

BULLETIN OF THE ROSSICA SOCIETY OF RUSSIAN PHILATELY



Number 26 WINTER 1997

The Missing Link?

Among postal stationery collectors, the 1875 Imperial postal card listed as No. 3 in most catalogs is so elusive that many question its very existence. The story goes as follows:

In 1872 two cards were issued, a 3 kop. brown on white card for local use, and a 5 kop. green on white for intercity or foreign usage. On the latter there were two sentences numbered 1 and 2 at the bottom. The first sentence took two lines in which the second line consisted of two words "М Ъ С Т А И м п е р і а " meaning "places of the empire."

At the 1874 Congress of the Universal Postal Union in Bern, a uniform postal rate for distant and abroad usages was agreed. Russia replaced its 5 kop. postal card with a green 4 kop. postal card (No. 3) with the same two sentence text in three lines at the bottom. Although designated for use abroad, this card lacked the text "и за границу" meaning "and abroad."

This omission was rectified in 1876 with the issuance of another green 4 kop. postal card where the first sentence at the bottom on the second line had five words "М Ъ С Т А И м п е р і а и з а г р а н и ц у ." This is postal card No. 4.

Postal card No. 3 has been a blank space in many stationery collections. An original listing of Imperial postal cards was the 1928 Chuchin Catalog, where for some reason he

rated card No. 4 with the added text higher than card No. 3, contrary to later catalogs.

A note in The Zeitschrift für Russland-Philatelie, 68, (1997) by new Rossica member Dr. Ortwin Greis of Hamburg announced his acquisition of a used No. 3, postmarked Riga March 5, 1878 to Hamburg, with a March 19, 1878 Hamburg receipt marking on the front and a Poesseldorf marking on the back with the same date. A reduced illustration is shown here.



In his article, the author cites a note in an exhibit by Mr. Leo Nebenzahl in his gold exhibit of 19th century Russian Postal Stationery that postal card No. 3 was issued "just under one half million." Dr. Greis adds that "one may assume that after the discovery of the error (omission of the extra words) a large part of the No. 3 issue was destroyed. Otherwise one cannot explain why this card is so extremely rare."

(continued on next page)

It is interesting to note that the Russian Postal Stationery exhibit by Russia's noted postal stationery researcher and author Alexander Ilyushin at PACIFIC 97 did not have a copy of postal card No. 3. Nor has he ever seen it.

Experts here still question the authenticity of Dr. Greis' card. Although Dr. Greis cites a note in another exhibit, he does not make it clear whether that exhibit had a copy of No. 3. It would be nice to track down the Nebenzahl exhibit. Secondly, the usage of Dr. Greis' card is 1878 three years after its issuance and two years after its replacement. For a card in such short supply as indicated, the late usage seems a bit strange.

Some experts wonder if with today's technology it would it be possible to remove a printed word without damaging the paper beneath it?

Is the missing postal card link still missing or do other copies of this very elusive card lie unnoticed in someone's album?

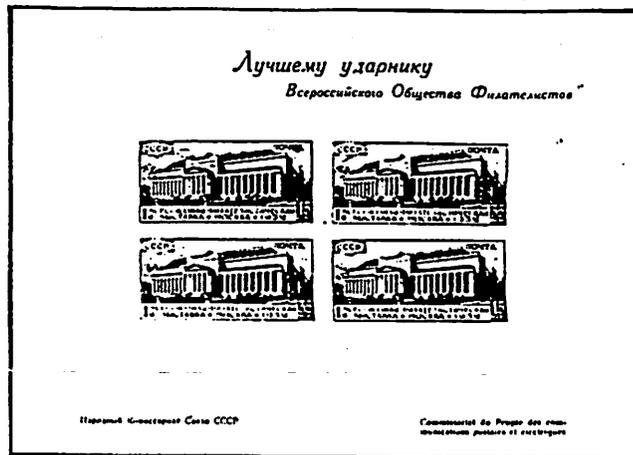
Readers Respond...

Thanks to **Henry Kuipers** in Holland for information about the Soviet Postal Stationery book published by Rossija Filatelie in Holland. The book arrived, a very well done admirable effort, quite useful for Soviet cachet cover collectors of the period 1953-1977.

The response for a copy of the prices realised for the Torrey sale brought responses from members **Jim Goodwin, Mike Renfro, Philip Robinson, Roy Pietruszka, Richard Talbot** and **Herbert Dreimanis** and from long time correspondent **Col. Asdrabul Prado** in Brazil. Special thanks to all. I now have an excess which I can offer to others.

Of special interest in this Torrey sale was lot 8763 the 1932 Moscow Philatelic Exhibition sheet with additional text on the top "To the

best shock worker." Only 25 of these special overprinted sheets were distributed to special dignitaries. Michael catalog rates it at 50,000 German marks. The auction estimate was 9000 Swiss francs. The knock down price was 18,000 SF plus 15% buyer's premium (roughly \$14,425 total).



As a followup to the note in the last Bulletin about the "X.K." perfin attributed to the Khabarovsk Krai on Far Eastern Republic stamps, our secretary **George G. Werbizky** sent a copy of his note in the journal П О Ч Т А on the same subject. He illustrated three examples of Far Eastern Republic stamps with the perforated initials "X.K." which he believes stand for **Х А Б А Р О В С К А Я К О Н Т О Р А** or Khabarovsk Kontora (Office). Whether the letter "K" stands for "Krai" or "Kontora", it doesn't detract from the rarity of a stamp with these perforated letters.

The Journal...

The planned joint issue with the British Society fell apart due to the illness of the British editor. Rossica decided to go it alone and the large volume of 248 pages was mailed the last week of December. A big stumbling block has been how to bind this massive edition, more than twice the size of the usual Rossica Journal. It should be worth the wait. Dues notices were included. Dues are \$20 but the \$2.00 discount will be honored even though past the December 31 deadline through January. Send your remittance to the treasurer.

Stop Press...

In the December 8, 1997 issue of the Stamp Collector, it was announced that eight postmarking devices were reportedly stolen from the Finnish Post Museum in Helsinki sometime in early April 1997. This was originally reported in the October issue of Luren, a publication of the Scandinavian Philatelic Library of Southern California.

These are original devices whose imprints are shown in the reduced illustration here.



Of the eight markings shown one quickly recognizes that several of the markings can be found on Russian stamps used in Finland and on covers from Finland with Russian stamps.

The danger is that these devices may be used to create desirable markings on stamps and covers for sale to unsuspecting collectors. Numerous precedents of such shenanigans are known.

If you have any of this material purchased prior to April 1997, have it expertized to validate authenticity. Receipt or evidence of purchase would be helpful. Beware of any material offered after April 1997.

If such items are offered to you for sale, notify Paul Nelson, Scandinavian Phil. Library of So. Calif., Box 310, Claremont, CA 91711, Finnish police officer Minna Pavas, phone 358-0-189-4632, and Finnish Post Museum, phone 358-204-514-767.

Soviet Bear Becomes a Pussy Cat...

An advertisement in the September 1997 issue of the Russian magazine Filateliya [Philately] (formerly Filateliya SSSR) offers direct subscription of the magazine from the "Marka" Publishing and Trading Center in "Mosckow." A six month subscription is offered for \$60. A portion of the ad is shown below. Note that one may order "Philately" from Pussia.

Издательско-торговый центр "МАРКА"
и журнал "ФИЛАТЕЛИЯ"
объявляет подписку для зарубежных читателей
на первое полугодие 1998 года

"PHILATELY" FROM PUSSIA

*We guarantee the Accuracy of the Information on Postage
Issues of Russia and CIS members Countries*

Literature Worth Reading...

The excellent color illustrated article of Russian Imperial issues in the 20th anniversary issue of The Post Rider, June 1997, mentioned in the last Rossica Bulletin, is followed by an equally beautifully color illustrated article on Russia No. 1 in the September 1997 issue of the German magazine "Philatelie und Postgeschichte." There are enlarged accurate color reproductions of many of the essays and proofs along with photos of a stunning unused block of four and used strip of three.

The author "GDM" referenced previous articles on Russia No. 1 as follows:

- 1) Krötzsch-Handbuch "Die Postmarken des russischen Kaiserreiches " von Dr. med. E. von Bochman, Riga.
- 2) Journal of the Rossica Society of Russian Philately, No. 51, "Russia No. 1" by V. Rachmanov.
- 3) "The 19th Century Issues of Imperial Russia" by Sir John Wilson.
- 4) Soviet Collector No. 14 (1976) and No. 15 (1977) "Imperial Postage Stamps of Russia issued in 1857-1888, by V. Lobachevsky. (see Rossica Journal No. 94/95, 1978)

Dirty Business...

"The Dirty Business of Mr. Feigenbaum" was the title of an article in the January issue of the Russian magazine Filateliya, No. 1, 1997. It dealt with the exploits of British dealer Clive H. Feigenbaum who produces labels or cinderellas for obscure and even non-existing places for sale to collectors and the unsuspecting public. The story was repeated in The Insider column by Les Winick in Linn's Stamp News several times.

Included among Feigenbaum's inventory of unauthorized stamps, labels, and gold plated embossed issues are stamps purported to be issues of Tuva, Batum, and Abkhazia (territories of the former Soviet Union). Some of these were first introduced at the Singapore 95 International Exhibition, complete with missing colors, perforations and other errors.

The Universal Postal Union states that Tuva, Batum, and Abkhazia are not members and these stamps have no international postal validity and that postage stamps may only be issued by government agencies and used at their authorization.

Mr. Feigenbaum has been in the business of producing these colorful labels for nearly thirty years. Although subjected to numerous scandals and legal actions, he has managed to continue his activities.

Noted for his production of colorful stamps and gold plated issues of obscure places within the British Commonwealth under various company names, Mr. Feigenbaum is alleged to have taken advantage of the chaotic restructuring of the Soviet Union into the various independent states, issuing his stamps as the first issue of these newly emerging nations. His ability to successfully advertise his emissions in reputable philatelic places gave some degree of authenticity and legitimacy to his claims on the unsuspecting.

If one wishes to collect labels, that is certainly their prerogative. To pay high prices for colorful pieces of paper that are supposed to be postage stamps of some new country when in reality they are not is foolhardy. It is nice to be on the ground floor of something, but only if it is not held up with hot air.

Moscow 97...

By all accounts, the Moscow 97 show was a philatelic success. Contrary to early concerns, exhibitors got their exhibits in and out without any problems other than some usual custom delays, according to the U.S. exhibits commissioner and jury member from the West Coast. There were 3500 frames of exhibits (about the same size as PACIFIC 97) from 452 entrants, but only 14 entries from the U.S. The pre-show negative publicity kept many U.S. exhibitors from entering the event. There were 112 entries in the Literature class. Foreign dealers were missing due to high booth fees, high hotels rates, inventory fees, a 15% customs tax and a 20% value-added tax.

Two Rossica members had exhibits at Moscow 97 and did quite well. **Roger P. Quinby** received a Gold medal for his exhibit "Russian Stamps and Postal Stationery Used in Finland 1891-1918." Rossica secretary **George G. Werbizky** exhibited his book "Ostarbeiter Mail in World War II" and was very happy to earn a Silver medal. Congratulations to both.

Member **Andrew Cronin** and his Canadian Society of Russian Philately scored a hit with his reproduction of the same 1932 souvenir card shown on page 2 (without overprint) but with his own text commemorating this international philatelic event at Moscow 97, complete with commemorative cancellations.

Russia's prolific researcher and writer Manfred Dobin won the Grand Prix National for his exhibit "St. Petersburg Postal History."

Soviet Postal Advertising Labels...

As part of the New Economic Policy of 1921, the private sector was encouraged to participate in the economic growth of the socialist state. There were more than 6000 private companies in the Soviet Union in 1923 which accounted for more than 80% of the retail business.

To help advertise the goods and services of the state-owned companies, the state advertising-commercial agency called Svyaz (Communication) issued postal advertising labels which could be affixed to an envelope with space for a stamp. Each label had an illustration and text describing a particular product of the state-owned enterprise.

In the period 1923-26, fifty four labels and eight variations were issued. They are approximately 39 by 55 millimeters in size, printed in multicolors. Most were printed by Svyaz as indicated in small print on the label, though some lack this inscription and it is not known whether they were printed by Svyaz or by the company itself. Samples are shown below in reduced size.



Quantities printed range from 50,000 to 0.8 million copies for some labels, totalling many millions in all. Completion of a collection is possible, but will require an extensive search. Labels on covers are most desirable, but usually they are found soaked off. In many cases the stamp attached to the label was soaked off as well and not always re-attached. Labels are found with replaced stamps but with mismatched cancellations.

More Literature...

The Bulletin was remiss in not mentioning an excellent article on the Transnistrian Peoples Republic titled "Transnistria" by member **Jayseth Guberman** in the October 1996 issue of the American Philatelist, journal of the American Philatelic Society. Quite detailed and well illustrated, hopefully a similar version will appear in Rossica Journal soon.

Member **Peter Michalove** also helped spread the faith in the American Philatelist Aug. 1997 with a fine summary titled "The Numeral Dot Cancellations of Russia."

From the company Standart-Kollektiya in St. Petersburg, Russia there is offered a new "Specialized Catalog of the Postage Stamps of the R.S.F.S.R. 1918-1923." Authored by I. S. Brun, M. A. Dobin, V. B. Zagorski, N. F. Mandrovski, and edited by Zagorski, the 140 page book is extremely well-produced, finely illustrated, with color plates, and exceptional detail of stamp varieties of this period. Values are in US dollars. Text is primarily Russian. There is a detailed English Glossary of words used. With Russian inflation, it is best to inquire about cost by mail to Standart-Kollektiya, Box 103, 191186 St. Petersburg, Russia, or fax at (812) 311-96-47, or E-mail: stand-col@pop3.rcom.ru. Originally offered for 192,000 rubles, but the ruble was recently devalued and exchange rates change daily.

From Germany there is a new release "Briefmarken Russlands 1908-1923, Tauschkontrollmarken 1923-1933 Katalog-Handbuch" by Eduard Fomin, 292 pages, with circa 600 illustrations softbound for 145.00 marks, limited hard bound for 180.00 marks from Wina-Verlag, Postfach 2104, D-96012 Bamberg, Germany. Highlights include 30 pages of Romanov proofs and essays. A three page book review appeared in Deutsche Zeitschrift für Russland-Philatelie, 69, (1997). Review is available from the Bulletin editor.

Rossica Medalists

PACIFIC 97 in San Francisco, CA

Björn-Eric Saarinen "Finnish Revenues 1865-1995" Large Vermeil

(Apologies to Mr. Saarinen for our omission of his award along with other PACIFIC 97 exhibitors in the last issue of this Bulletin. Belated congratulations! Mr. Saarinen is a new Rossica member and would like contact with any others interested in Russian Revenue issues.)

STAMPSHOW 97 in Milwaukee, WI

Rossica Members in the World Series of Philately (Grand Award Winners in National Shows)

G. Adolph Ackerman "The Russian Arctic" Prix D'Honneur

Alfred F. Kugel "The German African Possessions Postmarks" Prix D'Honneur
"American Intervention in the Caribbean 1898-1934" Prix D'Honneur

STAMPSHOW 97 Open Competition

John Briggs "In Service to the State" Gold

George V. Shalimoff Bulletin of the Rossica Society of Russian Philately (Periodical) Bronze

BALPEX 97 in Hunt Valley, MD

George G. Werbizky "Ostarbeiter (Eastern Workers) Mail in WWII" Gold
American Philatelic Society Research medal, Postal History Society medal, German Philatelic Society Silver medal

PENPEX '97 Redwood City, CA

M.R. Renfro "Imperial Russia Dotted Numeral Cancellations" Silver

MILCOPEX 97 in Milwaukee, WI

Leroy Ferber "Postmarks From the Last Weeks of the 52 Post Offices of Karelia (1944)" Silver-Bronze

SESCAL 97 in Los Angeles, CA

Alfred F. Kugel "The Rising Sun - Japanese Expansion from 1891-1941" Gold
ROSSICA Award

East Bay Collectors Club Show, Oakland, CA and Redwood Empire Stamp Show, San Rafael, CA

George V. Shalimoff "Russian Revolutionary Overprints" (one frame) Gold, Vermeil

SUNPEX 97 in Sunnyvale, CA

M. R. Renfro "Imperial Russia in the Far East" Gold

At this show members of the Northern California Chapter of the Rossica Society put together 16 pages of various aspects of Russian philately in a one frame informational exhibit.

The President Asks...Let Me Hear From You.

The New Year brings a new administration to the Rossica Society. Its officers and editors serve at their own desire to help foster the fun and study of Russia and Russian-related philately. The journal which is the backbone of any philatelic group depends on the input of those who make a study of their collections and interests and are willing to share them with others by way of a note or article. For the many who have contributed, the society owes deep gratitude and we encourage them to continue to enlighten us with their observations and discoveries.

Just as there have been changes in the world structure which affects our particular interest in this hobby, perhaps some changes or additions need to be made within the society itself. In particular, what would be in the best interest of its members? For example:

Should we make efforts to keep up with the new issues of the new republics of the former Soviet Union? In addition to Russia, we now have stamps issued by Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Tadjikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan as well as from other areas of dubious legitimacy. There are specialty groups for several of these countries already doing an excellent job.

Should we republish articles from old issues of Rossica because few members have a complete series of journals? Should we try to update the information in old articles in some way?

Other than the above, what information would be of most interest to you in our journal? Of late, our journal has been rather heavy in postal history and sparse with articles on stamps. Is this a good mix or should we

strive to improve the mix? Most of us start as stamp collectors and slowly progress into the postal history phase of philately. Do we satisfy the needs of the first stage collectors?

Should we have more effort in small study groups on particular areas with the goal of producing a society monograph on that particular aspect, such as the RSFSR effort by member Geb Seiflow? Should we make better efforts in more timely and faster translations of Russian monographs? How do we encourage more participation in these efforts?

Although our national meeting at PACIFIC 97 was well attended, very little input from the attending members was received. The same is true of our other national meetings with smaller attendances. What do you feel we should be discussing at national meetings? What do we all want from our society?

Our membership total has been rather static, between 350 and 390 members for the last few years. The membership turnover each year is about 10%. Unfortunately, many of those who drop out after a year or so do not tell us how we failed them. If there is no input from the membership, we really do not know where we failed to keep your interest and membership.

The success of the society depends on its members. All of the above suggestions require efforts by members willing to help. We can set off in new exciting directions if you, the members, make real efforts to participate with your time and energy.

Please tell me your feelings, your wants and dissatisfactions. and, most of all, your willingness to help. A letter or postcard is all that is needed. Write to:

**Gary A. Combs, Rossica President
8241 Chalet Court
Millersville, MD 21108**

1925 Foreign Exchange Correction...

Member **Alex Sadovnikov**, who has studied the 1925 Foreign Exchange overprints extensively and gave a presentation on the subject at PACIFIC 97, informs us of a mistatement in the note about these stamps in the last Bulletin. It was stated that there were four types of overprints, determined by the combinations of letters "e" with slanted and horizontal closures. The types were misidentified in the previous Bulletin.

Type 1, both letters "e" have horizontal closures. Type 2 the first "e" has a slanted closure and second "e" with horizontal closure. Type 3 has the first "e" with horizontal closure and second "e" with slanted closure. Type 4, both letters "e" have slanted closures.

The kopek values of Type 1 have round periods after the word "kop.", the Type 1 ruble value has square periods after "rub.". Types 2 and 3 have square periods only.

Mr. Sadovnikov states the Type 4, which the Russian catalog rates at twice the value of the other combinations, is unknown to date.

In addition to the new Russian stamp catalog, information about these overprints appeared in *Filateliya SSSR*, No. 7, 1986. In the latter article, more varieties were listed. for stamps with the two different forms of the letter "M". In addition to the 5 kop. overprint, the two different letters "M" appear on the 10, 15, 25, 50 kop. and 1 rub. values along with some characteristic differences in the letters "o" in the word "kontrol." This once again points out that catalog compilers do not always include all the known observable varieties of any issue. One must study his stamps..

The Pale Thaws...

The persecution of Jews in pre-revolutionary

Russia was as endemic as its Siberian winters. Though professing equality, the Soviet Union still labeled its citizens of Jewish ancestry with internal passports marked that way. For the past 40 years the Soviet Union heavily armed and supported the Arab nations in direct conflict with Israel, propagating Russian anti-Jewish attitude.

But miracle of miracles, we now learn that there will be a joint issue of Russia and Israel to commemorate the translation of Alexander Pushkin's 1833 novel "Eugene Onegin" into Hebrew by the Russian-Jewish poet Abraham Shlonsky. The Israeli souvenir sheet shown here depicts an 1825 caricature of Pushkin on the left, a stamp showing Pushkin and his hero on a bridge overlooking St. Petersburg's Peter and Paul fortress. On the right is a portrait of Ukrainian-born Shlonsky and signature. We can assume the Russian sheet will be similar.



The Bulletin...

In the American Philatelic Society Literature competition for society periodicals, this bulletin earned only a Bronze medal. Perhaps a newer approach is in order. If anyone has better computer skills, has other ideas for making interesting member communications and would like the job, contact me.

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