



Bulletin of the Rossica Society of Russian Philately

Number 17

Bruce Bain, Editor

Summer, 1993

EDITORIAL

The leaves have started turning and the kids have started school. Soccer season has begun. And, Oh no! The Rossica Bulletin hasn't gone out yet. I must be late again. I want to again thank those of you who took the time to write. Many things have happened since December. The Annual meeting was held at NAPEX, Much ado about the new issues of the successor republics, Political turmoil and the like. Stay tuned for more.

On the philatelic front more overprints continue to flood the market. Many are suspect/speculative/never-used-postally/for philatelic purposes only or some other phrase you may prefer. Linn's Stamp News reports that as of May 1 the Ukrainian Post was no longer accepting privately posted overprints due to the large number of private overprints. They thanked Rossica (and UPNS) member Peter Bylen for this info. An aside here for Peter. Both the Editor of the Bulletin and the Journal would have appreciated being on the mailing list for that announcement (and future ones also). We are both very willing to publish news about Ukrainian Philately. We both recognize that many of our members collect Ukrainian material but some may not be members of the UPNS or may not subscribe to LINNS. The only press

releases I have received from the UPNS concern their fund raisers (Auctions). Funny, I am expected to publish news about their money making enterprises but not about philately.

1994 Annual Meeting

The Next Annual Meeting will be at COLOPEX in Columbus Ohio April 15-17, 1994. We have reserved 50 frames for Rossica members on a first come first served basis. However the this reservation expires December 31, 1993. In other words: **HURRY UP!** We do not want you to be shut out. Information is available from

Paul H. Gault
'94 Exhibits Chairman
140 West 18th Ave
Columbus, Ohio 43210 USA

The Judges will be S. Schumann, Jeannette Adams, Randy Neill, John Hotchner, and Rev. Fitz. Lets try to put on a show that will leave them talking in Columbus.

At the annual meeting we will begin the next election process. Start thinking of who you want for each office.

NAPEX

The 1993 Annual meeting was held the weekend of June 2-4 at the Sheraton National Hotel in Arlington, Virginia (a suburb of Washington D.C.). Many Rossica luminaries were there including 6 elected officers. On Friday Night we all piled into the cars (including 11 into my wife's station wagon) and went into downtown Washington restaurant : The Azerbaijani Kitchen. While some had wanted Thai food the overall consensus was : There is no way we could explain to the rest of the membership how we passed up an Ethnic Russian place. I seem to recall past notices of Washington Chapter Meetings complaining that there were no Russian Restaurants to be found. Unfortunately the other 2 Russian Restaurants in the area had closed over the preceding 6 months. Including one a mere 2 weeks before. Would this become the local Rossica hangout? If the response I got is any indication the answer may be: Yes! Everyone enjoyed the food, company etc. Our Treasurer was too tired to attend. Gary you missed a wonderful time and we all missed your company. We all voted that the treasurer should have paid for this Official Rossica Function. The rumors of dancing girls on the tables are greatly exaggerated. It was really Rossica's favorite dealer Webster Stickney dancing on the tables (Web must have had a big day at the bourse). Just kidding Web.

Saturday was a busy day for Rossica. The officers met for their meeting at 8:30 AM. Much was discussed and resolved. This year the overall theme was one of harmony and progress. Does this mean that the Annual Meeting

(commonly referred to as the Annual Bloodletting in the past) will be harmonious in the future. One can only hope. The officers are trying to publish the next book in the first half of 1994. Beginning in the December Bulletin we hope to run a pre-publication sale.

Saturday Afternoon we had 2 presentations. George Shaw showed us his Voice of America covers and discussed the Philately/Postal History of the period of Jan-April 1992. What a fascinating talk. Then our President showed us some of his favorite Soviet Airmails covers. Again this was an intellectually stimulating talk. The sheer enjoyment of the hobby came through in each presentation.

Finally the Society hosted a pre-Awards dinner reception on Saturday Night. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves and the sodas and munchies provided by the society were tasty. For everyone who was unable to attend this year's meeting lets try to make it to ColoPex in March or the 1995 Meeting.

ADLET

Wanted: buy/trade Russian Revolution/Civil War Cinderella's on cover. Specifically looking for Occupation Azerbaijan overprints or Izsvestia Overprints. Bruce Bain P.O.Box 2928 Merrifield VA 22116-2928

New Republics

HELP!!!! I am in need of some help here. There is an incredible amount of material/information out there on the successor republics. No one of us currently knows everything about all of these Republics. I personally do not have the time, resources or the contacts to research all of these. As such if someone(s) would like to start chronicling the philately of the republics either regionally or individually I would be happy to publish them and give credit. This is the newest and currently most exciting phase of our hobby/area of specialization. The more we know about this area the more we will be able to attract newer/younger members who are currently being attracted to this area of the field.

AD CALL

Dealers if you wish to advertise in the Bulletin please notify the Secretary/Editor at:

Rossica Bulletin
P.O. Box 2928
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Secretary's Minutes

The Annual Officers meeting was called to order by President G. Adolph Ackerman. The Roll was taken:

Ackerman: Present
Michalove: Present
Bain: Present
Combs: Present
Skipton: Present
Finick: Absent
Torrey: Present
Mazepa: Absent
Renfro: Absent
Carson: Present

Invited speaker Shaw: Present

The Librarian (Dave Skipton) presented his report (See the Journal for the full report). With deep regret he reported that this must be his last term in that office. We need to have someone step forward to perform this function. Currently Dave has 2 assistants. In addition he reported that the translation of the Azerbaijan Catalog is progressing nicely. Dave then asked George Shaw to complete the presentation on the work. With the recent Ceresa publication on Azerbaijan we must increase our efforts to present the finest, most definitive catalog available. We will include all known information on the topic. In addition New photographs will be taken/added to the work. A publication date of April - July 1994 is anticipated.

The Secretary presented his report on the results of the survey. Space in this Bulletin does not permit publishing the results in this issue. They will appear in the December Bulletin.

The Treasurer then presented his report (See the Journal). The net result is that due to outlays for the translations the Treasury is experiencing a short term cash flow problem. The society is in no fiscal danger. Simply there is more being expended than is being taken in. The officers voted to keep a keen eye on this problem and determine if action is required.

At the request of the Journal Editor, The Officers debated accepting advertising in the Bulletin. It was finally agreed that the Society should (and will)

continue to accept ads for the bulletin. Rates will be the same as the journal. After all we have the same circulation and audience. The two publications will try not to compete for ads.

Book Review by Henry Hahn

THE CZECH LEGION IN RUSSIA from the beginning of 1914 to its homebound voyage in 1920

Background information, chronological history, postal documentation, official Legion forms, photographs of the period.

By HORST TAITL, Privately published in 200 copies, August 1992. Issued under the auspices of the ARGE Osterr. Feld und Zensurspost (1914-1918). In German.

A copy of this 70-page paper bound, photocopy edition was made available to this reviewer through the courtesy of the Rossica Society Library by Mr. Dave Skipton.

The chronological history of the Legion is well organized, brief, clean and interestingly illustrated by high quality photocopies of post cards and covers.

Details of the forming of the Druzhina and its military action in June 1917, under Col. Trojanov, as part of Russia's (Kerenski Government) last major military action is explained. The author captures the drama and tragedy of this period, in which the Druzina was decimated from 3 Regiments to 1, after suffering over 5,000 casualties.

The book includes a scant bibliography,

and none of the facts, previously unknown to this reviewer, are foot-noted or otherwise documented. Thus, for example, the author states that the US Field Post in Vladivostok, established shortly after the arrival of US troops in August 1918, postmarked and censored Czech Legion mail. While US censor marks, applied in San Francisco and elsewhere are well known, this author has never seen a Legion cover carried by US Field Post and US censored in Vladivostok.

The author delves into financing of the Czech Legion, though this part of his story is somewhat oversimplified.

The story of the various attempts by the Bolsheviks to disarm the Legion while passing Penza and later Samara and Irkutsk is put in proper context, as is the May 14th, 1918 "incident" along the Trans Siberian Railway which sparked the bloody military actions that followed. The disarming by the Czechs of the Red Guard and one-day capture of Cheljabinsk shortly following the "incident" is mentioned.

The roles of Trotsky and even Stalin in the context of the Czech Legion are covered. Particularly fascinating is the clear explanation of the of General, (and for a time Russian White Army Lt. General), Gajda in terms of his break with Adm. Kolchak and eventual "sell-out" of Kolchak, who incidentally was his father-in-law.

The US-Japan attack on the Siberian Republic forces in Vladivostok, under command of General Gajda is well covered. Gajda's defeat at the cost of

many lives, including Czechs, and Gajda's ups and downs culminating in his eventual leadership of Czech Fascists in the newly independent Czechoslovak Republic is related.

The author does not fail to mention some "excesses" by the Legion. The culpability for some of the tragedies by the "Allied Intervention" vis a vis the Czechs is brought to light. The Allies' abandonment of the White Russians, leaving the task of fighting Bolsheviks to the Czechs and relatively weak White Russian Armies is pointed out.

Visits by French General (and Czech Government appointed Commander of the Legion) Janin and CSR War Minister Stefanik in November 1919 are described. The existence of a Czech Legion Supply Agency established in Tokyo, previously unknown to this reviewer, is superbly documented by a cover from this agency via Kobe to Charbin.

An incident, sometimes neglected by Czech historians, mainly the mangling of the Czech Legion Cavalry by the Soviets on January 20th, 1920 at Nizhnyj Udinsk and the severe demoralization of the Legion are aptly brought out, as is the armistice sought by the Czechs which

materialized in February. The departure from the Czechs from Chita in March and the departure of the Legion from Vladivostok beginning as early as December 1919 are described with both understanding and a view toward unidealized history.

The weakest and most disappointing aspect of this book is in the area of philately. While the author promises to provide "postal documentation", this reviewer has hoped for some emphasis on the Legion's Field post. Thus, for example, the franking privileges bestowed by the Russians upon the Legion are not even mentioned. Having been published under the ARGE auspices, a purely philatelic organization, one might have expected this book to be oriented toward philately to a greater degree. Unfortunately, even the historic aspects of the Legion Field post are neglected. This important part of the story continues to await the work of a more philatelically oriented author.

Nevertheless, this reviewer recommends this book to collectors of Legion mail as well as to others concerned with this somewhat mysterious part of the World War I story.

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