

BULLETIN OF THE ROSSICA SOCIETY OF RUSSIAN PHILATELY



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Why Collect Commemoratives

After casually looking at hundreds of exhibits at various stamp shows, it became obvious that most exhibits fall into the categories of traditional stamp exhibits, postal history and postal stationery. There are also the thematic or topical exhibits.

The traditional stamp exhibits usually have as a theme a country's definitive series, including essays, proofs, the issued stamps, postal usages of them, surcharges and overprinting for special purposes of stamps of a particular design.

The postal stationery exhibits follow the same formula as traditional stamp exhibits, though usually less colorful. Postal history exhibits dwell on a theme, showing covers displaying various rates or correspondence with reference to some historical event, area or time period. But other than a topical collection which will include stamps of a particular theme from many countries, where can one use commemorative stamps?

Catalogs of Russian stamps include Imperial Russia, the Soviet Union and now Russia and the individual states that made up the former Soviet Union. Those of us who are general collectors of this material gleefully filled the spaces of our albums or sought to achieve completion to some degree.

All of Imperial Russia's stamps can be considered definitives, including the Romanov jubilee issues. Each series lends itself quite nicely to traditional exhibiting and collecting.

The issues of the Soviet Union include several definitive series numbering perhaps a hundred stamps and thousands of commemoratives for everything imaginable.

There appears some hope a way may be found to exhibit these USSR commemoratives. In recent auction catalogs, one finds more and more "archival" material of Soviet Union commemoratives that may add spice to any Soviet collection or exhibit. For a long time collectors of this material had to be happy with the occasional printing freak, misperf or fantail along with an occasional perforation variety or subtle color change. But the appearance of color proofs, monochrome proofs and essays of some of these issues certainly whets the appetite.

Member John Briggs found a way to effectively use Soviet commemorative stamps in an exhibit. He shows the stamps along with the predictions and promises of its regime, but follows each issue with the facts of reality. The exhibit immediately becomes political, whimsical, satirical. He carefully points out the twisting of history, the contradictions of the promises and claims of the Soviet regime in a delightful and oftentimes humorous manner.

Exhibit judges, trained in their conservative manner, have told John that his exhibit will never achieve more than a Vermeil award. But John Briggs says he doesn't mind. He has fun assembling it and exhibiting it and is glad when someone says it was a joy to see. One maverick judge at WESTPEX felt it was the most

interesting presentation he had seen in a long time, a relief from the traditional stamp exhibits where emphasis is placed on the formula of presentation, completeness and rarity. So perhaps there is a place for commemoratives in a stamp show other than topical exhibits.

Cover Prices Go Into Orbit

In recent sales two covers went for spectacular prices. In the Guido Craveri Harmers Auctions May 1st sale of the Liphschutz material, a first day usage of the first issue, 10 kopek pen canceled with a weak KOVNO/1858/JANUARY 1 marking on the cover to Warsaw, realized 145,000 Swiss Francs plus 15% buyers premium (\$120,210). The estimated value was 25,000 SF.

On the other hand, a USSR space cover that was delivered to the Soyuz 4 space capsule from the Soyuz 5 capsule in January 1969 was sold for \$123,500 at a Sotheby auction in New York. It was the first such space delivery of mail, signed and endorsed by the recipient Cosmonaut Vladimir A. Shatalov.

The space cover was purchased by the Italian dealer Alberto Bolaffi. The sale was witnessed by Shatalov in which the bidding started at \$10,000 and quickly rose by active bidding of several bidders. Other later space delivery covers fetched more than \$13,000 and \$19,000 each.

These realizations are a bit mind-boggling. But even more modest prices for other material are equally confusing. Former Soviet Union president Mikhail Gorbachev received \$100,000 for his foundation for signing 1000 commemorative envelopes in Charlottesville, VA where he gave a speech honoring Thomas Jefferson. The buyer of the envelopes hopes to sell them for \$500 each. This seems a lot considering the number available. Even signatures of other famous Nobel Prize winners don't usually fetch that much. But if one has to have it, the sky or outer space is the limit whether it's an autograph, space cover or first day cover.

Rate Questions

Member Mike Ercolini is puzzled with two items in his collection. The first is a 10 kopek propaganda postal card posted in Voroshilov April 27, 1935 to Kansk, bearing an oval postage due marking with a script "20" indicating 20 kopeks due. Rate tables indicate the postal card rate was 15 kop. The card is underpaid 5 kopeks, but why the 20 kop. due?

A registered single weight (?) letter from Petrograd to Berlin canceled March 18, 1923 is franked with a block of 10 Scott #221 (100R on 15K). These stamps were equivalent to 10 rubles in 1923. But the rate for a registered letter was only 7 rub. The 10 rub. rate did not take effect until March 25, 1923 according to published rate tables. Mike states registered letters were stamped at the post office which should have known the current rates. Are the rate tables in error? Anyone else have an early use cover for this period? Send your comments directly to Mike Ercolini, P.O. Box 778, Daly City, CA 94017 or to this Bulletin.

Free Journal Adlets

Rossica Journal Editor Gary Combs announces free Member-to-Member adlets starting with the October 1994 issue of the journal. Members in good standing may communicate their needs and information to share with others on 6 lines of 80 characters each, including ALL spaces and ALL punctuation marks. Member's name and address will NOT be counted part of the total 480 permitted characters in the adlet. If additional words are needed beyond the 480 character limit, there is a charge of 10 cents per word (no matter how long the word). Adlets for the October journal should be received by August 15, 1994. Send adlets or any questions about this to Gary Combs, Rossica Editor, 8241 Chalet Ct., Millersville, MD 21108.

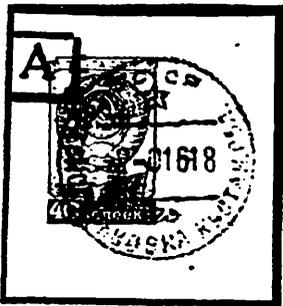
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Most readers receive the J. Barefoot LTD price list of Russian material. Has anyone noticed his cover illustration shows the "bloody sword" variety of Scott Catalog No. B-5?

A Rare Provisional

Notwithstanding the current numerous provisional overprinted USSR stamps including some local places as well, we usually associate provisionals with the issues resulting from the turmoil of the Russian civil war in the early 1920's. These are well documented in Michel catalog and frequently appear in auctions.

At a Show and Tell session of the Northern California Rossica meeting at WESTPEX, Alex Sadovnikov showed a recorded 1961 provisional. The used stamp and an enlargement of its overprint are shown below. The two line overprint reads "from 1.1-1961 cost 4 kop."



с 1.1-1961 г.
Коп. 4 К.

As we know, in 1961 the Soviet Union underwent a ten to one devaluation of its currency and postage stamps. Postal cards and postal stationery were allowed to be overprinted with the new values. New stamps were to be issued starting January 1, 1961, but old USSR stamps were allowed to be used at one tenth their denoted value until April 1, 1961.

Not having received the new issues for use in January due to weather conditions, authorities in Aktyubinsk received permission to overprint the available 40 kopek stamps (Scott No. 1689a) with the same black handstamp used on postal stationery. The provisional was limited to one day such that no more than 10 sheets or 1000 stamps were overprinted. The overprint was discovered with a Presnogorkovka, Kustanai Oblast cancellation. This is a town in a neighboring oblast to Aktyubinsk. The example shown above was canceled January 2, 1961.

The new catalog published in Filateliya rates this provisional RR unused and RRR used. A similar overprint occurs on the 1960 40 koprk Letter Writing commemorative, Scott No. 2379, rated RRRR unused.

Unanswered, of course, was what was the urgency? Why was this allowed in the first place since the old stamps had postal validity until April 1, 1961?

An Imperial Question

Member George Miskin in England seeks information from other collectors about the earliest internal use of registration in Imperial Russia. He says the provisional decrees of 1871 introduced registration for internal mail, but, he asks, when did they actually go into effect? These early registrations of internal mail were of manuscript form. Mr. Miskin is aware of registered covers dated 14.10.72 from Rostov on a cover he owns as well as 4.8.72 on a cover from St. Petersburg published in Soviet Collector No. 27. Does anyone know of any earlier uses of internal registration?

Check your Imperial covers albums. Please reply to the Bulletin editor or directly to member George Miskin on your Rossica mailing list.

A New One Ruble Variety

Member Ellen Thompson informs us of an Imperial Russia variety which she found and had expertized. It is a used one ruble stamp of the 1902-05 issue Scott No. 68. Her copy has an inverted groundwork (the tear drop loops of the scroll work point up instead of down.) The registration with respect to the frame and value is very good, making it hard to see the invert without close examination.

The one ruble stamp is listed in the Lobachevski catalog as the 14th Issue of 1904, no. 67. Among the other varieties of this issue we can add 67Ek - 1 rub. with inverted background, most likely with at least an R valuation. Be on the lookout for others since at least 49 others should exit.

Genuine Fake or Fake Genuine?

Collectors of Soviet stamps are well aware of the overprinted "RSFSR Philately-Children 19-8-22" issue on 1, 2, 3, 5 and 10 kopek perforated stamps and a 1 kopek imperforate stamp. When this issue was announced in the journal Soviet Philatelist No. 1, 1922, some copies of the journal indicated the overprint on a 7 kopek value as well. How come? Here is the story in brief, abstracted from an article by V. Yakobs in Filateliya SSSR, No. 4, 1989.

F. G. Chuchin was the head of the Central Committee to Aid the Hungry by means of Donations of Stamps in Russia and Abroad. The sale of postage stamps was a successful means of raising money for this charitable purpose. When proposals were made to sponsor a Day of Philately for children with the sale of specially valued stamps and to publish a philatelic journal, Chuchin felt they fitted within the charter of the committee.

By his own admission, Chuchin knew little about philately. He turned to Moscow philatelists for assistance. One such volunteer was V. L. Sanchov who was allowed to join the team after an impressive interview.

Chuchin apparently ordered the required overprinted 1, 2, 3, 5, and 10 kopek stamps for the Day of Philately and as editor prepared the first issue of Soviet Philatelist. He then took a month's vacation abroad, leaving the Day of Philately program and completion of the journal, which needed some collector and dealer advertisements to be included, up to his subordinates.

When this first journal issue was released, Chuchin was in Riga and was surprised to read the journal was edited by V. L. Sanchov and F. G. Chuchin. He was also surprised to read a 7 kopek value stamp was listed among the Day of Philately for Children issue, and to find the inclusion of an unpaid advertisement for exchange of stamps with the journal editor, V. L. Sanchov.

In Chuchin's absence, Sanchov convinced the deputy secretary that he would be the principal editor. He managed to change the order for the Day of Philately overprinted stamps to include a 7 kopek value, and he somehow retained the overprinted stamps for himself which he proceeded to sell with the help of the advertisements in Soviet Philatelist No. 1 and in Russian Collector No. 2 printed in Novochoerkassk.

Chuchin realized this was not simply a careless and stupid mistake but rather a conscious and maliciously preconceived swindle whereby Sanchov sought to legitimize the overprinted 7 kopek stamp with its announcement in the philatelic journals. Upon his return, Chuchin immediately removed Sanchov from the committee and had him placed under arrest.

Brought up on charges of fraud and falsifying documents, Sanchov was found to be incurably insane by the Moscow provincial revolutionary tribunal. He was sentenced to a mental hospital for permanent confinement.

Although by some means Sanchov was able to include the announcement of the overprinted 7 kopek stamp in some but not all issues of Soviet Philatelist No. 1, the news was picked up by domestic and foreign philatelic journals and retail firms. Among philatelists of the day, the 7 kop. overprint was called the "Sanchovka." Fakes of the 7 kopek value appeared along with the other authorized values.

(V. L. Sanchov's name and residence in Moscow later appeared in a reference of an article on the Second Five Year Plan Issue in The Soviet Collector No. 10, 1932. The reference was a journal titled Liechtenstein No. 81, no date given).

One might think the story ends here. But does it really? With the appearance of so many "new" varieties from Russia these days, suppose a true "Sanchovka" appears. How will an expertizer describe this unauthorized genuine stamp with a genuine overprint?

Rossica Medalists

COLOPEX '94 in Columbus, Ohio

- G. A. Ackerman "Via the Red Skies-The Development of Soviet Air Mail Service 1922-1945"
Gold, APS Medal of Excellence, Rossica Award, Columbus Stamp
Club Gold, Research, and Postal History Awards.
- John Briggs "The Soviet Union: Philatelic Practice and History" Silver
- Mike Carson "Hard Times in Russia: The Inflation Period" Vermeil, Rossica President's
Award
- Tom Chastang "The Third Standard Postage Issue of the USSR - A Postal History View" Gold
- Alfred F. Kugel "America's War With Spain" Grand Award, Gold, Postal History Award
- Peter Michalove "Soviet Military Mail of World War II" Vermeil
- G. V. Shalimoff "Varnish Lozenges on Some Issues of Russia & Soviet Russia in the
Period 1909-1919" Silver Bronze, AAPE Creativity Award
- G. G. Werbizky "Ostarbeiter-Workers from the East - Mail in World War II" Silver
- G. Combs, Editor "The Journal of the Rossica Society of Russian Philately" Literature Vermeil

PHILATELIC SHOW 94 in Boxborough, Massachusetts

- Joseph Taylor "Allied Intervention in Russia" Gold, American Society. of Polar Philatelists
Award

WESTPEX '94 in San Francisco, California

- Alfred F. Kugel "The American Intervention in Russia"
Grand Award, Gold, US Cancellation Club Award, War Cover
Club Award, Postal History Award, Rossica Award
- Roger P. Quinby "Finland's 1891 Ring Stamps and Postal Stationery" Gold,
Van Dahl Scandinavian Award of Merit
- John Briggs "68 Years in the Life of Arkady Fet: Postal Practice and History in
the Soviet Union (1913-1991)" Silver

SANDICAL '94 in San Diego, California

- Roger P. Quinby "Finland's 1918 VAASA/WASA Temporary Wartime Issue" Gold
- Gordon Torrey "The Midnight War 1918-1922" Gold

MILCOPEX '94 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Daniel G. Hammell "The Soviet Union in Space" Bronze

FILATELIC FIESTA in San Jose, CA and FRESPEX in Fresno, CA

M. R. Renfro "Russia Used Abroad" Manchuria and the Chinese Eastern Railway"
Gold in both shows

SARASOTA NATIONAL STAMP EXPOSITION in Sarasota, Florida

Alfred F. Kugel "The American Intervention in Siberia" Gold, APS Research Medal,
Modern Postal History Certificate, Rossica Award

OKPEX 94 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Alfred F. Kugel "Postmarks of the German Pacific Possessions" Gold
"Italian Offices Abroad" Gold, APS 1900-1940 Award,
Postal History Society Award

John Briggs "What's Going On Here: An Historian Examines the Soviet Union" Silver

This list includes US winners through early June 1994. My apologies to any I've missed. I've heard Al Kugel won another top award at ROMPEX in Colorado this year but I don't have a list of winners yet. He needed a wheel barrow to take home his WESTPEX awards

Apologies to John Briggs for omitting his Silver Award at TEXPEX '93 for his exhibit "What's Going On Here? An Historian Collides with the Soviet Union" in the last Bulletin. His exhibit also earned the Texas Stamp Dealers most popular adult exhibit award.

The awards won at COLOPEX '94 coincided with the 1994 national meeting of Rossica. I don't believe Rossica Medalists were cited for their participation at NAPEX '93 where the national Rossica meeting was held last year. Briefly, gold awards were won by David Skipton, Joe Taylor, Roger Quinby, vermeil awards by Peter Michalove, M. R. Renfro, G. Adolph Ackerman, silver awards by Raymond J. Pietruszka, George Shalimoff and silver bronze by John Briggs.

Congratulations to all on their achievements and for spreading the gospel of Russian and Russian-related philately.

FINLANDIA 95 Representative Needed

The World Exhibition for Postal History and Postal Stationery and The Finnish Society for Russian Philately will sponsor a World Symposium for Collectors of Russian Philately on May 12, 1995 during the FINLANDIA 95 World Exhibition in Helsinki May 10-15, 1995. If any Rossica member is planning to attend this exhibition and symposium and would be willing to act as Rossica's representative, please get in touch with Rossica's president or secretary.



I might add that the Finn's are great hosts. At a FINLANDIA 95 reception at WESTPEX this year, the food and refreshments were superb and everyone received a nice souvenir bottle of vodka with a FINLANDIA 95 label, a new philatelic collectible!

Stamp Articles Needed

The Rossica member interest survey shows that members desire more information about stamps. The journal editor asks anyone who has made a study of any particular issue or series of Imperial Russia stamps, the Soviet period, the back-of-the-book issues, any of the independent states, as well as any of the new emerging states of the former Soviet Union to please share your information and studies with Rossica.

The editor would like in-depth studies rather than simply unusual items. Certainly many of you have made your own studies of issues that perhaps had been mentioned before in Rossica or elsewhere. Since this information is not always available to all or new members, there is no harm in updating the information in the journal again.

I know several members with fine collections of Zemstvos, Georgia, Philatelic Tax stamps, Finnish (nee Russian) Ring stamps, Soviet advertising labels with stamps, Cinderellas and Soviet revenues. Surely there is something about these stamps worth sharing with the membership.

The journal editor does not expect a research tome on the scale of Tchilinghirian and Stephen's Used Abroad or books ala Ceres. But if you have made any effort in studying a particular issue or topic, you certainly must have found interesting about them.

You say you can't write. Nonsense. The editor can find someone to help make an article presentable. Writing should not be the drawback. The editor may be a bit fussy about format, but I'm willing to help shape up an article from any manuscript. Just supply the idea and the information. We can arrange for illustrations as well.

Just as the first page of an exhibit is the hardest to do, so is the first paragraph of an article. But once over that hump, it's downhill all the way to a fun journey. Give it a try.

Let's Look at Varieties

The journal Filateliya has been running an updated catalog of Russian stamps of all periods with more detail than ever before. Although there still seems to be some omissions, there are many new interesting varieties. Here are a few from No. 1, 1994 of that journal.

In 1957 seven stamps were issued for the VI Youth Festival, Scott Nos. 1913-14 and 1936-40. Both issues were comb perforated 12:12 1/2. However, Nos. 1913, 1937, and 1940 are also found line perforated 12 1/2, somewhat rare. Nos. 1913, 1914, 1936, 1937, and 1940 also occur imperforate as many catalogs indicate.

No. 1913 is found on thick paper, too. The same value is found with a small dash below the eye of the dove. Though not officially sanctioned, the dove on No. 1914 is found colored light yellow in place of orange.



On the second series, the 10 kop. value (Scott No. 1936) is found with a pale violet background. On No. 1937, the 20 kopek value, there can be a broken letter Д in the word "МОЛОДЕЖИ" along the right side.

Most are probably aware of the "bottle" on the knee of the marcher on No. 1938, the 25 kop. value, reported long ago. Both perf varieties of No. 1940 are found with a broken first letter "B" of the word at the top, resembling a "3".

All stamps are known with color shifts of about 1 mm. Such a shift on the 1 rub. value (Scott No. 1940) creates a white or "open" door on the university building, instead of an orange door.

New Issue Help Needed

Like many others, I have been clipping the items in the philatelic newspapers about the new issues of the states of the former Soviet Union, trying to decide whether to collect them or not. And if so, where do they fit with my collection to date? Most of these issues are available from numerous new issue services as well as established stamp dealers. Some of these new issues have even appeared in sales circuit books already.

In addition to familiar names like Ukraine, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, etc, some strange new ones pop up like Chechen Republic, Transdniester Republic, Dikson, Birobidzhan, Sary Oskol, many locals, all issuing stamps. At first Soviet stamps were overprinted, but now we see totally newly designed stamps.

A columnist for Linn's Stamp News, Michael Tereshko who works for Polyglot International in Moscow (Polyglot is a marketing company providing translation services to foreign business interests in Russia) has attempted to keep readers abreast of these developments. But then he announces that many of the issues are privately produced, with no legitimacy. Included are illegal local provisionals issued by a government agency, privately produced fantasy issues and overprints.

In spite of this, postally used covers, even registered, seem to slip through the cracks of the various postal systems. Tereshko's comments have generated letters to the editor on the merits of what is or isn't collectable from this area today.

The Ukrainian Society can handle their end of this deluge, but it would be nice if someone would come forward and try to keep us informed of what's happening in philately with these other new states. I offer a byline in this newsletter, perhaps the journal, too Any takers?

Don't Miss Reading

More and more articles on Russian related philately are appearing in philatelic literature other than the specialized society journals. The American Philatelist, the monthly journal of the American Philatelic Society had several. Look for Peter Michalove's The Soviet Occupation of the Baltic States 1940-41, in the Sept. 1993 issue, George Werbizky's Local Issues in Pskov under German Occupation, Dec. 1993, Letters from Behind the Barbed Wire by Victor Boyko Jan. 1994 and Italian Field Post of the 1941-43 Russian Campaign by Rene Chavez in the Mar. 1994 issue. The newspapers Linn's Stamp News and Stamp Collector also have articles of interest to collectors of Russian philately.

Editor's Yellow Face

Readers George Werbizky and Alex Sadovnikov both caught the error in this editor's transliteration of the Russian word for "little lemon" in the last bulletin. They correctly point out the correct transliteration is "limovka" instead of "lemovka." I knew that, of course, but thought the use of "e" instead of "i" in the word would preserve the "flavor" of the meaning. Nevertheless, thanks to both for their comments. It is nice to know readers scan every line carefully.

Many thanks to those who wrote kind notes to me about the last Bulletin. Please let me know what you would like to see here. I'll try my best.

Send your comments, questions, and news items to this Bulletin's editor: George V. Shalimoff
5820 Ross Branch Road, Sebastopol, CA 95472.

PS: George Werbizky tells me it is Sebastopol with a "B" because during the Crimean War the British saw Russian road signs "СЕБАСТОПОЛЬ" and mistransliterated the third Russian letter into English as "B" instead of "V" as it should be.