28, Liapin P3 (881).

“Dark dot above the head,” Pos. 48, Liapin P1 (881).

“Light spot at the right of the wreath.” Pos 60, Liapin P2 (881).
Left fragment with variety, right one – normal for comparison.

Figure 2. Varieties of the 1944 3-ruble stamp (Scott #941) commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the birth of Russian Composer N. Rimsky-Korsakov.



Broken Frame under "ИН" in "ПУШКИН" Pos.15, Liapin, P1 (1131I).



Figure 3. Plate varieties of the 30-kopeck stamp, "800th Anniversary of the Founding of Moscow" issue. (Scott #1138)

"Light spot on the building" (variety - left fragment, regular stamp - right fragment), Pos 19. Liapin P2 (1131I).



"White spot above sculpture (variety - left fragment, regular stamp - right fragment), Pos 21. Liapin P3 (1131I).



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“Kite over the building,”
Pos 36. Liapin P3 (11321).



Figure 4. Plate varieties
of the 50-kopeck stamp,
“800th Anniversary of the
Founding of Moscow”
issue. (Scott #1139)

There is a violet spot
under “P” in “РУБ,” Pos
14. Liapin P2(1135).



Figure 5. Plate variety of the
1-ruble stamp, “800th Anniver-
sary of the Founding of Mos-
cow” issue. (Scott #1142).
There is a violet spot under “P”
in “РУБ.” Plate position was
identified by the authors. This
variety exists in Pos 14 of the
sheet.



Figure 6. Plate variety of the 10-kopeck stamp, “Fauna of the USSR” issue of 1957, (Scott #1916, Liapin P2 (1941).) There is an orange dot to the left of the bird’s neck. Plate position was identified by the authors. This variety exists in Pos 48 of the 12 x 6 sheet.



Figure 7. Plate variety of the 40-kopeck stamp, “International Geophysical Year” issue of 1957, (Scott #1957, Liapin P1 (1981).) There is a dot in front of “ПОЧТА.” Plate position was identified by the authors. This variety exists in Pos 32 of the 12 x 6 sheet.



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Figure 9. Plate variety of the 40-kopeck stamp, “100th Anniversary of Klara Tsetkin’s birth” issue of 1957, (Scott #1983, Liapin P2 (2010).) There is a dot on the book. Plate position was identified by the authors. This variety exists in Pos 9 of the 6 x 12 sheet.



Figure 8. Plate variety of the 40-kopeck stamp, “Russian Writers” issue of 1957, (T. Shevchenko, Scott #1962, Liapin P1 (1931).) There is a broken “Й” in “УКРАИНСКИЙ.” This variety exists in Pos 65 and 72 of the 12 x 6 sheet.



At the end of every issue of the FlySpecker we encourage our readers to write us and contribute to this section and/or publish your findings and questions at Rossica

FlySpecker forum at the Rossica website. Our emails are: Greg Mirsky: gregmir@pacbell.net, David Waterman: dnh2oman@pacbell.net You can also write to the Rossica

Editor and information will be forwarded to us. We are waiting for your discoveries!

Russian Postal Activity in Persia 1914—1917

By Alfred F. Kugel

Historical Background

One aspect of the long-running geopolitical rivalry between the Russian and Turkish Empires over the centuries up through 1918 was the competition between them for influence in neighboring Persia (modern-day Iran). At the time of Tsar Peter the Great in the early 1700s, Persia controlled much of the Caucasus. In the ensuing period, several conflicts were fought over this area, with the final declared war between Russia and Persia in 1828 resulting in Persian claims to these territories being abandoned.

Subsequently, the Russians adopted a policy of political and economic penetration of adjacent areas of Persia during a lengthy period of governmental unsettle-

ment in that country. This activity proceeded to the point that in 1907 Britain and Russia agreed to divide the country into zones of influence, with the latter having primary influence in the northern 40% of Persia, including Teheran, Tabriz and Isfahan, while the British zone was the southern part of the country as far west as Bandar Abbas. (See sketch map shown as Figure 1.)

By the early part of World War I, the Russians were operating several post offices abroad on Persian territory. However, except for Tabriz, which had a substantial amount of commercial activity, examples of the postmarks from these offices are very elusive (as discussed below).

After Turkey declared war on Russia on 29 October 1914, its troops briefly occupied several towns in the western part of Russian Armenia and, from time to time, made incursions into western Persia. These moves prompted the

Russians to send military forces to protect its interests in Persia, which resulted in fieldpost offices being operated in the area along with the civilian post offices abroad. (As it turned out, the Turkish troops were soon withdrawn in order to meet the threat posed by the British-French invasion of the Dardanelles in 1915.)

The situation charged dramatically with the installation of the Provisional Government following the abdication of the Tsar in March 1917 and the subsequent Bolshevik revolution in November of that year, which brought about the collapse of the Russian front. The soldiers were fed up with fighting and, in many cases, simply headed home. This was followed by the advance of Turkish forces into the Caucasus and areas of northern Persia, until they were compelled to leave as a result of defeats on other fronts (Palestine and Mesopotamia). Although there was an attempt to impose a Soviet-type government in northern Persia in the early 1920s, this effort was unsuccessful.

Philatelic Consequences

The postal activity in Persia is a rather obscure aspect of Russian philately, and Russian fieldpost usage from there is certainly a very minor part of World War I military mail. Not surprisingly, therefore, material is quite scarce, but with considerable effort can be acquired showing use from both the Russian civil and military post offices in the 1914-1917 period.

The most important of the civil offices was located in the Consulate in Tabriz, the capital of Persian Azerbaijan. The opening date of this office is unknown, but examples of its postmarks are recorded

(Continued on page 35)

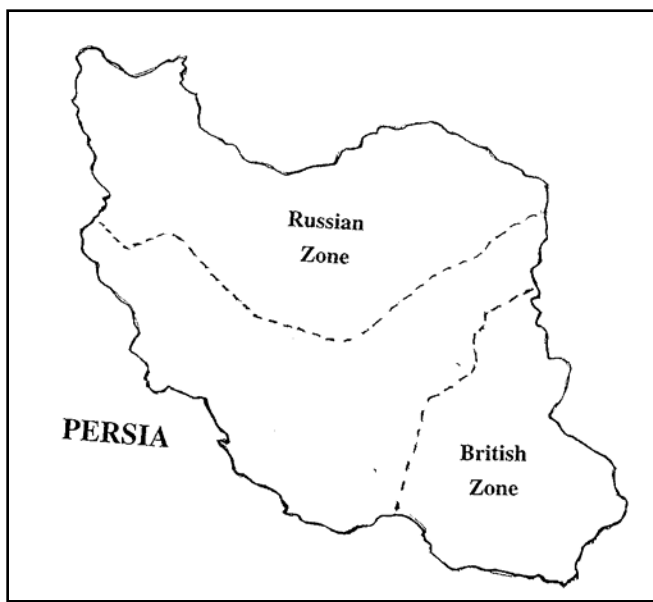


Figure 1. Sketch map of Persia showing the Russian and British spheres of influence in 1907.



Figure 2. Registered cover sent from Tabriz to Paris in 1915. Postmark and registry label are inscribed “Tabriz Russian Consulate.”



Figure 3. Registered cover sent from Tabriz to Petrograd in 1916. Postmark reads “Tabriz/Russian Consulate,” while the registry label is inscribed simply “Tabriz (Persia).”

(Continued from page 34)

from 3 April 1914 until 10 September 1917 per Tchilinghirian & Stephen. Two different postmarks inscribed “Tabriz Russian Consulate” were used, apparently contemporaneously, to cancel normal Imperial Russian stamps. (Figures 2 and 3 show examples of registered mail from Tabriz.)

Additional consular offices are known to have operated in Ardebil, Khoi and Maku, but examples of their markings are extremely elusive, with only a single cover from Ardebil being recorded by Tchilinghirian. However, more recently an example of a postcard with the Maku cancel was discovered (See Figure 4). Maku is a town in Persian Azerbaijan about 135 miles northwest of Tabriz, near the Turkish border.

A Russian post office also operated at Gumbet-Kabuz (The Dome of Kabuz), which is located about 250 miles northeast of Teheran and 50 miles south of the Russian border. One possible reason for having a post office there was to provide service for pilgrims visiting the tomb of King Kabuz. Examples of this cancel were limited to a handful of loose stamps until recently when a postcard was discovered (See Figure 5).

As to fieldpost activity, Russian troops from the Caucasian Corps operated in Persia as well as the occupied areas of Turkish Anatolia. Figure 6 is a picture postcard inscribed “The Russian Army in Persia” and depicting a group of marching soldiers. One fieldpost office, FPO 201, operated at Khoi and examples of its postmark are recorded from 22 December 1915 to 17 August 1916. (See Figure 7 for an example of this usage.)

Reserve FPO 115 was used by the 4th Armenian Division. Exhibit 8 is a cover sent to West Pullman IL with a letter written in Armenian which states that the sender had

(Continued on page 38)



Figure 4. Picture postcard (of Tiflis) mailed from Maku to Harbin in 1916 and postmarked “Maku Russ. Cons.”



Figure 5. Picture postcard (of Taganrog) mailed from Gumbet-Kabuz in 1914. The postmark is inscribed “Gumbet-Kabuz Persian Possessions.”

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Figure 6. Picture Postcard of Russian troops on the march in Persia.



Figure 7. Picture postcard sent from Khoi through FPO 201 in 1916.

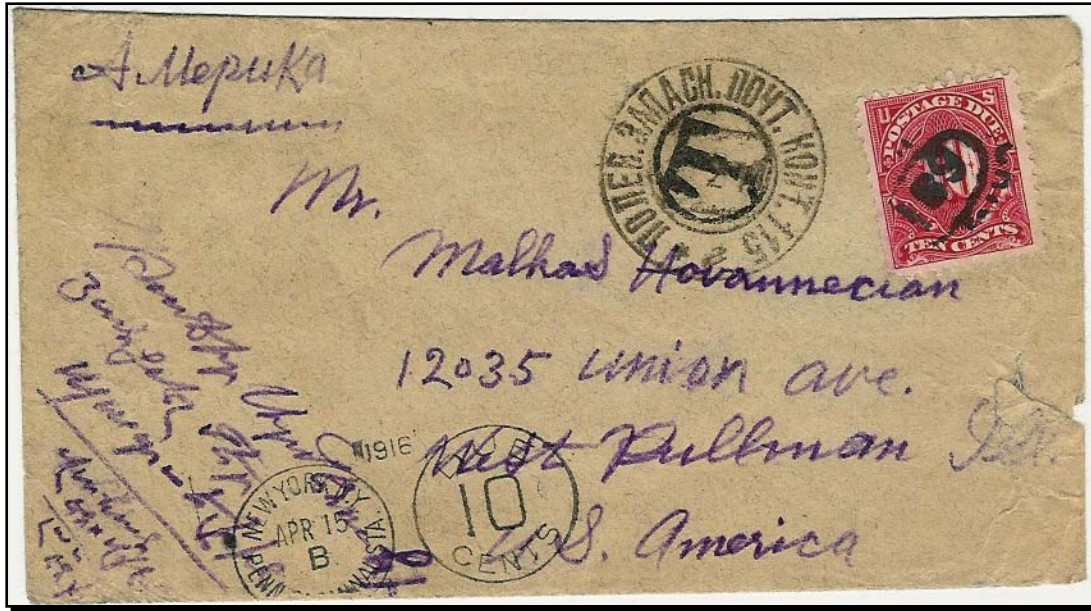


Figure 8. Cover sent from Reserve FPO 115 in North Persia to West Pullman, Illinois in 1916. It was sent unfranked, but the military free frank did not apply to mail to the U.S., which was neutral at the time, so double deficiency postage due of 10 cents was assessed against the recipient.

(Continued from page 35)

come from Tiflis and “we are now in Persia.”

There are undoubtedly other examples of Russian mail from Persia residing in various collections, but exhibits containing such material are only rarely seen. Thus, the presentation of an article illustrating some of these covers seems appropriate.

References:

1. “The Ottoman Empire Enters WWI on the side of the Central Powers,” from *Russia and Eastern Europe Chronology*, by North Park University History Department, 1996-9.
2. “Russia in 1914,” from *The National Archives Learning Curve*, 2001.
3. “Russian Fieldpost in the Caucasus” by Alfred F. Kugel, *Rossica Journal*, Fall 2001.
4. *Stamps of the Russian Empire Used Abroad, Part Three*, by S.D. Tchilinghirian & W.S.E. Stephen, published by The British Society of Russian Philately, 1958.
5. “Turkish Occupation of Transcaucasia in 1918” by Alfred F. Kugel, *The Levant. Journal of the Ottoman & Near East Philatelic Society*, Vol. II, No.5, 2004.

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Russian Stamp Club—Denver

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The stamp club meets on the third Saturday of the month at the Rocky Mountain Philatelic library. They are looking for anyone interested in Russian philately! Join them at the Rocky Mountain Philatelic Library, or contact Mark at the following email address for more information:

FeliceVainer@aol.com.

http://www.rossica.org

Permit Me to Disagree

By Meer Kossoy
(trans. D. Skipton)

Permit me to disagree – such is the answer I would like to give to Leonard Tann’s assertion in “A Warning to My Fellow Collectors” (*Rossica* Nos. 140-141, 2003, p. 80), that both the 1-kopeck stamp (Michel No. 64) and the cancellation on the postcard he shows are forgeries.

Leonard Tann cites the following as proof that the stamp and the cancel are not legitimate:

1. With a 1-kopeck stamp, the postage due could not be eight kopecks, as shown on the postage-due handstamp. He posits several accounting scenarios, none of which come to eight kopecks. At the same time, he maintains that given the postal regulations of the day, only if the postcard had been franked with a 3-kopeck stamp could the postage due have equaled eight kopecks. Therefore, his conclusion was that the postcard initially bore a 3-

kopeck stamp that someone removed and replaced with a 1-kopeck stamp, then drew in the cancel.

2. Leonard Tann cites as further proof that the postage-due handstamp says nothing about RR route 137, which we see on the cancellation, and that there is a color contrast between the ink of the cancel on the stamp and that on the postcard.

I will attempt to demonstrate that these conclusions are in error. First, it is necessary to establish which postal regulations were used to calculate the postage due and whether or not those regulations were always strictly observed.

Russia had strict requirements on the use of postcards. For instance, Article 96 of the 1909 Postal Regulations stipulated that the address side of the card had to be divided into two parts by a vertical line; the right part of the card had to occupy at least half of the space on that side, and no text other than the address could be put there. If this article were violated, then Article

99 called for a “penalty” – the card would be treated as a letter and charged in accordance with the letter rate, and the recipient would then be charged double the missing amount.

On the card shown in Leonard Tann’s article, the sender wrote part of the message above the address and next to the stamp, so in compliance with Article 99, the card ought to have been treated as a letter and sent at the letter rate of seven kopecks. Thus the insufficiency: 7 kopeck minus 1 kopeck = 6 kopecks. Double the 6 kopecks for the penalty, and you get 12 kopecks, not the eight shown on the postage-due mark.

However, we should bear in mind that under this postal regulation, an improperly-franked card like Leonard Tann’s called for 6-kopeck postage due, but had it been fully franked at the postcard rate but with message text on the address side, then it should have been 8-kopeck postage due at the letter rate. This apparently caused some
(Continued on page 40)

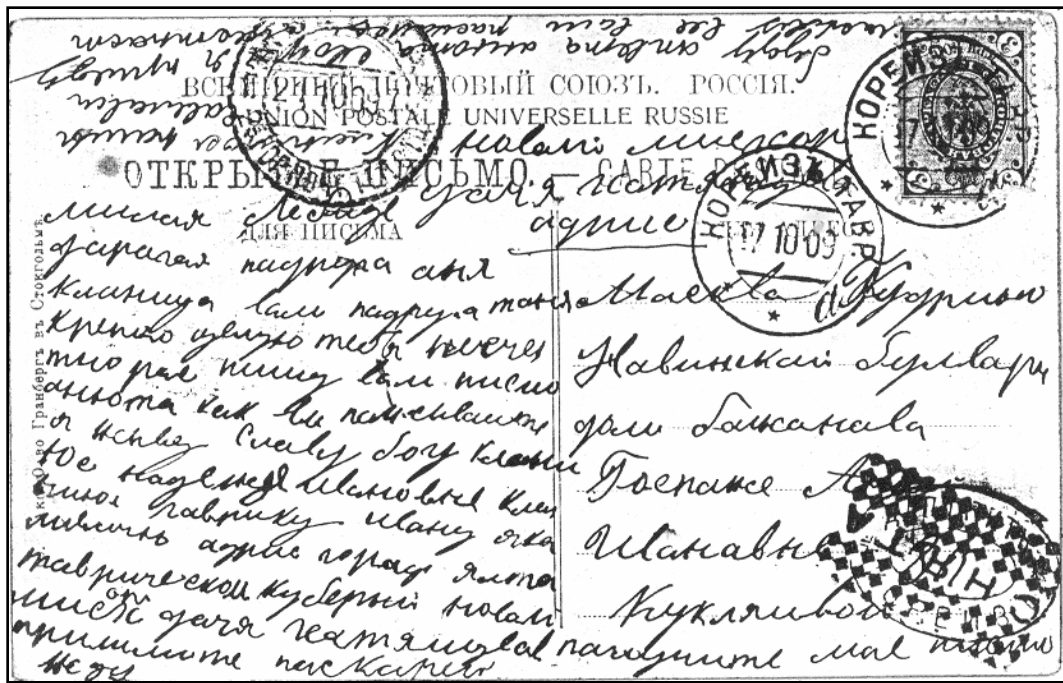


Figure 1.

(Continued from page 39)
 confusion among the postal officials, who interpreted the regulation in two different ways.

As an example, Figure 1 shows a postcard on which the 3-kopeck stamp (Michel No. 43) is canceled with a 17 October 1909 datestamp reading “KOREIZ TAUR [IDA PROV.]” serial “a.” Addressed to Moscow, the arrival mark shows that it reached the city on 21 October. We can see that the sender has written some of the message text on the right side of the card reserved for the address, so, in accordance with the article cited above, a postal official applied the black oval postage-due handstamp (“DOPLATIT” / KOREIZ”), and in black ink wrote in the amount to be collected – 8 k.

The Moscow officials found this assessment to be unwarranted, so they obliterated the postage-due marking with the violet rectangular dotted handstamp “SNYATA” ([charge] removed, or annulled). It shouldn’t be thought that postal officials in various cities interpreted this postage-due regulation in various ways, say, due to

local instructions. Even in a single central city like Moscow, the postal officials could come to different interpretations of this regulation. Figure 2 shows a postcard sent locally there, franked with a 3-kopeck stamp (Michel No. 43) canceled at a Moscow city post branch office on 18 December 1908. It took two days to reach its destination, still in Moscow.

Here again, there is message text intruding on the address side of the postcard, which is why the black oval postage-due handstamp (“MOSKVA / DOPLATIT”) was applied, with a manuscript “8 k.” inside. Another postal official, however, viewed the problem otherwise, and obliterated the postage-due marking with the same violet rectangular handstamp “SNYATA.”

These two examples show that postal officials could and did interpret these somewhat unusual franking problems differently. One official would call it underfranked, and another would disagree. These examples also demonstrate that just because the amount of the postage due fails to correspond to postal regulations isn’t proof that the

stamp and the postmark are forged. We can suppose that the official who assessed the example in Leonard Tann’s article at 8-kopeck postage due (rather than the 12 kopecks called for by the rate) either wasn’t completely familiar with these regulations or he interpreted them “according to his own lights.” He “automatically” wrote “8 kopecks” inside the postage-due marking, as he always did in the event he spotted message text intruding on the address side of the card. Perhaps he paid no attention to the fact that the stamp was one kopeck rather than three, or he simply didn’t know how to handle a rare situation like this.

There are other considerations, too. To find a stamp with a partial cancel that could so precisely fit with the piece of cancel on the card is impossible. That leaves only one other possibility, if Leonard Tann’s assertion is true – that the portion of the cancel on the stamp is forged, i.e., drawn in. Forgers and fakers always try to make their “product” as close to the original as possible, so that the forgery fails to cause
 (Continued on page 41)

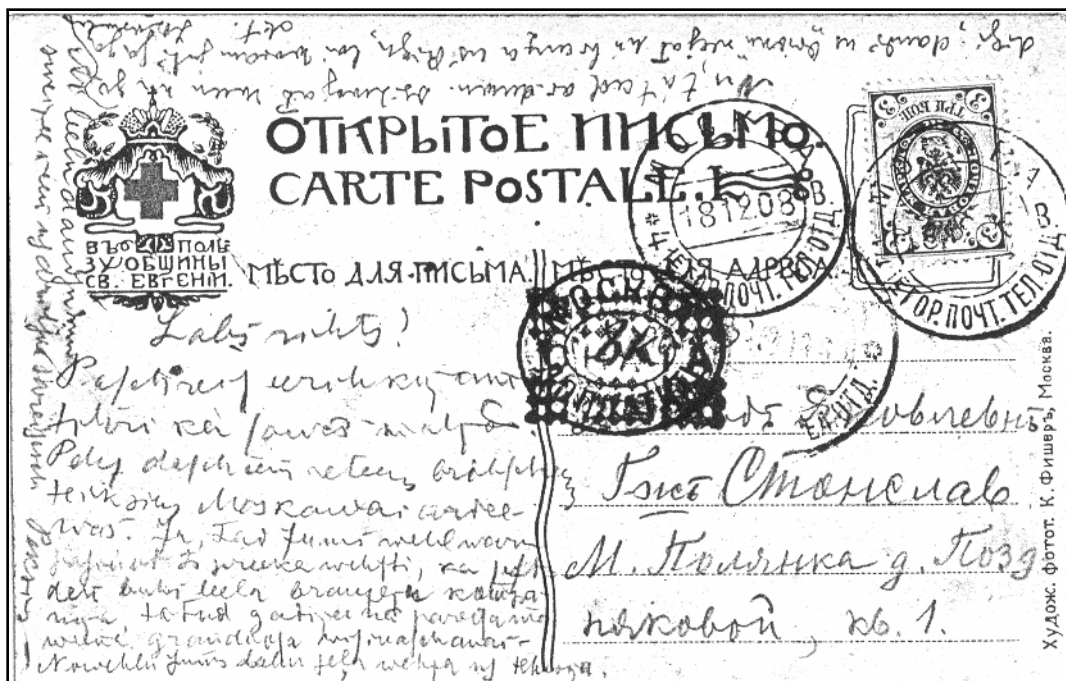


Figure 2.

<http://www.rossica.org>

(Continued from page 40)
 suspicion. And then the question is raised: why would the forgers choose a 1-kopec stamp for their work, one that didn't correspond to the postcard rate and that would, therefore, attract attention to itself? Why not forge the 3-kopec stamp – the most common – so as not to draw unwanted attention? The most likely answer to this question is that the 1-kopec stamp and its cancel are not forged, they're legitimate.

Russia's postal regulations called for a postage-due mark to be applied at any point along the route; whoever noticed the insufficient franking could apply the marking. Many railroad mail cars had no postage-due handstamps (or at least none have been recorded in the literature for Mail Car No. 137), so it is possible that either this was the cause, or the shortness of the route didn't give the mail car officials a chance to process the correspondence, but the postage-due marking on the card shown by Leonard Tann wasn't applied in Mail Car No. 137 but at its destination, Taganrog. In

this instance, there could be no text on the marking that read "Pochtovyy vagon No. 137," as Leonard Tann proposes.

The right (address) side takes up less than half of the card, so a red oval "Doplatit' / Kiev" postage-due stamp was applied, and the amount of the deficiency and "fine" written inside in black pen – "8" [kopecks]. This example proves that the postage-due handstamp could be applied not just at the point of dispatch but even at the destination, and that when the handstamp is struck at an angle, the impression can be black in one part and grayish in another. It is just such color differences in the handstamp that Leonard Tann presents as proof that the cancel on the stamp has been forged, and this card also demonstrates that there is no requirement for a "Mail Car No. 137" on the postage due stamp in his example.

Russian postal regulations stipulated that under- or non-franked correspondence be extracted from the general mail stream, and to that end postal offi-

cial were required to apply a handstamp in the shape of a large Cyrillic "D," the first letter in the word *doplatit'*, but such examples are very rarely encountered. Instead of a handstamp "D" one will occasionally find that a postal official simply added a "D" by hand, as was done in Figure 3.

This violation of the postal regulation mandating the application of a "D" handstamp also serves as oblique proof that the regulation governing how the postage due was to be calculated could be interpreted in more than one way, where officials came up with eight kopecks rather than 12.

Given all of the above, I believe that the stamp and postmark shown in Leonard Tann's article are legitimate, not forged. However, with all of the numerous forgeries appearing recently, Leonard Tann's warning is one that I can second: FORGERIES SPOIL OUR COLLECTIONS. COLLECTORS – BE CAREFUL AND BEWARE OF FORGERIES!

Figure 3.



Mariya Spiridonova

Addenda and Corrigenda

By David Skipton

Due to an inadvertent computer glitch, (*ed. note: Dave is too polite since it was an editorial mistake that excluded the text!*) some text in the article “Mariya Spiridonova (1884-1941)” on page 68 of *Rossica* No. 142 went missing. It should have read, “I know of no Spiridonova cards from the Soviet period, although some may have been produced from November 1917 to July 1918. Anything after that is much less likely, and if they exist, they would probably have been issued
(Continued on page 43)



Figure 1.



Figure 2.

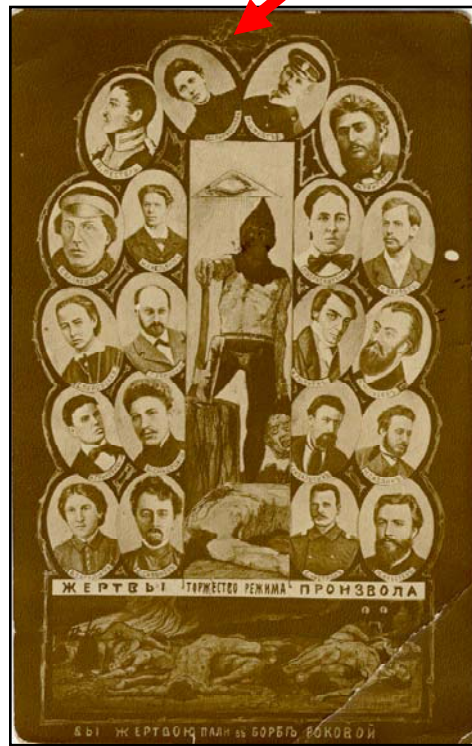


Figure 3.

Figures 2 and 3. At left, “Fighters for Freedom,” showing several more photos than does the “Victims of Tsarist Tyranny” card at right.

abroad by scattered SR remnants.

“The picture post cards shown in this article most probably do not exhaust the list of Spiridonova-related picture post cards issued during the Imperial period. There could well be a dozen or so more.

“As for finding an item of mail sent by Spiridonova, it should not be impossible. From her lengthy statement submitted on 13 November 1937 to her interrogators, it is known that she maintained an extensive correspondence with up to 50 other SRs throughout the Soviet Union, all of them in prison or in exile.”

The second paragraph was

certainly correct and it is beginning to look as if the estimate was too low. Thanks to Meer Kossoy and Boris Sokolov, we can add four more cards to the list. The crudely-produced, poorly-cut May Day card in Figure 1 is an SR production featuring Karl Marx, Mariya Spiridonova (in the middle of the left upright part of the “M”), Lt. P. Schmidt, Kalyayev, Balmashev and G.V. Plekhanov, along with pictures and drawings of revolutionary events. It was probably produced in 1907 or 1908.

The date of issue for the card in Figure 2 is unknown, but from some of the texts next to the pic-

tures, it cannot have been produced prior to 1906 or later than 1910. This is undoubtedly an SR production, given the “top billing” for Mariya Spiridonova at the beginning of the middle column, and it keeps reasonably close to the SR “family” and its immediate predecessors. The same cannot be said for the lurid postcard in Figure 3, which lumps Decembrists with some of the more cold blooded SR assassins of the early 20th century. Had they still been among the living, the Decembrist might well have protested the company this card forced them to keep.

Figure 4. “Mariya Spiridonova, Leader of the Left SRs.” Figure 4 is a remarkable picture postcard issued by the Cinema Committee in the People’s Commissariat for Education, which rather emphatically answers supposition in the first paragraph above. This card was very likely issued in 1918, but prior to July when she and her Left Socialist-Revolutionaries rose up against the Bolshevik government and were crushed.

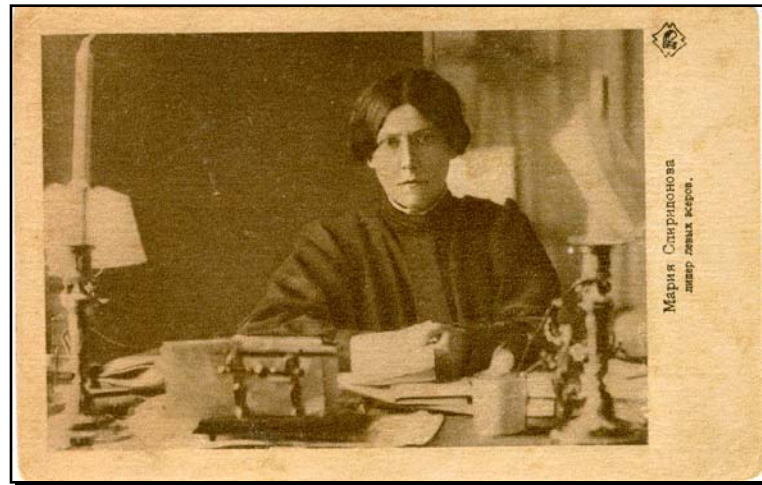
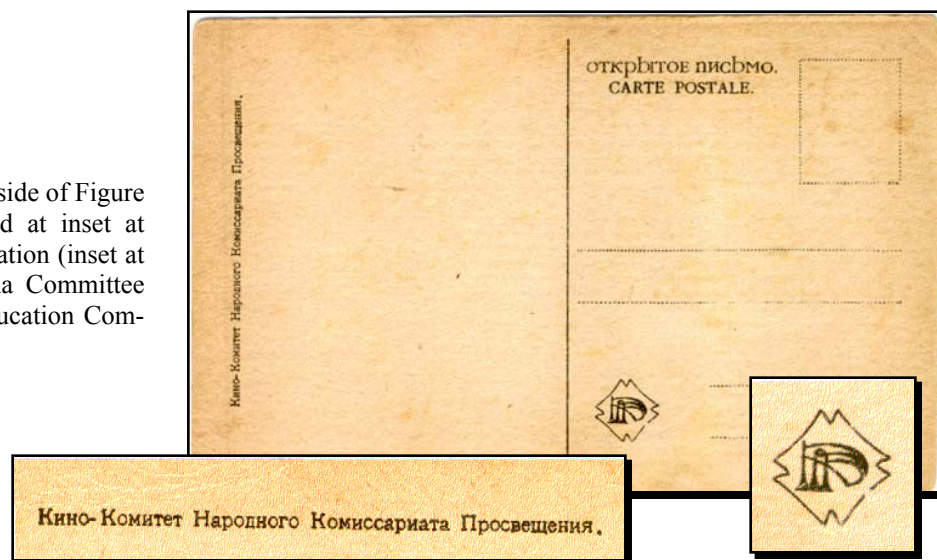


Figure 5. Reverse side of Figure 4. Logo (enlarged at inset at right) and identification (inset at left) of the Cinema Committee in the People’s Education Commissariat.



A Couple of Other Wooden Postcards

By Alexander Epstein

Responding to the article by Bill Nickle (Rossica No. 142), I would like to show two more such postcards in my collection.



Figure 1. This card, manufactured from some kind of thin veneer with the standard text handstamped over it, was posted in Riga to Revel' on 2 June 1906. There is a branch with blue flowers on the message part. The message in German consists of birthday greetings.

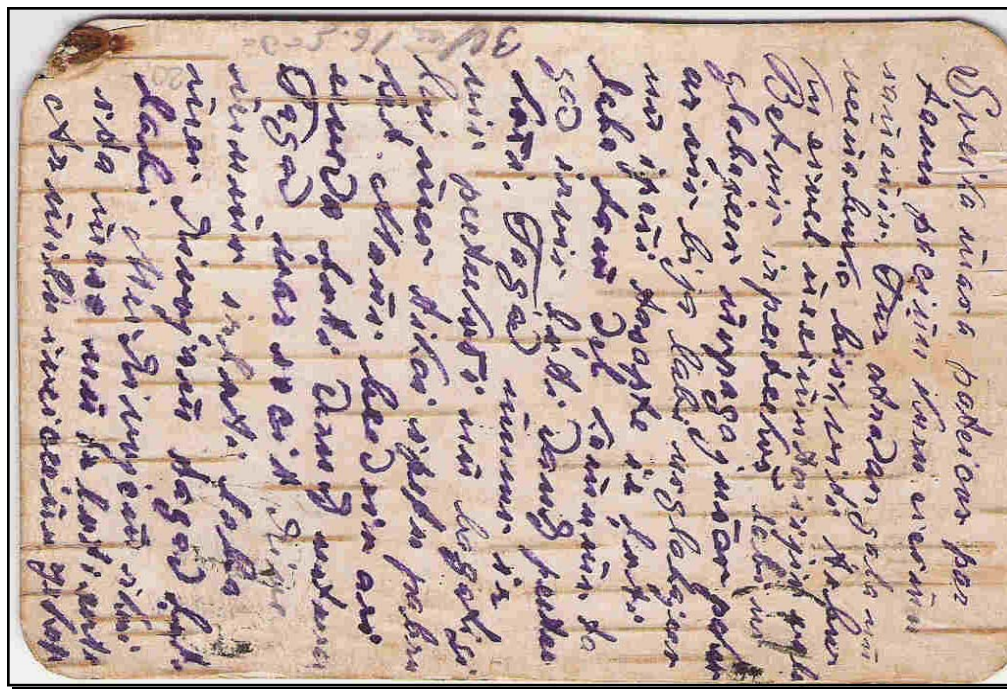


Figure 2. This is a self-made card of birch bark and hand-designed. Note the missing last letter “Я” in the word ПОЧТОВА(Я). The message is written in Latvian; so it was probably a Lett who designed the card and did not master Russian too well, hence the mistake. The Imperial coat-of-arms in the upper left corner is combined with a military unit’s emblem: the abbreviated text in the shield (522 п. ТД) means probably the 522nd Infantry Tambov Militia Brigade (*Druzhina*). This postcard was sent to Riga and has the postmark of the 146th Reserve Field Post Office dated 30 June 1916. At that time, it was actually a Corps FPO attached to the 31st Infantry Corps fighting as a part of the Russian 3rd Army in the swampy forest area (called *Poles’e*) in the south of present-day Belarus.

Annulled Zemstvo Stamps

By George G. Werbizky

In Rossica 142, Gary Combs, Dick Scheper and Noel Warr treated us to an interesting and informative article on the history of Moscow perfins, citing relevant postal circulars, which they coupled with many illustrations.

In addition to annulling stamps with the initials of a post

office, there was another, cruder way that had the same results: a hole was punched through the stamps. One such example is the money order shown in Figure 1. The money order originated in Irbit Zemstvo, Perm' Province and was mailed to the journal "Spiritual Discussion" (a religious publication), in Kiev. It appears to have been an annual subscription, costing the subscriber nine rubles. Because the

money order was handled by both the zemstvo and central government postal systems, zemstvo stamps as well as Arms-type stamps were required. The money order in Figure 1 left the Irbit post office on 10 October 1917 and reached Kiev four days later on 14 October. The recipient signed for the amount.



Figure 1. Front side of the money order.

The punched holes are round, and are 4.5 millimeters in diameter. The distance between holes, edge-to-edge, is 11 millimeters. The first five holes are essentially evenly spaced and are in line, top to bottom. This suggests that the punching mechanism produced five holes at one application. The sixth hole is out of line and is spaced further

from the edge. Therefore, this hole must have been punched singly. There are two more holes at the left side of the money order when viewed from the front, whose purpose is unknown. In the Combs, et al. article from Rossica 142, there is an example of the same kind of punched hole shown in Figure 12.

The Moscow post office, as

the central post office of the country, had a sophisticated annulling mechanism. Other post offices, it appears, punched holes through stamps for the same purpose.

In today's Russia the word "прокол" = puncture has acquired an additional meaning: "failure, personal or business failure in a venture, mistake, it went wrong."

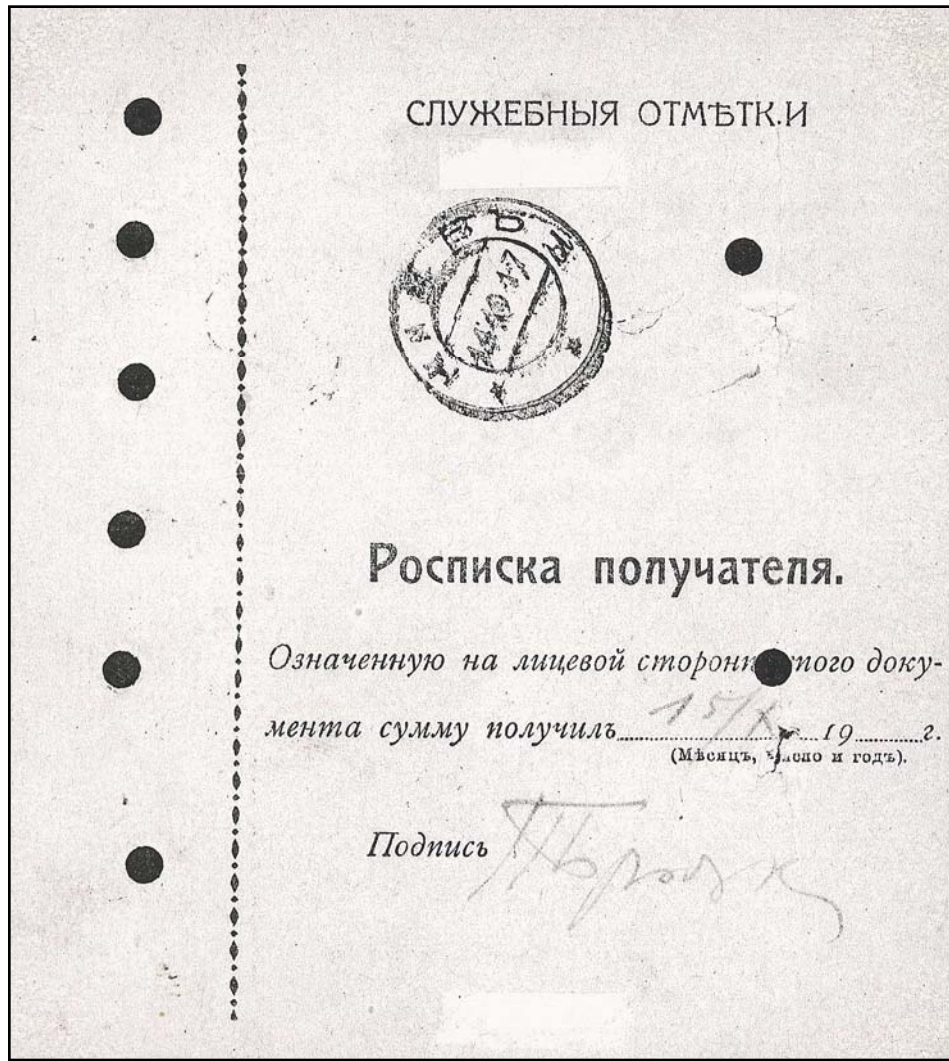


Figure 2. Reverse of the money order.

When Were They Issued?

By Alexander Epstein

Sometimes one finds sometimes in stamp catalogs discrepancies as to the particular date of issue of some Russian stamps, especially definitives. Two such sets are considered hereunder.

1. The imperforate and high face-value perforated definitives of 1917 (Scott Nos. 119 to 135 and 137-138).

Different catalogs date this issue as 1917 or 1917-18; some add also the month March. Information about this appeared in the March 1917 edition of the official “*Post-and-Telegraph Journal*” (*Pochtovo-telegrafnyi zhurnal*). It stated that because of damage to the perforating machines, the current definitives would be issued imperforate. These stamps can be found cancelled beginning in April; however, this concerns only those individual face values of this set most frequently used, i.e. 1-, 2-, 3- and 5-kopecks. The earliest known cancellations on other face values are dated much later.

The message in the postcard from Petrograd to Hilversum, The Netherlands written on 22 October/4 November 1917, i.e. just before the Bolshevik’s October coup (Figure 1), sheds some light on the circumstances connected with this issue. It reads (in translation from French):

“...I reserved for you the following imperforate stamps: 1-kop – 150 copies, 2-kop – 100 copies. 3-kop – 150 copies, 5-kop – 150 copies, and 1-ruble – 5 copies. **Up to this day, these are the only imperforate stamps, which appeared.....** The 3 r 50-kop stamp just appeared in new colors: lilac

and green...”. As concerns the latter, the case in point is evidently the perforated variety.

True, such a situation in Petrograd, the capital of Russia at that time and the place where the stamps were printed does not necessarily mean that the other stamps of this set could not have been released for sale at some earlier date. This message reflects, first of all, the writer’s personal experience.

One more source of information is the magazine *Filateliya*, published regularly by Ewald Eichen-thal, a prominent stamp dealer, whose business was in St. Petersburg/Petrograd till 1918. It was reported in the March issue of this magazine that imperforate 1-, 2-, 3-, and 5-kopeck stamps had been issued. These stamps were evidently very scarce at the beginning, since the same issue of the magazine tells about some young man who daily, in the course of two weeks traveled around all the town post branches and the Petrograd main post office looking for the imperforate definitives but could obtain only a single sheet of the 5-k stamp unofficially perforated. The next, April issue of the magazine reported the 10-k stamp that had allegedly been issued.

However, one can read in the issue for July/August that the Editor (or Publisher) received imperforate stamps of the following face values: 1, 2, 3, 5, 15, 20, 35, 70 k, 1, 3.50, 5, 7, and 10 r. Taking into account that the magazine itself appeared with some delay, one may suppose most of these stamps to be issued not earlier than August or even September. As to other imperforate stamps, only the following was stated: “It is said that the 10-, 25- and 50-k had been issued as well but we did not succeed in obtaining them up to now.” Nothing was said

about the 4-k stamp. The issue for September/October, which actually appeared no earlier than November, reports: ‘Up to now, we succeeded in seeing the following face values of imperforate Russian postage stamps:– 1-, 2-, 3-, 4-, 5-, 15-, 20-, 25-, 35-, 50-, 70-kopecks, 1-, 3.50-, 5-, 7-, and 10-rubles.’ At last, the issue for November/December confirms release of the 4-, 25- and 50-kopecks stamps, but not the 10-kopecks stamp.

Comparing all this information with the personal experience of the sender of the postcard described above, one can conclude that most face values of the imperforate definitives were put on sale originally in very limited quantities. Evidently, this circumstance was used by the important Petrograd stamp dealers, who with the help of their agents bought out the bulk of these stamps to offer them afterwards to the public with an extra charge against the face value. This very thing was done by Eichen-thal among others and announced in his magazine.

An important factor is also the actual demand for particular face values. As known, the stamp office of the State Printing Works sent out the stamps by orders of the Postal/Telegraph District Administrations, which were submitted when the stocks of particular stamps were almost exhausted. In its order, the expenditure of stamps was determined in particular by the current postal rates for the commonest kinds of mail.

At the time when the release of imperforate stamps was announced, the following basic rates for the commonest kinds of mail were in effect: local printed matter 1 kopeck, inland and foreign printed matter 2 kopecks, inland
(Continued on page 49)

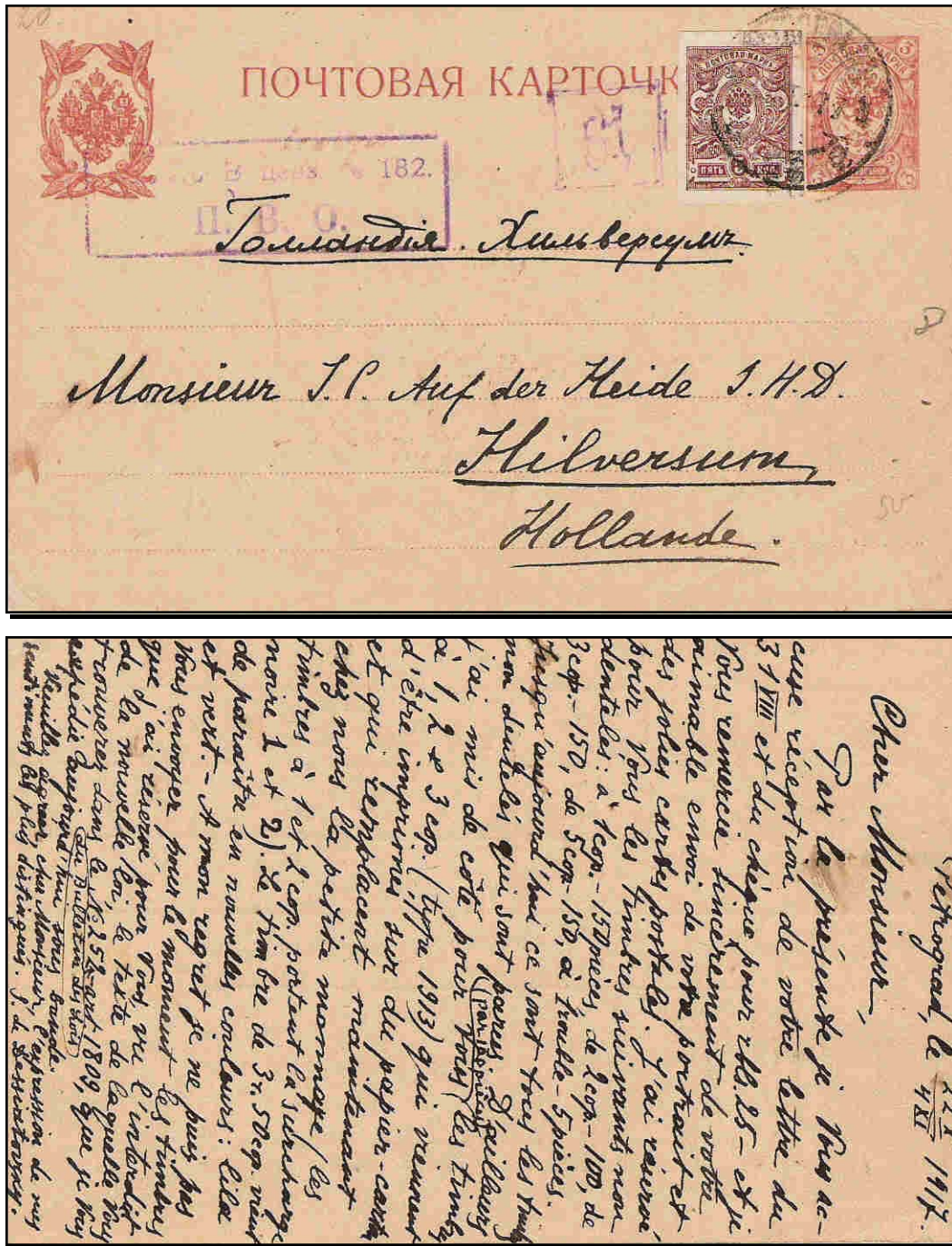


Figure 1.

(Continued from page 48)
 postcard 3 kopecks, foreign post-
 cards 4 kopecks, local letters 5
 kopecks, inland and foreign letters 10
 kopecks, registration 10 kopecks.
 The minimum money order rate
 was 15 kopecks. It is natural, there-
 fore, that the first imperforate

stamps to appear were the 1-, 2-, 3-,
 and 5-kopecks, as demand would be
 the highest for them. The consump-
 tion of the 10- and 20-kopecks
 stamps was well covered by the
 perforated 7- and 14-kopecks defi-
 nitives surcharged 10- and 20-
 kopecks, respectively (and the Ro-

manov Jubilee stamps similarly
 surcharged), so there was no imme-
 diate need in the imperforated 10
 and 20-kopecks as well as the 4-
 kopeck, since the scope of postcard
 mail abroad was much reduced dur-
 ing the war.

(Continued on page 50)

(Continued from page 49)

As of 15 August and 1 September 1917, respectively, the inland and foreign postal rates were increased: in particular, inland postcards were 5 kopecks, inland letters were 15 kopecks, foreign letters were 20 kopecks, registration 20 kopecks. This led in particular to an increased demand for the 15-, 20- and 35-kopecks stamps. Also the 1-ruble stamp could be required for transferring large amounts of money or for parcel mail.

Studying the earliest known cancellations for imperforate stamps of face values higher than 5 kopecks shows that they are found actually beginning in November (e.g. 15 and 35 kopecks) and December (e.g. 50 and 70 k) 1917 as well as 1918 for other face values, although they might appear at some earlier date. It would be interesting to learn from collectors about their findings. The message does not mention the 7-ruble stamp issued in new colors. I have such a stamp of Type I (single frame) cancelled at Odessa on 6 October 1917, so it appeared probably about the same time as the 3.50-ruble stamp.

2. The perforated definitives of 1922-23 (Scott Nos. 234 to 237).

These stamps are very common mint, with the exception of some perforation varieties. However, everyone who seriously collects these stamps knows how difficult it is to find them genuinely cancelled, to say nothing about covers franked with them. This does not concern only the 100-ruble stamp, which is more common than its imperforate counterpart. However, the catalogs generally do not reflect this fact in their valuations. Moreover, one can find an evident nonsense: the Scott prices for the cancelled perforated 100-ruble stamp, which is probably the most common in this set, are even higher than other cancelled stamps! The

catalog/handbook by Fomin is the only one that takes this fact into consideration when pricing these stamps.

To find out why the postally-used, perforated 10-, 50- and 70-ruble stamps are scarce, I turned to literature sources regarding the date of issue of individual stamps of this set. Only a few catalogs specify the month of issue. For instance, Michel Catalog indicates December 1922/January 1923, specifying neither the face values, nor the perforation or its absence. Stanley Gibbons gives the first date for the imperforate and the second date for the perforated stamps. The catalogs published in Russia and the Soviet Union also present different information. So the SFA (Soviet Philatelic Association) catalog published in 1924 gives December 1922 for the imperforate 50-, 70- and 100-ruble stamps, January 1923 for the imperforate 10-ruble stamp, February 1923 for the perforated 10- and 50-ruble stamps and March 1923 for the 70- and 100-ruble stamps. However, the next editions of this catalog, published in 1928 (the so-called Chuchin catalog) and 1933 indicate no months at all. Also all the catalogs published there later up to the newest catalogs (e.g. that by Lyapin) indicate nothing more than December 1922/January 1923 or December 1922/March 1923.

The “*Standart-Kollektsiya*”-catalog by Zagorski is an example of this. The detailed handbook by Fomin remains within the latter limits, indicating the alleged dates of issue for individual stamps: December 1922 for the imperforate 50- and 100-ruble, January 1923 for imperforate 10-ruble, February 1923 for imperforate 70-ruble and perforated 10-, 50- and 70-ruble and March 1923 for perforated 100-ruble.

However, there is one more source of information concerning the approximate date of issue of the early Soviet stamps: the philatelic

magazine “*Sovetski Filatelist*” (“Soviet Philatelist”) published in the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s kept regular records on the new stamp issues. No. 1-2 (January-February) of this magazine for 1923 reported the release all four imperforate stamps of this set. The next, No. 3-4 (March-April) informed readers of the 100-ruble perforated stamp adding that one could expect three additional perforated stamps. However, nothing in Nos. 5-6 (May-June) or 7-8 (July-August), and only the chronicle in No. 9-10 (September-October) reported that these stamps had, at last, been issued. It appears that the corresponding numbers of this magazine were published with some delay, since the same No. 9-10 also noted that the first set (1 to 10 k) of the so-called “gold standard” definitives was issued on 12 October. Consequently, one may suppose the perforated 10-, 50- and 70-ruble stamps to have been released for sale at the post offices most probably at the very beginning of October or end of September. The few used copies of these stamps that I possess or have seen, are dated October 1923 (Figure 2).

As mentioned above, covers with these stamps are rare. I cannot boast of having even a single one, nor have I seen such covers, which would not raise doubts as to their genuineness. In vain, I looked for them in auction catalogs. True, the most prominent auctioneers, such as Cherrystone, Corinphila, etc., offer covers, which they consider common, in bulk lots, at the best. However, there is the Wilfried Nagl auction in Germany, which specializes in Russia exclusively and where each cover is described individually in detail. There have been 19 auctions up to now, but I could not find even a single cover with the perforated definitives other than the 100 ruble in the auction catalogs.

Dr. Ceresa describes this issue
(Continued on page 51)



Figure 2.

(Continued from page 50)
in Section E2, Vol. V of his handbook. Concerning the postal use of the perforated values he writes on page 194 that apart from the harrow perforated 100-ruble, they are “not too common and used on covers or entire they warrant a 200% premium.” ‘Not too common’ may stand for ‘moderately common.’ In his checklist, Dr. Ceresa prices used copies of all stamps with the most common perforation equal in value with imperforate copies, i.e. very low, so the premium adds little to their value on covers. However, neither in this section, nor in the next Section E3/4, is there among dozens and dozens of covers illustrated, which franking included these definitives, a single one with either 10-ruble or 50-ruble, or 70-ruble perforated stamps!

On the other hand, I happened to see photocopies of a few commercial covers with perforated 50- and 70-ruble stamps sent from very different localities during February-April 1923. However, as much as one can determine from the photocopy, there are some features that cast a shadow on the authenticity of the perforation on these stamps making these covers rather dubious. Of course, only a direct study of these covers by a qualified expert can give a final answer whether they are faked/forged or not.

Let us now make some suggestions about why these stamps

appear so late. Due to galloping inflation, the postal rates continued to rise swiftly almost every month, sometimes even more often. The face values of this set of definitives, which now became kopeck stamps expressed in 1923 rubles (= 100 former rubles), especially the 10-ruble stamp satisfied these rates less and less. The 100-ruble stamps remained the most used, so their consumption was the greatest, and an additional batch of them, now perforated, was put on sale in March. Up to May, they were used in multiples together with other valid stamps, such as the ‘star’ overprints, etc. Their use diminished considerably when the new set of definitives in the rubles of 1923 (Scott Nos. 238-241A) was issued on 2 May. On 20 August, the inland postal rates were fixed in gold currency, but the rate of conversion between the gold and paper currency remained steady being changed only twice prior to October.

The situation changed on 1 October, when instead of a fixed value, the conversion rate was changed every day, increasing continuously during all of October and November. From then on, the daily calculated tariffs were expressed in rubles and any number of kopecks rather than in entire or, sometimes, half-rubles (50 kopecks) as before. To comply with these rates, the former 10-, 50- and 70-ruble stamps

of the 1922-23 definitives, used now at 10-, 50- and 70-kopecks reverted to face value again. The gold-kopeck definitives (Scott Nos. 250-259) just starting to appear could not solve the problem all at once.

Thus, the probable period of use of perforated 10-, 50- and 70-ruble definitives is confined to the span from 1 October to 1 December 1923; after the latter date, the postal rates in gold kopecks entered fully into force, i.e. franking with the corresponding stamps became obligatory.

This does not exclude the possibility that these perforated definitives were released at an earlier date but at provincial post offices rather than in the capitals, or in quantities so negligible that they were not noticed by collectors at the time. Again, further search for and study of cancelled copies or covers passed through the mail is necessary to solve this problem.

WANTED Western Army Eagles

For my retirement project, assuming I live long enough to finish my current second series of Forgery booklets, I plan a final survey of Western Army Eagles. Over the years I have amassed over 8000 copies of this small series of unissued perf. and imperf. stamps which were prepared for the Russian Army occupying Latvia under the direction of Col. Avalov Bermond. I know of no other non-issue that was so extensively reprinted, forged and forgery reprinted in so many shades, on so many papers and with so many varieties, retouches, etc. I need the help of others to add to my accumulation before I start my final analysis. Please email me at crayceresa@aol.com with your offers to sell at reasonable prices.

The Language of Postage Stamps

By Meer Kossoy
(trans. D. Skipton)

Philatelists have long been attracted to the postcards showing 10 stamps arranged in various positions with a corresponding word or phrase. I. Levitas and V. Kulikov were the first to call attention to them back in 1985, in their articles “*Vlyublenny korol*” (*Filateliya SSSR*, No. 1, 1985) and “*Pishu tebe, moy drug serdechnyy...*” (*Filateliya SSSR*, No. 10, 1985, p. 62), respectively.

Some time later Gary Combs presented two more such cards in “*She Loves Me, She Loves Me Not*” (*Rossica* No. 120, April 1993, pp. 77-78.) They differed from Kulikov’s example only in the de-

nomination of the stamps printed on the cards, but the words and phrases on all three of them were the same. Kulikov’s card showed 7-kop. stamps (Michel No. 45) in a variety of positions, whereas Combs’ examples used 3-kop. (Michel No. 43) and 4-kop. (Michel No. 51) stamps. All of the stamps portrayed were issued in 1902-1904, which fact proves that these cards were issued after 1904.

There is some doubt, however, as to the text “*D.Ts.V 9/V.03,*” which Mr. Combs expands as “checked [by] censor [on] 9 May 1903.” I believe that the “*D.Ts.V*” should be read as “*Dozvoleno tsenzuroy voyennoy*” – Authorized by Military Censorship – but military censorship wasn’t instituted until the onset of hostilities in the

Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905). Therefore, the date printed on that card needs to be clarified – it is probably 9 V 1905, rather than 1903. (Translator’s note: Given the Warsaw and Lodz’ cancels shown on the stamps, the “V” may well stand for “Varshava” – Warsaw.)

The cards described by Messrs. Kulikov and Combs had somewhat dissimilar arrangements as well as differences in the text in the lower part (Kulikov’s example lacks a text), but much greater differences can be found if we compare the address sides of the cards. For instance, Kulikov’s text was in French, but Combs’ was in Russian. These differences lead us to conclude that these cards were produced as different issues and proba-

(Continued on page 53)



Figure 1. A card that appears to have been the first in Russia to publicize the rules of “The Language of Postage Stamps” game, printed in 1905 by “I.R. publication – Gatchino” according to the text in the lower left corner of the card: “Auth.[orized] by censorship. St. Petersburg 30 April 1905.” The finger of a hand points to the warning that “Reproduction and imitation is forbidden.” The rules of the game entail eight different stamp positions (relative to the vertical) and five different places on a postcard or envelope where the stamp could be affixed, with each place changing the meaning for a given stamp position. This produces 40 potential variations of message. For instance, a stamp affixed to the left of the address in a horizontal position would mean, “I hug you.”

(Continued from page 52)
bly by different printers, in France and Russia.

Mr. Combs appealed to Rossica members to share any information about similar cards in Russia or other countries, so in publishing this article, I would like to add what I know and share the items in my collection.

All of the cards of this type have the text “*Yazyk pochtovykh*

marok” – The Language of Postage Stamps – printed on them, usually in the center. This was the name of a game that became widespread in various countries at the beginning of the 20th century. It was essentially a flirtation conducted by mail, one of the many approaches to the game of love, and the rules to conduct it were printed right on the card. In order to communicate a lover’s secret message, it was nec-

essary to affix a postage stamp to a card or envelope at some angle that departed from the norm, i.e., upside down or inclined to one side or the other. The position of the stamp conveyed a word or phrase that expressed the secret thoughts or feelings of the sender. For instance, an upside-down stamp leaning to the left would mean, “Do you love me?” (See the articles by Kulikov and Combs.)

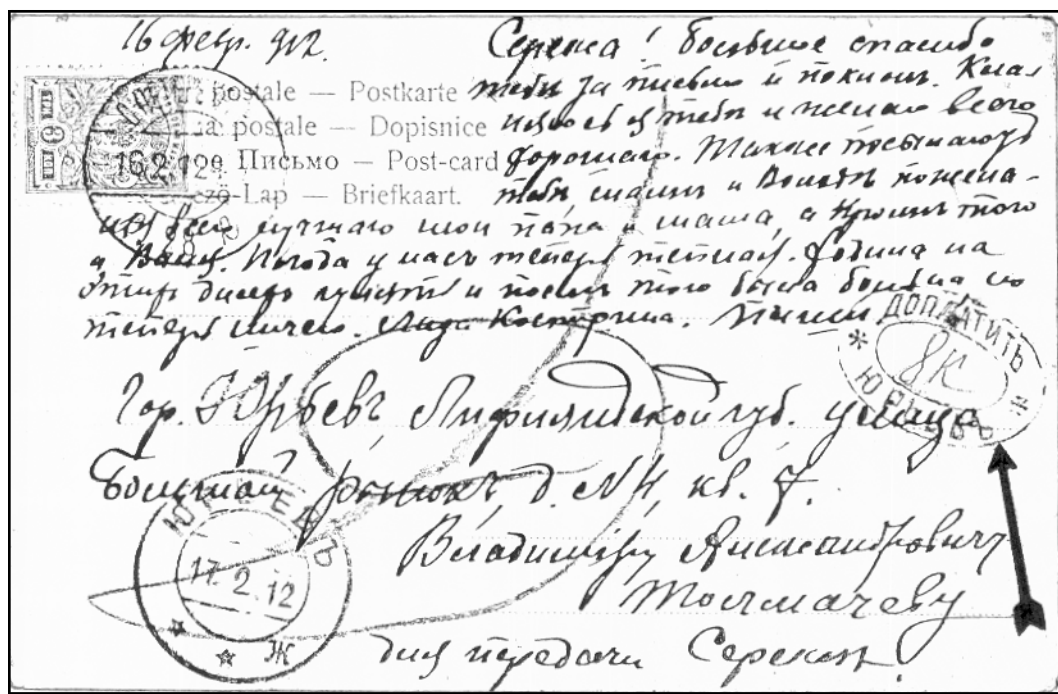


Figure 2. A postcard sent from St. Petersburg on 16 February 1912, on which the 3-kopeck stamp (Michel No. 66) was affixed in the manner and place prescribed above. The card was addressed to Yu'rev in Lifyand Province, and arrived there on the following day. A young girl named Lida wrote a straightforward text to Serezha, another youngster, in care of V.A. Tolmachev: “All the best wishes. The weather here is warm. I was sick, but am better now.” Thanks to the “Language of the Postage Stamps,” though, we can see that there was also a hidden message of love to go with the text – “I HUG YOU!”

I should point out that the 3-kop. stamp fully paid the rate for sending a postcard, so the question arises: why did a postal official apply the red oval “Postage Due / Yur'ev” handstamp, then write in “8 k.” as the amount still owed? The postage due was applied because Lida had violated postal regulations. For instance, Article 96 of the 1909 Regulations (Postanovleniya po pochtovoy chasti, St. Petersburg) stipulated

that the address side of a postcard had to be divided into two parts, and it was forbidden to write any text on the right half, other than the address. In the event Article 96 was violated, Article 99 with its penalty came into play: the card would be considered as a letter, so the addressee would be charged double the insufficient amount for that category of mail. The card had letter text on the address side, so in accordance with Article 99 it had to

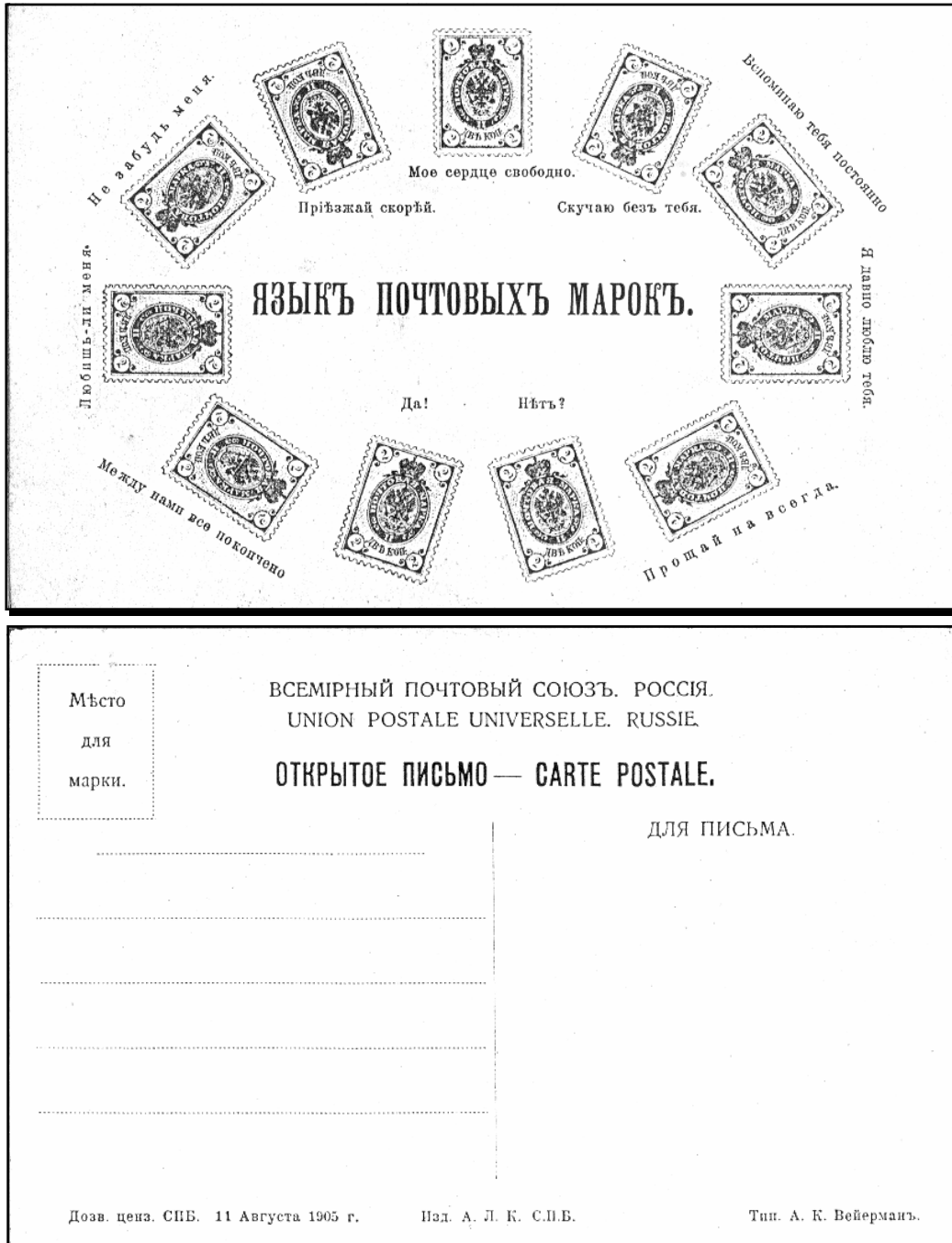
be sent at the letter rate – seven kopecks. Franked with only three kopecks, that meant the deficiency was four kopecks, doubled for the penalty to eight. To call attention to the fact that postage was due, the official scrawled a big letter “D” for *doplatit'* in blue pencil on the front.

The considerable postage due penalty charged for putting stamps on the left side might be the reason why all of the other “Language of (Continued on page 54)

(Continued from page 53)
 Postage Stamps” that I have seen call for the stamps to be applied in one spot only – in the upper right corner, above the address. There, a

stamp could only be affixed in one of 10 or 11 possible positions to express some hidden thought or feeling. In order to increase the number of phrase variations, it was

necessary to use different denominations of stamps or even stamps of various denominations in pairs. (Figure 3)



Figures 3 (top) and 4. 2-kopeck stamps are being used in a variety of positions to produce different phrases. The address side of this card is shown in Figure 4, and it tells us that it was an “Issue of A.L.K. of St. Petersburg. Authorized by St. Petersburg censorship on 11 August 1905.” This card, however, still departs from the “standard” arrangement, in that the text “for the message” is shown on the right half, rather than the left.

<http://www.rossica.org>

Figure 5 is another A.L.K. St. Petersburg production, this one authorized by censorship on 22 September 1905. (The text is printed on the address side.) Here, the rules of the “Language of Postage Stamps” game use 7-kopec stamp. This card differs from the one shown in Figure 3, however, because at the bottom a line of text has been added: “*In order to express one of the feelings (sentiments) shown above, you must affix the stamp in the proper position.*”

There are other significant differences. For instance, on these cards the various denominations share the same positions, but have different meanings, either single words or phrases. One characteristic feature most of the postcards

share is that they picture eleven stamps. Those shown by Kulikov and Combs, though, have only ten, yet they have the same positions and show the same words or phrases. It is therefore difficult to explain why three postcards were issued showing three different denominations – 3-, 4- and 7-kopec stamps, rather than just one postcard with one denomination. Perhaps these three cards were issued by different printers, and they had to introduce some sort of variation to avoid charges of plagiarism.

There are postcards on which the “Language of Postage Stamps” was illustrated not by single stamps, but by pairs. These stamp pairs were selected in such a way as to equal the corresponding rate for sending a postcard – three kopecks

– or a letter for seven. Figure 6 shows just such a card, with pairs of 1- and 2-kopec stamps to make up the card rate.

The stamp pairs in Figure 7 equal the letter rate of seven kopecks. Neither of these cards bears any information as to who produced them or when, but on the reverse of one of them there is a manuscript text dated 26 March 1906, which gives some approximate idea of when they first appeared. Besides the stamp denominations, the cards differ in the positioning of the text “*In order to express one of the feelings (sentiments) shown above, you must affix the stamp in the proper position*” – Figure 6 has it at the bottom, Figure 7 in the middle.



Figure 5.



Figure 6.



Figure 7.

On these cards, as on the majority of the others, the place “For the address” was shown on the right half of the card, and that “For the message” on the left. This tells us that the arrangement of the text

noted by Mr. Combs – “For the address” on the left half and “For the message” on the right – had no particular significance for postcards in the “Language of Postage Stamps” series. It is possible that

changes in the textual arrangement like these depended on the printing shop or the card’s publisher.

The “Language of Postage Stamps” game was certainly popular (Continued on page 57)

(Continued from page 56)
 lar not only in Russia, but in Finland and Poland as well, both parts of the Russian empire up to 1918. That much can be seen from separate issues of this game for these territories.

Figure 8 is without doubt the Finnish issue, a beautiful color postcard bearing the rules of the game, and the stamps shown are those of the special Russian set that were valid only on Finnish territory. (The unique feature of these stamps

was the denominations, which were given in pennies and marks (PEN. and MARKA) rather than kopecks and rubles.) The card also differs from all others by the language – Finnish – and use of various de-
 (Continued on page 58)



Figure 8.



Figure 9.

(Continued from page 57)

nominations for the rules, from two pennies to 10 marks, and it even uses a standard illustration for flirtation – picking the petals from a flower and guessing “He loves me, he loves me not.”

The Combs and Kulikov articles show cards that bear 3-, 4- and 7-kopeck stamps, and all of the stamps pictured have cancellations from Warsaw, the capital of Poland (a cancel in the form of straight parallel lines and text). We can assume that these particular cards were produced for use in the Kingdom of Poland.

Figure 9 shows 2-kopeck stamps with cancels that are characteristic of Lodz’ and Warsaw, and the card is close in type to the one described by Kulikov. The address side has a small “J.J.W.” inscription in the lower left corner (the publisher) and the Russian words “Address” (upper right corner) and “For the message” (in the left half). The written text on that card is in French.

There is another card showing 2-kopeck stamps (D. Skipton collection, USA), and it differs from the one in fig. 9 only by the position

of the texts above two stamps – “Do you love me?” and “I love you!” On Skipton’s card, these lines are printed at an angle rather than horizontally. (These same two lines also appear at an angle over Kulikov’s 7-kopeck stamps.)

Germany played the “Language of Postage Stamps” game, too, as evidenced by the postcard in fig. 10 (V. Vinokur collection, Israel). It has the rules of the game entirely in German, but the stamps shown are Russian 7-kopecks with Warsaw and Lodz’ cancels.

Figure 11 shows the game in play, a postcard mailed locally in St. Petersburg on 7 September 1911. The three 1-kopeck stamps (Michel No. 64) affixed are obviously not “in conformity with postal regulations,” with two of the stamps at an angle and the third horizontal. There is no arrival mark, since local mail like this didn’t usually get such treatment. In order to “decipher” the hidden messages, we can refer to the card in Figure 3. The horizontal stamp meant “I HAVE LOVED YOU FOR A LONG TIME,” and those at an angle – “I THINK OF YOU CON-

STANTLY.”

Figure 12 is another example of the game, this time employing a 1- and a 2-kopeck stamp (Michel Nos. 41-42). Posted from Moscow on 12 April 1908, the card was addressed to Borovsk, Kaluga Province, where it arrived on the 14th. Once again, the stamps are affixed “against postal regulations,” and referring back once again to Figure 3 to decipher the meaning, we get “COME RIGHT AWAY” for the inclined stamp on the left, and “YES!” (or possibly “I’M WAITING FOR YOUR ANSWER”) for the stamp on the right.

This game was widespread in many European countries in the early 20th century. Figures 13-16 are colorful cards issued in France, and the two in Figures 13 and 14 were sent from Paris to Moscow in 1907.

On these, the central illustration is either Cupid playing a postman, or two lovers framed by a heart. Figures 17-18 show cards produced in Switzerland, Figure 19 a card from Germany, and Figure 20 a card from Bavaria.



Figure 10.

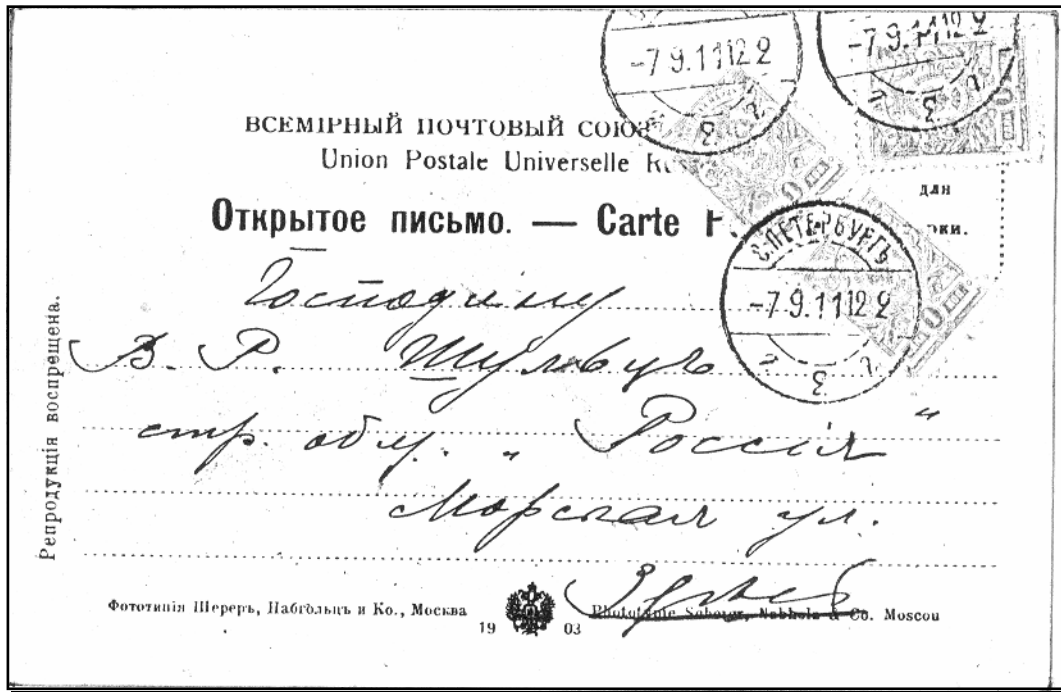


Figure 11.



Figure 12.

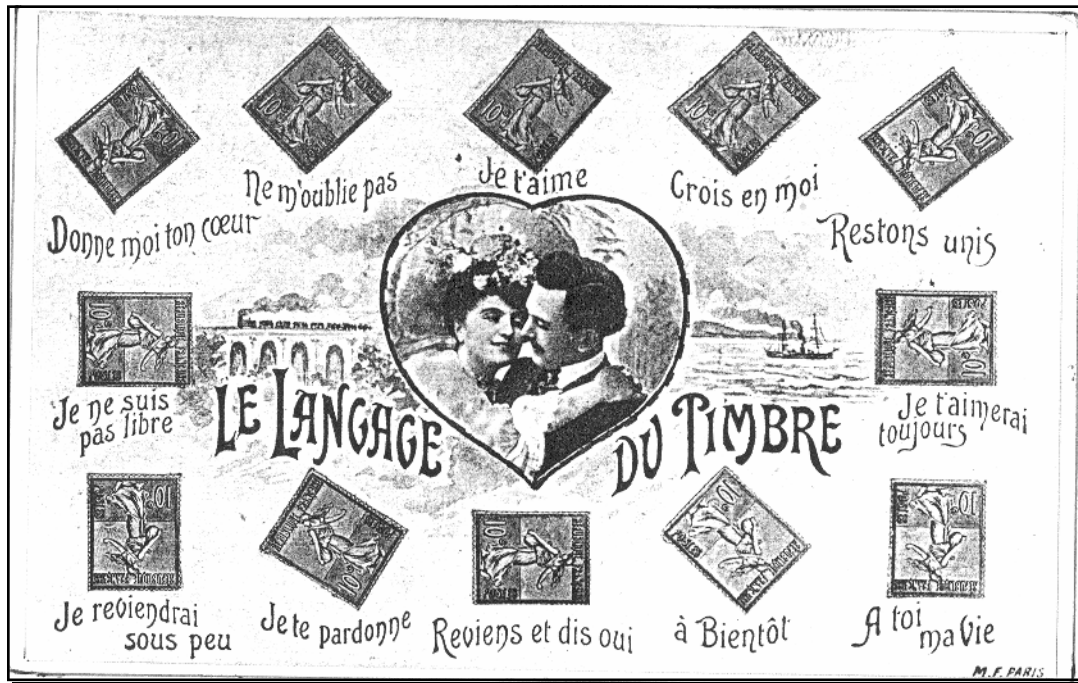


Figure 15.



Figure 16.

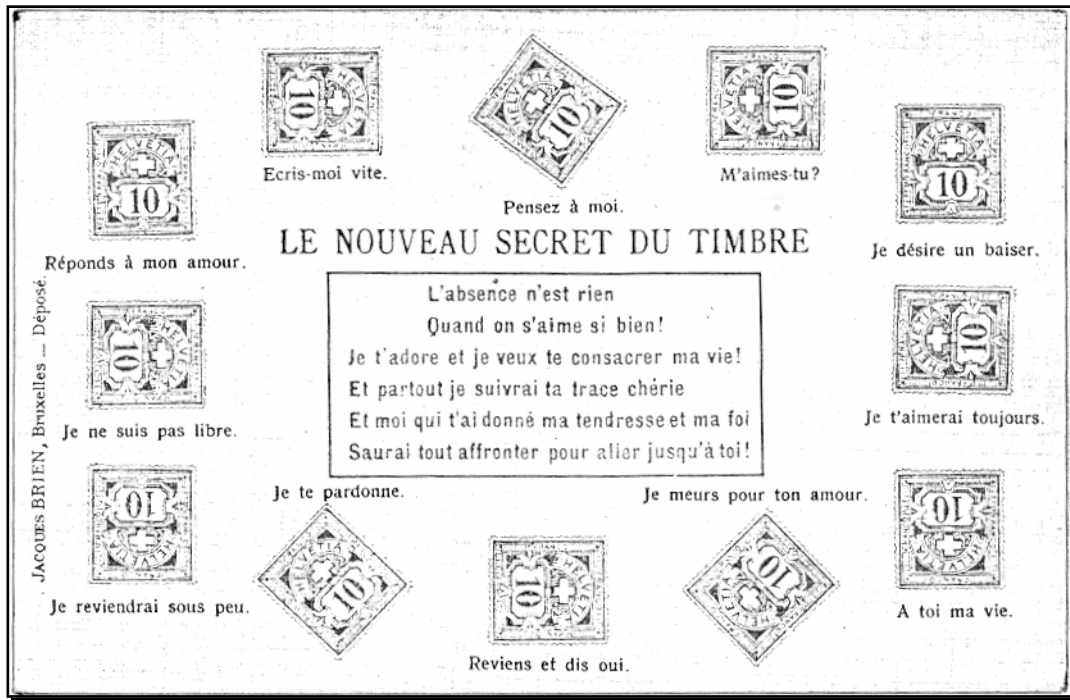


Figure 17.

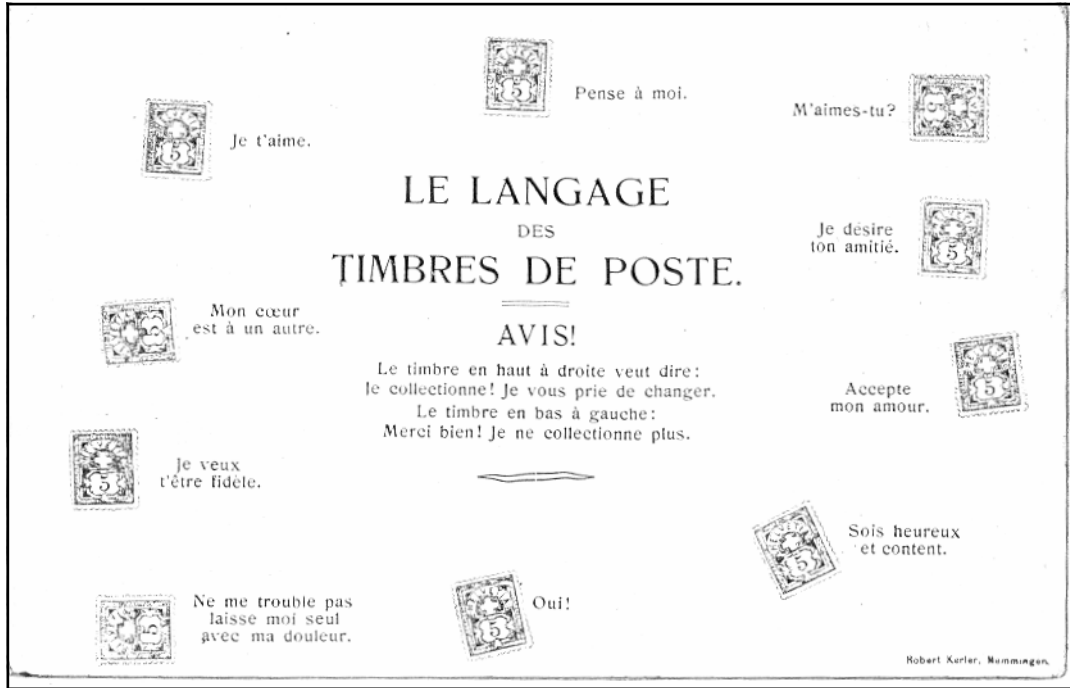


Figure 18.

<http://www.rossica.org>

 PHILATELIC REVIEWS

The British Society of Russian Philately (<http://www.bsrp.org>). Anatoly Kiryushkin and Nestor host the BSRP site, providing this most prestigious philatelic society a nice on-line presence. This site provides some basic information about the Society, some excellent links to other sources, but generally lacks what most philatelic sites lack: an interactive place for members to visit, collaborate and post. Much of the information on society meetings, etc. are at best one year old if not older, essentially making the site a repository of old, outdated material.

Although certainly lacking in many aspects as a modern website, it does provide one key aspect for the society - a website presence that gives virtually anyone with an internet connection the ability to learn about this society. The society no longer needs to rely just on word-of-mouth, magazine advertisements, or other means to "get the word out." The bsrp.org needs an active webmaster that can update content and give not only members, but casual visitors a reason to return, again and again. With a proven clientele, advertising becomes more attractive to dealers with Russia-related material and this revenue could help defer the costs of running a web site.

Reviewed by Jeff Radcliffe

The Canadian Society of Russian Philately (CSRP) (<http://www3.sympatico.ca/posrider/posrider/index.html>). Andrew Cronin's website opens with this statement: "The primary activity of the Society has been the publication of literature through its journal 'The Post-Rider.' Accordingly, a subscription fee rather than dues are charged for 2 issues at a time which

have unfailingly been published on a bi-annual basis every spring and fall. We pride ourselves for our award winning publications and look forward to your support." Like BSRP, this site is not interactive, but instead a place on the Internet where you can learn about the publications of the CSRP.

From a webmaster's perspective, I would recommend a better navigation menu that is consistent across all pages. This site forces you to read to the bottom of the page where you find a button that says "Next" and makes one assume that there is more to read if you press the button. The website's content is sufficient for a society that concentrates almost solely on a publication. Other than the navigation problems that I really do not care for, I would recommend that the CSRP, which provides an opening statement that tells the viewers about an "unfailing" ability to publish a journal, update the Contents page to show the contents of the latest CSRP publication, rather than the June 2000 issue that currently resides at the website. I hear that the journal is excellent, but have never made any effort to subscribe! Possibly because I would have to navigate my way to the third page before I found the order form! Andrew, if you would like assistance if putting this website together, drop me an email!

Reviewed by Jeff Radcliffe

The World-wide Society of Russian Philately (WSRP) (<http://www.wsrp.net> (for members only) or <http://home.nestor.minsk.by/ph/> (public page)). Anatoly Kiryushkin's web site is probably one of my favorite Russian philatelic websites. This "internet only" society provides megabytes of useful information and images. Most

of the information is available to members only, but some is accessible through the public site. Navigation through the site is sufficient, but page download times are often slow. This is not a website problem, but a problem of geography as the site is hosted in Belarus and bandwidth may not be sufficient between the site's host and my home computer. Anatoly provides an interactive bulletin board, similar to the Samovar. The most powerful aspect of the WSRP site is the amount of information and images available to the visitor, especially to a researcher. Most interesting is that this information is not from a single source, but from a collaborative effort of philatelic experts throughout the world. A membership application and the website rules can be found here: <http://home.nestor.minsk.by/ph/rules.html>

Reviewed by Jeff Radcliffe

Russian Stamps, Philately, and Postal History. (<http://www.rossia.com>). David Rowell runs this website for Russian enthusiasts. I provided a very positive review of the site a few years back and thought it would be appropriate to come back and see what has changed. Simply put, I'm not really sure. It looks much the same as it did a while back and many of the links on the site are dead or outdated. In many ways, this is a shame since I considered this site to be a "rival" site to Rossica's web site. It is still a very useful and informative site for Russian philately. Mr. Rowell's page with stamp information, images, and values brings together lots of useful information from (primarily, as far as I can tell) eBay auctions. As previously stated, the information is a little out of date as most information

(Continued on page 65)

http://www.rossica.org

(Continued from page 64)

tion seems to describe auctions from 2000 and 2001. Although dated, the information remains useful and would be a good source for a would-be buyer of Russian stamps on eBay.

In terms of content, rossia.com has lots of content to view, but not necessarily anything new or up-to-date. If Mr. Rowell has the time and energy to update his site, it will continue to be a useful repository of information! Unfortunately, if the content becomes stale, then visitors (like me) will stop coming back.

Reviewed by Jeff Radcliffe

Philatelic Literature Review, Journal of the American Philatelic Research Library. 2004/ Volume No. 53, 2d Quarter. The APS quarterly journal provides powerful reviews on new philatelic literature sources, to include booklets, periodicals, journals, websites, etc., a few informative articles, and a comprehensive listing of APRL new acquisitions. Printed quarterly, you may subscribe through the APRL at their website: https://www.stampstore.org/services/Library_application.htm

Reviewed by Jeff Radcliffe

The British Journal of Russian Philately, No. 90, October 2003. 68 pages. Kudos to Lenard Tiller and his editorial team for putting together another magnificent Journal! My general dislike of the A4 format (I liken it to 11 x 14 inch paper used by lawyers and mortgage companies!) is quickly overcome when I open the cover and greet the first page with oohs and aahs. Why all of the oohs and aahs? The BJRP is printed on the highest quality paper, enriching the quality of the illustrations provided with each article. Oh, and once you get past the high quality printing,

the content is of high quality also. I especially enjoyed reading Postal History of Armenia; Pre-adhesive period, Part I by Rafael Nagapetians. This is an outstanding article with clear detail and historical significance. Although I have a natural bias towards the Rossica Journal, I would recommend the BJRP as a must have for the serious Russian philatelists. Membership in the BSRP is \$30 per year. Contact Norman Ames, Ashton House, Ashton Keynes, Swindon, SN6 6NX UK for membership information.

Reviewed by Jeff Radcliffe

Russian Postage Stamps 1917 - 1923, Pocket Forgery Guide 4A Russia - Ukraine, Odessa Type I. (May 2004). Ceresa, Dr. R.J. 24 pages, A4 format. £10.00. Available from Trevor Pateman, Unit 10, 91 Western Road, Brighton, BN1 2NW United Kingdom, <http://www.trevorpateman.co.uk/ceresahandbooks.html> or by email trevor@trevorpateman.co.uk.

Ray Ceresa's open ended series concentrates on rewriting the forgery sections of his original five volumes of work titled: "The Postage Stamps of Russia, 1917 - 1923." This Herculean work took Ray 25 years to complete. New discoveries, especially in regards to forgeries, prompted Ray to produce this most interesting updated series.

Guide No. 4A concentrates on Odessa Type I Tridents and provides new information and scans. This is an absolutely outstanding work that is hindered only by the generally poor quality of the black and white scans. It would appear from Ray's preface that this work is also available on CD in color (like the Rossica Journal). This work, along with his other guide books, is highly recommended! This is a definitive work that obviously took Ray 100s of

hours to discover, compile, format and print.

Reviewed by Jeff Radcliffe

Russian Postage Stamps 1917 - 1923, Pocket Forgery Guide 4B Russia - Ukraine, Odessa Type II Tridents. (June 2004). Ceresa, Dr. R.J. 24 pages, A4 format. £10.00. Available from Trevor Pateman, Unit 10, 91 Western Road, Brighton, BN1 2NW United Kingdom, <http://www.trevorpateman.co.uk/ceresahandbooks.html> or by email trevor@trevorpateman.co.uk.

When Ray decided to update his original series, "The Postage Stamps of Russia, 1917 - 1923," he realized that within the Wrangle Russian Refugee posts there were additional Odessa Type II forgeries that were not stand-alone tridents. As a result, he split his original Guide No. 4 into two volumes, the first (4A) concentrating on Odessa Type I forgeries and the later (4B) concentrating on the Type II forgeries. Again, the black and white scans leave a little to be desired, but all are good enough (as they are in all of his guide books) to distinguish between the multitude of overprints represented in this guide. This is a simply outstanding work from one of the premier experts of Russian philately.

Reviewed by Jeff Radcliffe

Russian Postage Stamps 1917 - 1923, Pocket Forgery Guide 3 Russia - Armenia, 60 Kopeck Overprints. (April 2004). Ceresa, Dr. R.J. 32 pages, A4 format. £10.00. Available from Trevor Pateman, Unit 10, 91 Western Road, Brighton, BN1 2NW United Kingdom, <http://www.trevorpateman.co.uk/ceresahandbooks.html> or by email trevor@trevorpateman.co.uk.

If you are a neat and orderly
(Continued on page 66)

stamp collector like me who prides himself in the detailed numbering of your stock books, then don't run out and purchase Ray Ceresa's Guide books on forgeries of the postage stamps of Russia from 1917 through 1923. This volume in particular defeats my exacting number standard I use based on the Michel catalog. Guide No. 3 concentrates on no less than 46 varieties (the forged kind) of the 60-kopeck Arms-type of Russia Armenian stamp. When I broke out my hoard of this stamp (several crammed in to a single glassine slot in a stock book), I discovered that maybe a reorder of my stock books was in order. I will definitely require more slots to cover all of the varieties and identified forgeries! This guide is an absolute must have for the specialist who deals in the Imperial period of Russia.

Reviewed by Jeff Radcliffe

Russian Revenues (2004) 1st Edition. J. Barefoot Ltd. 108 pages, A4 format. #15 or \$28 postage free by surface mail or \$37 by Air Mail. Available from J. Barefoot Ltd., P.O. Box 8, York, YO24 4AR, England or by email JBarefootL@aol.com. John sent me a note to introduce this publication (and puts it in perspective): "This book has been 15 years in the making; it all began when Anatoly Kiryushkin paid a 'State Visit' to my house in York and a discussion about revenues sowed the seeds....." An absolutely outstanding publication, beautifully printed. Although generally lacking in color (only the first few pages are in color, the remaining are in black and white), this profusely illustrated book touches on a subject that has been little covered in philatelic circles. Revenues, stamps or not stamps? Whether you believe they are philatelic items of value or not, you certainly need to look no fur-

ther than *Russian Revenues* to see a comprehensive listing of revenues categorized in these historical groups: Imperial issues, WWI Occupations, Civil War issues, 1920-21 Inflation surcharges, Soviet issues, Municipals (all periods), and Border territories. The revenues are further broken down into fiscal types for further clarification. A simply wonderful catalog and a comprehensive answer to many philatelist who own revenues but never know quite how to categorize them or have a clue as to their general worth. A definite must buy for the Russian enthusiast at a reasonable rate!

Reviewed by Jeff Radcliffe

O markirovannykh pochtovykh kartochkakh Yuzhno-Russkoy oblasti vystavki v Yekaterinoslave 1910 goda, by Aleksandr Ivakhno, Kiev, 2003. Published as Special Printing No. 2 R by the Editorial Board of the Ukrains'kii Filatelistichnii Visnik, 20 numbered copies, A4 format.

This 7-page Russian-language booklet – "The Stamped Postcards of the Southern Russian Oblast' Exhibition at Yekaterinoslav, 1910" – originally appeared as an article in UFV No. 3 (71), 2003, and tells the story of how these 1909 Imperial stationery postcards were produced (an example of one is shown below). The booklet is the first attempt to construct a listing of the various buildings portrayed and the different editions. Readers were tangentially introduced to these cards in the "Vremennoe" series beginning in *Rossica* Nos. 104-105, but only as they touched upon the temporary post office there. This is a detailed account of the cards themselves, and some idea of their rarity can be gleaned from the facts that no philatelist has anywhere near all of them, and even with Mr. Ivakhno's digging in the archives and access to a number of large

collections, a complete list still eludes us.

Ukrainian philatelists, deltiologists and Russian temporary post office collectors will find this work very useful and well arranged.

For further information, please contact the author, Aleksandr Ivakhno, at P.O. Box 4933, UA-49101 Dnipropetrovsk, Ukraine, or the Editorial Board of the *Ukrains'kii Filatelistichnii Visnik* at e-mail address angolenko@svitonline.com or orklyn@yandex.ru. The postal address is V'yacheslav Angolenko, a.s. 148, Kiev-68, 02068, Ukraine.

Reviewed by David M. Skipton

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WANTED

Chinese Eastern Railway covers or postcards, especially train nos. 261, 263, 265 and 266. Please reply to Wai Wor Phoon, Suite 402, Kelway Plaza, Newark, De. 19711, USA.

<http://www.rossica.org>

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

It is always a pleasure to receive comments from our members on the Journal. Almost all comments are positive, which is definitely something I like to hear, read, etc. Unfortunately, not everyone is happy. Recently (after Journal 139, I think), I was called a dumb-#*\$ by an esteemed member of Rossica, (such language!) because his images did not print as well as he imagined they would. Of course, when I asked if I could print his comments in the Journal, as a letter-to-the-editor, I was told "absolutely not!" So - you do not get to see all of the mail I receive, whether directly or indirectly. Too bad, because some of it is rather entertaining. I live by a simple premise in regards to the Journal: if you don't like what you see, then do it yourself." Pretty simple, actually. I really enjoy putting the journal together, even though I spend dozens of hours that I simply cannot spare. With that, a few comments from readers to the Editor. Yes, they are all positive.....

Ed Laveroni, by E-mail. 21 April 2004. "Jeff, I want to give you a big pat on the back for a job well done. The journal was excellent. I just received it yesterday." (*Ed is such a nice guy, he always has something nice to say about the Journal!*)

Hans Kupec, by E-Mail. 27 April 2004. "Hi Jeff, the Rossica-Journal on CD-Rom arrived today and works is very good! Please, I want to have the CD from the Lobachevsky reprint on CD-Rom, tell me what is the price of it. Greetings to you and the team of Rossica for the very good work of the last Journal. Sincerely, Hans" (*Ed. Note: Sorry Hans, but the Lobachevsky CD is on hold for awhile. The Rossica librarian and 'author' of the*

new and improved Lobachevski monograph has changed residences—and life as we know it (for Ged) - is on hold until all of the boxes are unpacked, the dishes back in the cupboards, and the dog has reconnoitered the new backyard!)

Margarita Nelipa, by E-Mail. 27 April 2004. "Hi Jeff, Pleased to confirm that I received my Rossica J. and CD safely today. Thanks very much for expediting it so quickly. The journal is becoming more and more interesting to read with each new edition. There is a nice balance of topics providing something for everyone to enjoy. Thanks very much for all your great efforts in making it all possible. Best regards from the land of Oz, Margarita" (*Ed. Note: Margarita did indeed have her Journal with CD ROM shipped to her by Air Mail. If you ever follow The Samovar at rossica.org, you may have noticed a few 'complaints' from some that Margarita received 'preferential treatment.' Of course she did! But for good reason(s): first, this editor had a once-in-a-100 years screw-up and did not mail Journal 140-141 to the entire country of Australia until someone pointed out that NO ONE in Australia received the journal! Next, Margarita was co-author on an outstanding article in journal 142—I think she deserved to receive her journal (as an author) faster than surface mail could get it to her. If you have a problem with this, fire me - please.....*)

Fred Bean, by E-Mail. 15 May 2004. "Jeff, Another great Rossica Journal." (*Ed. Note: Thanks Fred, nice to hear from the Stamp Professor!*)

Asdrubal Prado, by Mail, 8

July 2004. "Dear Mr. Radcliffe, I just received the Rossica Journal No. 142. A fine issue with many articles of interest. I read all of them and the article about the 'Construction and Early Postmarks of the Amur Line, 1912 - 1915' by V.G. Levandovsky was, in my opinion, the most interesting. About this subject, I would like to mention the book 'To the Great Ocean - Siberia and the Trans-Siberian Railway' by Harmon Tupper, published in England, 1965, by Martin Secker & Warburg, Ltd. It is a book I recommend to anyone interested in this field. Please extend my compliments to the editorial staff. With many thanks to your attention and my best wishes for increasing success, I am, Yours sincerely, Col. Prado" (*Ed. Note: I was pleased to hear from a fellow military man and Russian philatelist that, even in Brasil, the varied and wonderful articles in the Rossica journal are READ and enjoyed!*)

George G. Werbizky, by Mail. 20 May 2004. "Dear Jeff! Minor comment: on page 4 (of Rossica Journal 142) you show a table with Marcovitch rating of rarity. That rating was developed in 1920's for zemstvo stamps and is stated in the Chuchin catalog, which was issued in 1925. Marcovitch simply used it, which is OK, but the rating is not his. Sincerely, George" (*Ed. Note: plagiarism is one of the highest forms of flattery! At least someone thought that the Chuchin ratings were worth using for other items of rarity. I am not, of course, saying that Marcovitch plagiarized the Chuchin ratings—he may have referenced the 'R' ratings in his work. Since I have not seen Marcovitch's work, I am unable to confirm or deny.*)

HTTP://WWW.ROSSICA.ORG

There are lots of exciting things going on with the Rossica website! Possibly the most exciting things you may never see because we are implementing a database driven “backend” (as we say in the technology business) that will provide a more dynamic interface for website administration.

But don't despair! (yes, I'm grinning as I type this—despair?!?) The improvements to the backend will eventually bubble up to the front end, the side you get to see everyday. A few database items have already been integrated into the website:

♦ **Rossica Announcements** - you'll see this in the center of the home page. Announcements should be more important than forum postings, so we put those on the home page so you'll get to see them right away.

♦ **Samovar Last 5 Postings** - This feature has been available for awhile. By visiting the home page, you can see the last 5 postings on our forum, The Samovar, without having to visit The Samovar to see what is new. This will display the last 5 postings regardless of the date of the posting.

♦ **Journal Index** - This feature allows a visitor to view the title, subject area, year (in most cases), and author of every article ever published in the Rossica Journal, including transliterated titles of the Russian volumes. The index

has several features that allows one to sort and even print search results. It's not the greatest web-based (and database driven) application I've ever thrown together, but it generally works, and that is what is most important. :-)

Other features of our website that you may or may not be familiar with, most from the home page:

♦ **Newsletter** - there are “subscribe” and “unsubscribe” options available from the home page. If you are not receiving our (almost) monthly electronic newsletter in your email inbox, then you can add your email address here. Just click on the “Subscribe” option, enter your email address in the appropriate box, select which newsletter you would like to receive (currently we have the Rossica newsletter and a web developer newsletter), and you are in the database! One additional item you need to complete, however, is the newsletter confirmation. After you subscribe, you will automatically receive an email from “Rossica Newsletter” with the title “Request for Confirmation.” This is a security feature that ensures that if you indeed subscribed to the mailing list, you must confirm the subscription. Simply click on the link sent in the email and you will receive notification of your confirmation.

So after that lengthy “how to”

tutorial, why subscribe to the newsletter? First, it's free and painless - that's the best feature. Next, our newsletters will send out announcements about the website, about upcoming Journals, Society announcements, stamp shows that are particularly relevant, etc. It's also a nice reminder to come and visit the website and see what's new.

♦ **Site Search** - site search from the home page will allow you to input a search string and search just about every page on the website. It will not search any of the databases which I think is a major shortcoming. If any web developer out there knows of a search engine that will do a comprehensive site search and include all localhost databases, let me know!

♦ **Pay Annual Dues using PayPal!** - this option allows you to pay your annual dues using your PayPal account. Sometime soon, the rate will drop from \$25 to \$20 to award you for early payment of the following year's dues. A small fee for PayPal use is included in this feature, but you may still be ahead since you would be removing the paper check, the envelope, and the postage from the transaction. You pay instantly and the Society gets your funds instantly. It is a nice feature for everyone involved.

The screenshot shows the homepage of The Rossica Society of Russian Philately. At the top, the title "The Rossica Society of Russian Philately" is displayed along with the date "Tuesday, October 26, 2004". A navigation bar includes links for Home Page, Membership, Journal, Bookshop, Contacts, The Samovar, and Links. The main content area is divided into three columns. The left column has a "Welcome to The Rossica Society of Russian Philately Web Site" message and a small image of a postage stamp. The middle column, titled "Announcements", contains two entries: a poll titled "What is your favorite journal?" dated Thu Oct 21, 2004 09:28, and a notice about the "Rossica Newsletter" dated Tue Oct 12, 2004 08:02. The right column, titled "Articles", lists several links: Internet Search, Web Mail, Journal Index, Transliteration Table, Journal Advertising, Fly Specker, and Counterfeits/Fakes/Forgeries. At the bottom right, there is a logo for "ROSSICA" with the text "No. 45" and "F-1200".

http://www.rossica.org

ROSSICA PUBLICATIONS MEMBER PRICING AND SHIPPING INFORMATION			Shipping		
Publication	Price	Format	USA	Canada	All other Countries
<i>The Russian Post in the Empire, Turkey, China, and the Post in the Kingdom of Poland</i> by S. V. Prigara, translated by David Skipton	\$20.00	CD ROM	Free!	Free!	Free!
		Book	Free!	\$3.00	\$5.00
<i>The Russian Posts in the XIX Century</i> by K.V. Bazilevich translated by David Skipton	\$25.00	CD ROM	Free!	Free!	Free!
		Book	Free!	\$4.00	\$6.05
<i>Imperial Russian Postal Placename List, Reverse Sort, 1858-1915</i> by David M. Skipton	\$25.00	CD ROM	Free!	Free!	Free!
<i>The Philatelist's Guide to Maps, Atlases, and Gazetteers of Russia</i> by Peter A. Michalove	\$15.00	CD ROM	Free!	Free!	Free!
<i>A Study of the Postmarks of Moscow, 1765-1917: Part One</i> by Gary A. Combs and Noel Warr	\$30.00	CD ROM	Free!	Free!	Free!
		Paper	Free!	\$4.00	\$7.00
<i>Cumulative Alphabetical List 1858-1916</i> by Gary A. Combs	\$20.00	CD ROM	Free!	Free!	Free!
<i>The Mute Cancels of Russia 1914-1917</i> by Arnold Levin	\$45.00	See shipping rates below.			
<i>The Rossica Catalog of the RSFSR</i> by Ged Seiflow					
Section 0, Introduction - 10 pages. *Free with first section ordered.	—	Paper	—	—	—
Section 3, 1st Issue of the RSFSR	\$10.00	Paper	\$1.42 per section or \$2.68 for 2 or more	\$3.75 per section or \$8.95 for 2 or more	\$5.60 per section or \$14.90 for 2 or more
Section 7, 1st Standard Issue of 1921	\$9.00	Paper			
Section 10, 2nd Standard Issue of 1921	\$14.00	Paper			
Section 11, 4th Anniversary of October Revolution (100 through 1000 rub.)	\$7.00	Paper			
Section 12, Volga Relief (Charity stamps)	\$6.50	Paper			

Special Notice on shipping rates for Rossica publications. Rossica will pay up to the US Media Rate for all publications shipped (except RSFSR catalog). Shipping outside the United States will be charged surface shipping rate minus the equivalent US media rate. Purchaser is responsible for all other shipping charges. CD ROMs ship free worldwide. International shipping rates shown have already been reduced to reflect this policy. Contact Gary Combs for more information.

Special Rates for the Levin Book: USA: Media \$3.00, Priority Mail \$7.00; Canada: Surface \$8.00, Air Mail \$9.00; Europe: Surface \$9.00, Air Mail \$18.50; Australia/Japan: Surface \$10.00, Air Mail \$21.00; Russia: Surface \$11.00.

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