

BULLETIN OF THE ROSSICA SOCIETY OF RUSSIAN PHILATELY



Number 18

WINTER 1993

Bulletin Editor Recycled

As you may have guessed from the logo on this bulletin, your new editor is an old editor (Dec '84-Jan '89). After a hiatus from philately during which I got married and moved from San Francisco, our president twisted my arm to help with the bulletin once again. Write, contribute items, or send questions for this bulletin to George V. Shalimoff, 5820 Ross Branch Road, Sebastopol, CA 95472, phone (707) 887-7380.

I will generate the bulletin much as I did before, with information about Russian and USSR stamps and covers. The many political changes in what was the USSR have created many new Russia-related states with their own postal systems and stamps. I confess I have not kept up with these philatelic changes and would appreciate any help from anyone in bringing tidbits of information to our membership. Hope to hear from you soon.

Exhibiting

You have been collecting for quite a few years now. You have filled many of those empty spaces in your albums and made a few extra pages of your own for the things that don't fit in the printed spaces. Along the way, you have picked up some uncataloged varieties, a number of interesting and most likely colorful covers and postcards with various postal markings. And so they sit there in your albums. Most likely you also attend the stamp shows in your area, spend too much money at the bourse and perhaps take a minute or two to look at some of the exhibits. But exhibits of Russia related material are few and far between. So you lose interest and go home.

Why not make an exhibit of some of your own material? Start out with a simple one frame (12 or 16 pages) exhibit. There are numerous stamp shows, especially local shows that will accept a single frame of material for display and competition. If you have more material, try for several frames. Pick a specific theme and stick to it. On your title page, say what you will

show. Don't be general, like Stamps of Russia, but instead be specific, like The Moscow Numeral Town Post Cancels, or Printing Varieties of the 1908 Arms Issue.

Your material counts most, but presentation counts a lot, too. Computer generated exhibit pages are quite common now, but you can still produce excellent appearing pages with a typewriter. Unless you are an accomplished calligrapher, don't attempt hand lettering. Judges want just a little text to supplement the philatelic material, not pages of printing or lettering. After all, you are showing your stamps, not your words. Secure your material to the pages well. Encase your pages in transparent holders that are sealed on the bottom and sides. Submit the exhibit to a show, listen to the judges critique, corner a judge to tell you how to improve your effort, go home, change it, and try again. If you win an award, the feeling is great, whatever the level. But more important, you are showing your material, teaching the judges about Russian philately, and encouraging others to learn more about collecting Russian material.

THE PRESIDENT SAYS...

The national Rossica Society meeting will be held at COLOPEX '94 in Columbus, Ohio, April 15-17, 1994 at the Veterans Memorial Center, 300 West Broad St. The Holiday Inn City Center has been selected as the COLOPEX hotel, located at 175 E. Town St. Columbus, OH 43215-4654. COLOPEX will provide shuttle bus service between the hotel and Veterans Center. Columbus is a central location for both eastern Rossica members and those in the Chicago/Central States area.

At present 42 frames of Russian area exhibits have been accepted. Exhibits may be submitted until all frames are filled for the show.

Prospectus available from
Paul H. Gault, 140 West 18th Ave., Columbus, OH 43210. Be sure to mention Rossica, but after January 1st, it's first come first served.

There will be a General Meeting on Sunday April 16th at 1-3 PM, to include a brief business report and status of the society. Highlights will be presentations of the exhibits by members at the frames in the show. It's informal and enlightening to get the word about an exhibit directly from the exhibitor.

The Rossica Social will be Friday April 15th after 6 PM at the hotel. All are invited, with food and fun for all and a chance to meet everyone!

THE TREASURER SAYS...

Thanks to all those members who recently purchased a copy of Peter Michalove's book "The Philatelist's Guide to Maps, Atlases, and Gazetteers of Russia" \$20 to members, available from the treasurer. We are only a few sales away from covering initial costs. Postage for mailing is extra, so for those who did not remit funds to cover postage, please do so, (\$2 for domestic, \$4 for foreign mailing).

PS: 1994 Rossica dues are due. It's \$20, payable to Rossica in care of the treasurer Gary Combs, 8241 Chalet Ct. Millersville, MD 21108.

NEED HELP?

Although many of our members already interact with other collectors/members, some may not be aware that among our ranks are people who can assist in dealing with the Russian and Ukrainian languages. Rossica does not have an official translation service, but members do help one another.

If a member needs assistance in identifying a postmark, address, or a simple translation of a message on a postcard or short letter, please contact the treasurer who will quickly find help. This is not an expertization service but instead help in identification. Good photocopies are acceptable or actual items may be sent. Please include a SASE and funds for any costs for registration/ certification/ insurance if applicable.

NEW ROSSICA SECRETARY PRO TEM

Effective December 1, 1993, we have a new Secretary Pro Tem, George G. Werbizky, 409 Jones Road, Vestal, NY 13850. Let's welcome him..

Members wishing to purchase society items should send their requests to either Gary Combs or David Skipton. Do not send orders to the Pro Tem Secretary or to the previous Secretary. If any member has ordered something from the previous Secretary, requested assistance, etc. and has not received that item or information, please contact the Treasurer as soon as possible. If there was money involved, please send a copy of your letter to the Treasurer or President. They will attempt to resolve all outstanding actions where possible.

QUESTION?

The 1932 Soviet airmail stamps Scott C34-35 commemorating the second International Polar Year are often found with CTO cancellations Franz-Josef Land. Has anyone ever seen a non-philatelic cancellation from the same place?

THE CHAIN CUTTER STAMPS

Although the first issues of the "new" Russia of the 1990's will capture the interest of serious collectors, the first issues of Soviet Russia are no less interesting or controversial. These are the blue 35 kopeks and brown 70 kopeks stamps picturing a hand with sword cutting a chain (Scott 149-150). These stamps were born during the tumultuous period of the 1917 Russian revolution, when in a period of less than a year, there was the downfall and abdication of the czar, the rise and downfall of the Kerensky-led Provisional Government, and finally the rise of the Bolshevik Soviet socialist state whose downfall we have all just witnessed.



For many years Western stamp catalogs as well as some editions of Soviet stamp catalogs described these two stamps as Kerensky or Provisional Government issues with confusing dates of issue. Philatelists in the former Soviet Union in recent years examined postal archives and published their findings that indicate these issues to be really the first issues of Soviet Russia, and not issues of the Kerensky government.

Despite the turmoil of the World War and the continued unrest of the workers, peasants, and soldiers in 1917, the Provisional Government announced a contest for designs of new postage stamps. A design showing a hand holding a sword cutting a chain was chosen from the finalists in mid 1917. It was created by Richard Zarrinsh, the Latvian artist with the Government Printing Office, well known for his work on many of the Imperial issues and the remarkable Romanov jubilee issue of 1913.

Although a design was selected, the Provisional Government gave no orders to print new

stamps, possibly due to the lack of support by various labor organizations, government staff offices, or to the political conditions that led to the overthrow of this government in October 1917. If the stamps were indeed printed during the period of the Provisional Government, their values would most likely have coincided with the postal rates established in August 1917. These values would have been 15 kopeks for an ordinary letter and 20 kopeks for registration.

After the Bolsheviks seized power, N.P. Glebov-Avilov, the Peoples Commissar of the Post and Telegraph, approved a 15 kopeks essay designed by Zarrinsh from a group of five essays with values of 7, 10, 14, 15, and 20 kopeks. Soviet archives contain this card with the 5 essays signed by the commissar with all but the 15 kopeks value crossed out. This could only have occurred in the period of November-December 1917, the period of Glebov-Avilov's term of office. However, once again, no orders to print or issue new stamps were found.

The new Soviet government increased the postal rates on February 28, 1918 to 35 kopeks for an ordinary letter and 70 kopeks for registration. The old czarist issues continued to be used for postage, allegedly proving no new 35 and 70 kopeks stamps were available. It was only on May 22, 1918 that two designs for 35 and 70 kopeks stamps were approved by the new Commissar of the Post and Telegraph, V. N. Podbelsky. These two designs were the same as the 10 and 14 kopeks essays made by Zarrinsh in 1917, but with new colors and values.

The date of issue is confused, with some Soviet documents indicating the stamps were to be issued on the first anniversary of the revolution, October 25, 1918, whereas other documents signed by Podbelsky indicate October 15th as the first day of use. Postal announcements and newspaper stories seem to confer the first use in October 1918 along with covers and cancels on stamps. But searching for this material is complicated by the fact that postal rates were reduced in September 1918 to 25 kopeks for an ordinary letter and 50 kopeks for a registered letter. Later, on January 1, 1919, there was free

franking for an ordinary letter. The need for 35 and 70 kopeks stamps was limited.

Because a civil war raged following the revolution, legitimate usage of these stamps was limited to areas controlled by the Bolsheviks. Although these stamps used on cover are uncommon, one frequently finds them on overweight letters, registered mail, money transfer cards, insured and parcel post tags and record logs.

We applaud the efforts of these philatelists to dig out this story. Knowing how Soviet authorities oftentimes altered historical records to fit their needs, hopefully a scholarly reexamination of postal archives in Russia will settle the matter once and for all. The stamps and their subsequent usage are in themselves fascinating, perhaps a subject of a future note.

THE LIPHSCHUTZ AUCTION

The remarkable Liphschutz collection of classic Russia was auctioned in May 1993 in Switzerland. Collectors had a great opportunity to fill their wish lists. The sheer number of outstanding items was overwhelming. The beautifully color illustrated catalog is a treasure in itself.

The display of the imperforate 10 kopek Russia No. 1 was outstanding. Not since the Baughman sale in 1971 have so many examples been offered at one time. There were 95 lots of this classic beauty including an unused copy with gum which sold for 32,000 Swiss francs, (the 15% commission is not included in any of the auction figures). A stamp used on the first day of issue on a small piece fetched 22,000 SF, while a cover used on the first day was the highlight of the sale, knocked down at 145,000 SF. Its estimate was 25,000 SF.

There were used stamps with pen cancels, town cancels, straight line and framed town markings, dotted and franco cancels. A cover with a franco canceled stamp sold for 85,000 SF over an estimate of 25,000 SF. A used strip of 3 sold for 32,000 SF, whereas two horizontal pairs sold for 4,000 SF and 3,200 SF respectively. A

fine cover with two single stamps nicely postmarked Berdyansk reached 48,000 SF and another cover with a single stamp with a small spur in the "0" of the lower left value "10" on the stamp sold for 38,000 SF.

An additional 12 lots of Russia No. 1 used in Poland were offered separately, all with the characteristic cancels of numerals within four concentric circles. Highlight of this group was a cover with the stamp initially canceled in red, contrary to regulations. The stamp was carefully recanceled in black with the marking nearly perfectly superimposed on the red. However, enough red was showing to make a spectacular bicolor marking.

The rarity of Russia No. 4, the watermarked 30 kopek stamp was again emphasized with only 7 examples in the sale, including one unused copy which sold for 1,500 whereas single used copies of this stamp sold for 750, 1,500 and 1,600 SF depending on condition and marking. Another lot of this stamp, the only known copy on cover used in Poland, along with covers with single copies of No. 2 and No. 3 sold for 75,000 SF.

Old time readers of the Rossica journal would have recognized some of these auction lots. In one of his rare contributions to the Rossica Journal, Michael Liphschutz described cancels on Russia No.1 stamps. This article appeared in issue No. 61, published in 1961. Readers interested in more details about this classic stamp are referred to the article by V. Rachmanov in Rossica Journal No. 51, published in 1957, along with other articles commemorating the 100th anniversary of the issue. That 1957 issue of the journal is well worth a request from your philatelic library.

UKRAINE EXCHANGE PAL

A collector in Ukraine wishes to exchange new Ukraine philatelic material, as well as stamps of the new states of the former USSR for mint USA material. Copy of his letter is available from this editor. The collector's address is: Ukraine, 320100, Dnipropetrovsk 100, Box 152, Ilya Bariyev.

ROSSICA MEDALISTS

INDYPEX '93 at Indianapolis, Indiana

- Alfred F. Kugel "Postal History of the American Expeditionary Force in Siberia"
Gold, APS 1900-1940 medal, Postal History Society medal
- G. Adolph Ackerman "Soviet Air Fleet Semiofficial Stamps and Propaganda Post Cards"
Vermeil, APS Research medal, Rossica Society President's award,
American Air Mail Society Bronze
- Tom Chastang "Censured - Russian Military Censorship in World War I"
Second - One frame exhibit

9th Humbolt Stamp Show at Eureka, California

- George V. Shalimoff "Varnish Lozenges on Some Issues of Russia and Soviet Russia in the
Period 1909-1919"
Gold
- "St. Petersburg Geometric Numeral Cancels"
Gold

BALPEX '93 at Hunt Valley, Maryland

- Gordon Torrey "Ottoman Turkish Locals and Ship Mail"
Gold, APS pre-1900 medal.
- G. G. Werbisky "Ostarbeiter-Workers from the East-Mail in World War II"
Silver
- J. Briggs "What's Going On Here: An Historian Collides With the Soviet Union"
Silver, American Association of Philatelic Exhibitors Creativity
Award

AIRPEX at Dayton, Ohio

- G. Adolph Ackerman "Soviet Airmail: The Early Years"
Reserve Grand, Gold, APS Research medal, American Air Mail
Society Gold, Dayton Stamp Club Wright Brothers medal,
Rossica Society award.

CHICAGOPEX '93 at Rosemont, Illinois

- James Mazepa "Mexico, the First Issues of 1856"
Gold, Chicago Philatelic Society award, APS Pre-1900 award
- Alfred F. Kugel "The Dawn of the American Empire, 1898-1919"
Gold, APS 1900-1940 medal.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

MEDALISTS (continued)

Numerous award winning exhibits by non-Rossica members were noted with themes of Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Apollo-Soyuz Test Project, and a youth exhibit titled "Rushing to Russia."

Note that members Torrey, Mazepa and Kugel have ventured beyond Russian-related philately in which they have been similarly successful exhibitors.

NATIONAL POSTAL MUSEUM



Rossica members Gordon Torrey and George B. Shaw were recently honored to present talks at the inaugural Sunday Afternoon Colloquiums at the National Postal Museum in Washington, D.C. The new museum which emphasizes display and study of postal communications is truly worth a visit whenever in the area. Although geared to be informative on a basic level, specialist collectors will find the museum to be fascinating as well.

Rossica past president Gordon Torrey spoke on The Russian Caucasian States dealing with the four Caucasian states of Armenia, Georgia, Batum and Azerbaijan in the period 1917-1926.

George B. Shaw's talk covered Yugoslavia, the area of complex nationalities, religions, cultures, alphabets and different governments.

These overviews were certainly timely in light of the reemergence and conflicts of the independent states in the former Soviet Union and the chaos in Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia of the former Yugoslavia.

THE LITTLE LEMON

In American vernacular, the word lemon, in addition to its definition of a citrus fruit, oftentimes means something defective. How often have we heard the term applied to a new automobile with sagging doors, misfiring engine, or balky transmission. Even that expensive stereo with the crackly sound or the battery powered tool that seems to always run down can be called a lemon. But in Russian, lemon, or more properly "lemovka", has another meaning.

One of its meanings is, of course, the wonderful lemon-flavored Stolichnaya Vodka. It is mandatory that one drink it straight. However, the philatelic meaning of "lemovka" is the elusive typographed 15 kopek peasant stamp perfed 14 1/2 x 15. In used condition it is rare. In mint condition it is very rare. Either is usually missing from most collections of Soviet Union issues.

Forget trying to find it in the stock of your favorite dealer. Auctions are usually your only hope, but lots of this stamp (Scott 287) are few and far between. Mint copies and probably used copies as well have been fabricated by reperfing large margin copies of the same value that were originally issued with perforations 12 (Scott 287a). Some years ago in a prestigious auction, a very fine mint copy with a Royal Society certificate was in fact a reperfing stamp. Even more clever was a copy with the printed image trimmed to the borders and pasted onto a stamp with the correct perforations.

The stamp is part of several series of issues in the period 1922-1927, called the Small Heads. Three designs grace these stamps, the busts of a worker, soldier and peasant.. Issued imperforate and perforated, lithographed and typographed, with various perf sizes and papers, these issues are a challenge. Details of their differences were discussed in previous Rossica journals by Adler and Aronson. As a definitive series with numerous values, these issues would make a nice exhibit.