

BULLETIN OF THE ROSSICA SOCIETY OF RUSSIAN PHILATELY



Number 22

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Transdnestrian Error Story

Among the many stamp issuing entities of the emerging republics of the former USSR is Transdnester Moldavian Republic, a small area west of the Ukrainian-Moldovan border and east of the Dniester River, with Tiraspol as its capital. A Newsweek magazine article indicated it was run by an independent former hard nose Soviet general, loyal to Russia.

Its issues are local, having no UPU validity, therefore requiring other stamps for international mail.. A concise description of the problems of the first issue of Transdnester was given by free lance writer Jayseth Guberman in Linn's Stamp News on May 29, 1995. He described two particular printing errors. It was by coincidence that member Mel Kessler asked this bulletin about some covers he acquired from Moldova with Transdnestrian error stamps. The story is worth repeating.

On March 1, 1994 Transdnester announced the expected release of three local use stamps later that year. Due to the current economic conditions, no values were to be printed but instead cyrillic letters were printed corresponding to particular types of service: ordinary mail, registered, and overweight mail.

The stamps were printed in France, showing a map of the region. When samples of the stamps were examined in Transdnester late in 1994, two significant errors were found on the "Б" denominated stamp.

One error was the misspelling of the word "ПОЧТА". It was spelled "ПОУТА", using the wrong letter in the third position. The second error was the use of the wrong soft sign at the end of the word for Tiraspol on the map. It was misspelled as "Тирасполб" (fig. a).



fig. a

fig. b

With the errors detected, the issue supposedly was not placed into circulation and instead was recalled by the French printer. A second printing was ordered with the following corrections. The word "post" was corrected to "ПОЧТА", and "Тираспол" on the map does not have a soft sign at the end of the word (fig. b). This corrected issue was placed into circulation on March 1, 1995.

Mr. Guberman states "It is unknown exactly how many errors exist. . . some sets have already been made available in Europe but at rather expensive prices."

He adds that although the Transdniester stamps appear to be serving some local purpose for domestic purposes, international mail from the region must have appropriate Moldovan stamps attached, otherwise the mail is returned to the sender.

Mr. Kessler writes that he has received three registered covers with the error stamps (first printing) and one ordinary mail cover with the corrected stamps (second printing). It appears some of the recalled "first printing" got back into circulation in Transdniester after all.

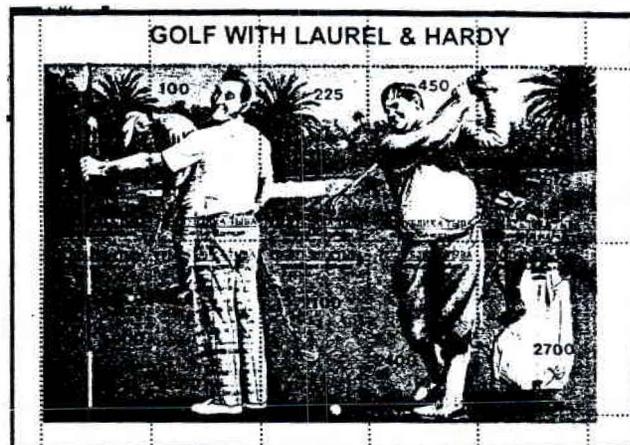
Final note: On the stamp, the country's name is spelled in English as "Pridneistrovian Moldavian Republic" whereas current writers seem to prefer Transdniester and Moldova (with an "o") , as if there isn't enough confusion already.

The Nonsense Continues

Collectors of Soviet Union stamps were inundated with numerous issues commemorating real or exaggerated feats and accomplishments of the socialist state. In spite of the blatant propaganda theme of many of these issues, one could accept the legitimate reason for their issuance.

But the deluge of non relevant issues from the Russian self autonomous regions of the former USSR leaves an even more bad taste. A recent full page ad shows issues from Touva commemorating 6 Legends of Golf on a perfed and imperf sheetlet, with first day covers, of course. Added to that is another sheetlet showing the old time comics Laurel and Hardy playing golf, perf., imperf, etc. It's my guess there isn't any golf course in Touva or that few if any there know of Arnold

Palmer, Jack Nicklaus, Lee Trevino, et al.



Batum issues a Hall of Fame souvenir sheet featuring O.J. Simpson. American football is popular in Batum?

Abkhazia shows its extremely poor taste in subjects with a sheetlet of ten stamps depicting 13 male Hollywood stars seated at a table with Marilyn Monroe in the center, imitating Leonardo deVinci's famous painting of The Last Supper.

Philatelists who collect and study the postal issues of a particular country have no choice in the subjects that entity chooses to picture on its stamps. But with study the philatelists can define what are legitimate issues and what are not. Unfortunately, for the sake of completeness one often includes the bogus issues, the cinderellas, the fantastic issues. Consequently, these current non relevant and poor taste issues will be found on album pages. Such items must sell otherwise stamp companies would not buy full page ads.

Check the Perfs

The Soviet 1931 Arctic Airmail set of four with polar bear and icebreaker Malygin comes perforated 12 1/2 and also 12 x 12 1/2, as well as imperf. Any found with perforations 11 1/2 are private perforation, made from the imperforates some time ago, reported to come from Germany.

The President Reports...

President David Skipton reports the annual meeting and Rossica participation at CHICAGOPEX in November were a great success. There were over 100 frames of Russian, Russian-related material on exhibit, possibly the largest showing ever in the USA. (See Rossica Medalists in this issue.) Over 20 attended the general meeting with Ged Seiflow giving a presentation of his computerized Russian catalog. Five new members were signed up, and everyone had a blast at the Rossica reception.

The Rossica Board of Directors decided to re-establish a Rossica expertization committee. Three members have volunteered to serve with G. A. Ackerman as committee chairman and contact point. In light of the publicized closure of the German Society expertization service because of mail loss, this move is very reluctantly taken. Nevertheless, it will be carefully specified that the society will not be responsible for any loss, that every item must be sent registered and insured for protection while in the mail, and that each individual committee person would be personally responsible for items in their possession for expertization. Any members interested in working on this committee should contact the president.

Other good news. If there is a Rossica chapter annual meeting at a non World Series of Philately stamp show, any Russian, Russian-related exhibit in the show is eligible for the Rossica President's award, at the discretion of the exhibit jury, of course.

New Journal Ad Rates for Dealers

Effective immediately, the rates for dealers placing advertisements in the journal will **decrease** for 1/4 and 1/2 page insertions. There is **no change** for **full page, inside and outside cover** advertisements. The 1/4 page

cost now is \$15, for 1/2 page - \$25. The minimum "3" times is waived for all ads. Advertisements may appear anywhere in the journal, not necessarily lumped together in the back. Deadlines are February 15 for the April issue and August 15 for the October issue. Special consideration for one-time flyers, catalogs, etc.

Contact the journal editor Gary Combs,
8241 Chalet Court, Millersville, MD 21108

The Treasurer Reports...

Many **thanks** to those who responded to the President's Skipton's request for donations. Whereas cash is always helpful for the society's efforts, you can also donate philatelic literature for resale or the library. The treasurer will provide an official letter describing the donation, its market value, and the Rossica tax ID number (a non profit organization) to justify your tax write-off. Rossica Journal issues prior to No. 70 are in demand and the supply exhausted. If you have any to give, you can get a tax write-off and some other member can purchase the journal for his library.

If any member is looking for a large write-off, contact the treasurer. He has all kinds of ideas for your support at any level. (The treasurer is also our journal editor. His address is above.)

Fake Alerts

The 1983 Soviet souvenir sheet (Scott 5135) commemorating Cosmonauts Day was issued with an incorrect color stripe in the Rumanian flag. It was printed green instead of blue. Sheets found with a correct blue stripe in the flag are fakes. The green was chemically changed to blue. The same color change to create a variety can be found on the 1963 souvenir sheet for the 3rd Spartacist Games (Scott 2763a). Blue sheets are fakes.

Address Table Postal Cards

Following the postal stationery article in the last bulletin, M.R. Renfro sent photocopies of several Address Table postal cards which upon study leads to other questions as to their use. The Address Table is an address registry office.

The single card of 1881 addressed to the St. Petersburg Address Table, for example, asks for the name of the sender of the letter (requestor) on the front. On the back is requested the name of the person sought, which may be an individual, official, merchant, artisan, peasant or military person (figs. 1, 1a). There is no space to enter the requested address. Obviously, this card is not returned to the requestor.

One can conclude that upon receipt of this card, the Address Table copies the name from the front of the submitted card unto another reply card with the desired information. The Address Table would retain the original request card. The requestor pays 9 kopeks for the request card which covers the cost of the reply and search. Higgins & Gage Catalog

lists 6 such cards in the period 1880-1890.

An 1880 card without an imprinted Address Table address asks for the address of the requestor on the front of the card. On the back, the heading indicates the card is a reply of the St. Petersburg Address Table with space for a name, address, etc. (fig 2, 2a) Higgins & Gage Catalog lists 5 such cards in the same period.

Obviously this second card is the reply sent to the requestor of the information. The time period suggests their use coincides with the request cards of figures 1, 1a and are probably the corollaries. The hazard is that it requires a clerk to accurately transcribe the address of the requestor to the second card. In 1891 the introduction of double reply cards addressed to the Address Table which the requestor filled in with return address eliminated transcription.

The next question that one can ask is has anyone seen a used Address Table reply card? We can be sure those sent to the Address Table were retained for whatever purpose, but the reply cards to the requestors should exist, because we do find all sorts of used postal cards for this period.

Ask and Ye Shall Learn...

In the last bulletin we asked if anyone knew the meaning of the "ULTRAMAR" handstamp on some early Russian stamps. The response was quick and decisive.

Stamp issuing countries of the world would send samples of their valid postage stamps to the Universal Postal Union in Berne, Switzerland. Some countries would overprint, punch or handstamp their stamps with a word in their language meaning specimen or sample. Russia used "OBRAZETS." The UPU would distribute these sample stamps to the various postal administrations around the world.

The postal administration in Portugal would handstamp the specimen stamps received from the UPU with the word "ULTRAMAR" meaning "overseas." These stamps were to be sent to the various Portuguese colonies abroad as samples of legitimate foreign stamps. The handstamped "ULTRAMAR" stamps shown in the last bulletin came from a Portuguese archive. One report to the bulletin indicated a large quantity of such handstamped stamps got into the philatelic market around 1965.

Apparently not all Russian stamps sent to the UPU were overprinted with the Russian word for specimen. This would explain the lack of the Russian word for specimen or letters of that word on the ruble values mentioned in the note in Bulletin 21.

Many thanks to Mike Ercolini who found a reference to this ULTRAMAR handstamp in the book "UPU Specimen Stamps" by James Bendon. Special thanks, too, to members Sergio Sismondo, Richard Talbot, Pat Eppel and Dr. Raymond Casey for similar data. The latter two indicated this was noted by Mr. Angus Parker earlier in the Brit. Jour. of Russ. Phil. No. 37 (1965), p.31 and No. 40 (1967) p.31. Rabbi Leonard Tann and Matt Hedley made nearly accurate guesses, too.

FINLANDIA 95 Wrap Up

Belated congratulations to member Dr. Raymond Casey of Great Britain for his 16 frame Court of Honor display of "The Russian Post in the Far East" at FINLANDIA 95. Vermeil medals were awarded to members Kaj Hellmann for "Finnish Railway Mail During the Grand Duchy Period", Timo Bergholm for "Different Types of Imperial Russian Railway Postmarks", and Ivo Steyn for "Siberia 1918-1924." As mentioned before, the American philatelic press rarely mentions foreign participants or medalists in international shows.

Dr. Casey was also a participant in the World Symposium for Collectors of Russian Philately held in Helsinki. The proceedings of that symposium were published, containing the following presentations: "Collecting of Imperial Russia, Finnish Viewpoint" by Kaj Hellman (Finland), "Charles Mitchell Grant and the Opening of the Russian Post in China" by Dr. Raymond Casey (United Kingdom), "Early Period of Registered Mail in Russia" by Harry von Hoffman (Germany), "The Allied Intervention in Russia 1918-1925" by Alfred Kugel (USA), and "Philately Today in Russia" by Alexander Ilyushin (Russia).

Hopefully this volume will become part of the Rossica Library, or perhaps summaries can appear in the journal. Mr. von Hoffman's thesis on "The Early Period of Registered Mail in Russia" appears in the current issue of The Postrider (Yamshchik) No. 37, Dec. 1955.

Spreading the Faith

Journal contributor Michael Ercolini has begun an eight part article on the Romanov jubilee issue in the philatelic weekly newspaper Stamp Collector with a circulation of over 16,000. He draws his inspiration from his extensive collection of jubilee issue postal history covers canceled in 1913.

Rossica Medalists

Rossica exhibitors are harvesting well deserved awards for their exhibits. Congratulations to all! Listed here are those with Russian or Russian-related exhibits.

CHICAGOPEX ' 95 in Chicago, Illinois

- G.A. Ackerman "Via the Red Skies-The Development of the Soviet Air Mail Service" 1922-1945" Gold, Grand Award, President's Award, Best in Show, Air Mail Society Award, Postal History Society Award, Rossica Award
- "For the Red Air Fleet - Soviet Air Fleet Semiofficial Stamps, Labels and Propaganda Postcards"
Gold, Amer. Phil. Soc. Award of Excellence-Best Research
- David M. Skipton "Russian Postal Development from the 1780's to 1917"
Gold, Amer. Assn. Phil. Exhibitors Creativity Award
- Alfred F. Kugel "The American Intervention in Russia" Honorary Gold
- John L. Briggs "Russia, War to War" Vermeil
- Michael J. Carson "Hard Times in Russia: The Inflation Era" Vermeil
- Thomas E. Chastang "The Third Standard Postage Issue of the U.S.S.R. - A Postal History View"
Vermeil, Amer. Assn. Phil. Exhibitors Honor Award
- Peter A. Michalove "Soviet Field Post of World War II" Vermeil, Rossica President's Award
- George G. Werbizky "Ostarbeiter (Eastern Workers) Mail in WW II" Vermeil
- R. J. Pietruszka "RSFSR, Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic" Silver
- G. V. Shalimoff "The Romanov Tercentenary Issue of Russia" Silver
- Andrew Cronin "Postal History of the German Presence in Russia" Silver-Bronze

SUNPEX '95 in Sunnyvale, California

- M. R. Renfro "Russia Used Abroad: The Levant" Vermeil

EUREKA STAMP SHOW in Eureka, California

- M. R. Renfro "Russia Used Abroad" Gold, Grand Award

AIRPEX in Dayton, Ohio

- G. A. Ackerman "The Russian Arctic" Vermeil

HOUSPEX 95 in Houston, Texas and TEXPEX 95 in Dallas, Texas

- John L. Briggs "Russia War to War" Gold, Reserve Grand at Houspex, Vermeil at Texpex

NOJEX '95 in Secaucus, New Jersey

- Alfred F. Kugel "The Allied Intervention in Russia 1918-1925"
Reserve Grand Award, Gold, Amer. Phil. Soc. 1900-1940 Medal
- John L. Briggs "Russia, War to War" Silver

VAPEX in Virginia Beach, Virginia

- Joseph Taylor "Allied Intervention in Russia" Gold
- Alfred F. Kugel "Over There - US Forces Abroad in WWI and Its Aftermath" Gold
- Alberta D. Curtis "Joseph Stalin - From Peasant to World Leader"
Vermeil, Amer. Topical Assn. Bronze

Omaha Stamp Show in Omaha, Nebraska

- Roger P. Quimby "Finland's 1918 Vaase/Wasa Temporary Wartime Issue" Gold

AmeriStamp Expo 95 in Secaucus, New Jersey

- Roger P. Quimby "Karelia - Jan. 31-Feb.16, 1922" Gold, one frame exhibit

PENPEX in Redwood City, California

- G. V. Shalimoff " St. Petersburg Geometric Numeral Cancellations" Gold, best 1 frame exhibit

Midaphil 95 in Kansas City, Kansas

- John L. Briggs "Russia Between the Wars 1913-1941" Gold

Once again, apologies to those inadvertently omitted. In scanning the winners lists, one sees other related exhibits by non-Rossica members, covering such topics as Latvia, Lithuania, Soviet Arctic and Antarctic Expeditions, Zemstvos, Russia in Space, indicating a growing interest in this field..

More Magnifier Varieties

Thanks to the new catalog of Soviet stamps published serially in Filateliya, new varieties appear, unlisted in western catalogs.

There are two positions of the 6 kop. black overprint on the 60 kop. blue airmail stamp issued in 1960 (Scott C98). On Type 1, the left leg of the letter "K" of KOP. is on a line with the right ends of the wavy lines below. On Type II the line along the left leg of the letter "K" falls within the wavy line pattern below. It was found in the first row of the sheet. Of course, the well known and cataloged missing "6" on the overprint of this stamp is still the premier variety for this issue.

This new Soviet catalog also warns that fakes of the missing "6" variety are known.

Another overprint variety exists on the 1962 issue commemorating the Earth to Mars rocket launch on November 1st (Scott 2662). The overprint in two lines is found with two different separations between the lines.

The usual separation between the lines is 2 mm with the serif on the numeral "1" in the second line essentially horizontal. The second type of separation is 0.8-1 mm with the serif of the numeral "1" in the second line visibly sloped.

Hope you find this interesting!

Literature Sources

By popular request from time to time we will list current sources of Russian philately literature. Descriptions will be brief and readers should write directly to the addresses given for complete descriptions and lists, current prices, and method of payment.

Check your *Rossica Journal* for information on back issues of the journal, for Prigara's *Imperial Russian Post*, Bazilevitch's *History of the Russian Post*, Skipton's *Reverse Sort* and Michalove's *Philatelists Guide*.

Available from **P.E. Robinson, 2 Rydalhurst Ave., Sheffield, S6 4BG England:**

Siberia-Postmarks & Postal History of the Russian Empire Period by P.E. Robinson, 2nd Ed., 190 pp, \$25 (dollar bills), £15 post paid.

Russian Railway Postmarks by A.V. Kiryushkin & P.E. Robinson. 180 pp, \$30, £25 post paid.

Russian Postmarks, An Introduction & Guide by A.V. Kiryushkin & P.E. Robinson 100 pp, \$15, £10 post paid.

Available from the author **P.T. Ashford, 9 Pentre Close, Ashton, Chester, CH3 8BR, England**

Postal Cancellations of the Transcaucasian Railway, 85 pp, £12

Georgia: Postal Cancellations 1918-1923, 158 pp, £11;

Imperial Stamps Used in Transcaucasia: Part I Postal History, 56 pp, £4;

Part III Tiflis Guberniya, 72 pp, £4; *Part IV Kutais Gub., Batum. Obl., Sukhumi Okr.*, 87 pp, £4;

Part VI Erivan Gub., Kars Obl., 89 pp, £4; *Part VII Elisavetpol Gub, Zakataly Obl.*, 60 pp, £4;

Part VIII Baku, Baku Guberniya, 94 pp, £4.

Commonwealth of Independent States Handbook by David E. Race 1995, 500 pp, \$25

From: **New Century Publishing Co. P O. Box 1941, Jacksonville, TX 75766.**

Philatelic Library Listing 130 pp, \$6.00, reprints of all kinds

A. Sadovnikov, P.O. Box 210073, San Francisco, CA 94121-0073.

ZAKAZNOE-Recommandirt, The Imperial Russian registered post from the beginning of the 19th century until the end of the First World War in 1918, 320 pp in German and 80 pp English addendum. Combined issues circa \$68 or £40; German ed. only \$50, £30; English ed. only, circa \$18, £10, plus post. Send no money. Invoice arrives with order. Available from the author:

Harry von Hoffman Verlag, Postfach 52 05 18, D-22595 Hamburg, Germany

For information on a large variety of catalog checklists dealing with all phases of Ukrainian philately, both past and present, including Western Ukraine, Soviet Ukraine, Carpatho-Ukraine already available and upcoming Ukraine 1991-1995, Belarus, 1918-1920, Ukraine 1918-1920, Ukraine Rural Posts 1867-1916, Ukraine Trident Issues 1918-1920, write to **Peter Bylen, Ukrainian Philatelics Resources, P.O. Box 7163, Westchester IL 60154-7193.**

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