

BULLETIN

OF THE

ROSSICA SOCIETY OF RUSSIAN PHILATELY

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Rossica at AMERIPEX '86 in Rosemont, Illinois

Every ten years the United States hosts an international philatelic exhibition. This spectacular event will be held May 22-June 1, 1986 at the O'Hare Exhibition Convention Center near Chicago's O'Hare Airport in Rosemont, Illinois.

Rossica Society will be in attendance with a booth on the floor of the exhibition and a meeting on Sunday, May 25, 1986 from 1 to 2:45 PM in Room Continental A of the Hyatt Regency O'Hare Hotel. This meeting room is on the main level of the hotel. This event will be an opportunity to renew acquaintances and meet other members.

The meeting will be informal with a minimum of business and a maximum time for philately. A slide show of Soviet Semi-Postal issues prepared by the Northern California section will be shown. It highlights some of the interesting varieties of these issues.

On the convention floor, Rossica will share Booth #12 with the Polonius Society. Members are urged to register at the booth and receive a Rossica lapel badge which will allow members to identify one another. There will be several chairs to rest one's weary feet.

An additional slide show on Soviet Air Mail stamps will be shown at the convention for the general public as requested by the AMERIPEX committee. This is scheduled for Tuesday May 27, 1986 at 1:30-2:30 PM in Room 6 at the Convention Center.

There are numerous AMERIPEX sponsored social activities. Highly recommended are: Thursday May 22, an Ethnic Dine-Around Evening, with visits to Greek, Chinese and Serbian restaurants and places, cost \$35.00 per person, food and drinks and entertainment! Saturday, May 24, a night of Russian Renaissance, food and revelry in the Russian manner. If you like Russian stamps, try the food and music as well. It's fun and different, \$39.50. Sunday, May 25, German Oompa evening, always a favorite, with beer, food and music, \$35.00. For advance reservations, send checks and requests to AMERIPEX Tours, 5944 West Montrose Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60634, or ask for their Social Activities Booklet for more info.

Rossica will try to have its own reception for members which we will announce at the exhibition. To help us plan how many plan to attend our meeting, we ask that you fill out the enclosed form indicating the dates you plan to attend AMERIPEX. This way we can better arrange a reception in one of the hotels so that most people can attend. Complimentary refreshments!!

Rossica also asks if members who plan to attend can help man the booth for a small period. Please indicate on the enclosed AMERIPEX form if you would be willing to help out. Hopefully our Chicago hosts can help out the most since for many of us this will be our first visit to this area.

The word is that with more than 3000 frames of exhibits, the length of the exhibition aisles is 4.4 miles! So brings your walking shoes, roller skates or skateboards to see this fine display of some of the world's most exciting philatelic material.



Information Available

Tom Waters has recently been named Back Issues Chairman of the War Cover Club. This means he is custodian of the War Cover Club Bulletin dating back to 1968. Individual issues are \$1 each and indexes for the periods 1944-72, 1973-78 and 1979-80 are \$3. For more information, write Tom Waters, Warwick Park, R.D. #4, Pottstown, PA 19464.

A true labor of love for philately is a series of handbooks produced by member Dr. R. J. Ceresa. The handbooks are designed to help the reader understand and identify the many issues of the post revolution period. Completed are Vol. I Armenia, parts 1-13, Vol. II Ukraine (tridents) through parts 7-8. To be completed this year are Vol. II Ukraine through parts 13 including the Kiev and Podolia tridents, Shagiv and Special Types issues. Vol. III covering South Russia, Crimea, Wrangels will be added to the earlier published handbooks on the NW Army, O.K.C.A., Siberia and the Far East. Vol. IV scheduled for next year will cover Transcaucasia, Batum along with Vol. V on the RSFSR, completing this monumental work.

A sample copy of the Ukraine trident overprints shows extensive descriptions and illustrations. A detailed review of the book will be sent to Rossica Journal, but in the meantime those interested in these areas should contact Dr. R. J. Ceresa, "Pepys Cottage", 13 High St., Cottenham, Cambs. CB4 4SA, England.

1985 Medal Winners

Below we wrap up the 1985 medal winners. Congratulations to these Rossica members who collect and exhibit. Once again, our apologies to those we missed in the news reports.

POWPEX '85 San Diego, California

Samuel Ray : Gorlitz and Niesky Local Issues (non-competitive entry of an APS judge)

CHICAGOPEX Chicago, Illinois

Dr. James Mazepa : Kingdom of Poland 1858-1875 (Grand Award, Gold, APS medal, Polonius Society award, President's award)

Dr. Jozef Kuderwicz : Siege of Przemysl Mail (Vermeil)
: Poland Postal History-Prestamp Period (Gold, Postal History Society medal, CHICAGOPEX award)

Marion J. Dudek : Index of the Bulletin of the Polonius Society (Silver-Lit.)

UKRAINEPEX '85 Montreal, Canada

Val Zabijaka : Ukrainian International Mails (Vermeil)
: Tridents of Podolia (Silver)

Bohdan Pauk : Polish Period 1920-1939 (Silver)

Paul Spiwak : Exhibition Stamps on Ukraine (Silver)

VAPEX '85 Virginia Beach, Virginia

John M. Hotchner : Stamp Separation: Its Development from 1844 to Modern Times (Gold)

AIRPEX X Dayton, Ohio

G. Adolph Ackerman : The Russian Arctic (Vermeil, American Topical Association medal, also most popular exhibit at show)

A Quickie Quiz

Have you looked at your stamps closely? What stamp in the period 1858-1986 does not have either the name or initials of the country or the coat of arms or national emblem or portrait of a ruler that would identify its country of origin? Confine your search to the regular issues of Russia and the Soviet Union.

Rossica Members in the News

President Gordon Torrey was appointed one of the judges at AMERIPEX '86 and also was elected to the Council of the American Philatelic Congress.

Professor William Moskoff has a fine article "Philately as Propaganda" in the January issue of The American Philatelist. It deals with the collectivization of Soviet agriculture as depicted on the propaganda/agitation postal cards of the early 1930's. Perhaps we can entice Professor Moskoff to follow-up with an article for Rossica Journal.

The previously announced Parts I and II sales of the Norman Epstein collection by Harmers of New York was premature. These sales have been canceled and instead the Epstein Air Mail collection has been consigned to Robeson Lowe for auction in Europe next month. Request copies of the catalog from Robeson Lowe representative Gordon Torrey, 5118 Duvall Drive, Bethesda, Maryland 20816.

Chemical Changelings - Beware!

Although the word "changeling" is defined as a child surreptitiously or unintentionally substituted for another, many collectors consider their stamps as their "children" and are quite concerned about their integrity. Many inquiries have been received about Soviet issues with missing or changed colors not mentioned in any catalogs. Quite often the effect is spectacular and the stamp has the appearance of an unusual and desirable variety.

Some experiments in a laboratory have shown that many of these unusual varieties can be created easily with common chemicals and solvents without damage to gum or cancellations. This is especially true of multicolored issues. An example is the 1969 multicolored seven-tenant strip of 5 depicting Folk Tales book illustrations by I. Y. Bilibin (Scott 3662-6). The red, yellow and green colors can be removed easily to leave the design in blue and gray. The green field of the 1963 souvenir Spartacaid sheet (Scott 2763a) can be changed into a brilliant blue in 30 seconds. The multicolored 1962 Red Poppy ballet stamp (Scott 2548) can be converted into various monochrome red shades. The purple color on Scott 3205 can be completely removed leaving a monochrome gray black portrait on the stamp. The red orbital lines on the 1963 foil-covered Cosmonaut Day issue (Scott 3023) can be removed leaving colorless impressions on the foil, and so on.

In printing multicolored stamps, inks with various binders and solvents are used so as the printing of one color does not dissolve or smudge a previously printed color. It is often-times possible to find a solvent that selectively dissolves and removes one or more colors. Often stamps with missing colors appear washed. Many quite literally are washed in bleaching agents, acids and alkalis, various organic solvents in the attempt to create a variety. In view of this, any stamps with missing colors should be suspect. There is little or no mention in Soviet literature of genuine missing or different color varieties. Although in years past some shade varieties were listed for many Soviet issues in their catalog, most are no longer listed. In many cases these particular color varieties were simply subtle but definite shade varieties.

But the spectacular missing colors or changed colors are not even printers waste but simply the creation of someone trying to cheat the collector. There can be no expertization in such cases because there are dozens of ways to remove or change colors and no expert could be expected to know all the possibilities. This is not to say that color varieties on Soviet issues do not exist because numerous collectors have indeed found definite shade differences. But when offered a spectacular missing color or changed color, we say in one word, BEWARE!

Semi-Postal? and Gum?

In 1932 the Soviet postal authorities released two stamps commemorating the All-Union Philatelic Exhibition in Moscow. The two stamps had the same design showing the Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow where the exhibition was held. This is presently called the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts. One stamp in blue was printed 15 kopeks, the other in brown was printed 35 kopeks. However, the stamps were sold for three times face at 45 and 105 kopeks respectively. The additional funds collected over the face value were used to pay the organization expenses of the exhibition.

In 1933 the same two stamps were overprinted with the text "Leningrad 1933" along with the values "30 kop." and "70 kop." respectively for an analogous exhibition held in Leningrad. Again the stamps were sold for the value of the stamp plus the surcharge value or three times. The money equivalent to the surcharge value collected from the sale of these stamps was used for the expenses of the Leningrad exhibition.

Since these issues were sold with added amounts for non-postal purposes, why haven't the catalogs listed them as semi-postal issues? All western catalogs that divide Soviet stamps into categories of postal, semi-postal, airmails and postage dues arbitrarily include these stamps among the regular issues. What are the criteria for a stamp to be considered a semi-postal?

At the time of the first issue in 1932 a special souvenir sheet was printed with a block of four of these stamps, two of each value positioned diagonally. The sheets were not sold at post offices or at the exhibition but instead were given to certain participants of the exhibition along with invitations to the event. Soviet philatelic literature throughout the years indicate only 500 copies were printed on thick ungummed paper. Yet numerous sheets with all kinds of expertization marks are found fully gummed. Are these gummed sheets really part of the original 500? Why would anyone place gum on an original un-gummed sheet? Let's hear your thoughts on this.

Pen Pal

The newspaper Stamp Collector forwards another letter from a Soviet correspondent inviting exchange of philatelic material. The writer's interest is first day covers and maximum cards on the themes flora and fauna as well as art in exchange for USSR stamps on the same themes. The letter is written in readable English and the address is: Robert Aleksandrian, Leningradian St. 20-16, Yerevan, Armenia 375038, U.S.S.R.

Mailing to the U.S.S.R.

The US Postal Service has published a new booklet on mailing to the U.S.S.R. It outlines the rules for sending merchandise, indicating things allowed and quantities by the Soviet postal and custom authorities. Included is a discussion of recent postal problems such as confiscation, delays and non-delivery for unclear reasons. Copies can be ordered from your post office or US Postal Service, International Postal Affairs Dept., Washington, D.C. 20260-6500. Ask for Publication 269. There is no charge.

Soviet Topicals

Whereas collections of the 19th century so-called classics, used abroads and Russian Civil War issues are spectacular and represent longtime pursuits and study, it is most welcome to see that successful collections and exhibits can be made with the more modern Soviet issues. G. Adolph Ackerman has been quite successful with his Russian Arctic exhibit, receiving the American Topical Association medal as did non-Rossica member Beverly Vaughn for her exhibit of "Russian Lighthouses." There are a vast number of topics found on Soviet issues that lend themselves well to a one country thematic collection, such as space, flora and fauna, sports, literature, music, art, etc. So if you have reached an impasse in the direction of your collecting, consider a topical theme as a diversion.

