

BULLETIN OF THE ROSSICA SOCIETY OF RUSSIAN PHILATELY



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Seek and Ye Shall Find

It is always exciting when an old subject presents a new question. At PACIFIC 97 Mr. Leroy Collins of Virginia, a collector of Imperial Japanese commemorative post cards, found a card with an unusual Russian marking, shown here in reduced size.



The card pictures decorated Japanese warships at Port Arthur commemorating Emperor Meiji's birthday, February 11, 1905 with an inset photograph of Admiral Tojo. The card was postmarked Tokyo, Feb. 16, 1905 on a 1 1/2 sen stamp (underpaid 1 1/2 sen) with a rubber stamped return address of a Belgian construction unit building railways in China.

In addition to the Japanese stamp on the picture side, there are two other stamps. One is a one cent Chinese Imperial Post stamp with a boxed marking on the address side with Chinese characters which we are told spells Xing tai. The other is a Russian 1 kop. stamp on the picture side with a boxed cyrillic

marking "З Е Х Т Е . Ф У" or Xing tai (Hsing-tai) (Note: The National Geographic Society map spells this Hsingt-ai.) This town is about 200 miles inland, about 200 miles south-south west of Peking.

Our usual information source for Russian post offices abroad, Tchilinghirian and Stephen, makes no mention of a Russian office in Hsing-tai. Although the Russian marking on this post card may not be a postal marking or any other official Russian marking, it is curious why it should appear on this card at all. Can readers offer an explanation?

The same collector showed a Japanese picture post card registered and posted June 21, 1902 from Tientsen, China with a pictorial UPU anniversary datestamp to Germany with neat transit strikes of the Shanghai Imperial Japanese Post Office and Hong Kong G.P.O. But what makes this card more interesting is an oval Russian Volunteer Fleet Agent in Nagasaki marking on the picture side. This suggests the card was purchased from the Volunteer Fleet Agent's office. Is that a reasonable explanation?

Whatever the reasons for such Russian markings on these Japanese picture post cards, the lessons learned here are that interesting Russian markings are found on postal communications of other countries. It may pay the Russia postal history collector to look at the other sections of dealers cover boxes.

Rossica Annual General Meeting...

The Rossica annual general meeting at PACIFIC 97 attracted one of the largest assemblages of members one could remember, nearly 40 in all. The highlight of the gathering was an excellent presentation of Allied Intervention in Russia following World War I by **Mr. Alfred Kugel**. His slides of postal history covers from each of the forces involved in the intervention were breathtaking.

The general meeting itself seemed to be a missed opportunity. The journal editor's report was neither praised nor criticized. There were no requests for articles on specific subjects which may be of interest. One can only assume that the journal content is fine as is and that it fully satisfies everyone's needs.

Similarly there was no comment to the president's announcement of the proposed publishing plans, whether what was proposed was a good idea, desirable, or not. Perhaps it is just this apathy that is responsible for this slate of offices not to seek reelection.

Rossica turns over about 10% of its membership each year. Many new members remain members for only a year. What is the reason? It appears Rossica is not filling their expectations. But if these expectations are not voiced, then how can the society react and adjust? Members must make their opinions and desires known. Perhaps it's time for a membership survey.

Nevertheless, PACIFIC 97 was a fun time for Rossica members who attended. In addition to the excellent exhibits and huge bourse, they enjoyed two excellent presentations by **George Shaw** and **Alex Sadovnikov** on Post USSR Postal Conditions and the Soviet Foreign Exchange Stamps, respectively. Both subjects are worthy of award winning exhibits and journal articles.

Hats off to **Michael Ann Gutter** who hosted a super reception and to **Mike Renfro** who organized a Sunday night dinner at a local Russian restaurant, both events giving ample time for socializing. And special thanks to the numerous members who took turns at the Society table, which served as a fine meeting place for members to sit down and chat about everything imaginable.

All About Holes...

Most Imperial Russia collectors are familiar with Russian stamps with initials or numbers perforated on them. These are called perfin. The commonly found examples are usually from the Moscow or Odessa post offices as well as others. Sometimes the perforations appear to be parts of words.

An interesting "X.K." perfin was reported in Filateliya, No. 6, 1996 as being from the Kharbarovsk Krai (region) in the Far East. The writer had examples on 1 and 5 ruble values, perfed and imperf., 3.50 and 10 ruble perfed stamps. Used examples were canceled Vladivostok in the period July 1918 to February 1919. The same initials were reported on unused 2, 4, and 5 kop. stamps of the 1921 Far Eastern Republic issue.

The Soviet souvenir sheet issued in 1958 and overprinted in 1962 commemorating the North Pole Drifting Station (Scott # 1767a) has four perforated stamps in the center of the sheet. If one looks carefully, there can be 10, 11, or 12 extra holes outside the rectangle of perforation holes surrounding the stamp. These extra holes appear as extensions of the horizontal or vertical perforation lines surrounding the stamps.

While on this subject of holes, the 1914 large semi-postals perfed 11 1/2 can have perf. holes of 1.3, 1.1, and 0.9 mm in diameter on stamps with colored backgrounds, and 1.3 and 1.1 mm holes on stamps with white paper.

PACIFIC 97 Exhibit Highlights...

Member **Paolo Bianchi's** Large Gold winning Imperial Russia exhibit was breath taking. There were beautiful essays of proposed indicia, 4 essay indicia covers, and 3 No. 1 essays, along with a full sheet of the No. 1 watermarked paper, first day covers dated "31/12/57" and 1/1/58, a mint No. 1, 10 used copies, 2 pairs, a strip of 3, pairs on cover and a beautiful combination cover with No. 1 and No. 4.

The second issue started off with unique mint blocks of four of Nos. 2, 3, and 4 (ex Casperly and Liphschutz). No. 4 was also shown on cover along with a De La Rue Trial sheet.

Subsequent issues showed essays and proofs, partial sheets, large blocks, and numerous attractive covers with unusual destinations.

Ms. Ulla Ecklund of Finland won a Large Vermeil for her Imperial Russia exhibit, beginning with a stampless 1785 cover from St. Petersburg. She also showed a mint No. 1 with 11 used copies on and off cover, 3 No. 2's on cover, a pair of the 20 kop. No. 3 on cover, and a No. 4 on cover! Subsequent issues showed stunning trial proofs, bright covers and even an 1889 15 kop. with an inverted center.

Filateliya magazine investigations editor A. Ya. Pevzner won a Large Vermeil for his exhibit of Soviet 1929-41 definitive issues, showing numerous printing varieties, shades, proofs, and sizes.

Member **Roger Quinby** also won a Large Vermeil for his Russian Stamps Used in Finland. His exhibit included 21 examples of Romanov stamps used in Finland, combination covers, including the black Soumi protest label used with Russian stamps on cover. Various types of postal usages included package tags, money orders, insured mail, registered, money

enclosed, etc. All examples were exceptionally clean and visually attractive.

Russia Philatelic Society President A.S. Ilyushin won a Large Vermeil for a stunning exhibit of Imperial Russian Postal Cards and Letter Cards 1872-1917. By their nature postal stationery exhibits are rather dull and static with page after page of seemingly identical material, but the detail of research as shown in this exhibit was remarkable. There were numerous paper, color varieties and detailed printing varieties, such as minutia in length of lines, size of type, shapes of letters, etc. This exhibit was really a textbook of this material.

Unusual highlights were several essays of postal cards which were significantly oversize compared to the issued cards, something I don't recall seeing mentioned elsewhere.

Former Rossica President **Adolph Ackerman** won a Gold for his outstanding exhibit of Soviet Airmail Development. His pages are filled with fantastic covers tracing various airmail routes. Commercial (non-philatelic) covers far outweighed the usual philatelic material we often see in auction catalogs.

Russian exhibitor S. Posnahirko earned a Large Silver for a fine exhibit of Cosmic Post, highlights of which included covers actually flown into orbit and canceled aboard the space station. A similar exhibit by a German entrant was disqualified for having too many fake covers. Juries do track exhibit anomalies!

Member **Timo Bergholm's** fine effort on Russian Railway Postmarks earned him a Silver medal. It was a nice display of postal cards and covers with the distinctive oval RR markings. Unfortunately my Volunteer Coordinator duties at PACIFIC 97 did not allow me time to study this or other exhibits in as much detail as I would have liked. Nevertheless, it was a privilege to see these presentations. Thank you, all.

Rossica Medalists at PACIFIC 97

We congratulate the following 11 Rossica members who entered exhibits in the PACIFIC 97 International Exhibition. Thanks for the great displays of your collections and research!

- G. Adolph Ackerman** "Via the Red Skies: The Development of the Soviet Air Mail Service 1922-1945" Gold
- D.J. Aggersburg** "Stanley Gibbons Catalogue, Part 1 (British Commonwealth) Vol. 1-2." Large Silver (Literature)
- "Collect British Stamps" Large Bronze (Literature)
- "Great Britain Specialized Catalogue. Vol. 4, QEII Decimal Issues, Definitives" Large Vermeil (Literature)
- "Part 19 (Middle East) 5th Edition, Stanley Gibbons" Silver (Literature)
- "Part 21 (South-East Asia) 3rd Edition, Stanley Gibbons" Silver (Literature)
- Timo Bergholm** "Different Types of Imperial Russian Railway Postmarks" Silver
- Paolo Bianchi** "Imperial Russia" Large Gold and Special Award-Ceramic plate with doll paintings, donated by the Japanese Philatelic Federation.
- Paul Burega** "Postal History of the New Republics of the Former USSR" Good in Modern Philately Section
- Kaj Hellman** "Finland, Railway Mail" Large Vermeil
- Alfred F. Kugel** "Allied Intervention in the Boxer Rebellion" Gold
- "The German Pacific Possessions - Postmarks and Usages" Court of Honor
- Derek Palmer** "Postal Stationery of Chile, Including Proofs, Specimens, & Errors" Large Vermeil
- Roger P. Quinby** "Russian Stamps and Postal Stationery Used in Finland, 1891-1918" Large Vermeil
- Robert Taylor** "The Cape Before the Triangles" Large Silver
- Alfonso G. Zulueta** "Nepal: The Classic Period, 1881-1907" Large Vermeil

Another Exhibitor Extraordinaire...

In the last issue we noted the success of member Alfred F. Kugel in exhibiting his excellent collections of military postal history. Member **Alfonso G. Zulueta Jr.**, has been equally successful in national and international shows with his exhibits of the classic period of Nepal and stamps and postal history of Afghanistan in the reigns of Habibullah Khan and Amir Amanullah Khan. He has no less than 6 gold awards plus an APS award of excellence and a Prix d'Honneur at the 1996 APS Champion of Champions for his Grand Award exhibit of Nepal. One of his exhibits has been accepted for PACIFIC 97 and we see he has earned a Large Vermeil in his first try. Although not a Russia exhibitor, Mr. Zulueta has been collaborating with former Rossica president **G. Adolph Ackerman** on air mail covers of Mongolia and Afghanistan.

Tuva Trailer...

Long time member **Lloyd C. Kannenberg** sends a welcome literature list of Tuva stamps and postal history, starting with a series of articles in "Rossica" by A. Cronin and W.S.E. Stephens, an article by S. Blekhman on the 1932-33 local surcharges, the "Tuva Catalog" by Richard Kanak, a new catalog by the Tannu Tuva Collectors Society, and an article by late member Souren Sebrakian in the China Society Magazine about Tuva's final local issues.

Also listed was a critical review of the S. Blekhman booklet and article by member **Andrew Cronin** which Mr. Kannenberg couldn't recall where it was printed. However, this bulletin found Mr. Cronin's 24 page thesis as the lead article in the premier issue of "Yamshchik" (The Post-Rider) Sept. 1977.

Mr. Kannenberg's letter emphasizes the importance of searching out the available literature if one is to make a meaningful study

of any particular issue. And where do you find this literature? You ask your friends, other collectors, dealers, and your society's library. Bits and pieces will appear that will make collecting more enjoyable.

Thanks for the Notes...

The bulletin appreciates the notes and kind words received from old time members **Derek Palmer** in Chile and **Col. Asdrubal Prado** in Brazil. Similarly, thanks for the notes from **Don Powell** in Alaska and **Michael Ercolini** from close to home. Comments and questions are always encouraged, and if you indeed have a specific philatelic discovery, share this with the Rossica Journal editor. The society's journal is the best place to new information because the journal is found in all major philatelic libraries, primary sources for all serious philatelists.

Mr. Ercolini wrote that he saw an announcement in the Nov-Dec 96 issue of Topical Time of the publication of a book "Soviet Stationery 1953-1977" by Gerrie Coerts and Linda Nizova, 242 pages, \$35 postpaid from Rossija Filatele in The Netherlands. This bulletin editor sent a check in March and a follow-up letter in June. So far no response, check has not been cashed. Does anyone know anything about this book and publisher?

Philip E. Robinson announces a 1997 supplement to his book "Siberia: Postmarks and Postal History of the Russian Empire Period" with over 300 newly-recorded postmarks and a special illustrated section of the Trans-Siberian Railway, some illustrations in "FULL COLOUR!"

Cost is 12 pounds sterling, or US \$20 postpaid by airmail. Payment in cash preferred. Add \$6 for personal checks. Send orders to: P.E. Robinson, 2 Rydalhurst Avenue, Sheffield, S6 4BG England.

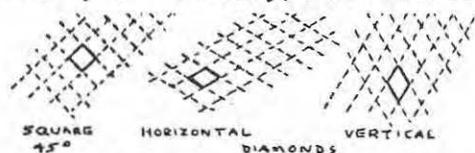
Diamonds and Squares...

When photographs are used for the illustration on a postage stamp, special methods are used to make the printing plate in order to correctly reproduce the continuous tones of the photo on the printing paper. The continuous tones are broken up into small dots of various sizes which are printed on the papers which our eyes blend back into a continuous tone. The process is commonly called photogravure.

We see it everyday in our newspapers and magazines. The dots used on the plates for newspapers are very coarse and readily visible, whereas the dots used on illustrations in better magazines are extremely fine so that the reproduction more nearly duplicates the original detail. With black and white photographs the dots are black or one color if the reproduction is colored. With multi-color pictures, the dots are combinations of the three primary colors and black.

The dots are made by copying the photograph onto a printing plate through a screen. The finer the screen, the better is the reproduction of the detail.

Many Soviet stamps, especially in the late 1930's and 1940's, are photogravure stamps. Three different types of screens were commonly used, a square pattern tilted 45 degrees and a diamond pattern positioned horizontally or vertically, as shown below.



One needs more than an ordinary magnifier to see these patterns on stamps. Usually a good eyepiece or 10X magnifier will suffice. On some stamps the patterns are very smudged, apparently due to wear of the printing plate.

The interesting thing about screens with respect to Soviet stamps is that stamps of

many issues can be found printed with two and sometimes even three different screens. So in fact there are printing screen varieties not mentioned in our catalogs. However, they have been documented in the British Journal of Russian Philately as far back as 1962 and more recently in the Soviet and Russian philatelic magazines. The lists are too long to simply include here. For some issues one can usually find all the screen varieties of a particular stamp if one searches long enough. But there are many that are very difficult to find, which only adds to the fun of the chase.

Some examples:

Scott # 886 is printed with both horizontal and vertical diamond pattern screens.

Scott # 1075 is printed with the tilted square screen and a vertical diamond pattern screen.

Scott # 1417 is printed with a tilted square screen and horizontal diamond pattern screen.

Scott # 1058 is found with all three screens, tilted square, horizontal and vertical diamonds.

Very hard to find are Scott # 1150 with a square screen, the usual has the diamond pattern vertically, and Scott # C77 with square screen, where the usual screen is the horizontal diamond pattern.

Many of the issues of this period are found with perforation varieties as well. Some but not all the perforation varieties exist with the screen varieties. For example, Scott # 784 perforated 12 1/2 exists with horizontal and vertical diamond screens, but the same stamp perforated 12 x 12 1/2 only exists with the horizontal screen. So when you add this all up, there can be many individual varieties of any particular set.

Curiously, Scott # 2309 is found with a square screen tilted 45 degrees and about 82 degrees.

Rossica Medalists

On a previous page all Rossica members who won awards at PACIFIC 97 were listed regardless of the subject of their exhibit. Here we return to our usual listing of Rossica members who won awards in shows for their Russia or Russian-related exhibits. Once again, apologies to our foreign award winning exhibitors because their names are not mentioned in American philatelic media. But they can always write to the bulletin for inclusion so that all members can appreciate their efforts.

Milcopex 96 in Milwaukee, WI

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

Aripex 97 in Tucson, AZ

G. Adolph Ackerman "The Russian Arctic" Vermeil & Polar Philatelist Post 1950 Award

George A. Hall "Russian Activities in the Arctic" Vermeil

PIPEX in Salem, Oregon

George V. Shalimoff "Romanov Tercentenary Issue of Russia" Gold

Sarasota National Stamp Exhibition in Sarasota, FL

John Briggs "In the Service of the State 'Building a Public Image for the Young Soviet Union 1923-1941'" Gold & American Philatelic Society Creativity Award

APEX in Anchorage, Alaska

George A. Hall "Russians in the Arctic" Gold

TEXPEX in Dallas, TX

John Briggs "In Service of the State" Vermeil

Happy Anniversary...

Congratulations to members **Andrew Cronin** and **Alex Artuchov** on the 20th anniversary of their journal "Yamshchik" (The Post Rider) for their Canadian Society of Russian Philately. It signifies 20 years of dedication to bringing new and interesting insights of all phases of Russian and Russian-related philately to collectors worldwide. Both probably rank as the longest reigning editor and publisher of a Russian specialist journal in history.

The anniversary issue favored readers with its first ever color plates to illustrate an article by noted exhibitor and expertizer Ing. Zbigniew S. Mikulski, titled "Postage Stamps of Imperial Russia 1866-1899."

Rossica Journal...

As indicated in previous issue of this bulletin, there will be a single issue of the Rossica Journal this year, a double issue of more than 120 pages. This is a joint issue with the British Society of Russian Philately for whatever reason that escapes me at the moment. So for those of you who expected a journal this spring, be patient, this tome is in the works. It will be a winner.

It is very important that members advise the society secretary or the journal editor or the bulletin editor if you move or have a change of mailing address. As an experiment, the last journal issue was mailed as Bulk Mail, which unfortunately is not forwarded if you move.

1925 Foreign Exchange...

The Soviets carefully controlled the foreign exchange of postage stamps by collectors with specific rules and fees. The large semi-postal issues of Russia were overprinted for this purpose as shown below.

5 kop. on 1 kop. red brown and dark green on yellow background, perf. 13 1/2

10 kop. on 3 kop. lilac red and olive on rose background, perf. 11 1/2

15 kop. on 1 kop. red brown and dark green on yellow background, perf. 13 1/2

25 kop. on 7 kop. brown and dark green on yellow background, perf. 13 1/2

50 kop. on 1 kop. yellow brown and gray, perf. 11 1/2

75 kop. on 10 kop. dark blue and brown, perf. 11 1/2

- a. perf. 12 1/2
- b. perf. 13 1/2

1 rub. on 3 kop. red and gray, perf. 11 1/2

- a. perf. 12 1/2
- b. perf. 13 1/2
- c. 1 rub. on 7 kop. brown and blue green perf. 12 1/2 (misprint)

The horizontal text at left and right reads "The plenipotentiary for philately and banknotes", with the diagonal words in large letters reading "Foreign Exchange." New values in kopeks and rubles were printed at the bottom.



e e

M M

In the horizontal text, there are two letters "e" in the second line on both the right and left sides. The letters "e" can have a horizontal closure or a slanted closure as shown above.

All combinations of the two letters "e" are found on all values, that is: with two horizontal closure letters "e" (Type 1), with two slanted closure letters "e" (Type 2), with the first "e" with horizontal and the second "e" with slanted closures (Type 3), and the first letter "e" slanted and the second "e" with horizontal closure (Type 4).

From their distribution, the first three types are valued equally. The fourth type is valued twice the others. The 5 kop. overprint stamp is found with the second hyphen shortened, but no premium.

There are also varieties of the period after the word "kop." The kopek values with Type 1 letters "e" all have round periods. Square periods are found on Types 2 and 3 overprint on kopek values as well as on 5 and 10 kop. Type 1 stamps. On the ruble value, only square dots are found with Types 1-3. No premiums for any.

Inverted overprints are found on the 5-50 kop. values and on the perf. 12 1/2 varieties for the 75 kop. and 1 rub. values. A red overprint on the 25 kop. value is a color proof.

Finally, the 5 kop. value is found with the letter "M" with slanted legs instead of vertical legs. This is the last letter of the horizontal text. Premium is 1.5 times.

The above was abstracted from the new Russian catalog given in the magazine *Filateliya*, No. 4, 1996.

A Request...

This bulletin editor would appreciate a copy of the prices realized for the Gordon Torrey Auction by Corinphila, June 19-20, 1997.

If you have comments and questions for this bulletin, write to **George V. Shalimoff, 5820 Ross Branch Road, Sebastopol, CA 95472.**