

# BULLETIN OF THE ROSSICA SOCIETY OF RUSSIAN PHILATELY



\*\*\*\*\*  
Number 24

\*\*\*\*\*  
WINTER 1996  
\*\*\*\*\*

## Tannu Tuva Twists and Turns

There is a renewed interest in the past and present stamps and postal history of Tannu Tuva. Even a new society has spawned, The Tannu Tuva Collectors Society with a journal called "TbEA." The May 1966 issue (4 pages) of "TbBA" takes Rossica to task for its delay in translating the 1976 handbook in Russian titled "History of the Post and Postage Stamps of Tuva" by S. Blekhman. This bulletin was not aware we would undertake this worthwhile endeavor, but that isn't the point of this note.

The 113 page Blekhman booklet is a remarkable piece of work, and at first glance it appeared to be the definitive reference for the Tuvan issues of 1926-1942. In 1992 the Russian philatelic magazine "Filateliya" serially published a new catalog of the stamps of the Tuvan Peoples Republic. While translating a section of this new listing for a friend, it became apparent there were discrepancies with the Blekhman listings.

Two of the key Tuva stamps are the 15 kop. and 35 kop. Posta overprints on fiscal stamps issued in 1932. The word "Posta" in latin letters was rubber stamped on the revenue stamps while the new values were applied with a hand held numbering machine with metal numerals. In the better detailed stamp catalogs such as Michel and Gibbons we know that there were two sizes of numerals for each of the values, large numerals about 6 3/4 mm tall and small numerals 5 1/4 mm tall. So these catalogs list 4 basic stamps plus several

varieties such as omitted words and inverted overprints. The 1976 Blekhman booklet does the same with a few more printing varieties.

The "Filateliya" catalog goes into much more detail about these four stamps. It distinguishes the overprint "Posta" by characteristics of its letters, due to wear and usage of the rubber stamp, and we learn there are reprints.

Initially, the "s" in "Posta" had a comma-like appendage below it; the overprint was called Type I. With use, the tail of the comma broke off, leaving a period or dot appendage, Type II. As a result of further wear, the Type II marking showed a flattening of the upper portion of the letter "P" with a lengthening of the leg of the "P" and a lowering of the last letters of the word (due to stretching or distortion of the rubber).

So instead of 4 basic stamps with overprints, this new listing has 8 basic stamps.

### Large numerals 6.7 mm.

1. 15 kop. on 6 k., Type II "Posta"
- 1a. Type II with letter "P" lengthened
2. 35 kop. on 15 k., Type I "Posta"
- 2a. Type II "Posta"
- 2b. Type II with letter "P" lengthened

### Small numerals 5.1 mm

3. 15 kop. on 6 k., Type II "Posta"
- 3a. Type II with letter "P" lengthened
4. 35 kop. on 15 k., Type II "Posta"

(Note: In the original text, the above No. 2a was listed as Type I, but that would have been the same as No. 2. No. 2a is assumed to be Type II by this translator.)

Looking at this table, there appears to be only one value with the original Type I rubber stamp word "Posta." All the others listed as Type II would have to be made with the worn rubber stamp.

We later learn in this 1992 "Filateliya" listing that stamps with above numbers 1, 1a, 3, and 4 were reprinted in 1936. No. 1a was reprinted with the original Type II "Posta" marker with lengthened letter "P." For Nos. 1, 3, and 4 another rubber stamp was used which accurately reproduced the first marking, but with a significantly reduced size of the comma's tail which from wear soon became a dot under the third letter "s." The reprints of the above Nos. 3 and 4 also differ from the first issue in that the numeral "5" does not have the vertical portion, due to wear of the metal marker, the lower serif of the "5" is cut in half, and the position of the "5" is higher than the first numeral. In addition, the ink on the reprints is heavier, somewhat blacker (sooty) in color than the first issue.

The reprints are found used in 1936 along with the original issues, both CTO and on covers. The following reprint varieties are known.

**No. 1a paired with no. 3**

**No. 1 paired with non-overprinted stamp**

**No. 3 paired with non-overprinted stamp**

**Nos. 3 and 4 without the word "Posta"**

**No. 3 without the numerals.**

As one can see, what seemed to be simple is now much more complicated. And yes, there are fakes. For those who seek completion, there is more to search for. Even after 60 years, there is still much to be learned about the stamps of Tannu Tuva.

## A Tale of Three Cities...

At the 1976 international show INTERPHIL in Philadelphia, Rossica member Alexander von Reimers (now deceased) had an exhibit titled with the above heading. It consisted of stamps and postal history of St. Petersburg, Petrograd, and Leningrad.

There was an overlap of use of St. Petersburg markers after the city became known as Petrograd, and probably an overlap of Petrograd markings usage when the city was renamed Leningrad. More recently, there must be an overlap of Leningrad markings when the city's name reverted to St. Petersburg.

British members **Noel C. Warr** and **Rabbi Leonard Tann** have reopened the quest for the latest and earliest usages of postal markings bearing the respective names of the city. Mr. Warr (Brit. Jour. Russ. Phil. No. 80, 1996) searched for the St. Petersburg-Petrograd changeover, especially for the change of the TPO 1-2 marking, the St. Petersburg-Moscow to Petrograd-Moscow. Mr. Tann dealt with the earliest (new) St. Petersburg marking (BSRP Newsletter No. 6, 1994).

We can help by searching our holdings of covers. Let's look for the latest (old) St. Petersburg usage (remember the name changeover was September 1, 1914 new style) and earliest Petrograd usage on a postal marking, the latest Petrograd usage and earliest Leningrad (name change date ?) postal marking usage. And to bring this quest up to date, let's look for the latest Leningrad usage and the earliest (new) St. Petersburg marking (name change date ?).

Send photocopies and/or complete descriptions of the markings to this bulletin. If possible, use the codes in the Kiryushkin-Robinson guidebook "Russian Postmarks." All replies will be acknowledged here.

## Souvenir Sheet Anomalies...

Russian collectors have reported a couple of unusual occurrences on USSR souvenir sheets. Two of the 1976 50 k. sheet commemorating the 15th anniversary of Yuri Gagarin's first manned orbit of the earth were found with identical index numbers, No. 144662.

Similarly, the 1978 semi-postal souvenir sheet for the Moscow Olympic Games is listed in the Soviet Catalog as having a six figure index number, with an issue of 500,000. A Moscow collector illustrated two sheets with seven figure index numbers, Nos. 0490488 and 0490489.

Are these simply printer's problems or should we be suspect of the number issued data?

## Unusual Varieties...

Collectors of USSR issues are familiar with the 1965 issue printed on aluminum foil, two stamps with different designs commemorating Cosmonauts Day. Moscow collector G. Markhasin reported this issue was intended to be issued in 1964. In the magazine *Filateliya*, No. 7, 1996 he showed the two designs printed side by side on aluminum and gold colored foil, each stamp bearing the date 1964. Both pieces were imperforate and appear to be trial printings with 6-7 mm margins on the sides. Markhasin states the foil stamps were not issued in 1964 because of unresolved printing difficulties. He also reported these designs printed on thick paper in black.

## Exhibitor Extraordinarius...

One of America's most prolific and successful philatelic exhibitors is member **Alfred F. Kugel**. In show after show, Mr. Kugel has garnered gold, vermeil, research and Military Postal History Society awards for his military postal history exhibits. Not only does he have outstanding U.S. and Allied Intervention in

Russia exhibits, but also award winning exhibits on British, German, Italian, French, and Japanese military postal history.

In the 1996 World Series of Philately sponsored by the American Philatelic Society in which all national grand award winners compete for the title Champion of Champions, Mr. Kugel had three qualifying exhibits.

In the upcoming international show PACIFIC 97 in San Francisco, only one entry per exhibitor is allowed. Mr. Kugel must have had a difficult time deciding which exhibit to submit. The entries for frames at PACIFIC 97 were overbooked by a factor of two, but there must have been room for one of Mr. Kugel's exhibits as well as for other successful Rossica exhibitors. Our best wishes for success to all.

## PACIFIC 97 Update...

The U.S. decennial international philatelic exhibition, PACIFIC 97, will be held at Moscone Center in San Francisco, California on May 29-June 8, 1997 with nearly 4000 exhibit frames and an enormous bourse. the largest philatelic show ever on the west coast. (Actually it is 11 years since AMERIPEX in 1986. The show was delayed a year to coincide with the 150th anniversary of the first US postage stamp.)

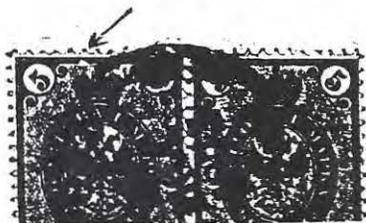


Rossica will hold its annual general meeting at 10 AM and a two hour seminar at 2 PM, both on Sunday, June 1st. So far, speakers include **Alfred F. Kugel** on "Allied Intervention in Russia 1918-1925" and **George B. Shaw** on "Postal History of the Post Soviet Period." There will be a society table at the show as well with society information. If time permits, Rossica President **David Skipton** will speak on the "History of the Rossica Society."

## From the Mailbox...

Member **Michael Ercolini** sends a folded letter used locally in Riga in 1873 with a pair of lilac 5 kopek stamps of the 1866 issue on horizontally laid paper. One stamp has a clearly visible break in the inner top black frame. This variety is not listed in the Lobachevski Catalog (Rossica # 94/95, 1978) nor in the Maiorov Varieties of Russian Stamps Catalog (Moscow, 1989).

Beneath the break, one can clearly see the lilac background. Therefore if the printing plate had a nick or break, there should be other copies. The only other explanation would be some foreign object on the paper at the time the black impression was made, in which case this is not a plate variety but simply a chance printing effect.

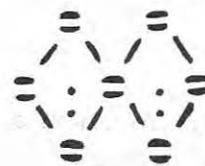


Mr. Ercolini also enclosed a nice cover to the USA from St. Petersburg with a copy of the inverted background 10 kopek blue stamp of the 1902-05 issue. In this case one needs a magnifier to see the inverted background. This becomes easy if one uses the characteristics of the invert defined by long ago member Rimma Sklarevski in Rossica Journal No. 48, 1956.

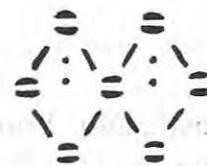
Looking at the background anywhere on the stamp, one sees diamond-shaped patterns made up of dots and dashes. Within these diamonds, there are two dots which are the keys to easy identification of the inverted background.

On the normal background there is one dot in the center and one dot in the lower half of the diamond pattern. On stamps with inverted

background, there is one dot in the center and one dot in the upper half of the diamond pattern. Remember to use a magnifier!



normal



inverted

In examining loose stamps and covers over the past 20 years, it appears the inverted background variety is more common than the catalog values suggest. It is a different story with this issue when overprinted for use in Turkey and China.

The Offices in Turkey overprint on the inverted stamp shows about the same premium as does the un-overprinted stamp. But the Offices in China overprint on both the normal and inverted background stamps are rarities. In the December 1996 George Alevizos Auction, there is an unused block of four with the Offices in China overprint on the normal stamp, estimated at \$7500-10,000. A very fine unused inverted background single with this overprint is estimated at \$4000-5000.

It is worth knowing how to identify the backgrounds on this stamp.

## PACIFIC 97 Help Wanted...

Rossica and the Canadian Society of Russian Philately will share an information table at PACIFIC 97 with literature for sale. Help is needed to man this table for a while at various times during the show. Please seriously consider this request, one, for the society, and two, to be able to sit down for a spell. Space to rest will be very limited at this show unless one purchases a special privilege Golden Gate Room ticket. Most dealer booths will be stand-up counters.

Send a note to the president if you can help.

## Mailing Suggestions Continued...

Two interesting responses arrived following the note in the last bulletin about pitfalls of mailing to eastern Europe.

Member **Philip Robinson** feels mail service through Germany is leaky, partly due to stamp collectors who work at their post offices. Ordinary and registered mail are both at risk. Whereas the higher German rate "Wertbrief" is safe, all mail from abroad is treated as the cheaper "Einschreiben" rate regardless of rate paid.

Mr. Robinson adds that in the period of 1981 to 1991 his massive correspondence with fellow author Anatoly Kiryushkin in Minsk was quite reliable, with only three letters returned marked "Inadmissible Contents" and two lost letters from nearly 800 mailings.

It's a different story today. Mr. Robinson feels ordinary mail to Belarus is safer than registered which is almost routinely opened and rifled. Thin letters are safer but this is no guarantee. Another ruse is to insert things in plain-looking magazines, to appear as Printed Matter, but paid with ordinary rate. An odd stamp, etc. can be enclosed in an aerogramme (not legal, but who checks.) Mr. Robinson's correspondents in St. Petersburg have their foreign mail posted from Finland and a Kharkov friend has his sent from Slovakia.

Canadian member **Paul Burega** has had better experience in the past three years, using registered mail to all 15 republics of the former USSR. With over 600 mailings, less than 35 arrived with contents missing, for which he was reimbursed by the Canadian Post by diligently filing claim forms.

He found costs of wire transfer of funds too high for what he would send. Lithuania would accept his ordinary Canadian bank personal check, Kyrgyzstan would accept a

dollar check with a New York clearing house number for a 2 1/2 % fee. It is similar for Ukraine. He also sends ordinary checks and cash in air mail letters, but he warns registered letters to Ukraine are oftentimes pilfered whereas ordinary mail is not and vice versa!

In his 600 mailings, Mr. Burega sometimes included US banknotes. Those dated 1990 or later receive 100% of value. Those printed earlier are redeemed at only 70%. He doesn't seal envelopes in a special way except to affix the registry label, and he tracks his mailings with requests for "avis de reception" or what we regard as acknowledgement of receipt.

The bulletin editor's own experience with mail to Estonia is to sandwich a banknote between two picture postcards within a registered letter. When held up to a light, nothing can be seen. All in all from everyone's different stories, there still seems to be a certain amount of risk in sending things to this part of the world. It may be the same wherever economic pressures are a strain on normal living as we know it.

## Rossica Journal Report...

Don't blame editor **Gary Combs** if your Fall 1996 journal No. 127 arrived later than you expected. When he took the copy to the printer, he found a For Rent sign on a padlocked door. It seems the old printer went out of business without informing any of the customers. Gary had to scramble about to find another printer.

In 1997 there will be only one issue of the journal, a special double issue of more than 300 pages. This is a special joint issue with the British Society of Russian Philately.

Lastly, please send your notes, articles, researches, or discoveries to the journal. You say you can't write? Don't worry, editorial help is available to polish your efforts for print. Let's get the word out for all to see.

## Printing Plate Varieties...

In the Russian journal *Filateliya*, No. 4, 1996 collector B. Maryanov stated he had the opportunity to examine thousands of copies of the Imperial Russian 5 kop. stamp of the 1866 issue, lilac with black frame. Among them he found several varieties which were not indicated in the Lobachevski or Maiorov catalogs and feels they are indeed constant varieties, as illustrated below.

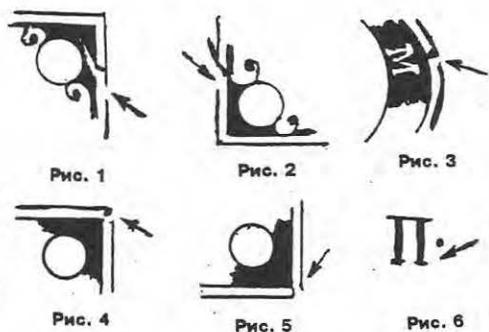


Fig. 1 shows a scratch of the upper left frame extending toward the numeral circle.

Fig. 2 shows a broken frame line at the lower left, with the fragment remaining slanted upward to the left.

Fig. 3 shows a broken oval line opposite the letter "M" in the center with the fragment in the white space of the oval.

Fig. 4 shows a broken frame line in the upper right corner with the fragment as a dot in the white space.

Fig. 5 shows a similar break in the lower right corner.

Fig. 6 shows a missing lower dot after the letter " II " in " К О II ".

The author says he has 20 copies of the variety in fig. 1 which he feels occurred early in the printing. The other varieties he feels occurred later with several copies confirmed

among various collector friends.

One must remember that the black frame and background inks on this 1866 issue are easily damaged by water immersion. All kinds of movement of the black frame lines are possible, depending on how used stamps were soaked off paper. Ideally, it would be nice to confirm such varieties on well preserved unused stamps.

The bulletin editor examined over a hundred copies in his possession and found none of these varieties. Further examination is encouraged to determine if these, especially figs. 2-6, are true varieties.

## Inflated Subscriptions...

Readers who subscribe locally to the Russian journal *Filateliya* may be feeling the pressure of Russian inflation as much as poor Ivan Ivanovich Ivanov. Look at the rates for an annual subscription of 12 issues.

1971	\$4.00
1975	7.00
1980	11.50
1985	18.00
1990	24.50
1995	66.00
1997	126.00

Current issues carry announcements of direct subscription for \$36 for the first 6 issues in 1997 which seems like a bargain in comparison to subscribing from a domestic bookstore. Local subscriptions come direct from Moscow via Budapest and not all issues arrive. The bulletin has lost one issue per year for the last five years. Since the direct subscription would come from the same place, any loss would be less expensive but not more palatable.

The issues suppose to arrive by airmail, but are usually two-three months late.

## Rossica Medalists

### CAPEX 96 in Toronto, Canada

- Roger P. Quinby "Russian Stamps and Postal Stationery Used in Finland, 1891-1918"  
Large Vermeil
- Alfred G. Kugel "The Allied Intervention in Russia, 1918-1925" Vermeil

(Apologies to both of the above for omitting them from the CAPEX announcement in the last bulletin.)

### Philadelphia National Stamp Exposition, Philadelphia, PA

- George G. Werbizky "Ostarbeiter (Eastern Workers) Mail in World War II"  
Vermeil and American Philatelic Society Research Award

### MILCOPEX in Milwaukee, WI

- John Briggs "Communism in the Land of Radiant Tomorrow" Silver and Rossica Award

### Redwood Empire Stamp Show in San Rafael, CA

- George Shalimoff "Romanov Postal Stationery Envelopes" (one frame) Silver

### East Bay Collectors Club Show in Concord, CA

- George Shalimoff "Peter the Great" (one frame) Gold

### PENPEX in Redwood City, CA

- George Shalimoff "Romanov Tercentenary Issue of Russia" Gold

The following Rossica members competed in the 1996 World Series of Philately by virtue of winning Grand Awards in national shows. Special congratulations to all.

### APS STAMPSHOW 96 in Orlando, FL

#### Prix D'Honneur

- Roger P. Quinby "Finland's 1918 Temporary Wartime Vaasa/Wasa Issue"
- G. A. Ackerman "Via the Red Skies: The Development of the Soviet Air Mail Service"
- Alfred G. Kugel "Over There: U.S. Forces Abroad in WW I and Its Aftermath"  
"The Allied Occupation of Germany: 1918-1935"  
"Italian Forces Abroad"
- Dr. James Mazepa "Mexico: 1856 and 1861 Issue"

-----  
**Literature Sources...(See also your current Rossica Journal #127 for reviews and sources)**

From **Stochastic Press, P.O. Box 35542, Tucson, AZ 85740, USA:**

"Central Lithuania: Specialized Stamp Catalog" by A. G. Pacholczyk. 207 pgs (in English), Perfect-bound (?) \$67.50 plus \$3 domestic, \$5 foreign postage, check on US banks in dollars only.

**Auction:** Late Rossica President Gorden Torrey's collection is slated for auction with Corinphila Zurich next spring. For information write them at P.O. Box Ferrohaus, CH Zurich, 8034 (Switzerland), or phone 31-383-1060.

## Expertization Feedback...

The note about expertization marks in the last bulletin brought two interesting responses. In a series of articles in the journal POCHTA Nos. 6-10 ( New Zealand Russian Philatelic Society) member **George G. Werbizky** compiled a list with illustrations of more than 70 markings, gleaned from literature and his collection. His original interest was in the markings found on Russian civil war issues, primarily authenticating the various surcharges on Russian stamps. He added the markings of the Soviet Philatelic Agency used on earlier Soviet issues.

Mr. Werbizky notes that many stamps in his collection have more than one marking, suggesting to him that previous collectors had the stamps reexamined when they changed hands. This also suggests to him that multiple markings are indeed a sign of genuineness.

He was unable to identify all the experts from the marks nor was he able to assign definite time periods of use. However, he felt confident about the following expert marks:

1. ROSS (A. M. Rosselevitch, deceased about 10 years ago)
2. Dr. R. J. Ceresa (still active, Great Britain)
3. Z. S. Mikulski (still active, Switzerland)
4. Rossica (Rossica Society in the USA)
5. ROMEKO (deceased about 10 years ago, Paris, France)
6. W. Pohl (deceased about 15 years ago, West Germany).

One still should be wary since marks have been faked (Rossica No. 106/107) and in later years some of the deceased on occasion simply were careless.

Member **Tony Speeckaert** sent copies of expertization letters he received in 1962 and 1965 from S. Rockling (Romeko, Paris) where Mr. Rockling states he found the stamps in

question to be authentic and adds "And so we signed it" and "I place my mark of guarantee." The certificate letter head states "Maison Romeko Philatelistes Experts." along with categories of Russian stamps for sale.

Many, many years ago the bulletin editor asked a well known New York auction house and stamp dealer the significance of their mark on a particular stamp. Their reply was "We feel this is a very collectable item."

## For the Variety Seekers...

There are small shifts of letters on the 1954 overprint commemorating the 300 anniversary of the union of Ukraine with Russia, shown below. (Scott no. 1709) A recent note says there is another, in between types I and II.

### ВОССОЕДИНЕНИЯ

УКРАИНЫ

УКРАИНЫ

УКРАИНЫ

С  
РОССИЕЙ

С  
РОССИЕЙ

С  
РОССИЕЙ

Тип I

Тип II

Тип III

Type I

Type II

Type II

A shortened first letter "P" in the third word of the top line of the 1973 souvenir sheet commemorating the 30th Anniversary of the Defeat of the Fascists at Stalingrad was reported. (Scott no. 4055)

The 1954 60 kop. stamp commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the Defense of Sevastopol in the Crimean War is known with a line connecting the first letter "T" of the first word on the top line with the frame line above. (Scott no. 1727)



\*\*\*\*\*

Do you have comments for the bulletin?  
Write to **George V. Shalimoff, 5820 Ross Branch Road, Sebastopol, CA, 95472 USA.**