

BULLETIN
OF THE
ROSSICA SOCIETY OF RUSSIAN PHILATELY

No. 2 December 1984



Two and one half years ago David Skipton published the first Bulletin saying it would be aperiodic. While it still may be irregular, we hope to make it a bit more frequent with news and notices about the Rossica Society and its members. Since David Skipton is away, any comments, suggestions or material for this bulletin should be directed to George V. Shalimoff, 20 Westgate Drive, San Francisco, California 94127. All correspondence will be acknowledged.

From Russia #1 to Soviet Philately Today

Rossica members Dr. James Mazepa and William T. Shinn, Jr. have written interesting articles which appeared in the August 1984 issue of The American Philatelist, the journal of the American Philatelic Society.

Dr. Mazepa's article "The First Russian Stamps Used in the Kingdom of Poland" documents the use of Russia Scott nos. 1-4. For Russia #1 he lists 8 covers with pen cross and adjacent Polish town postmarks, 31 town postmarks on stamps and 41 numerical cancellations. For Russia #2 only 26 town postmarks are recorded and five each for #3 and #4.

A historical background of Poland, descriptions of the introduction of postage stamps and postal history lead into the lists. The lists of town postmarks include their form and colors. There are 7 illustrations including a cover of the earliest recorded use of #1 in the Kingdom of Poland. The article is a compilation of a fine study of philatelic works, auction catalogs and collections by this prodigious collector and exhibitor.

Mr. Shinn served as the United States' Consul General in Leningrad and his article "The Philatelic Scene in Leningrad" describes some of his stressful experiences there while trying to make philatelic contacts in the USSR. His accounts of philately and attitudes in that country reveal aspects not generally known or appreciated, such as foreigners are not allowed to join their philatelic society and the collecting of varieties is officially discouraged and by rule varieties are not given consideration in judging at exhibitions.

Philately could be considered a threat to the regime because it encourages contacts abroad, it records difficult-to-alter historical facts and it encourages the acquisition of personal property which could lend itself to speculation, a heinous offense. But at the same time philately is a means of educating the masses with the enormous number of new issues, souvenir sheets, cacheted envelopes, literature, etc.

These two articles on the opposite ends of the philatelic spectrum are recommended.

Useful References on Fakes

The American Philatelist has been running a series of articles on fakes including short and specific descriptions of the Karelia Bears (Aug. 1984), the Azerbaijan 1921 Semi-Posts (July 1984), the Azerbaijan 1919 Issue (Jan. 1983). The articles are by Dr. Varro E. Tyler, an avid collector of forgeries and author of "Philatelic Forgers, Their Lives and Works". He also tackled the Western Army Stamps of Latvia in two articles and a letter (May & June 1983, May 1984) but admits there is still some mystery what are forgeries and what are real.

Help Wanted and Help Available

In recent years there have been many articles on specialized philatelic subjects in Soviet philatelic journals. Although we often translate those we think of special interest for our journal, there are still many others that should be studied. It would be ideal if specialized collectors with a reading knowledge of Russian could look over some of this material to see if there is anything new that he could correlate with his own knowledge, collection or information. Such a correlation could be the basis of interesting articles for our journal, better than simple translations.

The writer of this bulletin is willing to offer xerox copies of original Russian articles on most any aspect of Russian philately. For starters, there are many articles on Zemstvo stamps and districts, polar stations, space, postal stationery and others. If you can read the Russian and have interest in any of these subjects and are willing to share with Rossica members, please let me know. My address is at the top of page 1.(GVS)

Has Anyone Seen ...?

A minor overprint variety has surfaced recently on Russia Scott #350, the watermarked 7 kop. chocolate soldier issue overprinted with 8 kop. in black (2 mm separation between lines). The "O" in "KOP" is broken at the 2 o'clock position, about 0.5 mm. Is this a constant plate flaw or simply a chance occurrence? Has anyone seen a similar example? (The break is on the overprinted word "KOP", not the word on the original stamp).

The Journal

Though many of us would like to see the journal published more frequently, the simple truth of the matter is that there is not a sufficient number of articles to get out the journal more frequently. Although there are sometimes unavoidable vagaries in laying out a journal, getting it printed and mailed, the whole process can only be started when there are enough articles to fill an issue. So once again the editor and editorial board invite all readers to consider contributing articles or notes for the journal.

In depth articles or simply short notes about interesting items on any phase of Russian related philately from the pre-stamp era to modern 20th century things of today are welcome. Let's develop and use the Notes From Collectors section to stimulate exchanges of questions, answers and information. This way the journal becomes a more meaningful part of one's membership in the society.

All articles and communications can be sent to the editor or any member of the editorial board listed in the last journal. Help in writing, typing and illustrating your communications is available, so don't be shy.

A "Reverse Sort" of Russian Placenames

The indefatigable David Skipton has been compiling a "Reverse Sort" of over 18,000 Imperial Russian placenames, using names from several 19th and 20th century postal lists and guides. A "Reverse Sort" is an alphabetical list of names starting with the letters on the right side, instead of the normally used left side. Such a list enormously helps one to identify a placename on a marking where only a partial "right half" of a name appears on a stamp or cover.

Besides town names, the list includes post offices, postal and railroad stations and other establishments that handled mail. The list is in Russian, of course, using the old orthography spelling including variations, with cross references and an English explanatory text. For detailed information about this list, readers should contact David Skipton, USARI, APO New York 09053.

1984 Medal Winners

Russia and Russian-related philately are alive and well and exhibits of them win awards. Below are some of the Rossica members who have won awards at major philatelic shows as announced in the philatelic press. Our apologies to anyone omitted, especially to our overseas members. If you have received an award or know of a member who has, please inform the bulletin. Let's share in the recognition of members' efforts.

SPRINGPEX '84 Springfield, Virginia

George B. Shaw : Russian Inflation 1917-1923 (Reserve Grand)
Roslyn Winard : U.S. Beer Stamps 1866-1947 (Vermeil) Though not a Russian exhibit, this won the American Revenue Association award and best novice award.

ROPEX '84 Rochester, New York

Peter G. Gleason : The 1920-1923 Airpost of Estonia (Grand Award, APS and Leeger awards)

ESPANA '84 Madrid, Spain

Dr. James Mazepa : The Kingdom of Poland 1858-1865 (Gold)
: Airpost to Poland to 1939 (Gold)

WESTPEX '84 Oakland, California

Dr. Gordon R. Torrey : Imperial Russian Offices Abroad (Vermeil)

NAPEX '84 Washington, D.C.

George B. Shaw : Russian Inflation 1917-1923 (Silver)
Roslyn Winard : U.S. Beer Stamps 1866-1947 (Silver)

SEPAD '84 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Peter G. Gleason : The 1920-1923 Airpost Issues of Estonia (Gold)

BALPEX, '84 Baltimore, Maryland

Dr. Gordon R. Torrey : The Midnight War: Allied Intervention in Northern Russia (Gold, best Honor Class, War Cover Club award)

INDYPEX '84 Indianapolis, Indiana

Adolph G. Ackerman : Soviet Airmail - The Early Years (Gold, American Air Mail Society award)
Dr. James Mazepa : Poland Airmail to 1939 (Gold, American Air Mail Society and 20th Century awards)

UKRAINPEX '84 Springfield, Virginia

Bohdan O. Pauk : Carpatho-Ukraine Stamps of 1945 (Silver)
: Bielarus: Erinnophilia and Cinderellas (Silver)
: Lubomi Local Post (Silver Bronze)
Val Zabijaka : Ukrainian International Postal History (Silver)
Paul B. Spiwak : Steamship Company Stamps in the Ukraine (Silver)
Dr. James Mazepa : Ukraine and Poland 1918-1922 (Bronze)

AUSIPEX '84 Melbourne, Australia

P. A. Erixon : Russia 1812-1912 (Gold)
M. Liphshutz : Russia Posts (Large Gold)

VALPEX '84 King of Prussia, Pennsylvania

W. Thomas Waters : Covers from the Russian Civil War 1918-1921 (Second plus the Apfelbaum novice award)

CANADA '84 Montreal, Canada

Patrick Campbell : Russian Railway Mail (Vermeil)
: "Yamschik" Canadian Society of Russian Philately 1983
(Silver-Bronze, Literature)

MIDAPHIL '84 Kansas City, Missouri

John M. Hotchner : The Development of Stamp Separation (Vermeil)
: "The Stamp Club Idea Trading Post" Stamp Collector
(Gold, Journalism)
: "The Philatelic Philosopher" Linn's Stamp News (Vermeil,
Journalism)
: "Errors, Freaks and Oddities" Linn's Stamp News (Silver,
Journalism)

Mr. Hotchner is an exhibitor, prolific writer and columnist, as well as a qualified judge. At UKRAINPEX '84 he was awarded the Julian G. Maksymchuk award for his overall contributions to philately.

Congratulations to all! Wouldn't these exhibits make a spectacular single exhibition! Winners are cordially invited to write articles about their research and prize winning exhibits for the Rossica Journal so that readers may share in their work and special knowledge. Some have already promised articles and we are looking forward to them.

Rossica Journal Editor Ken Wilson Says...

The next issue of the journal will be sent to the printer in January 1985 and after packaging, labeling and stamping it hopefully should be in the mail to members in February. In addition to the setting-up of the journal for the printer, the licking of envelopes, labels and stamps of 300 journals can get rather sticky.

A Question About An Offices in China Overprint

Although the red KITAI overprint on the 10 kopek stamp on vertically laid paper (the 1904-08 overprint issue) commands the highest catalog values for Russian Offices in China and therefore presumably the rarest, there is a feeling among some that the black KITAI overprint on the 3 kopek stamp on wove paper (the 1910-16 overprint issue) may be considerably rarer than indicated by its catalog value. Does anyone have any comments, opinions or feelings about this black overprint stamp?

Remember that the overprints on the wove paper stamps have been faked extensively by many and also remember that the blue overprints on this series can be quite dark and easily mistaken for black overprints. Careful examination in daylight is oftentimes required to distinguish a blue overprint from a black overprint.

Gibbons Russia Catalogue

Stanley Gibbons Publications, Ltd. has released their 1983 Catalogue Part 10 Russia, 2nd Edition covering the Russian Empire, the 1917 government, RSFSR and USSR with the Baltic States, Mongolia and Tuva. Also included are the Civil War Issues, South Russia, Siberia, White Russia, the Wrangel Refugee Post, along with Wenden, Batuum and the British Occupation, Finnish occupation of Aunus, Eastern Karelia, Russia used in Finland, the Offices as all the republics (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, etc.) All of this is in a 396 page hard cover, illustrated book. It is possibly the nearest thing to a complete semi-specialized single volume catalogue in English today.

Available from your local dealers or StanGib Ltd., 1325 Franklin Avenue, Garden City, New York 11530 at \$20.00 or Stanley Gibbons Publications, Ltd., 399 Strand, London WC2R 0LX at L 10.95 (English Pounds).

A Few Words From Our President Gordon Torrey

Plans are already being made to hold the 1986 annual Rossica meeting at the international show AMERIPEX '86 in Chicago. We have been in contact with Mr. James E. Duffy, President of AMERIPEX. In due course we will be informed of available hotels and meeting place at the exhibition. Publicity about the meeting is important and Rossica members will be kept informed. Details for a program for our meeting are still being worked out. Any suggestions?



The annual meeting at BALPEX '84 was the best attended in many years and it was a great pleasure to have our Vice-President George Shalimoff attend. Norman Epstein presented an exciting slide show of Soviet Airmails which had many fine examples of the rare Consular airmail stamps, early Soviet airmail covers with air labels and finally a display of most of the printing, perforation, color and fake varieties of Soviet airmail stamps. Much of the latter group of slides was prepared by our Northern California section. A lively trading session followed this well received show.

With the passing of Boris Shishkin last June 14, 1984 Rossica lost one of its oldest stalwarts. He is greatly missed by the Washington-Baltimore group which he organized many years ago. A detailed obituary notice will appear in the next Rossica Journal.

Philatelic Phun

Check your CTO copies of the 1981 Soviet 50 kop. souvenir sheet commemorating the 26th Party Congress (Scott #4905) with printed cancel MOSKVA 16.02.81. Many of these CTO copies have a glaring anamoly. Have you spotted it yet? The answer will be in our next bulletin. Studying CTO's reveals several interesting things, such as manner of printing, first day cancels (as in the case above), downright impossibilities and comical errors. Though CTO stamps are often treated with disdain, there is still something to be learned from them.

Dues

The good news is that the dues remain the same at \$20 per year. The increase last year was bad news for many but like most other things, costs finally caught up with Rossica and an increase was needed to cover journal and the large mailing costs. Dues should be stable for quite some time now and the society should be able to underwrite special projects as they occur, such as the successful Prigara book.

Dues are for the calendar year January 1 to December 31 and therefore are due in January. Besides at least one journal, you are entitled to one free expertization, Expertization forms are available from the treasurer.

Since formal renewal notices are not sent out, please use the form below to remit your dues in January. Cut it out and send it as indicated, along with your remittance.

1985 Rossica Society Dues Renewal

Due January 1, 1985

Your Name.....

Send your remittance for \$20 payable to the Rossica Society and this form to the treasurer:

Your Address.....

.....

Mr. Norman Epstein
33 Crooke Avenue
Brooklyn, New York
11226 USA

.....

Thank You!

A New Two-Volume Soviet Catalog

"Soyuzpechat", the Central Philatelic Agency of the Soviet Ministry of Communications has recently published a two volume catalog of Soviet Stamps 1918-1980. The previous issue was in 1974. There are 512 pages in volume 1 covering the period 1918-1970 and 272 pages in volume 2 for the period 1970-1980. The catalog is printed in Russian. Every issue is illustrated with descriptions, perforations, some varieties, numbers printed, designers, etc. and a ruble-kopek valuation. Actual dates of issue are missing. Only the month and year of issue are given which seems odd since the actual first days of issue are given in the Soviet monthly philatelic magazine.

It seems possible that Rossica will be able to obtain some copies for its members from a European supplier. At present the cost including postage will be about \$15.00 for the two volume set. If you would like to order a set, please remit your check made out to Rossica Society to George Shalimoff, 20 Westgate Drive, San Francisco, CA 94127. The books will then be ordered and shipped to you from Washington D.C. if we manage to get them from the supplier. If not, your checks will be returned. Those interested should order early, please.

European Auction

Kronenberg AG of Switzerland will be having a special Russian auction in the spring of 1985. Free catalogs may be obtained by writing to Kronenberg AG, Postfach 222, CH-4104, Oberwil/bei Basel, Switzerland.

Zemstvo Stamps Black Blotted by the S.S.S.S.!

In 1895 a group of collectors, philatelic dealers and journalists in Great Britain formed the Society for the Suppression of Speculative Stamps (S.S.S.S.) to prevent the collection and dealing in stamps and stationery believed issued for other than real postal purposes and to exclude them from catalogs, albums and journals. They also lobbied, sometimes successfully, against the issuance of such "spurious" issues.

Among the issues condemned were the stamps of the Russian rural posts - the Zemstvos. Somehow this society felt the authorization of local postal service on the vast territory of Russia was actually a bare-faced attempt to fleece collectors. Other issues condemned included the Chinese Treaty Ports issues, Greece's 1896 Olympic commemorative set, and a host of others. And like many of these, the Zemstvo stamps remain intriguing, challenging and illusive for many collectors, once again proving that no one can tell a collector what to collect or for what reason.

This bit of trivia was found in The Australian Philatelist, Vols. I & II, 1894-1896.

BEST WISHES FOR A HEALTHFUL, PEACEFUL,
HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR!

ROSSICA SOCIETY