

Bulletin
of the Rossica Society
of Russian Philately

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October 1986

AMERIPEX '86

America's philatelic extravaganza, AMERIPEX '86, has come and gone and from all accounts it was a sensational philatelic and social success. The exhibits were extraordinary, the bourse - a shopper's delight. And if that wasn't enough, there was a full slate of meetings, programs and social events. If there was a complaint, it was too much to see and do and too few places to sit down and rest one's weary feet.



For Rossica members there were a number of outstanding exhibits. Perhaps one of the finest exhibits of Imperial Russia ever assembled was the entry of Mr. Z. Mikulski of Switzerland, titled "Russia-Selections from a Specialized Collection 1845-1900" which was awarded a Large Gold with Special Prize and nominated for the Grand Prix International. The representation of rarities and varieties is so overwhelming, one finds it impossible to describe in a few words.

For those of us who are still trying to fill spaces of the first issue, like the 30 kop. #1, Mr. Mikulski's exhibit contained 6 copies of unused singles, an unused block of four, used singles, a used pair on and off cover (both the only known examples) plus a vertical strip of 3 on cover (possibly the rarest cover of Russia) and others!!! The word "unique" appeared several times and notations such as "2 shown of the 4 known, etc." were frequently scattered throughout the 112 page exhibit.

Returning to reality, several Rossica members did quite well with their exceptional exhibits. Per-Anders Erixon of Sweden received a Gold for his exhibit "Russia 1812-1912" as did James Mazepa of Illinois for "Kingdom of Poland 1858-1870." Erixon's exhibit included an 1812 cover from Vitebsk sent by a member of the French "Grand Armee", a stunning display of used first issues including a strip of three No. 1's on cover and postal stationery of the prestamp period. Dr. Mazepa's excellent study of Russian stamps used in Poland, Poland's No. 1 and various cancels and usages was squeezed into 8 frames.

A Large Vermeil was awarded to Jozef Kuderewicz for "Poland Postal History - Prestamp Period" and also to John Hotchner for "Stamp Separation: Its Development from 1840 to Modern Times." Our own Rossica Journal edited by Kennedy Wilson won a Silver in the Literature-Periodical class and David Skipton's translation of S. V. Prigara's "Russian Post in the Empire, Turkey, China and The Post of the Kingdom of Poland" won a Silver in the Literature-Handbook class.

In other related exhibits in the Postal History category, Raymond Casey of Great Britain won a Large Gold for "The Russian Post on the Far East" as did James Van der Linden of Belgium for "From Russia", an exhibit about postal conventions, routes, markings and rates. There were numerous other exhibits of Poland, Finland and other eastern European countries and Asia that included material of interest to Russia collectors.

... send our congratulations to all these winners for their efforts, for earning their places in the world of philately.

Hats off to Norman Epstein and Kennedy Wilson who spent considerable time manning the Rossica booth at the exhibition hall. The Rossica meeting on Sunday May 25th had the best attendance ever with nearly 50 members packed into the room. Details of the meeting will appear in the next Rossica Journal. A slide show from the Northern California section of some of the Soviet semi-postal varieties was presented by Alex Sadovnikov, with most of the varieties from Alex's collection. He also presented a slide show on Soviet Airmail stamps later in the week at the exhibition hall.

A New Rossica Chapter in Chicago

Many Rossica members in the Chicago, Illinois area expressed interest in a local chapter of the society. An organizational meeting will be held at CHICAGOPEX '86 in Rosemont, Illinois on Sunday, November 9, 1986 at 12:00 noon. Check the exhibition program for the location. A short program will follow the organizational meeting. All Rossica members and friends are invited to attend. If you would like to help or need additional information, contact Dr. James P. Mazepa, Box 1217, Oak Park, Illinois 60304.

There are quite a few Rossica members in the Chicago area and an active local chapter will increase the exchange of information about Russian and Russian-related philately. It is a great opportunity to learn more and to meet fellow members interested in similar things. Plan to attend!!

Rossica Members in the News

Gordon Torrey was a judge at AMERIPEX '86 and at SPRINGPEX '86 this year. Dr. James P. Mazepa was a member of the Organizing Committee for AMERIPEX '86, a showcase of international shows in the USA. Russell Ott is president of the American Society of Polar Philatelists.

Quickie Quiz Answer

In Bulletin No. 4 our Quickie Quiz asked what Russian and/or Soviet regular issue stamp in the period 1858-1986 does not have the name or initials of the country, a coat of arms or emblem, or a ruler's portrait that would identify its country of origin. The Reverend L. L. Tann wrote to say the 2 R value of the Romanov Jubilee issue of 1913 qualifies and he claims a first prize of a Rossica Centenary Banquet ticket for the year 2030. His answer may be correct but some may argue that the figure on the right-most tower above the Winter Palace in the stamp is a crowned double-headed eagle, and, therefore, this stamp would be eliminated by the conditions of the question.

Less debatable is the 1921 40 kop. Soviet issue showing a slain dragon, a rising sun and a male figure with outstretched arm and only the words "POCHTA" and "40 RUBLEI." No name, initials or other symbols identify the country of origin on this stamp.

Study Groups and Information Wanted

The following Rossica members are interested in exchanging information in their areas of interest. Research in various aspects of stamp collecting and postal history can be more enjoyable when two or more mutually share their information and discoveries in addition to making fine acquaintances. Rossica Journal would be pleased to publish the findings of any such study group.

Joe Taylor, 120 Valley St., New Haven, CT 06515 would like to exchange information with others interested in the Foreign Intervention Period from the Polar Bear Camps of north western Russia to the various forces in Siberia to the east.

G. Adolph Ackerman, 629 Sandbridge Circle East, Worthington, Ohio 43085 is interested in early Soviet airmail postal history, first or special flights.

1986 Medal Winners

Rossica exhibitors were successful in the following 1986 shows as reported in the philatelic press. Congratulations to all and may their success encourage others to exhibit their collections. Winners at AMERIPEX '86 were indicated in the opening article.

SARAPEX '86 Sarasota, Florida

Val Zabijaka : Ukrainian International Mails (Vermeil)

SPRINGPEX '86 Springfield, Virginia

John M. Hotchner : Stamp Separation: Its Development from 1840 to Modern Times
(Gold)

George B. Shaw : Grozny Overprints 1950-1952 (Vermeil)

Val Zabijaka : Tridents of Podolia (Silver)

Roslyn Winard : Russian Advertising Stamps 1923-1929 (Silver)

STAMPOREE '86 Palm Beach Lakes, Florida

Russell Ott : Russian North Pole Drifting Stations (Gold)

STAMPSHOW '86 Washington, D.C.

John M. Hotchner : Stamp Separation: Its Development from 1840 to Modern Times
(Vermeil)

BALPEX '86 Hunt Valley, Maryland

David M. Skipton : Imperial Russian Postal Development from the 1780's to 1917
(Vermeil)

STOCKHOLMIA '86 Stockholm, Sweden

Gordon H. Torrey : Russian Empire Post Offices Abroad (Large Vermeil)

Victor Kent : Livonia Postal History During 180 Years of Wenden and Wenden
District (Vermeil)

Jozef Kuderevicz : Siege of Przemyl Mail (Large Silver)

Dirigible, Anyone?

Several Soviet issues of the 1930's depict various rigid airships or dirigibles. One 1930 set was titled "Dirigible Construction" (Scott C15-25). Another set in 1934 showed airships with the names "Pravda", "Voroshilov", and "Lenin" (Scott C53-57). Similarly the 1938 set commemorating Aviation Sports in the USSR has one value showing the dirigible "СССР B-1" over the Kremlin (Scott 681). Yet in the Great Soviet Encyclopedia, 1973 edition, there is no listing under "Dirigible" or "Rigid Airship." The questions we ask here: did the Soviet Union actually construct and fly any dirigibles? If so, does any postal history exist?

Soviet Issue Collectors and Writers Wanted

Many of our new members indicate collecting interests in current Soviet issues. Admittedly, our Rossica Journal could use more articles about these newer issues. Can anyone among our readers help in this endeavor? Perhaps we could persuade our editor to ve a special section in the journal if someone would come forward to help.

Americans on Soviet Stamps

Samantha Smith, an 11 year old US grade school student, made headlines in 1983 when she wrote an appeal for peace to then Soviet President Yu. A. Andropov. Her letter got her an invitation to visit the Soviet Union to spread her message. In 1985 Samantha and her father along with 6 others were tragically killed in a small plane accident here in the USA. The Soviet Union commemorated Samantha on a 5 kopek stamp shown here which apparently has been a popular item with non-collectors as well as collectors. This leads to another Quickie Quiz. How many other Americans are pictured on Soviet stamps?



While on this subject, Dr. Paul Dudley White, who was recently pictured on a 3 cent Great Americans definitive, was earlier pictured on a Soviet postal card in 1982. The 4 kop. card commemorated the IXth World Cardiology Congress in Moscow. The card pictured Dr. White and Soviet cardiologist A. L. Myashikov. White who died in 1973 at the age of 87 was perhaps best known as the cardiologist who treated President Dwight D. Eisenhower in the late 1950's. White was an International Member of the USSR Academy of Medicine.

"Leafing Through Yellowed Pages"

The above title was found on a section by A. Vigilev in the Jan. 1974 issue of Filateliya SSSR which gave some interesting postal statistics. In 1972 in Moscow alone there were 5732 post boxes, nearly 1/2 million in the country, served by 72 000 postal establishments. In Moscow in 1972 nearly 950 million pieces of mail were handled, with 10 000 mail carriers in the city.

The Ministry of Communication issued over 420 million postage stamps and souvenir sheets. Since the Moscow mail alone was more than twice the number of issued stamps, one readily sees the importance of stamped postal stationery and metered mail in the Soviet postal system. One can say that much of the Soviet mail is sent by stamped envelopes and cards. The cacheted stamped envelopes number in the tens of thousands already with numbers issued ranging from 0.5 to 27 million for recent items whereas the average numbers issued of commemorative stamps is 2.5 million. However, the standard or definitive issues are massive and not given in the Soviet catalog and must also account for a considerable portion of the daily mail.

For comparison the article continues with some statistics of the Russian postal system at the turn of the century. In 1900, Russia had 10 969 postal establishments (not counting the Zemstvos), including 382 postal wagons. The country has 17 040 post boxes. Total pieces of correspondence including banderols, parcels and money letters was 848.9 million. There were 254 000 versts of postal routes on land, rivers, seas, lakes and railroads. There were 801 courier stations employing 10 845 drivers and over 5 million horses.

In 1901, 8.27 million stamped envelopes were sold, along with 61.6 million postal cards and 340.4 million postage stamps (with half of them the 7 kop. value). There were 26 350 mailings without stamps, 22 933 letters without indicated designation and 3234 letters with fake stamps.

Philatelically Yours

Any comments, notes or information for this bulletin should be addressed to George V. Shalimoff, 20 Westgate Drive, San Francisco, California 94127.