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78



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EDITOR : I. STEYN

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The British Society of Russian Philately

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ALL OFFICES ARE HONORARY APPOINTMENTS

Editorial: philatelic wallflowers

As an editor, one gets a slightly distorted view of philately. The subject which generate many articles give the impression of being the most popular subjects for collecting, while other subjects rarely become the subject of articles and are therefore easily dismissed as "unpopular".

This is a distorted view of things, because the fact that many articles are written about a certain subject may simply mean that the subject has a few dedicated but productive adherents, while the less-frequently publicised subjects are perhaps collected passionately by a large number of people who, unfortunately, seldom write articles.

Apart from actually conducting a poll among our members, there seems to be only one way to find out if certain subjects, about which very few articles are written nowadays, are still collected: prod their collectors to write articles. I therefore present, as an open challenge, the following (selective and incomplete!) list of subject which cry out for an article or two.

1. Imperial postal stationery Apart from Alexander Epstein's article on the Kerensky postcards, Imperial postal stationery hasn't been the subject of an article in the BJRP for decades. In fact, the last article of any substance on the subject that I can recall was published during the Fifties! Surely there must be *something* interesting to report about these attractive items? Incidentally, the same goes for the postal stationery of the USSR.

2. Postal cachets Oh yes, registration labels and cachets have received quite a bit of attention, but what about all those other cachets that the post office saw fit to put onto an item of mail? "Addressee not at home", "Found in the mailbox", "Inexplicably delayed by six months" and so on. A difficult subject, but one which cries out for some research. Both the Imperial and Soviet periods have certainly generated enough of these markings.

3. Regional studies This is a style of article that seems to flourish only inside the pages of Yamshchik. So I'm jealous! Grab any region that takes your fancy, look at the history, population, postmarks, stamp issues (if any) and anything else that comes to mind. Sterling examples in Yamshchik reviewed the Crimea, the Volga German colonies and Moldavia.

4. Soviet postmarks Reams of paper have been filled with sage articles on various Imperial postmarks, but the postmarks of the Soviet Union have been all but ignored. The period prior to the introduction of the standard single-ring postmarks around 1939 spawned a dazzling variety of postmarks, *at least* as diverse and interesting as the postmarks of the late Imperial period. Surely there are dozens of articles here, waiting to be written.

5. Some stamp issues The glamorous 1913 Romanov issue and the ubiquitous 1908-1920 Arms issue have had whole books dedicated to them, and an uncountable number of articles, but there are many Imperial stamp issues which are still waiting for a good review. The last non-thunderbolt issue (1883-1888) comes to mind as do those splendid high values of 1906. The early Soviet period still has many stamp issues which need to be examined carefully, and even the familiar Small Head definitives could probably stand more expert attention. And there are many more possibilities.

6. Everything else Yes, I admit it, I'll happily publish articles on any other subject as well, no matter how over-publicised the subject is! I'm not proud...

Seriously, think about it. When you go through any bibliography (the Cumulative Subject Index or the Rossica Library Subject Index) you'll be shocked to see how little has been published on certain subjects. Roll up your sleeves...

Obituary: Gordon H. Torrey (1920-1995)

Gary Combs

On 28 March 1995, the philatelic community lost one of its stalwarts. Dr. Gordon H. Torrey died after a valiant effort on the part of doctors from serotonin syndrome. Dr. Torrey had been ill for years, but continually "bounced" back time after time. We all assumed he would again.

Dr. Torrey was President of the Rossica Society of Russian Philately from 1972 until 1992 when he declined to run again due to his medical problems. His guidance and foresight led the Society through some rather turbulent time while increasing the membership by approximately 30%. He was first elected as Vice-President under Kurt Adler in late 1968, following the tragic death of Greg Salisbury and the resignation of then-Treasurer A.N. Lavrov. When Adler resigned in 1972 due to poor health, Dr. Torrey became the President Pro-Tem, and was elected President in 1974. Thus, he was an officer longer than most people in a Society have been members, and he served longer than any other officer, including the founder, Evgenii Arkhangelskii. Less than 15 members remain active in the Rossica Society with membership numbers lower than Dr. Torrey's.

His contributions to the Russian philatelic community extended far beyond his administrative duties in Rossica. He figured prominently on the Rossica Expertization Board for many years and was an advisor to the American Philatelic Society. Dr. Torrey wrote numerous articles for various journals and represented the Russian philatelic community at many national and international events. He was the President of the Rossica Washington-Baltimore Chapter, and together with his wife Ann hosted many meetings and guests at his home.

It may come as a surprise to some, but Russian philately was not Dr. Torrey's greatest strength. He was first and foremost a Middle East expert, with outstanding collections of Turkey, Syria, Saudi Arabia, etc. His link to Russian philately came through his interest in Russian Offices Abroad, primarily the Levant and China. Dr. Torrey was one of only a few APS judges with extensive knowledge of the Russian area, and many Russian exhibitors got better consideration because of him.

His list of accomplishments is long and impressive. He graduated from the University of Oregon (USA) with a master's degree in history, and earned his doctorate of history from the University of Michigan (USA). The author of "Syrian Politics and the Military, 1945 to 1958," he was a Middle East analyst with the Central Intelligence Agency until 1974, when medical problems forced him to retire. He was a professorial lecturer at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (USA), and worked for Christie's as an appraiser for many years. His exhibits were always first class and usually took very high awards whenever and wherever shown.

In addition to his offices in Rossica, Dr. Torrey was also President of the Washington Philatelic Society, Treasurer of the Shaybani Society of International Islamic Law, North American Representative for the British Society of Russian Philately, and a member of the American Philatelic Society, China Stamp Society, Military Postal History Society, Postal History Society, and the Royal Philatelic Society of Great Britain.

Dr. Torrey was a very engaging, well-educated man, readily sharing his knowledge with newer collectors. Two things were consistent about Dr. Torrey. One did not ask whom he knew or what he knew. It would be much simpler to ask whom or what he did not know. The philatelic library of Dr. Torrey filled many shelves floor to ceiling. The amazing thing was he could, within a matter of minutes, find anything he was looking for. His mind remained razor sharp until his death.

Przedbórz revisited

A.T. Blunt

Przedbórz is a small town on the River Pilica and is situated roughly on a straight line between Warsaw and Kraków, 80 miles from Kraków and 120 miles from Warsaw. Its population at the time of World War 1 was about 6000.

The Austro-Hungarian authorities set up a K.u.K. Etappenpostamt, second class, which exchanged mail with Końsk, the nearest District Office. This office, like all other offices of the occupying powers in Poland, only forwarded mail to other main offices. Local deliveries were the sole responsibility of the local municipal authorities. The Postmaster of Przedbórz was P. Franczak who previous to 1914 had been the town Postmaster under Russian rule. He had seen the local delivery systems of Sosnowiec and decided to introduce a similar system to Przedbórz.

He initially ordered stamps of two values - 2 Gr. and 4 Gr. The 4 Gr value was delivered by 18 December 1917 but the 2 Gr was not delivered until 21 December 1917. Official permission to run such a service and issue stamps for it was not received until 19 January 1918, however did this not stop Franczak from starting the service. To cover the 2 Gr rate before the delivery of the 2 Gr stamps, the 4 Gr was used bisected.

First issue

Each value was produced lithographically in sheets of 8 (4x2) and in order to identify the genuine stamps reliably it is necessary to have plating details for all positions. For the 2 Gr these can be summarised as follows:

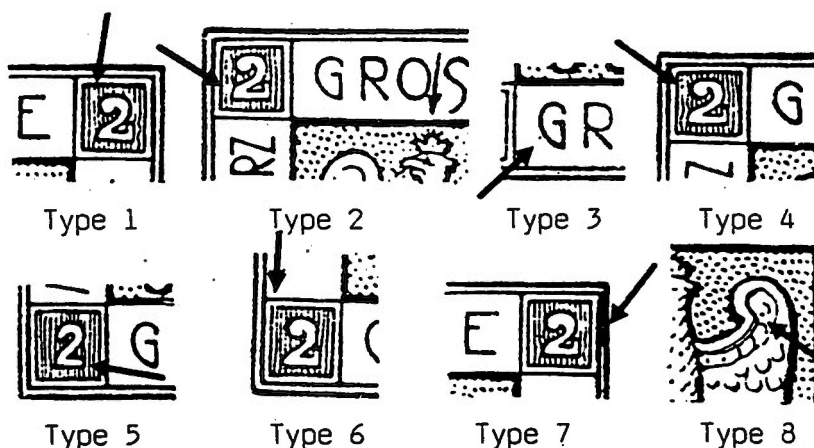


Figure 1

1. A break in the second line of shading in the top right hand box.
2. Breaks in the first line of shading in the top left hand box.
3. A dot under the G of the lower GROSZE.
4. Breaks in the first line of shading in the top left hand box.
5. No serif to the foot of the 2 in the lower left hand box.
6. Break in the top of the lower left hand box.
7. The top right hand box is fused with the frame.
8. A dot in the top of the right hand eagle's wing.

For the 4 Gr the characteristics can be summarised as follows for each position:

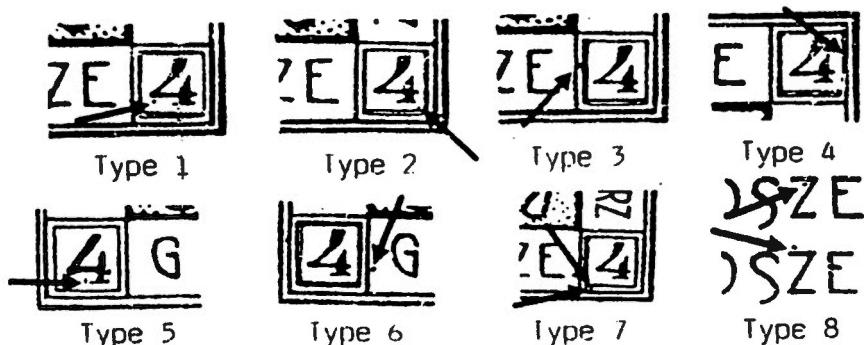


Figure 2

1. A dot under the left end of the horizontal stroke of the lower right hand 4.
2. A dot in the lower right hand corner of the lower right hand box.
3. A dot bridging the frame lines of the lower right hand box.
4. The top right hand box is fused with the frame.
5. Diagonal stroke of the lower left 4 is straight.
6. A dot to the left of the lower G in GROSZE.
7. A dot between the frame lines of the lower right hand box.
8. A dot above the lower Z of GROSZE.

The next step in identifying the forgeries of this issue is to examine the left hand wing of the eagle.



Figure 3

All genuine stamps have a dot to the left of the lower line of 'U's, see figure 3. Forgeries 1, 2 and 3 lack this dot. To differentiate between these forgeries it is then necessary to examine the innermost 'U's in the wings.

If they are rudimentary and amount to little more than a dash then the stamp is Forgery 1.

If the innermost 'U's are well-formed and the lower row of 'U's are not in a straight line then the stamp is Forgery 2.

If the innermost 'U's are well-formed and the lower row of 'U's are in a straight line then the stamp is Forgery 3.

See the facing page for illustrations of these three forgeries.

To confirm the forgery type (or to confirm that it is a forgery) it is possible to pick up other differences. F1 is in execution quite a good forgery. Its other major characteristics are that all the lettering is slightly thicker than the genuine, that the background dots follow very closely the pattern of the genuine but are all larger and appear to be slightly blurred, and that the S's in GROSZE have a tail that goes closer to the tablet's lower lines.

F2 (2 Gr) is not a very good forgery whereas F2 (4 Gr) is as good as F1. The background dots are larger and more blurred than in the originals. They also do not follow the patterns of the originals quite so closely, especially at the right hand side and the bottom. If you can lay your hands on a large enough outer margin you can also see that the 4 Gr has guide lines for the perforator (or scissors for imperforate stamps).



F 1



F 2



F 3



Figure 4

F3 is the best of these forgery types. The quality of the printing is as good as that of the genuine stamps. The major differences beyond the lack of dot in the left wing are that the pattern of dots to the left of the background makes a different impression as to the way they swirl (clockwise in the original, whereas in this forgery they appear to swirl anti-clockwise) and that the letter R of GROSZE in the upper tablet is identical to the R in the lower tablet - in the genuine stamp they differ.

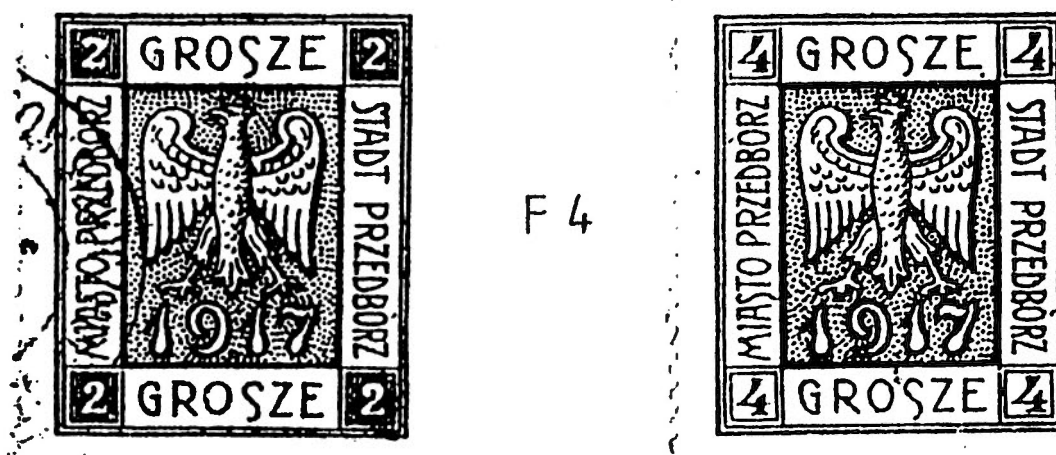


Figure 5

Finally we come to Forgery 4. In spite of its having the dot in the left wing it is the worst of the forgeries. It is of a generally blurred appearance, often being seriously under-inked. Its background of dots gives a different impression to the eye, especially to the left of the eagle. The letter S in GROSZE is quite differently formed as to its tail. It is also often very badly perforated.

Forgeries 1, 2 and 4 come both perforated and imperforate. The perforated forgeries all seem to be of the correct gauge (11½) but some are very rough. I have not seen an imperforate example of Forgery 3 although they probably exist. Forgery 4 seems to be far and away the commonest and is often found in multiples. Forgeries 2 and 3 are not often found. Forgery 1 seems to be of medium frequency.

All forgeries are to be found with varying K.u.K. Etappenpostamt datestamps but all these are forged. The impressions are usually too sharp, with lines that are too thin, and an occasional "used" forgery is to be found "on piece". What evidence I have on forgeries of the 4 Gr bisects is that they do not exist. Certainly the price of a genuine 4 Gr renders it unlikely that one should be used to fake a bisect, but it is a little surprising that no-one has tried this with one of the better forgeries.

Second issue

A second issue was put on sale from 26 February 1918 and consisted of four values. Each value was lithographed in two colours and the designs showed:

- 2 Gr Przedsbórz Town Hall
- 4 Gr River Pilica
- 6 Gr Przedsbórz Town Square
- 10 Gr Przedsbórz coat of arms

The stamps were printed in sheetlets of 5x5. Each design is known in three types, see figures 6 and 7.

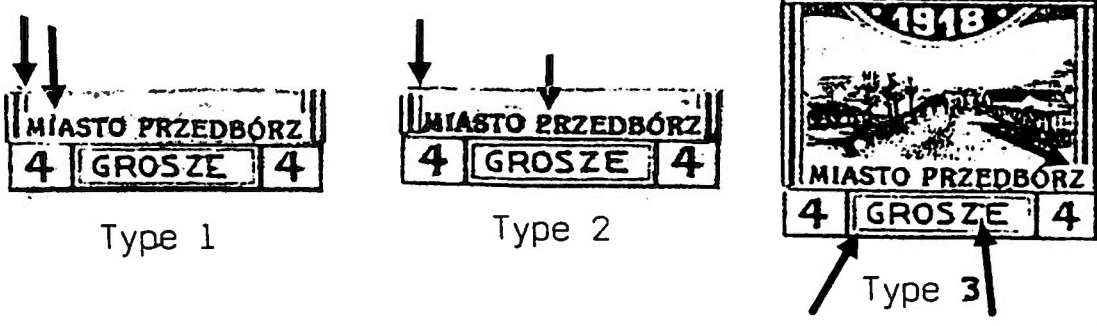
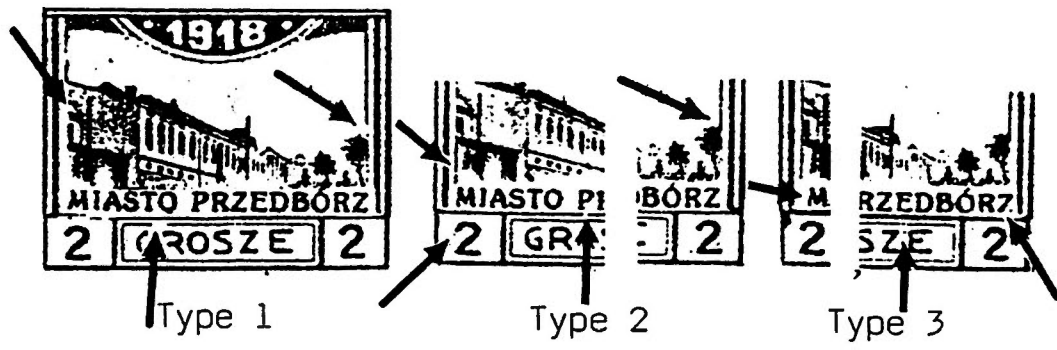


Figure 6

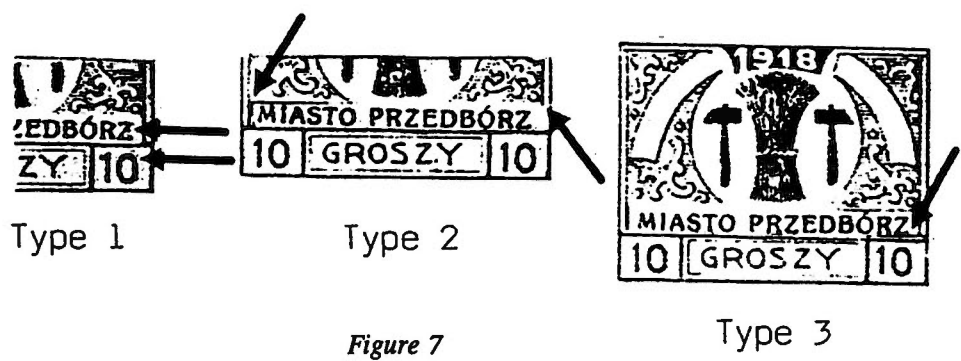
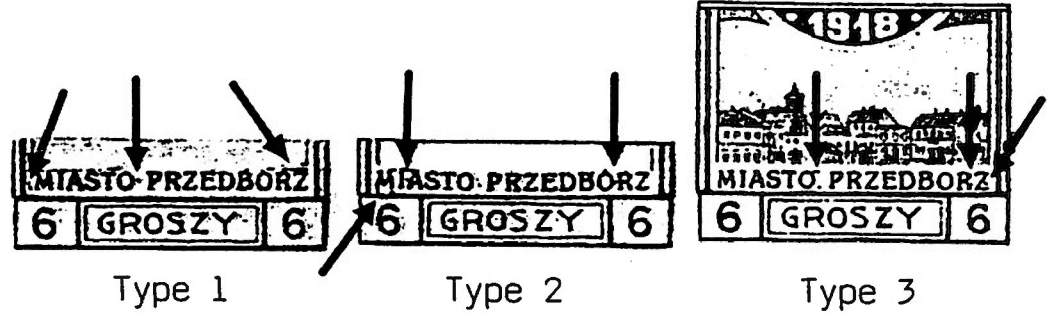


Figure 7

The characteristics can be summarised as follows:

- 2 Gr Type 1 The inmost frame line at the right stops short of the tree and there is a gap in the box around GROSZE.
 Type 2 There is a dot under the tip of 2 and a gap in the frame line under P.
 Type 3 There is a weak base to the final Z of PRZEDBÓRZ and a dot between Z and E of GROSZE.
- 4 Gr Type 1 The M of MIASTO is below the inmost frame line and there is a diagonal dash over the I.
 Type 2 There is an extra line above the 4 joining the frame lines and a dot by the P of PRZEDBÓRZ.
 Type 3 The right hand inner thick frame line stops above the Z of PRZEDBÓRZ and there is a dot between Z and E of GROSZE.
- 6 Gr Type 1 Line above Z of PRZEDBÓRZ and dot after O of MIASTO
 Type 2 Pronounced lumps in frame line under M and a dot between the I and A of MIASTO.
 Type 3 A line above the O and a dot after the O of MIASTO.
- 10 Gr Type 1 Upturned tip of 1 of right hand 10.
 Type 2 The right inner frame line is short and there is an extra line to the left of the M of MIASTO.
 Type 3 There is an extra line under the ÓRZ of PRZEDBÓRZ.

Forgeries

F1 is easily recognised. The 2, 4 and 6 Gr values all have a broken and irregular lower line under the tablet containing the date 1918, whereas in the genuine the line is regular and has regular raylets depending therefrom. In the 10 Gr value the empty ribbon to the right of the date tablet has a distinct break at the left hand side. The genuine 10 Gr value has a complete ribbon even though it can be very thin. See figure 8.



F 1



Figure 8

The artwork of the forgeries is only indifferent - the lettering in particular being heavy. The forgeries cannot be typed and are found both perforated and imperforate. The forgeries are also found in two distinct series of colour combinations which are in some cases quite good matches for the colour of the originals. F1 is very common indeed.

F2 is also easily recognised. The design as a whole seems to have been drawn with a thicker "pen" in particular in the frame lines and the boxes round the figures of value. Also to be looked for is the bowed lower line under the date tablet in the 2, 4 and 6 Gr values which is very solid and has no raylets. The colour match with the genuine is poor - the colours are "muddy". F2 is not at all common. See figure 9.

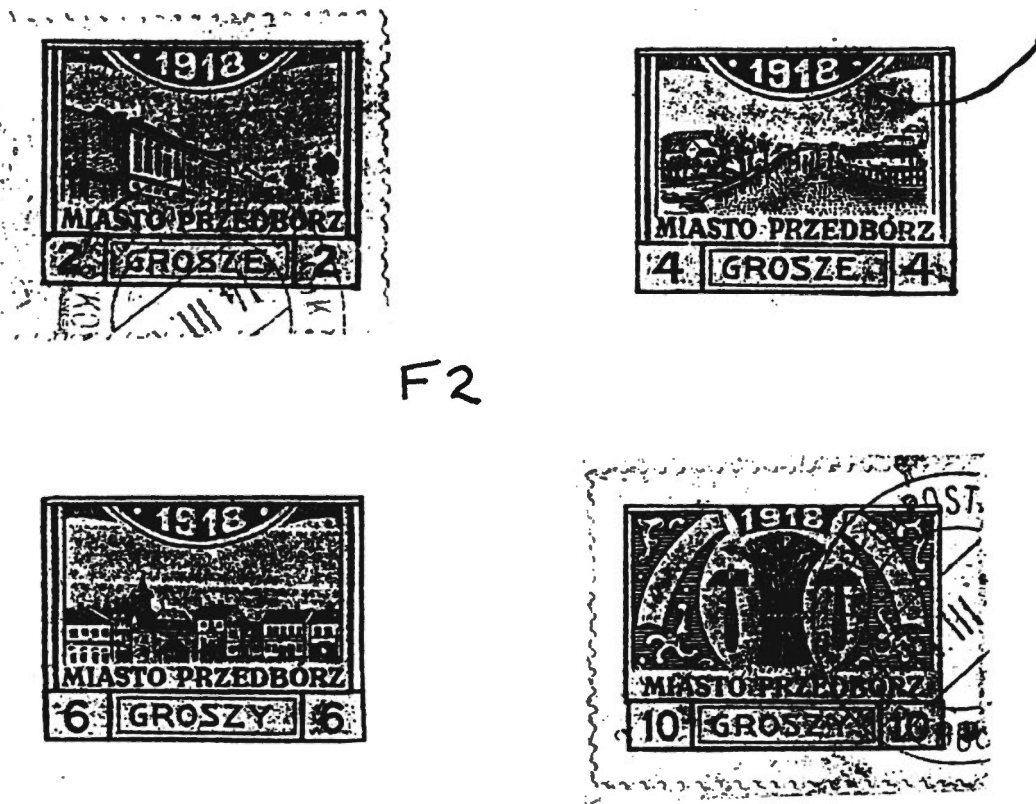


Figure 9

F3 had lurked in my collection for some time without being spotted. It is a very good production and is on good quality paper. The major differences from the genuine are as follows: the lettering of MIASTO PRZEDBÓRZ is more finely drawn than in the genuine with the legs of the M being more distinctly splayed and the top of the P being rounder. In the 2, 4 and 6 Grosze the bowed line under the date tablet is more rudimentary and in the 10 Gr value there is a definite appearance of a peak to the top of the sheaf of corn. See figure 10 overleaf.

F2 and F3 have not been recognised previously in the literature. As noted above, F2 is obviously rare because it is such a poor imitation and should be instantly recognisable. The true rarity of F3 I cannot at present estimate, having only recently spotted it, although one correspondent states that he too had noticed it without thinking very much about it one way or the other. Perhaps of more significance is to compare the so-called 6th, 7th and 8th issues with the 3rd, 4th and 5th issues (later), compare F3 (2nd issue) with the genuine 2nd issue and then turn back to the 1st issue and compare that with its F3.

The forgeries in question are all of very good quality on good quality paper and save for the 8th issue do not show strongly visible characteristics. It is my belief that these very good forgeries were prepared either by the postal staff or by the printers for private gain, and that the differences imported were imported deliberately to muddy the waters if a criminal charge of forgery had ever been brought. The more traditional explanation that they are Revenue issues does not hold much water - they have never been seen fiscally used and would have given rise to all sorts of accounting problems if used alongside the postage stamps in dimly-lit post offices.



Figure 10

BJRP Back Issues

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PSB & Control Stamps of Imperial Russia: postal use

Alexander Epstein

A number of good articles have been published about Postal Savings Bank & Control stamps used for their original purpose^{1 2 3}, to which the interested reader is referred. This article deals with the postal use of these stamps, which has many varied aspects, some of which are little-known.

We can distinguish three main periods during 1918-1923 in which postal use of PSB & Control stamps took place.

First period: usage of PSB & Control stamps at face value

Postal use of PSB stamps was first sanctioned by the following circular of the Central Postal Administration of Soviet Russia (the People's Commissariat of Posts and Telegraphs) dated 12 January 1918 (Old Style, or 25 January 1918 according to the Gregorian calendar valid in Russia from 13 February 1918 onwards)⁴:

"Taking into consideration that at present the State Printing Office (Ekspeditsiya Zagotovleniya Gosudarstvennykh Bumag) experiences great difficulties in manufacturing postage stamps because of the shortage of paper, the stamps being extremely expensive to produce due to the high labour costs, we consider it necessary to utilise the stocks of savings stamps...to release anew savings cards and besides, to use these stamps for internal service, money transfer orders, etc."

Thus, this circular explains the principal motives that induced the postal administration to sanction the limited (initially!) use of PSB stamps for postal needs. The stamps in question were the small format PSB stamps with face values of 1k, 5k and 10k. It should be noted that large stocks of those stamps were present at post offices throughout Russia, since the use for their original purpose, i.e. for savings cards, had been suspended by a decree of the Imperial Ministry of Finance dated 2 December 1915, when current postage stamps were ordered to be used for that purpose. The total stock of small format PSB stamps extant at post offices was estimated at 40 million copies at least.

The stamps are listed in the 'Russia' section of the SG catalogue under Nos. 180-182. The 5k- and 10k stamps are of similar design, while the 1k-stamp differs slightly from them, having been issued as a savings stamp a little later than the two other values, specifically for school and factory savings bank cards.

The small format PSB stamps are of the same size as the Arms type postage stamps with kopeck face values. Like the latter, they were printed in sheets of 100 with four panes of 25 divided by gutters and perforated 14 x 14½. However, unlike the Arms stamps, which were printed on wove paper with varnish lines, the PSB stamps were printed on paper with a watermark consisting of upright or sideways diamonds. The latter variety is the scarcer one for all three stamps. Both are, however, not occasional watermark varieties but characteristics of separate printings, since the paper for the stamps came from the factory in large rolls.

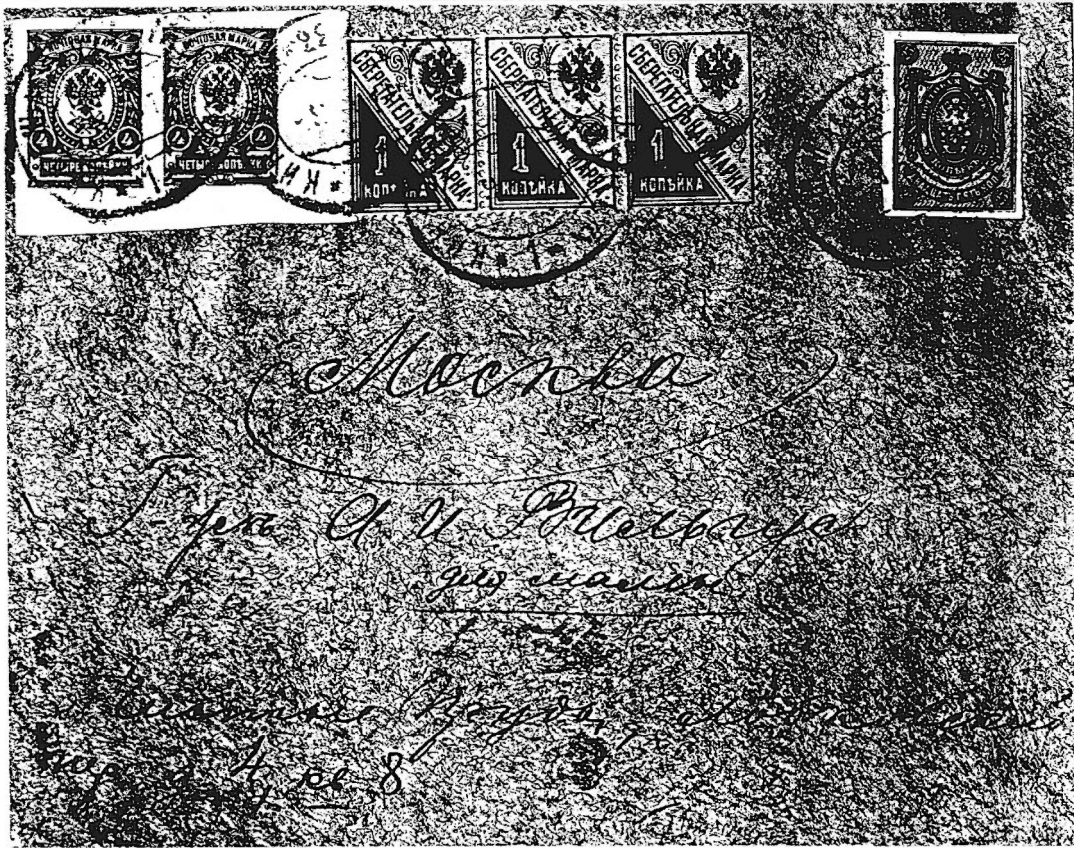
It follows from the abovementioned circular that the PSB stamps were intended as postage stamps only for internal accounting services, i.e. they were to be stuck on money transfer and parcel address forms, as well as in the so-called Book Form No.9 where stamps were stuck by clerks to account for postage due in the process of dealing with unfranked or insufficiently franked mail. This rule was initially followed rather strictly. So a telegram of the Central Postal Administration dated 18 May 1918⁵ reminds the post offices:

"Confirm to (postal) offices that sticking of savings stamps to mail being handed to the addressees is intolerable. Demand a strict observance of the Circular of 12 January of the present year."

A postcard from the Timo Bergholm collection depicted in BJRP 75 presents an excellent example of such treatment. Although the total franking of 20k corresponds to the then current rate for an ordinary postcard, the 10k PSB stamp was not cancelled by the datestamp but pen-crossed, and a 'to pay' marking for the double deficiency of 20k was applied.

Top: ordinary letter franked with imperf Arms stamps 25k + 2x4k, plus 3x1k PSB stamps, totalling 36k (ik overfranked), posted on TPO 224 on 9-6-1918 to Moscow.

Bottom: Letter franked 25k Arms and 10k PSB for correct rate of 35k, Vasileva-Sloboda 23-7-1918 to Petrograd (Timo Bergholm collection).

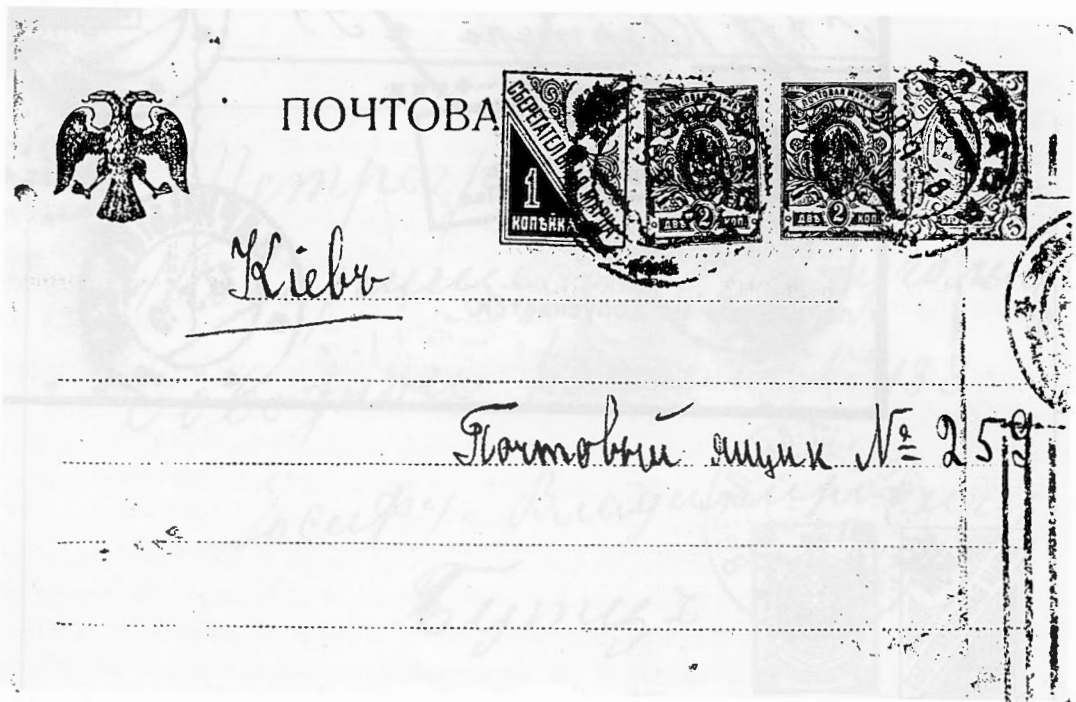


Telegraphic money order for 100R from Tsaritsyn (13-3-1919) to Petrograd, franked with 12.50R in Arms stamps (7R + 50k + 7x70k on reverse) and a 10k PSB stamp.



Top: Postal stationery card 5k with additional franking of 5k PSB stamp, locally used at Ekaterinodar, Kuban republic on 10-12-19.

Bottom: Similar card with additional franking of 2x2k Arms with Trident overprint plus 1k PSB stamp, sent from Poltava (19-9-1918) to Kiev



On the other hand, at many post offices the practice of franking ordinary letters and postcards with PSB stamps continued without hindrance. By the summer of 1918 it became general practice and the postal administration was forced to admit this tacitly. Illustrated is a cover of an ordinary inland letter franked according to the corresponding rates with a normal stamp and a PSB stamp. Even registered letters with PSB stamps were accepted (fig.6). We can show a money transfer card where the franking consists in part of PSB stamps.

Postal use of PSB stamps in non-Soviet regions

Although they were put into postal use by the Soviet postal administration, the small-format PSB stamps also remained in use in regions that had come under the control of anti-bolshevik forces and national governments. For instance, these stamps were widely used in the Kuban region under the local cossack government and Ukraine under the governments of the Central Rada and Hetman P. Skoropadski.

Overprints and surcharges on PSB stamps

Ukraine The earliest known case of overprinted PSB stamps is that from Ukraine during the general campaign of overprinting the available stocks with tridents in August/September 1918. It seems that officially, PSB stamps were overprinted (by hand) only at Poltava. All three stamps exist with the Poltava Trident (SG Type 14): 1k in violet, black and blue-green, 5k in violet and blue-green, and the 10k only in black. All stamps with blue-green overprints and the 10k stamps are rare. Incomprehensibly, the SG catalogue does not list these stamps, although their official nature is recognised by all other catalogues that list the trident issues of Ukraine.

The PSB stamps are also found with Kiev (SG Types 1 and 2) and Kharkov (SG Types 12 and 13) tridents, but these are considered to be unofficial, private productions.

A vertical pair of the 10k stamp with a Podolia trident is known on a piece of a money order or parcel card (ex-Vyrovyi, now P. Valentine collection⁶). There also exist two pairs of 1k PSB stamps on cover provided with a single Kiev trident overprint intended for postal stationery cards, revaluing the pair to 10k. This cover is clearly philatelic (ex-Dr.Seichter collection⁷). However, there exists a 5k PSB stamp overprinted with a normal Chernigov Type II trident (manufactured from the abovementioned postal stationery card die, but with "10 kop" erased) in violet. This unrecorded stamp is cancelled by a black bar lattice, i.e. it seems to have been used on a savings card. Nevertheless, the possibility of postal use of such stamps can not be excluded.

Armenia The only official issue made under the "Dashnak" nationalist government of the Republic of Armenia on a PSB stamp was the 1k stamp surcharged by hand "k. 60 k." in small quantities in October 1919 (SG Armenia 6). All other PSB stamps with Armenian monogram overprints listed in some catalogues (incl. SG 64) are unofficial private products or simply forgeries.

Kuban Like the Arms stamps with low face values (up to 15k, with 25k as a late exception), PSB stamps were revalued by surcharging them. The 1k-, 5k- and 10k-stamps were overprinted typographically in two lines "10 rublei" (SG South Russia 20-22). The number of stamps surcharged was 28700, 8000 and 1200 copies, respectively. There are copies with upright and sideways watermark among the surcharged stamps, at least for the 1k and 5k. The 1k exists with inverted surcharge and the 5k with double surcharge. PSB stamps with a Kuban surcharge are found used mainly on money transfer and parcel address forms.

One other little-known variety is a 70k-surcharge on a 1k PSB stamp, similar to that on the 1k Arms stamp, SG 23,24. This stamp has been found only with an inverted surcharge, although a sheet with normal and one with inverted surcharge were reported to have been overprinted⁸. No postally used copy of this stamp has been found thus far.

Far Eastern Republic As well as the various Imperial postage stamps, the 5k and 10k PSB stamps were also surcharged 1k and 2k in gold currency, respectively, at Vladivostok in the autumn of 1920 by an order of the local government representing the Far Eastern Republic (SG Siberia 45,46). The numbers of issued stamps were 7000 and 6000, respectively. They were the last PSB stamps locally overprinted in the territories not under Soviet control.

Wrangel Army (Russian refugee post) Surcharges of 10000R of this dubious issue are known on all three PSB stamps (SG Russian Refugee Post 54-56). The surcharges on 1k and 5k stamps exist inverted as well.

Large format Postal Savings Bank & Control stamps

Considerable stocks of large format PSB & Control stamps were also stored at post offices throughout the former Russian Empire by 1918. These stamps originally had a purpose that was somewhat different from that of the small format stamps, namely, to be stuck into savings book rather than on saving cards. 'Control' was a later designation of the large format PSB stamps after the small format PSB stamps were issued. Most of the stamp catalogues, e.g. Stanley Gibbons, list the following large format PSB & Control stamps used for postal needs:

PSB stamps: 25k, 50k (SG 210-202). Both are dated '18..' (the first two figures of the year of supposed usage in savings books). The 50k stamp also exists dated '1...' (SG 202a), part of the 2nd issue of PSB stamps made shortly before 1900.

Control stamps: 25k, 50k, 1R, 3R, 5R, 10R, 25R and 100R (SG 203-210).

Both large format PSB stamps are found with the loops in the burelé background pointing upwards or downwards in roughly equal proportions. The loops on Control stamps usually point to the left, although postally used copies of 1R, 10R and 100R stamps are also known with the loops pointing to the right (scarce).

The stamps are perforated 13 on all sides. According to Karlinski⁹ they were printed in sheets of 60, subdivided into three groups of 20 (2x10) stamps separated by vertical gutters 12mm wide. However, a cover from the R. Taylor collection mentioned in BJRP 75 shows a strip of 2x15 25R Control stamps. Such a sheet arrangement probably only concerns stamps of this value, and possibly of the 100R stamps as well, as both were issued later than the stamps with face values up to 10R.

The paper of the large format PSB & Control stamps was watermarked with diamonds pointing upwards, although the 50k PSB stamp is also found with diamonds pointing sideways. Some uncatalogued varieties will be mentioned later.

Postal use of large format PSB & Control stamps in Turkestan

Postal use of large format PSB & Control stamps was authorised for the first time by a telegram of the Central Postal Administration dated 5 June 1918¹⁰. It read:

"Because stamps have run out, (Post) offices of the Turkestan district are temporarily permitted to use Control and Savings stamps for prepaying any kind of mail..."

It was no accident that the Turkestan Post-Telegraph District was the first to receive this permission. The district included post offices of the Russian provinces in Central Asia - Fergana, Semirechye, Syr-Darya and Transcaspia - as well as those post offices that continued to function on the territory of the Emirate of Bukhara and the Khanate of Khiva. By the end of 1917 Soviet authority had been established in the major towns of the Turkestan provinces, but there was permanent fighting in the countryside. In April 1918, the Turkestan Soviet Republic was proclaimed as an autonomous part of the RSFSR that included the four abovementioned provinces.

The main communication link with metropolitan Russia was the Samara-Tashkent railway through Orenburg. This line of communication was cut when White forces under general Dutov took Orenburg, holding it from 28(15) November 1917 till 31(18) January 1918, and then again from 3 July 1918 onwards. For a short time after that last date, mail to Turkestan was directed via Astrakhan across the Caspian Sea to Krasnovodsk, and then along the Transcaspian Railway, but an anti-bolshevik revolt in Askhabad during the final weeks of July 1918 which separated Transcaspia from the rest of Turkestan put an end to this line of communication as well. The isolation of Turkestan from metropolitan Russia continued till mid-September 1919, with an interruption from 22 January to April 1919.

There was fighting not only at the frontiers of Turkestan against the White forces, but also within Turkestan itself, against nationalist forces (so-called 'basmachi') that strove for the creation of an independent Turkic state. For some time, particularly in 1918-1919, the Soviet Turkestan Republic did not form a single whole, but rather a number of enclaves, the largest of them around Tashkent with the towns of Samarkand, Dzhisak, Chimkent, and another in Semirechye including the towns of Vernyi (a.k.a. Alma-Ata/Almaty), Pishpek and some smaller

towns.

Naturally, this state of affairs influenced the postal service in Turkestan. Having been deprived of a regular supply of postage stamps from Central Russia, post offices in Turkestan were forced to use nonpostal stamps, such as PSB and Control stamps, of which stocks remained considerable. Evidently, postage stamps were not supplied to Turkestan at the end of 1917 - early 1918, nor during the spring and summer of 1918, nor at the beginning of 1919 when communications with Turkestan were temporarily restored. From the available postal history material it seems that mainly PSB and Control stamps were used for franking mail in Turkestan.

The Turkestan Republic had its own postal administration (People's Commissariat of Posts and Telegraphs) which, being formally subordinated to the Central Postal Administration in Moscow, could take independent decisions during the absence of regular communications with the latter. The republic even issued its own currency - roubles of the Turkestan People's Bank, the value of which differed from that of RSFSR roubles. In December 1920, when the Turkestan roubles were declared invalid, they were exchanged for RSFSR roubles at a rate of 1 to 10.

Unfortunately, no documents concerning the activities of the Turkestan postal administration are as yet available, so we can only speculate about the probable sequence of events.

Illustrated is a parcel card mailed during the summer of 1919 in the province of Semirechye, and franked according to the then current postal rates of the RSFSR with Control stamps only, or in combination with normal postage stamps with rouble face values. Another money order card from a later period, after the blockade of Turkestan had been lifted, is franked with Control stamps only, also according to the rates of the RSFSR. The Control stamps with high face values were used more frequently after postal rates had increased further in March 1920.

However, there remains an obscure period in the history of Turkestan's postal affairs. A postcard from the Eric Peel collection, previously described in the pages of the BJRP¹¹, provides the evidence. This local postcard mailed in Tashkent on 27 May 1919 is franked with two Control stamps of 10R and 25R. Since 35R is a quite fantastic rate for such an item of mail in 1919, one should agree with Eric's suggestion that both stamps were devalued 100 times, and were used as stamps of 10k and 25k, respectively. There actually was a rate of 35k for registered postcards in the RSFSR from 15 September 1918 to November 1919. However, this particular card shows no visible signs of having been registered: neither an R-label or R-handstamp, nor even a manuscript ZAKAZNOE ('Registered'). The message itself - an invitation to a meeting concerning the formation of a Public Library - is such that it would not warrant being sent registered. As for ordinary postcards, their forwarding was free in the RSFSR from 1 January 1919 to 14 August 1921.

Another postcard from roughly the same period was sent in March 1919 from Dzhisak to Samarkand, i.e. also within the Tashkent enclave of the Turkestan Soviet Republic. It is franked with 10k (the RSFSR rate for an ordinary postcard from 15 September to 31 December 1918) with small format PSB stamps of 1k(2) and 5k added to the 3k imprinted stamp.

Two possible conclusions can be drawn on the basis of the two postcards mentioned above. Either people were ignorant about the free forwarding of ordinary mail, or the free-post was not officially introduced in the Turkestan Soviet Republic, at least not during 1919, and postal rates in effect there were even raised during the spring of 1919.

Of course, two postcards form too small a sample for any firm conclusions. But it is clear that after the blockade of Turkestan was lifted, postal regulations and rates of the RSFSR were in full effect in Turkestan, also in the Russian post offices in Bukhara and Khiva that were sovietised during 1920. After postal rates were raised in March 1920, Control stamps with high face values came to be used intensively at their face value, as well as the small format PSB stamps revalued 100 times (see hereunder).

Money order for 4700R from Ekaterinodar (6-11-1919) to Rostov/Don franked with 84R in 4 x 1R/3k Kuban stamps on reverse, plus 8 x 10R/1k PSB stamps (1 stamp fallen off).



Money order for 3600R from Naryn, Semirechye province (1-8-1919) to Pishpek in the same province. Franked with 3 x 5R Control stamps at face value for 15R total. (Robert Taylor collection)

СЛУЖЕБНЫЯ ОТМѢТКИ



Расписка получателя.

Озн

мен

1919

1085 1/4

ПЕРЕВОДЪ по ПОЧТѢ

на сумму 3000 руб. — к.

Три тысячи рублей

(Повторить сумму рублей прописью, а копейки цифрами).

Подробный адресъ получателя

Кому Кулину Антону

Михайловичу

Куда Узг. Пышпекъ

СЛУЖЕБНЫЯ ОТМѢТКИ

№ 47
НАРЫНЬ,
Семиреченской обл.
Омская Контр. Пал.



Никакихъ помарокъ и поправокъ не допускается.

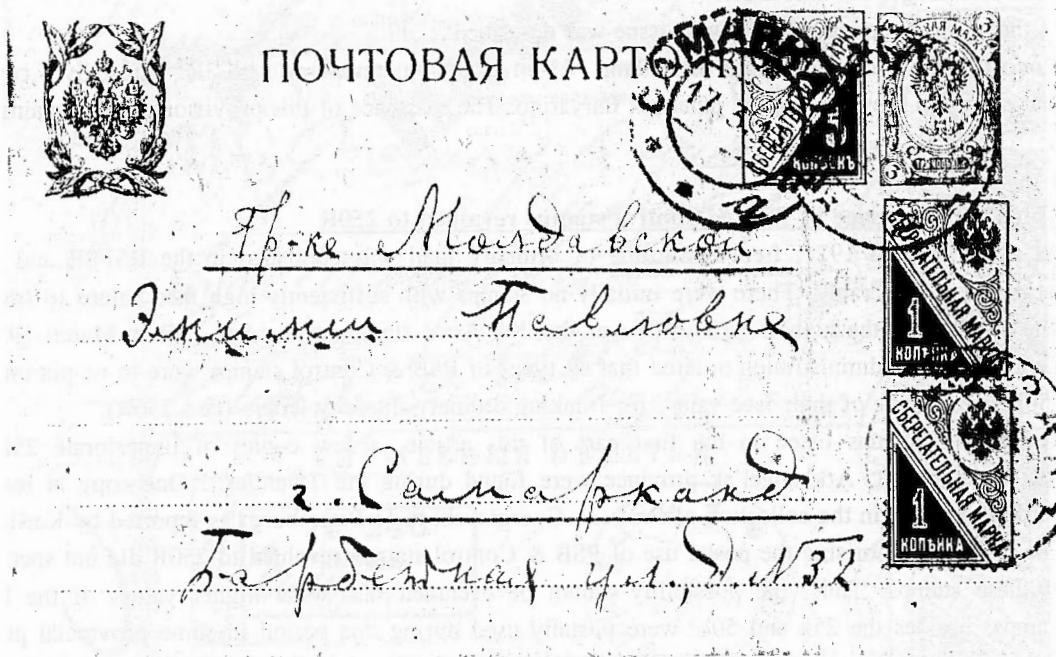
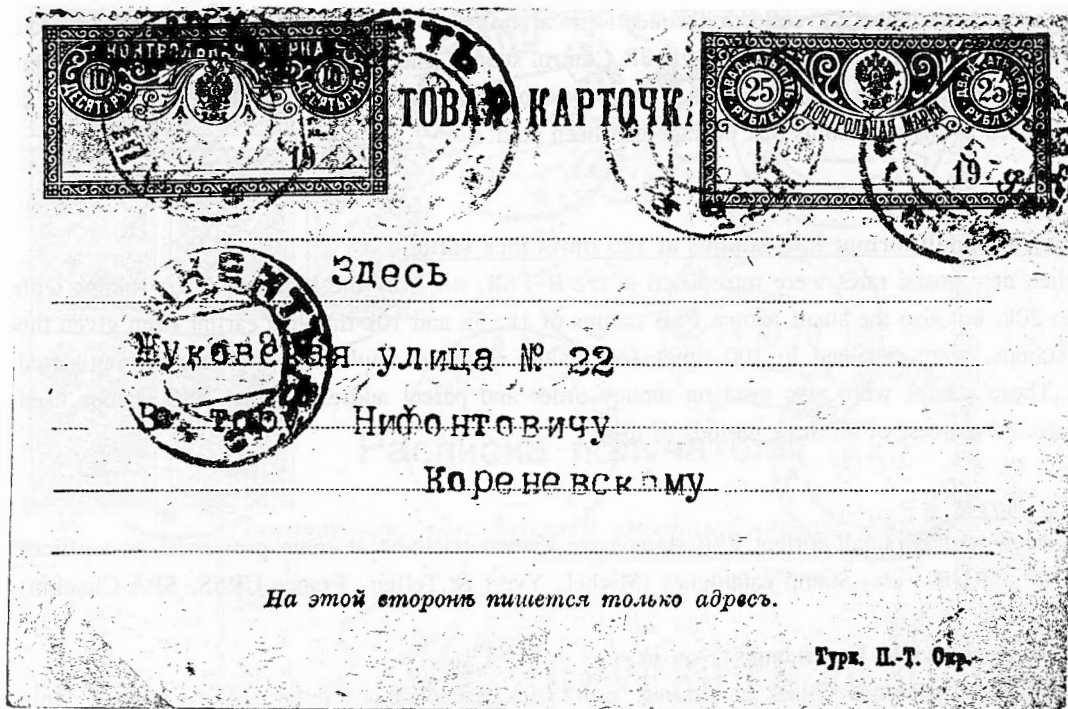
Туркест. п.-т. об.

Parcel card for a parcel with a declared value of 200R from Gavrilovskoe, Semrechye province (16-5-1919) to Pishpek. Franked with 3R and 10R Control stamps, as well as 1R + 2x5k Arms stamps for 14.10R total. (Robert Taylor collection)



Top: postcard mailed locally within Tashkent on 27-5-1919 and franked with 10R and 25R Control stamps, probably devalued 100 times to meet a 35k rate (Eric Peel collection).

Bottom: PS 3k-card with additional franking of 5k Arms and 2x1k PSB for 10k postcard rate, sent on 13-3-1919 from Dzhisak (Syr-Darya province) to Samarkand (Robert Taylor collection).



Postal use of large format PSB & Control stamps in other regions of Russia

There exists postal evidence that large format PSB & Control stamps were used in 1919-1921 (pre-August 15th) at their face value in some other regions of Russia, including Moscow. It is not known, however, if such usages were sanctioned by local postal administrations or if they were the result of spontaneous activities of individuals tolerated by the posts. Karlinski⁹ also reports that covers where different Control stamps had a common franking value of 2R have been found, but does not give details.

The catalogue of Baron Scharfenberg's collection¹² mentions an ordinary letter sent from Saratov in March 1921 to Revel/Tallinn in Estonia, franked with a single 3R Control stamp. The foreign rate for such letters in the RSFSR at that time appears to have been 5R¹³. It is quite possible that somewhere, the large format PSB & Control stamps were used as mere symbols that postage had been paid.

Second Period: usage of small format PSB stamps at 100 times face value

In March 1920, when new postal rates were introduced in the RSFSR, not only the Imperial Arms stamps with face values of 1k to 20k, but also the small format PSB stamps of 1k, 5k and 10k that had earlier been given the status of postage stamps, were revalued to 100 times face value. Some examples of their use on registered covers are shown. These stamps were also used on money order and parcel address forms. PSB stamps used during this period are the scarcest of all three periods of use.

Local revaluation surcharges

Like the normal postage stamps, small format PSB stamps are known revalued at some provincial post offices with a handstamp "R", "RUB", etc. Stamp catalogues (Michel, Yvert & Tellier, France-URSS, SFA-Chuchin) list the following issues:

Danilov (Yaroslavl province): violet handstamp "r" on 1k.

Semenov (Nizhnii Novgorod province): black handstamp "gub" (the first letter is a deformed 'r') on 10k. Only 150 copies are believed to have been surcharged at Semenov post office. This stamp is found used only with postmarks of Bogoyavlenie and Khakhaly (post suboffices subordinated to the Semenov post office)¹⁴.

Later, one more provisional of this kind was found:

Penza: green handstamp "r" on 1k and 5k. Such stamps are only known used revalued to 250R during the Third Period of usage, see hereunder.

In the early Twenties the following issue was described¹⁵:

Novosil (Tula province): black handstamp "3" on 1k stamp, revaluing it to 3R. Allegedly 7 copies were known, one cancelled Novosil and the other six Baryatino. The existence of this provisional still remains unconfirmed.

Third period: usage of PSB & Control stamps revalued to 250R

As of 15 August 1921, free forwarding of ordinary mail was abolished in the RSFSR and postal rates were increased considerably. There were initially no stamps with sufficiently high face values to frank at these rates. The stamp with the highest face value was the 20k Arms stamp revalued to 20R in March 1920. Therefore the Central Postal Administration ordered that all types of PSB & Control stamps were to be put on sale, revalued to 250R irrespective of their face value, for franking ordinary intercity letters (rate 250R).

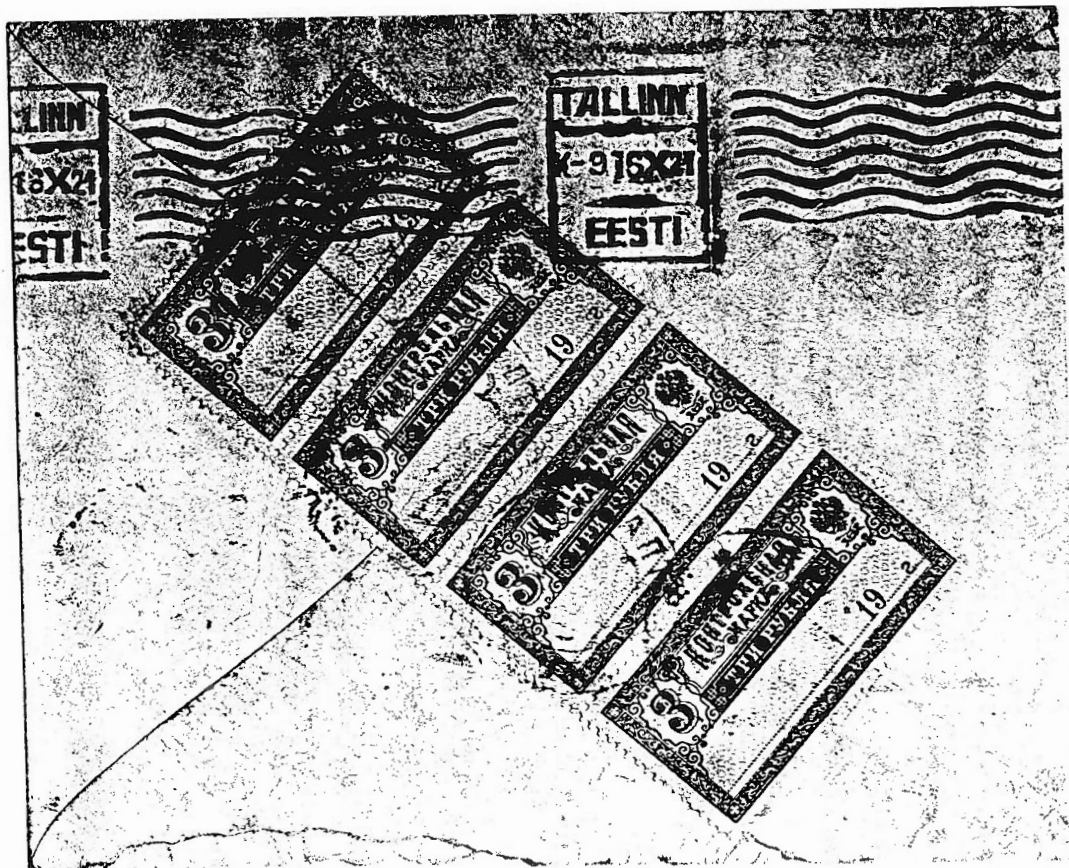
Besides the stamps listed in the first part of this article, a few copies of imperforate 25k Control stamps postmarked Kem, Arkhangel'sk province were found during the Twenties¹⁶. One copy at least was preserved until the present in the collection of Prof. A. Georgievski in St.Petersburg, as reported by Karlinski.

The circular authorising the postal use of PSB & Control stamps revalued to 250R did not specify the face value of these stamps. Thus, the possibility cannot be excluded that some higher values of the large format PSB stamps, besides the 25k and 50k, were postally used during this period in some provincial post offices, where occasionally copies of such stamps had been preserved. We show a copy of the green 3R stamp which has undoubtedly been used postally.

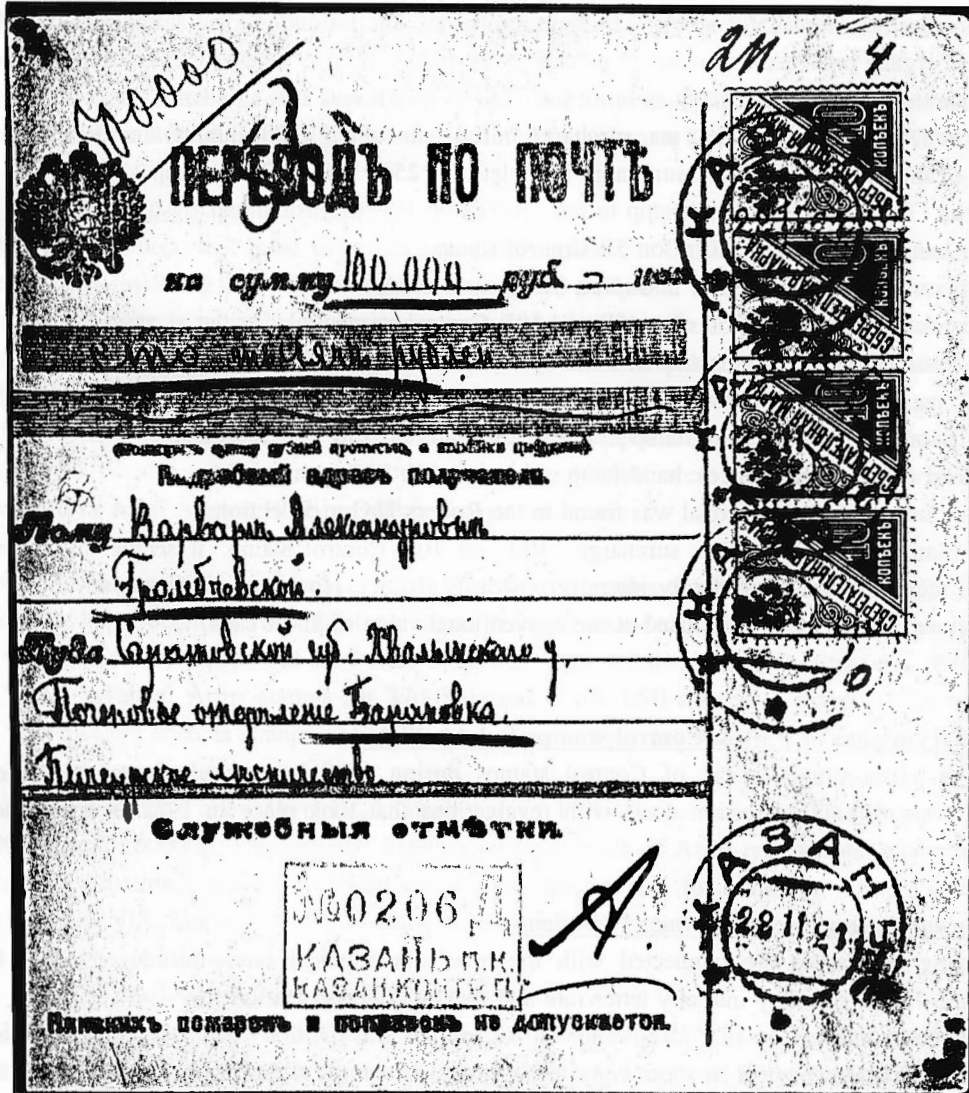
Money order for 7000R from Chilik, Semirechye province (19-9-1920) to Tashkent franked with 14x10k PSB stamps revalued to 10R each for total of 140R to meet 2% rate. The addressee was not at Tashkent and the form travelled via a number of Turkestan post offices before ending up with FPO 139 on 10-3-1921. (Robert Taylor collection)



Top: 3R PSB stamp (not listed in stamp catalogues) postally used at Talitsy, Vologda province (1-11-1921).
Bottom: ordinary letter sent on 5-10-1921 to Tallinn, Estonia. Franked with 4 x 3R Control stamps used at 250R each for the 1000R foreign letter rate



Money order for 100,000R from Kazan (28-11-1921) to Saratov province, franked with 7x10k PSB stamps revalued to 250R each, plus 250R RSFSR 1921 Jubilee stamp (the latter plus 3 PSB stamps on the reverse) to meet the 2% rate of 2000R



Initially all these stamps were intended for the franking of ordinary intercity letters only. However, rather soon they were being widely used on inland registered letters (fig.40), letters abroad, money orders and parcel cards (although an official circular demanded that such forms were only to be given a marking indicating that the postage had been paid, rather than franked with stamps).

Later, when postal rates were again increased on 1 February 1922, PSB & Control stamps continued to be in use but either in combination with normal postage stamps or in large quantities, because their value was now relatively low.

Local revaluation surcharges on PSB & Control stamps

As in 1920, there were local revaluation surcharges made by handstamps or in manuscript on PSB & Control stamps. Usually they were 250R-surcharges, but not always. The following local surcharges have been found:

Andizhan (Fergana province): manuscript surcharge in red ink "250 r" on 50k Control stamp.

Ekaterinoslav: manuscript surcharge in black ink "250 r" on 5R and 10R Control stamps.

Krasnyi Yar (Astrakhan province): ms. surcharge in red "sto rublei" (100 roubles) on 10R Control stamp.

Lebedyan (Tambov province): ms. surcharge in violet ink "250 r" on 5k PSB stamp.

Mikhailovka (Tula province): handstamp in red "100 r" on 10R Control stamp.

Orenburg: handstamp in blue "50 r" on 5R Control stamp.

Perm': ms. surcharge in black ink "250 r" on 3R Control stamp.

Saratov: handstamp in black "250 r" on 5R and 10R Control stamps.

Sebezh (Vitebsk province): handstamp in black "250" on 10k PSB stamp.

Tamala (Penza province) : handstamp in red "250 r" on 25R Control stamp.

Tsaritsyn (Saratov province): handstamp in black "250 rub" on 25R Control stamp.

Yuriev-Polski (Vladimir province): handstamp in black on 1k PSB stamp.

A previously unrecorded provisional was found in the Robert Taylor collection:

Pokrovsk (Samara province): ms. surcharge "100" on 10R Control stamp. It seems this stamp was initially revalued to meet the rate for ordinary intercity postcards (100R). However, on the money order form shown in the illustrations, 8 such stamps are used at the conventional value of 250R each.

Extraordinary usages of PSB & Control stamps in later periods

One case of extraordinary usage of Control stamps during 1919 has already been mentioned, namely the Tashkent devaluation. This section deals with revaluations that took place in 1922 in connection with further increases in postal rates.

Revaluation surcharges on small format PSB stamps

The following surcharges are connected with the new inland postal rates introduced on 1 February 1922, particular the 7500R ordinary intercity letter rate and the 15000R registration fee.

Kiev: enumerator surcharges of "7500" and "8000" on 5k and "15000" on 10k. The surcharges are found reading upwards or downwards in about equal proportions on stamps with upright or sideways watermark. These surcharges were made in Kiev according to an official decree of the Central Postal Administration¹⁷:

"...2. Revalue Savings stamps with face value 5k to stamps of 7500R, and 10k stamps to 15000R; with these stamps mail is prepaid in (postal) offices of the Kiev guberniya."

This circular does not mention the "8000" surcharge that was made first, since at first the rate for ordinary letters had been erroneously announced to be 8000R. About 20 sheets (2000 stamps) of the 5k PSB stamp were surcharged "8000" and released on 20 February 1922 at the Kiev main post office before the enumerator was readjusted to "7500". On the same day the 15000R/10k stamp was released in what is believed to be a quantity of about 1000 copies. The "7500" stamp was issued on the next day, 21 February 1922. In total, about 130,000 stamps were surcharged, thus the number of stamps surcharged "7500" should be rather high. The "15000" and especially the "7500" surcharge are found in two types, with clear-cut or indistinct numerals, explained by the

replacement of high-quality ink by ink of considerably downgraded quality¹⁸. Examples of postal use of Kiev provisionals are shown.

Again it should be stressed that PSB stamps were surcharged in Kiev on the instigation of the Central Postal Administration, although for use in a limited area, which gives these stamps the right to be listed as normal stamp issues in the SG catalogue, where these stamps are missing at present.

Svyatoshino: handstamped surcharge "7500" on 5k PSB stamp, pointing upwards or downwards. Svyatoshino was a dacha suburb of Kiev (now a town district). Probably, the local post-suboffice was not supplied with the newly surcharged stamps by the Kiev Main Post Office in time, so these home-made surcharges were ordered by the local postmaster. Initially, only a few copies were found on money order forms. However, in the Thirties mint Svyatoshino provisionals were sold in the state philatelic stores in Moscow and elsewhere, the ink shade being slightly different from that of the undoubtedly genuine surcharges found on money orders (grey-black instead of black).

Bryansk (Orel province): diagonal handstamps "15000" on 10k PSB stamp. This surcharge is known as a pair of stamps on piece in a collection of Russian provisionals offered for sale at a Köhler auction in 1977¹⁹.

Conventional local revaluations without surcharge

This subject has already been discussed in a previous BJRP article²⁰. Unfortunately, known examples of this practice, at least those involving PSB & Control stamps, are all unique in their own way. Although there is no documentary evidence there is nevertheless serious reason to believe that local conventional revaluations of PSB & Control stamps took place legally, in particular in Ukraine (Odessa, Kharkov, etc.). Such revaluations seem to be natural efforts to utilise limited stamp stocks after inland postal rates were increased by a factor 30 (on average) on 1 February 1922. After the next drastic increase of postal rates on 15 April 1922, when the minimum postal rate became 10,000R, stamps with a value of 250R were quite useless. However, PSB & Control stamps used in April-August 1922 in Odessa are not too scarce.

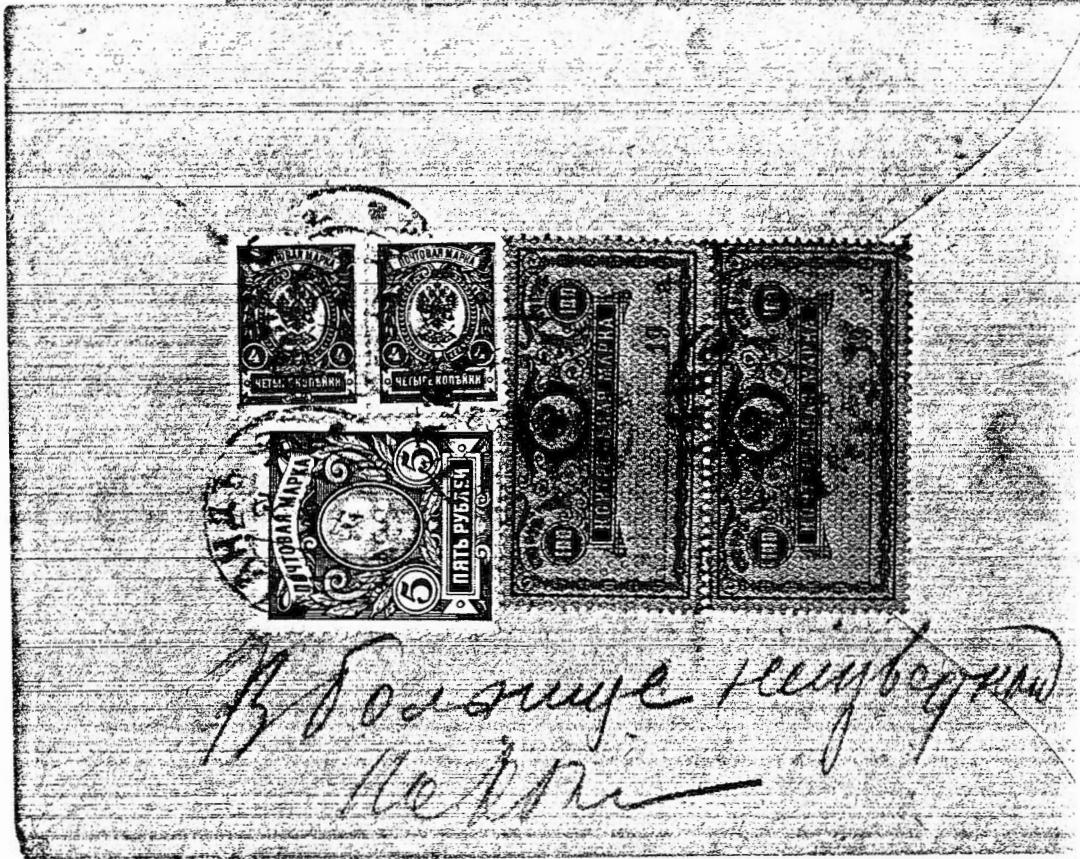
One further example of a possible local conventional revaluation, besides those described in BJRP 70, is a cover from the Robert Taylor collection. This registered cover from Kharkov to Korea (returned by Moscow because of lack of postal connections) was posted on 7 June 1922 when the rate for foreign R-letters was 400,000R. This rate is franked with revalued Arms stamps for 370,000, and 4 10k PSB stamps to make up the balance. This suggests these stamps were used as stamps of 7500R, a conventional revaluation.

Some sources^{21 22} report that after April 1922, small format PSB stamps were revalued at some post offices to 10000R, 50000R and 100000R, respectively, together with the stock of Arms-type postage stamps. This could not be an official revaluation, since the relevant circular did not provide for revaluing stamps with an official value (at that time) of 250R. Unfortunately, no entire where such a revaluation can be shown to have taken place without doubts, is known to the author at present.

In conclusion I would like to express my sincere thanks to Robert Taylor and Timo Bergholm, who enabled me to illustrate this article with photocopies of excellent entires from their collections, and to Ivo Steyn, who supplied me with a lot of important information previously unknown to me.

Ordinary letter from Samarkand (27-3-1922) to Kiev province. The franking consists of 2x100R Control stamps revalued to 250R each, plus Arms stamps of 2x4k and 5R officially revalued only in Turkestan to 1000R and 5000R respectively, thus 7500R in total in accordance with the current rte. This appears to be the only known cover demonstrating the Turkestan revaluation of Arms stamps (Robert Taylor collection).

Киевская губерния
 в. ~~Горьковская~~ Н.
 Каневская уезда
 Еврейская волость
 Борису Ровинскому, его жене
 и их семье Хан-Ровне Борис



Postal money order from Pokrovsk, Samara province (20-1-1922) to Tashkent. The franking consists of 8x10R Control stamps with manuscript surcharge "100.-" (originally intended for franking postcards) but used here at 250R each for total of 2000R, the 2% rate. (Robert Taylor collection)

ПЕРЕВОДЪ ПО ПОЧТѢ

2485 на сумму 100.000 руб. коп.

Мѣсто для марокъ

100.000 руб.

(Повторить сумму рублей прописью, а копейки цифрами)
 Подробный адресъ получателя.

Кому *Алекс Козьмину*
Владиславу

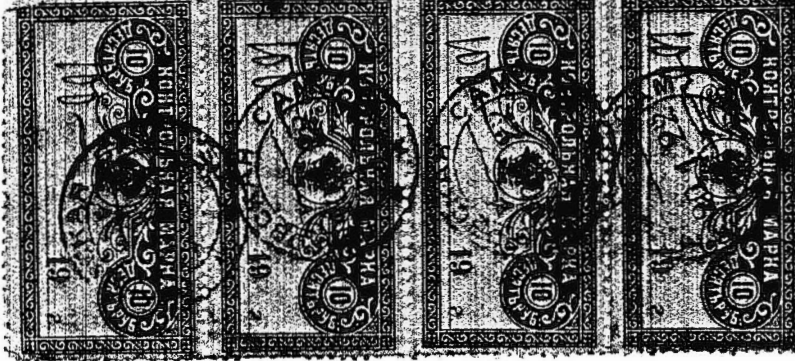
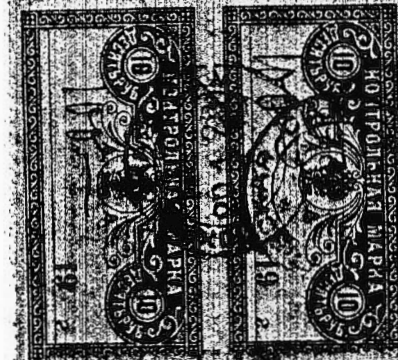
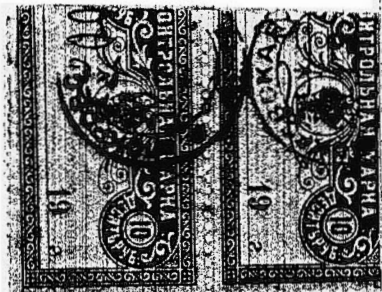
Куда *Ташкент*
Курортная Комиссия
Улица Давуда

Служебныя отмѣтки:

№ 61
 Покровскъ на Волгѣ
 Самарск. губ.
 Самарск. Котл. Дел.

Саратовская Губ. 20.1.22

Саратовская Губ. 20.1.22



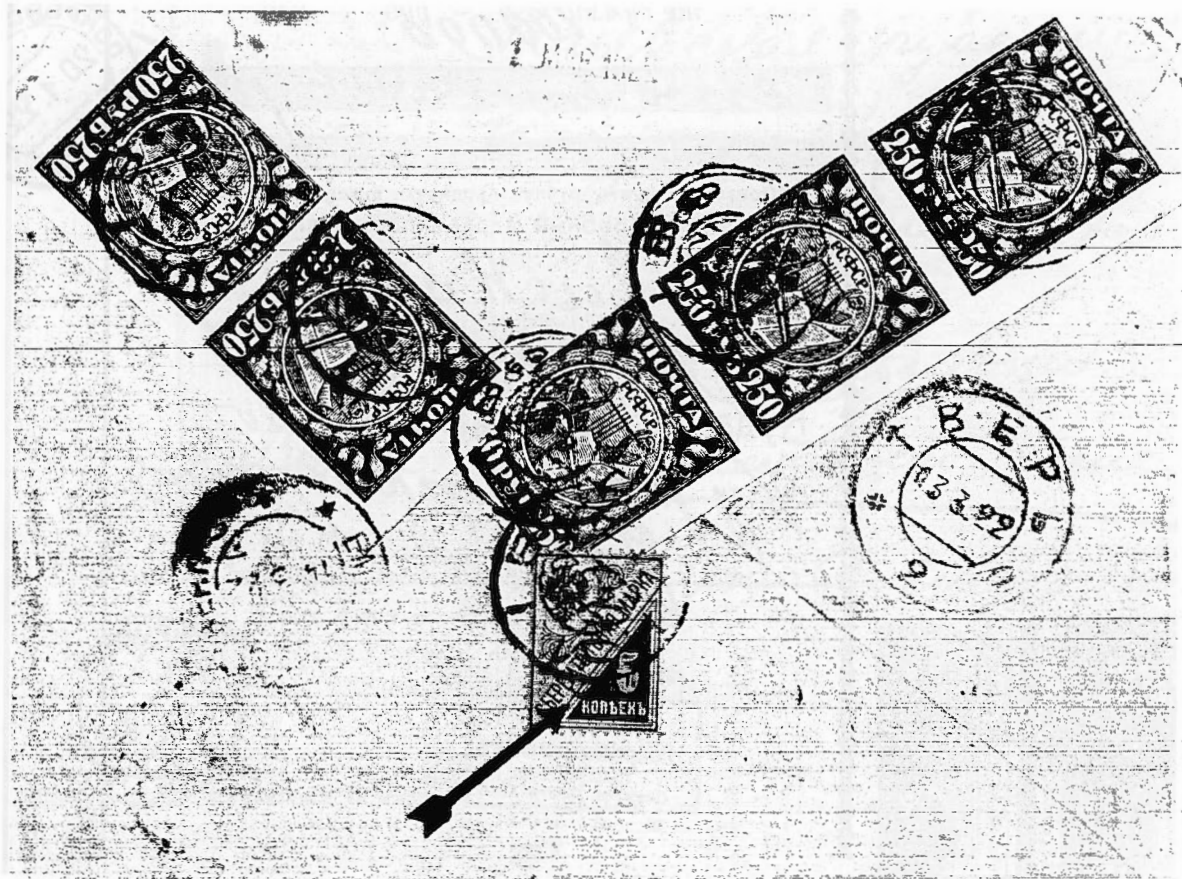
Списокъ получателя.

Ценную на лицевой сторонѣ этого до-
 сумму получили *31/1* 1922 г.
 (мѣсяцъ и число года).

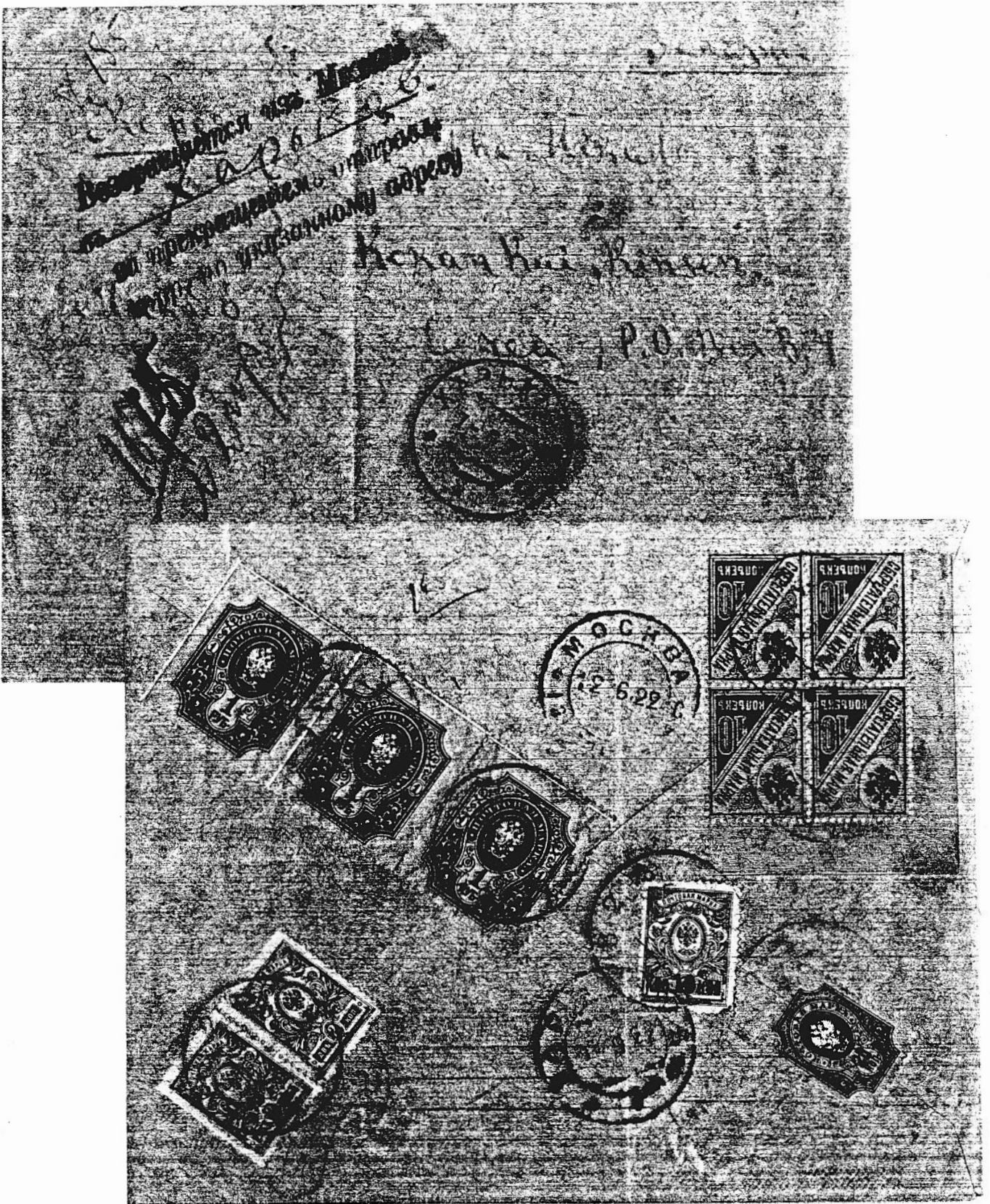
Владислав

Top: letter from Kiev (4-3-1922) to Staritsa, Tver province with franking of 9250R consisting of 5x250R 1921 RSFSR stamps and a single 8000/5k Kiev provisional (Robert Taylor collection).

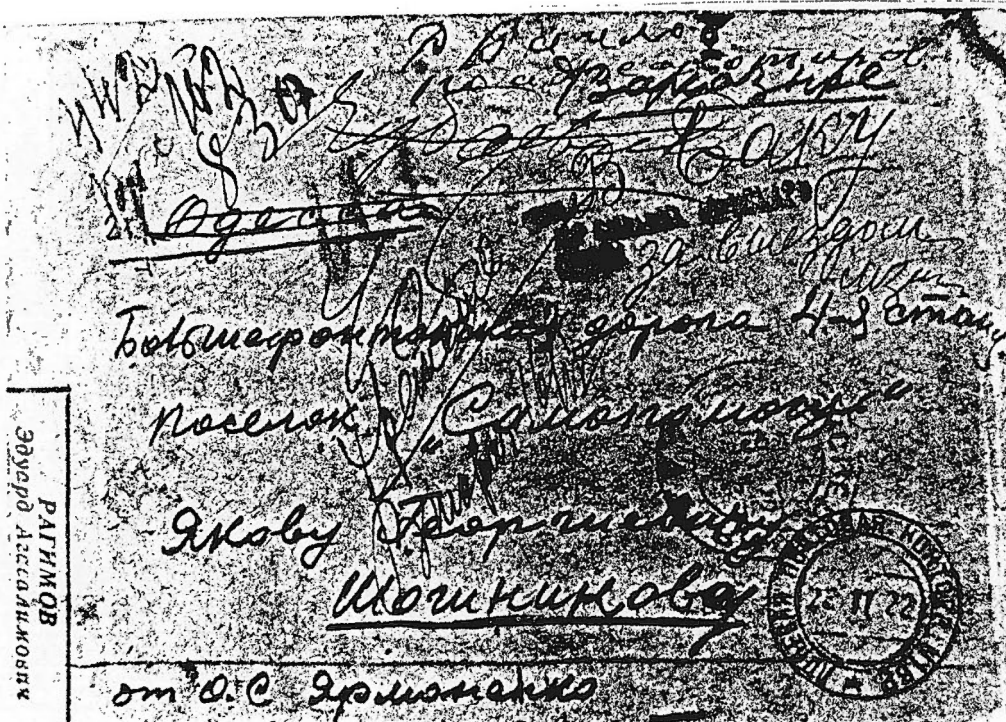
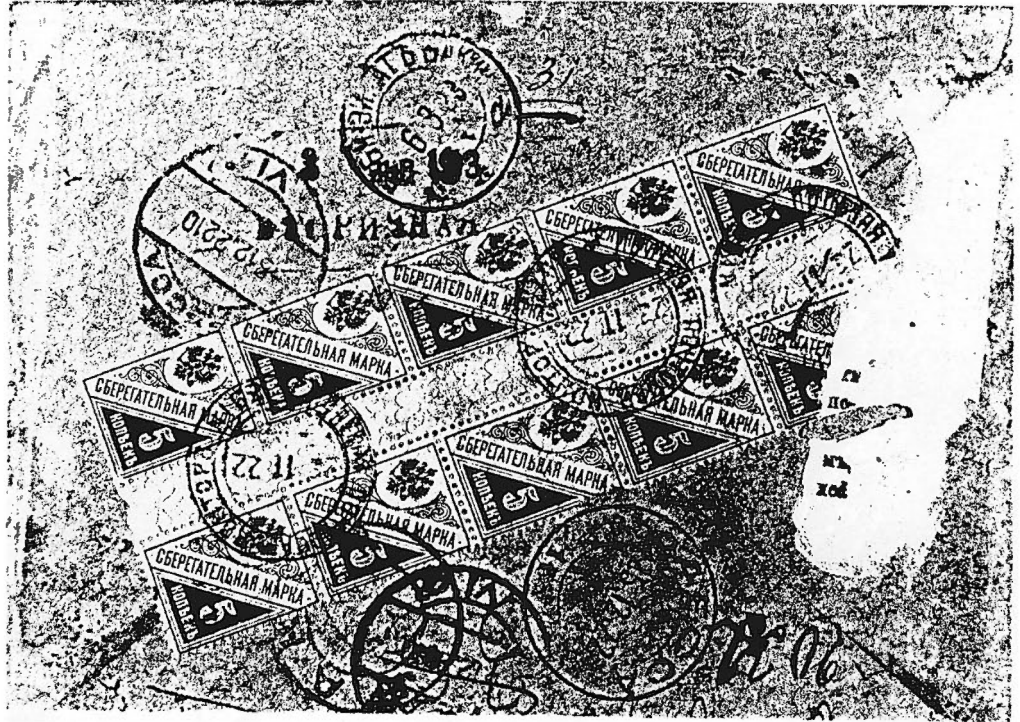
Bottom: Large format PSB and Control stamps used at Odessa in April-August 1922.



Registered letter from Khar'kov (7-6-1922) to Korea, returned from Moscow due to lack of postal communications with Korea. The franking consists of Arms stamps (3x1R revalued to 10000R each, 2x2k revalued to 20000R each, 1x10k/7k revalued to 100,000R). If the 20k stamp was revalued (unofficially) to 200,000R then each of the 4 10k PSB stamps must have been locally revalued to 7500R to complete the correct rate of 400,000R (Robert Taylor collection).



While this article was going to press, the cover below surfaced in the Wilfried Nagl Auction, Bamberg, Germany, who gave kind permission to reproduce it here. The cover was sent from FPO 162 (19-11-1922), then in Azerbaijan to Odessa. The addressee could not be found and the cover was returned, ending up in Bibi Eibat near Baku on 6-3-1923. Franked with 10x5k PSB stamps, apparently revalued to 50,000R each to make up the 500,000R internal letter rate. First known case of such a revaluation, and an interesting application of the domestic letter rate for Soviet troops on foreign (Azerbaijani) soil. Lot 810 in 2nd Nagl Auction, 21-10-1995.



NOTES

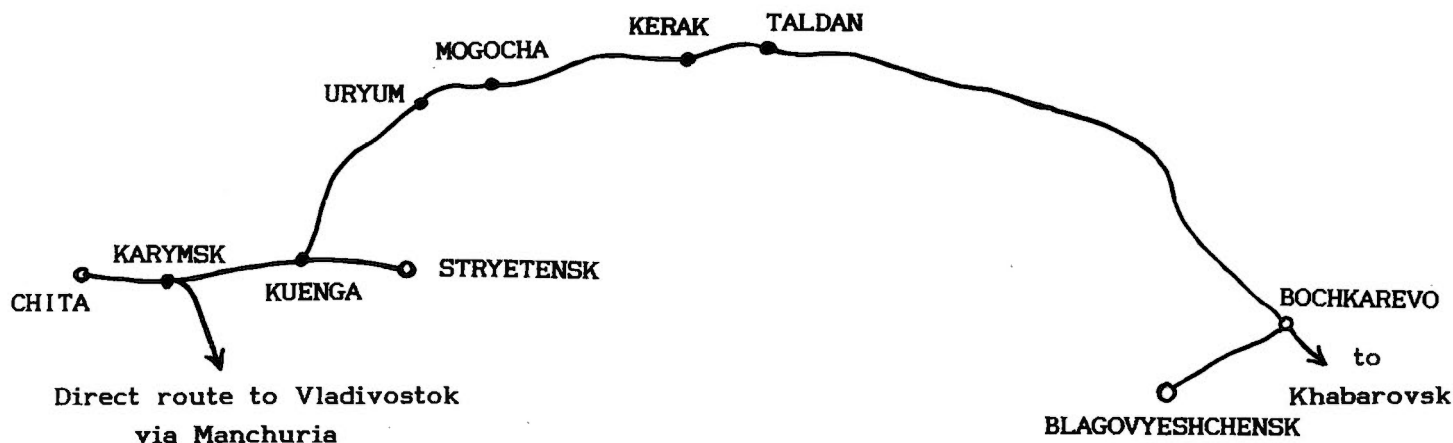
1. Jack Moyes & David Skipton, "A Kopeck saved...". BJRP 73, Autumn 1992, pp.9-19.
2. Dr.R.J. Ceresa, "The Postal Savings Bank and Control stamps (part 1)". BJRP 50, July 1974, pp.11-13.
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The Amur Railway - some new postmark discoveries

P.E. Robinson

Since the book Russian Railway Postmarks by A.V. Kiryushkin and myself was published in 1994, a great many previously unrecorded postmarks have come to light. Most of these do not differ greatly from postmarks already in the book; quite often the difference is confined to the serial number or letter. However, a significant number of postmarks have turned up from stations or TPO routes from which no postmark had previously been recorded. The purpose of this article is to describe two such postmarks which have recently been discovered, used on different sections of the Amur Railway in Eastern Siberia, and also a newly-discovered censor mark used on mail sent by convicts working on this railway.

DIAGRAM OF THE AMUR RAILWAY, SHOWING PLACES MENTIONED IN THE TEXT



When the Trans-Siberian railway was built around the turn of the century, a "short-cut" was taken, whereby part of the railway went through Manchuria. By arrangement with the Chinese government this line, the Chinese Eastern Railway, was built and operated by the Russians as part of the route to Vladivostok. It had originally been intended to build the line entirely on Russian territory, to the north of the Amur river, but as this involved a long detour the plan was abandoned when the Manchurian route became possible. A railway was, however, built to Stretensk, branching off from the Chita-Manchuria line near Karymsk. This railway linked the main Trans-Siberian/Manchurian route with the Shilka river (a tributary of the Amur). Further east, the Ussuri Railway was also built linking Vladivostok with Khabarovsk, on the Amur. Therefore in order to make the journey from Lake Baikal to Vladivostok through Russian territory, passengers could (as Annette Meakin, one of that intrepid band of Victorian lady travellers did in 1900) travel by train to Stretensk, then by steamer down the Shilka and Amur rivers to Khabarovsk, completing the journey by means of the Ussuri Railway.

This situation changed as a direct result of the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905. The vulnerability of the Manchurian route was realised, and the decision was made to build the Amur Railway. It was to be built to the north of the Amur, always beyond artillery range of the Chinese side of the river, and construction began in the spring of 1908 at Kuenga, west of Stretensk. It was finished in 1916 with the completion of a 1½ mile long bridge over the Amur at Khabarovsk.

As successive sections of the Amur Railway were completed, the TPO routes changed accordingly. For example, Postal Wagon No. 243/244 had been operating from Karymsk to Stretensk, but on 15 October 1913 the route was changed, so that it began to operate between Karymsk and Kerak on the newly-built section of the Amur Railway. This route would have been established as soon as the line was open to traffic as far as Kerak. In June 1914 the route was further extended to Taldan, and to Blagoveshchensk in November 1915. By December 1916 the route had been extended all the way from Chita to Bochkarevo, the point on the eastern part of the Amur Railway where the line to Blagoveshchensk branches off from the main line.

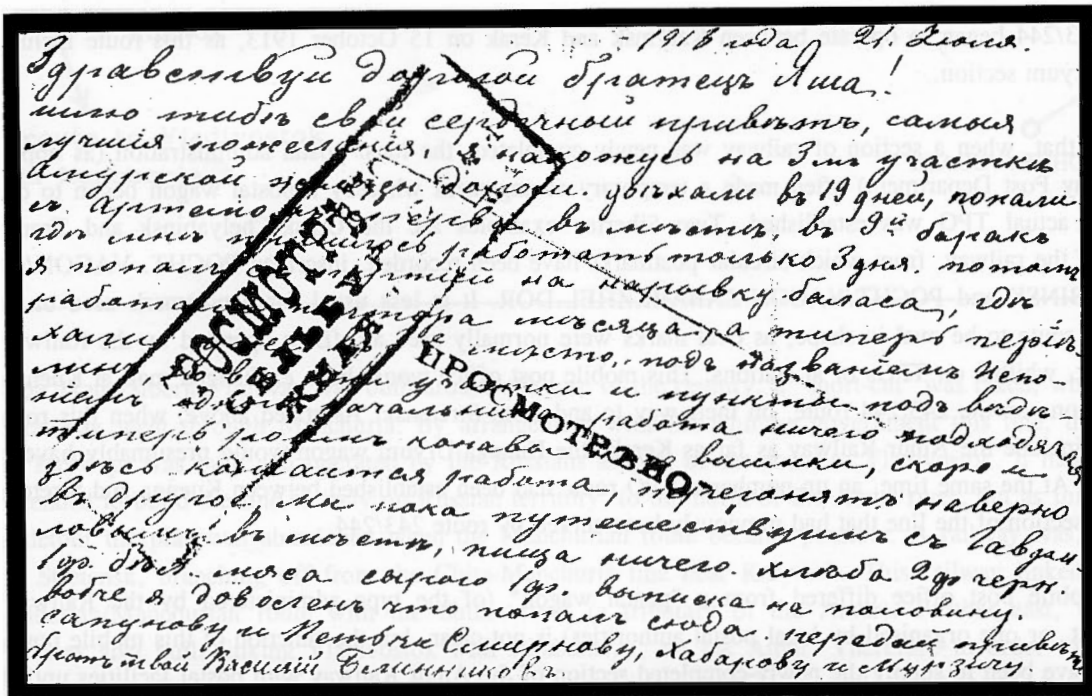
Thanks to the auctioneer Wilfried Nagl in Bamberg, Germany I am able to illustrate a postcard (fig.1) with a hitherto-unrecorded postmark of a "mobile post office" on the Amur Railway; a drawing of this postmark is shown as fig.2. The 3k Romanov postcard was sent in July 1913 to a Yakov Davidovich Blinnikov at the Shlisselburg Fortress, St.Petersburg, which was a hard-labour prison. In addition to the cancellation, on the front of the card there is a "S.PETERBURG/GOR.POCHTA" machine postmark used as a transit mark, and a "SHLISSEL..." receiving mark. The oval cancellation (the lower impression of which has been retouched in the illustration) is inscribed KUENGA-URYUM ZAB./PEREDV.P.O. As stated above, Kuenga (more usually written Kuehnga in Russian) is the point at which the Amur Railway leaves the original route to Stretensk. Uryum is about 130 miles along the Amur Railway, northeast of Kuenga. On this postmark, the abbreviation PEREDV.P.O. is short for PEREDVIZHNOE POCHTOVOE OTDELENIE, meaning "mobile post office". It is known that the postal wagons which operated on un-numbered routes, that is, the routes which were organised by local postal administrations, often functioned as mobile post offices. However, it is unusual for a postal wagon to be officially referred to by the designation "mobile post office". From official sources we know that such a mobile post office was established between Kuenga and Mogochoa on 31 October 1912. This route was shortened to Kuenga-Uryum on 28 June 1913. The mobile post office presumably ceased to operate when Postal Wagon 243/244 began to operate between Karymsk and Kerak on 15 October 1913, as this route included the Kuenga-Uryum section.

We know that, when a section of railway was newly completed, the local postal administration (as opposed to the Railway Post Department) often made a temporary arrangement whereby a postal wagon began to operate, before an actual TPO was established. Two Siberian examples are the Omsk-Chelyabinsk and Transbaikalian sections of the railway, from which circular postmarks have been recorded, inscribed POCHT. VAGON/OMSK-CHELYABINSK and POCHT.VAGON/ZABAIIK.ZHEL.DOR. It is less usual for a postmark used on such a temporary route to be oval in shape, as oval marks were normally used at offices operated by the Railway Post Department, whether on TPOs or at stations. This mobile post office would have exchanged mail at Kuenga with postal wagons on the 243/244 route, on their way to and from Stretensk. As stated above, when this route was altered to include the Amur Railway as far as Kerak, the Kuenga-Uryum wagon would presumably have ceased to operate. At the same time, an un-numbered TPO route had been established between Kuenga and Stretensk, to serve this section of the line that had previously been served by route 243/244.

How a mobile post office differed from a "postal wagon" (of the type administered by the Railway Post Department, or one organised by local postal authorities) is not clear, but the function of this mobile post office seems to have been to supply the newly-completed section of the Amur Railway with postal facilities until Postal Wagon 243/244 began to operate along the new line in October 1913.



Figs. 1-3, front and reverse of the postcard, and drawing of the postmark



This particular postcard is not only of interest for its mobile post office cancellation. My friend (and President/Librarian of the Rossica Society of Russian Philately) David Skipton pointed out that the censor marks on the reverse side of this card, together with the message, add greatly to the interest and importance of this item (fig.3), in particular as they indicate that this is an item of inter-prison mail. The postcard was sent by the brother of the addressee, and this brother was evidently a convict working on the Amur Railway. The two PROSMOTRENO ("examined") marks were used by prison censors, the larger boxed mark being inscribed PROSMOTRENO/SHLISSELBURGSKAYA/KATORZHNYAYA TYUR'MA, or "EXAMINED/ SHLISSELBURG/HARD-LABOUR PRISON. But it is the other, single-line PROSMOTRENO mark which is of particular interest, as this was clearly used by the officer in charge of the work-gang in which the sender was working, or by another officer somewhere back down the line. David Skipton assures me that this mark is unrecorded and very rare. His translation of the message on the card is as follows:

Hello my dear brother Yasha!

I'm sending you my warmest regards and very best wishes. I'm at the third section of the Amur Railway. It took us 19 days to get here, and Artem and I arrived together, first to Barrack 9, where I only had to work three days. Then (illegible name) and I got to a sapphire dig, where we worked for a month and a half, and now we're already moved to a place called Ispolin, but all of these sections and points are under the control of one chief. The work isn't hard, it's OK. At present we're digging ditches (1-2 words obliterated) cuttings. Soon the work here will be done, and they'll probably drive us to another place. For now, Gavrilov and I are travelling together. The food's so-so. Two pounds of black bread, one pound of white meat, and one pound of uncooked meat. [You can] subscribe for a half [more]. In general I'm happy I ended up here. Give my regards to Sapunov and Petka Smirnov, Khabarov and Murzich.

Your brother, Vasili Blinnikov

Another newly-recorded Amur Railway postmark, dated 2 August 1914, is shown in fig.4; this was reported by our member Alexander Epstein.



The inscription BLAGOVESHCHEN. 4 KERAK in itself suggests a postmark from a numbered TPO route, but the number '4' does not make sense as this number had been allocated to the Warsaw-St.Petersburg line. The figure '4' would therefore appear to be the serial number allocated to this particular handstamp. Mr Epstein tells me that, from his researches in the postal archives, he has established that the route from Blagoveshchensk to Taldan, given in Russian Railway Postmarks as existing in 1915, was in fact established on 5 November 1915, and that prior to this the route had operated along the slightly longer section between Blagoveshchensk and Kerak.

It seems strange that this un-numbered route continued to operate after November 1915 as official sources also tell us, as stated above, that Postal wagon 243/244 operated between Stretensk and Blagoveshchensk from November 1915.

These newly-discovered postmarks serve to remind us that we still have a lot to learn about the postal history of Imperial Russia, and that among the wide range of postmarks used in the vast Russian Empire, many discoveries are still to be made.

Current events in the F.S.U.

Ivo Steyn

The Geidar Äliyev Transcaucasian Two-Step

Of the late communist party boss Anastas Mikoyan it was said that he could walk through the rain and stay dry, by dodging every individual raindrop. Certainly his track-record qualified him as a survivor: he narrowly missed becoming the 27th Commissar of Baku to be executed by Transcaspian Whites in 1918, and then went on to high office under Lenin, Stalin, Chrushev and Brezhnev.

Former Politburo member Geidar Ali Rza oğly Äliyev¹ is rapidly gaining a similar reputation for survival under changing political conditions. Born in 1923 in Nakhichevan, he joined the Party in 1945 and made a career in the Azerbaijan KGB before becoming First Secretary of the Azerbaijan Party in 1969. He joined the Politburo as a candidate member in 1976 and quickly rose to become a full member and a deputy prime minister. In the power struggle that followed Chernenko's death he supported Gorbachov. A few years later he was sacked.

However, during his time in Azerbaijan he had built up an impressive network of relatives in high places, so after rejecting the life of a pensioner he had a power base on native soil to fall back on: Nakhichevan, the Azerbaijan exclave sandwiched between Armenia and Iran. In 1993 he returned to Azerbaijan to take over the government, which he has since run with a firm hand (to put it mildly).

While Äliyev was the uncrowned king of Nakhichevan, two stamps were issued, one featuring his benign smile, the other a map of Nakhichevan. The two stamps of 5 manat were issued *se-tenant* and were accompanied by a miniature sheet. Both these were printed by 'DSR Holdings Ltd.', apparently a French firm. The small print run of these Nakhichevan issues (25,000 sets, 2,000 miniature sheets) has driven up prices to speculative silliness. I have seen the sheet offered at £130! I have not seen them used in or on cover from Nakhichevan.

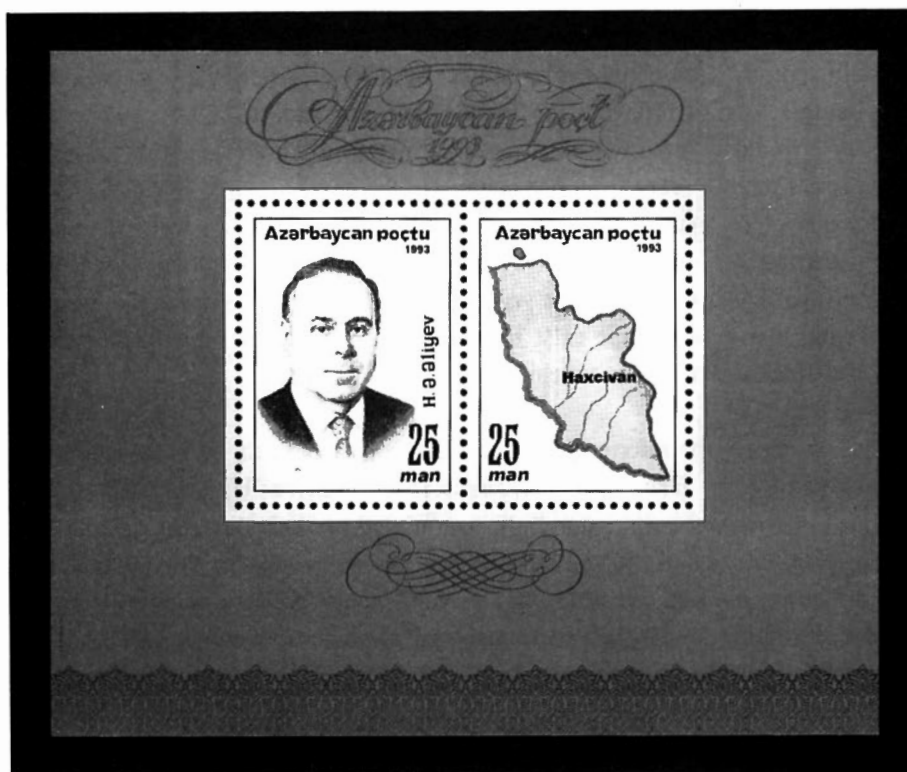
On his return to Azerbaijan, the same two stamps were reissued on the occasion of his 70th birthday, but now with inscription 'Azərbaycan poçtu' instead of 'Naxçıvan poçt', and a new face value of 25 manat. Although print runs were slightly higher this time (25,000 sets, 4,000 sheets) the stamps are still scarce. I have not seen evidence of their distribution within Azerbaijan. Imperforate stamps and colour proofs have also been seen, status unknown. The sheet exists in two versions: with 'Naxcivan' and 'Haxcivan' on the map.

Incidentally, several Azerbaijani topical sets were never distributed within Azerbaijan itself. The Filaross catalogue mentions two issues in this connection: 'mushrooms' (six stamps and sheet) and 'flowers' (six stamps and sheetlet), both from early 1994. I have similar doubts about the 1993 'horses' set.

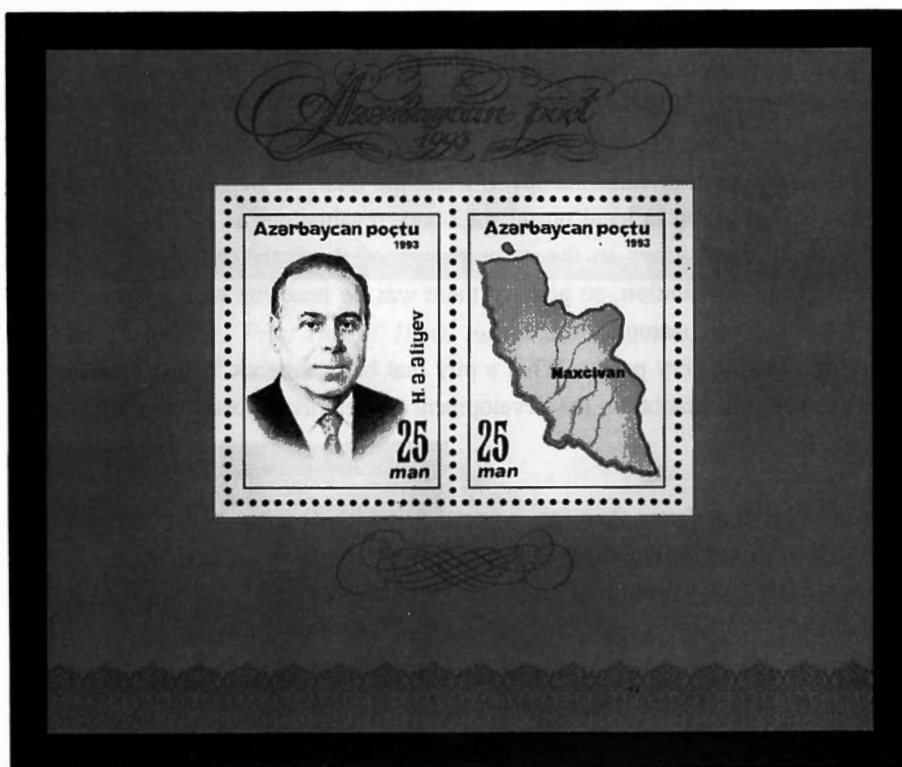
DSR Holdings Ltd. imperfs

Speaking of stamps printed by DSR Holdings Ltd., it may be a coincidence but the 'musical instruments' miniature sheet issued by Kyrgyzstan in 1993 which was also printed by this firm has now appeared on the market imperforate. Hmm, Azerbaijani stamps and Kyrgyz stamps printed by this firm have appeared on the market as imperfs. Either it's a coincidence or the perforation department of this firm is not working at the same speed as the rest of the company. Either way, I'd be most interested to hear if the imperforates have also been distributed within the respective countries for which they were intended. If not, we may be dealing with yet another example of exploitative rubbish on the market. Perhaps the printer's bill was paid by allowing them to market a small number of imperforate 'varieties'? Any information on this would be most welcome.

¹ As so often in this post-Soviet confusion, several spellings of this name are possible. Transcription of the Cyrillic spelling is ALIEV, on the Nakhichevan stamps the name is spelled Äliyev in the Latin alphabet, while the Azerbaijan version replaces the "Ä" with an inverted "e" in the expanded version of the Turkish alphabet that it now being used by most Central Asian ex-Soviet republics. I'll stick to "Äliyev", if you don't mind.



*Top: the original souvenir sheet issued for Azerbaijan, showing the incorrect spelling "HAXCIVAN" on the map.
Below: the sheet with the corrected spelling "NAXCIVAN"*



The market for FSU material

Two members have asked me to write something about current market prices for FSU material. Oh dear...

Seriously, it's a horrible problem. The vast majority of FSU material is as yet uncatalogued, and that means there is no universally accepted idea of its market value. As a result, prices can vary wildly. I've seen the four 'Never made it to Georgia' stamps offered at £5 for the four, but also at £30! Shop around and collect lots of price lists from dealers, would be my obvious advice. And try to make contact with dealers abroad as well, as the scarcity of some issues tends to vary from one country to the next.

Second, while the status of so much FSU material is still in doubt, I'd be wary of paying high prices for anything. The high prices asked for the first six overprinted stamps of Kazakstan, issued(?) locally at Leninsk, make me a bit worried, particularly since I have yet to see these stamps on a cover that went through the post. I have the horrible feeling that these stamps exist in two forms: unmounted mint in the stocks of a very small number of dealers, and stuck to Baikonur souvenir covers with lots of fancy postmarks. Not exactly an attractive prospect.

While the Leninsk locals can still be referred to as 'possibly respectable', there are of course plenty of issues out there which are now known to be fake. A good example is the massive 'Ukrainian cities' set, consisting of 10 values per city (printed in *se-tenant* strip, naturally!), overprinted on three different stamps. I think the entire set consists of something like 750 stamps. If you want to pay lots of money for this rather unpleasant little bit of free enterprise, be my guest, but you can probably kiss your money goodbye forever. Why not spend the same amount (I've seen the set offered for £200!!!) on something less obviously bogus?

That said, some post-Soviet issues exist in such small numbers that, in view of the many collectors of these issues, prices are bound to be high, and possibly rise further. If you are satisfied that a certain issue was legitimate, and you know that not many were printed (the recent Filaross catalogue gives numbers issued for almost all stamp issues), then you should be resigned to paying the price. Some examples of potential "winners" and "losers" are shown on the facing page.

Bad times in Belarus

Things are not going well with the Belarusian economy. You can get an idea of just how bad things are getting when a proposed currency union with Russia is put off because Russia fears it would weaken the rouble! (4000 to the \$ and counting...) As a result, postal rates in Belarus have been rising steadily over the past few years, and although they haven't yet reached the gaping heights (with apologies to Alexander Zinoviev) of Ukrainian and Georgian postal rates, things are looking grim.

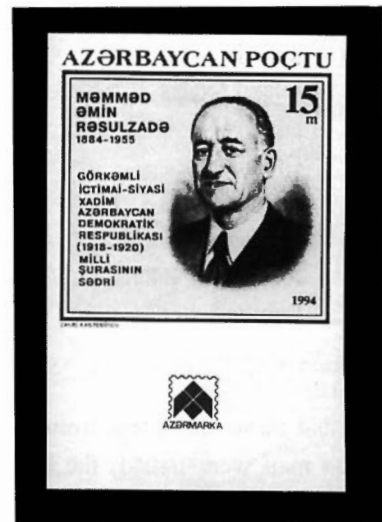
The bright side for anyone not actually living in Belarus is that high inflation leads to the usual combination of high postal rates and not enough high-value stamps to frank the mail, so Belarusian mail looks pretty spectacular. I can't judge if there is an explosion in local postal stationery revaluations as in Ukraine, but there certainly was a massive number of such revaluations in the early phases of the inflation. The pretty Belarusian definitives appear to have received wide distribution, so perhaps there was no need for such PS revaluations as there was in Ukraine, where there was a severe stamp shortage.

So, Belarusian covers are looking very pretty. What a pity that bad economic news should lead to good philatelic news. I would welcome any information on the development of Belarusian postal rates since 1992.

Ukrainian alphabet soup

If your postal rates are changing faster than, er, something which changes very fast, and you're getting really tired of making up huge tariffs with woefully inadequate supplies of low values, a natural solution would be to issue stamps without a fixed face value for the various categories of mail, like the British NVI stamps. Capital idea! There are now eight of these Ukrainian NVI stamps, and the deteriorating exchange rate of the Karbovanets and the rising postal rates have conspired to make the actual *price* of each stamp time-varying. The following tabel summarises what I know about these stamps. Note that more than one stamp has been issued for some categories. The designs of the first four of these stamps are those of previously-issued definitives, the design of the others are new, but in the same style.

POST-SOVIET WINNERS AND LOSERS



Above left: "ALTAI-BARNAUL" surcharges, Russia, 1993. Small print run, at least local official approval, distributed, postal use certain.

Above right: imperforate "Resulzadeh" stamp of Azerbaijan. Postal use accepted but local approval/distribution uncertain.



Above: Bukovina "Fauna" booklet. Print run of 1000, postal use of stamps certain, local approval but stern disapproval from Ukrainian central authorities.



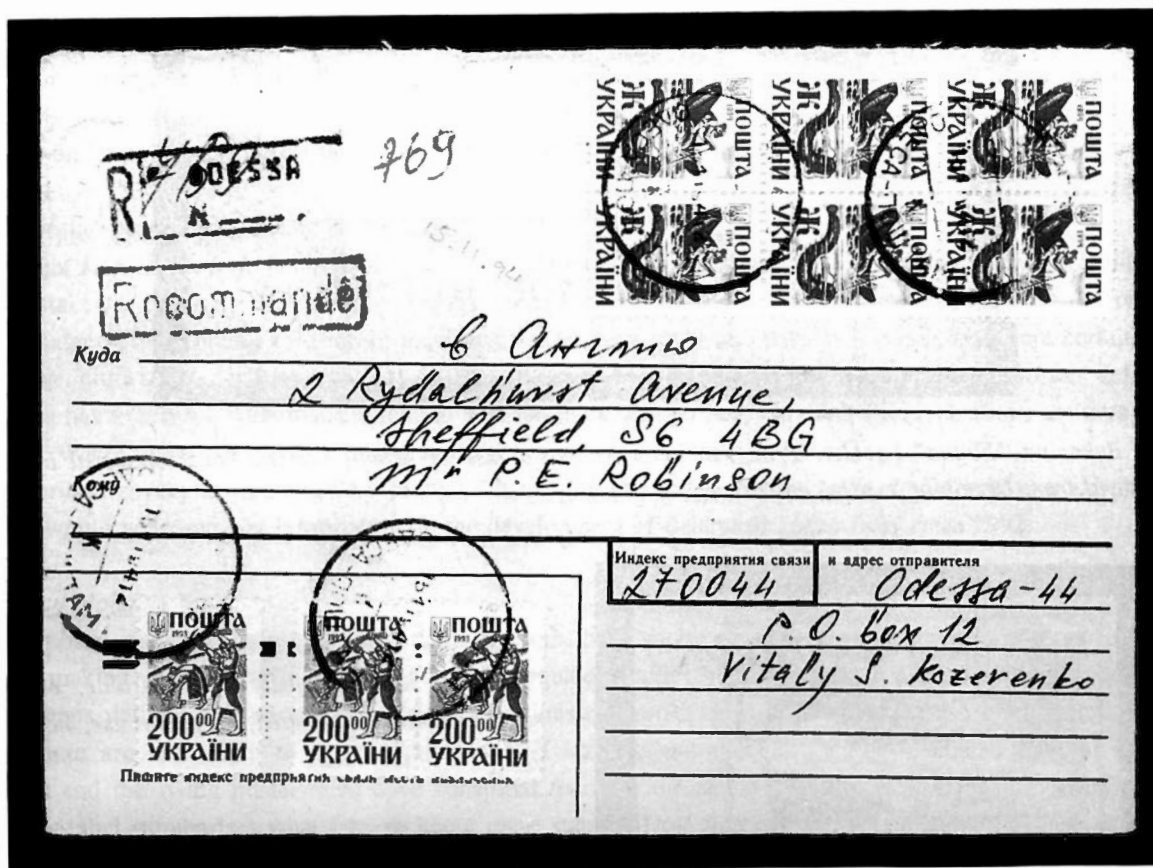
"Makhno" label allegedly from Ukraine, one of a set. Completely fabricated, no postal use, no official approval of any kind.

letter	for:	date of issue	value on:				rate in \$
			2-7	15-10	12-11	7-12	
A(A)	parcels	28 May	5000	5000	5000	5000	-
Б(B)	inland letters	2 July	100		500	500	-
В(V)	parcels	28 May	10000	10000	10000	10000	-
Г(H)	CIS letters	2 July				1800	-
Д(D)	inland letters	15 October	-	100	500	500	-
Е(E)	CIS letters	12 November	-	-	1800	1800	-
Є(Ye)	foreign air letters	12 November	-	-	17000	22000	\$0.20
Ж(Zh)	foreign letters	15 October	-	5300	12000	16500	\$0.15

1\$ = 35,300 80,000 110,000

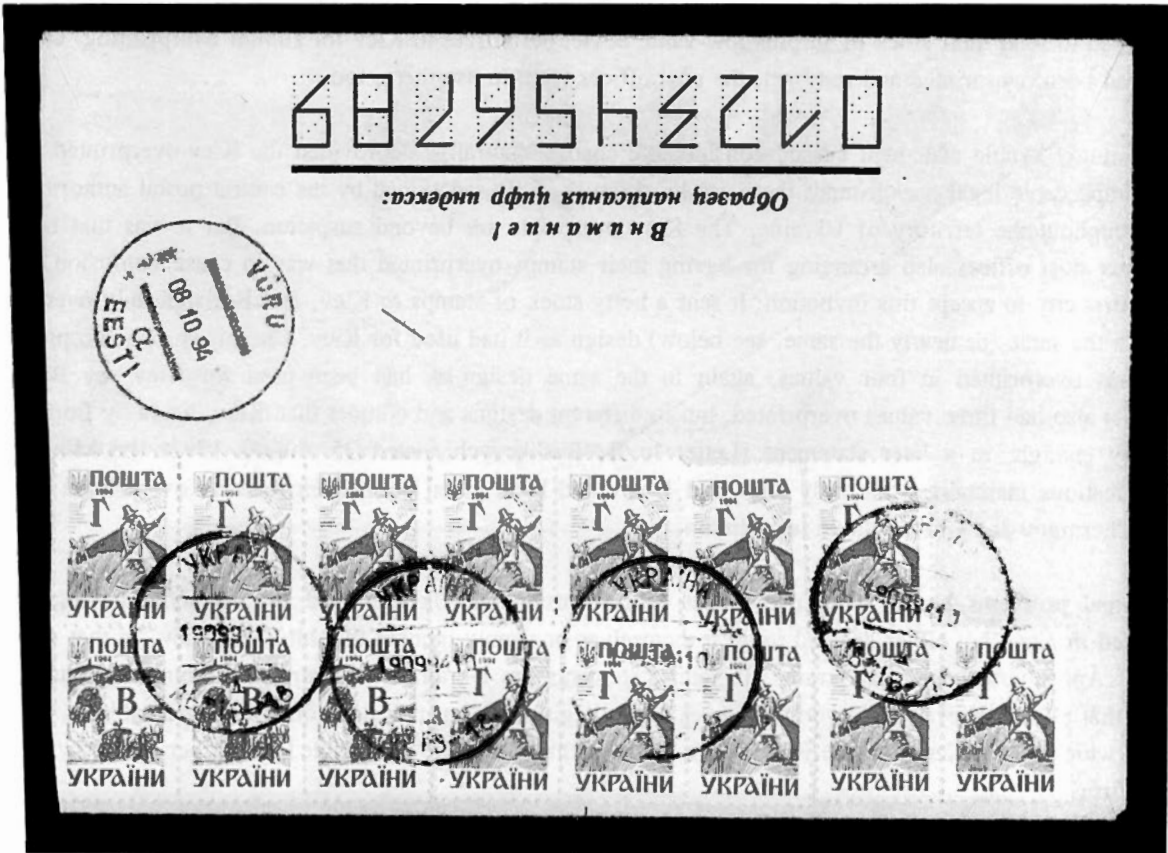
Note that these are letters from the *Ukrainian* alphabet, which differs from the Russian. Before the stamps for foreign mail were issued, the high foreign letter rates were often made up with the letter-stamps at hand: we were again treated to the spectacle of covers franked with lots of stamps, but now the stamps did not have readily recognisable face values but only cryptic letters, so it takes some decoding to work out if a cover was correctly franked (which it usually wasn't). There may be ways to complicate things further, but I certainly can't think of any!

Below: Registered letter from Odessa (15-11-1994) to Sheffield. The rate of \$0.91 (\$0.15 + \$0.21 + \$0.55) is franked with 6 'Zh' stamps @ \$0.15, plus 3 x 200 Krb for the remaining \$0.01, implying a conversion rate of 1\$ = 600,000 Krb.





Front and reverse of registered letter from L'vov (19-9-1994) to Viru, Estonia (8-10-1994). Franked with 4 'A' stamps @ 5000 Krb, 3 'B' stamps @ 10000 Krb, 24 'H' @ 1800 Krb stamps, 2x150 Krb stamps and a 'TP 6000' marking. depending on the weight, the correct rate should be \$0.70, \$0.91 or \$1.29 but it's difficult to see how this franking corresponds to any of these rates. Suggestions welcome!



Ukraine: the Tridents of Kiev, L'vov and Chernigov

Ivo Steyn

"I could have done it in a much more complicated way", said the Red Queen, immensely proud.

Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland

The Red Queen Syndrome must have been a factor in the genesis of the Trident surcharges issued in Kiev, Lvov and Chernigov, because there are few post-Soviet issues which offer such a nightmare of complications to the unwary collector. The difference between original, reprint and forgery is sometimes impossible to see, and even the distinctions between the genuine issues of these three cities are, with a few exceptions, not exactly obvious. The following review is based on the articles by Peter Bylen and others in Trident/Vysnik and Ukrainian Philatelist, the Stollberg catalogue, articles in the German journal DBZ and information received from correspondents. Even so, the picture is far from clear to me, but at least I can hope to show where the problems lie.

Legal status of the issues

We might as well start with one of the biggest problems surrounding these issues: are they official issues? This should be a simple question to answer, but oddly enough it isn't, mostly due to the fact that contradictory statements by the various authorities exist.

There seems little doubt that the initiative for these issues was taken by the postal organisation of the Kiev district (presumably the Kiev Urban District, not the *oblast* of the same name). Faced with the increase in postal rates of January 2, 1992 and a severe shortage of stamps of the higher face values, the Kiev postal authorities arranged for the overprinting of sheets of the lower face values by the firm of 'Borisfen' in Kiev. Decree No.52 of the Ukrainian Ministry of Communication, dated 25 March 1992, which was sent to all regional postal administrations, informed them that Kiev had issued overprinted stamps, and quite approved of the idea: other post offices were invited to send their stock of surplus low-value Soviet definitives to Kiev for similar overprinting. Once the stamps had been overprinted and returned, the post offices were to use them, too.

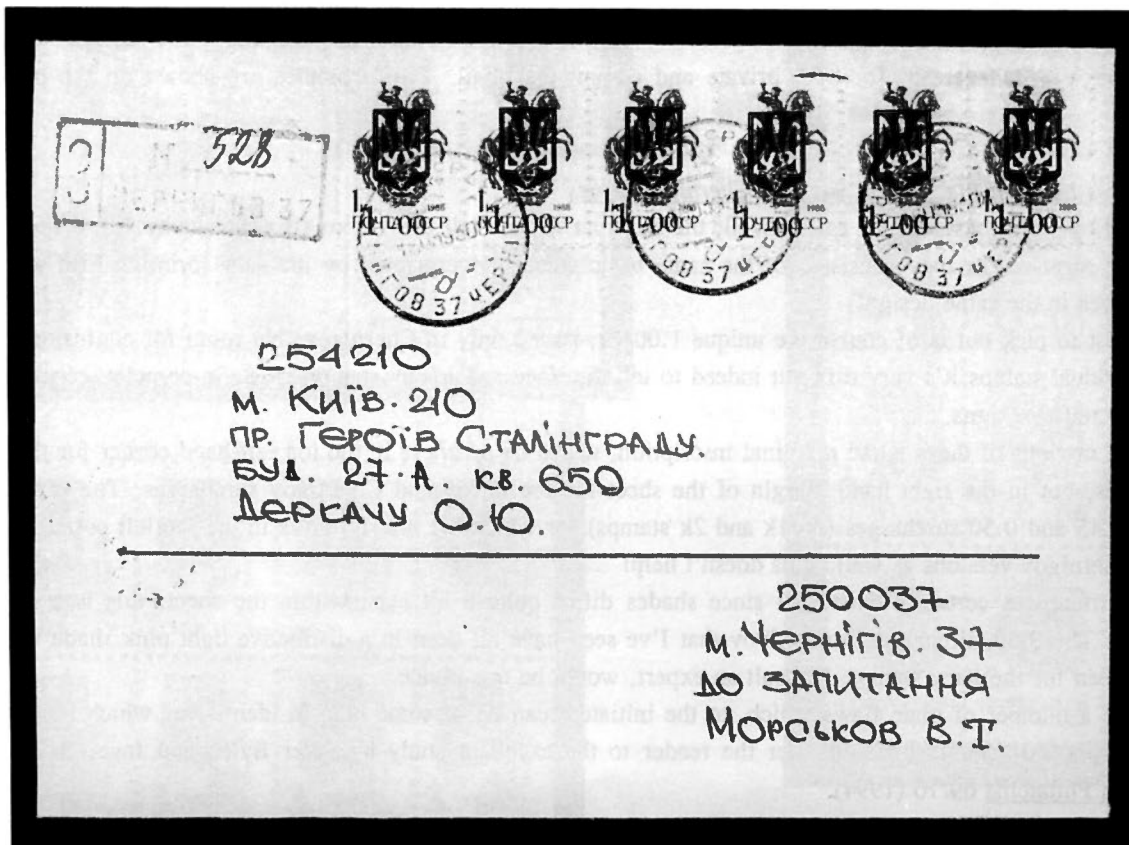
This seemingly simple statement caused considerable chaos. Naturally, it provided the Kiev-overprinted stamps with an impeccable legal background: these are local issues, fully sanctioned by the central postal authorities and valid throughout the territory of Ukraine. The Kiev overprints are beyond suspicion. But it was that business about other post offices also arranging for having their stamps overprinted that was to cause confusion. L'vov was the first city to accept this invitation. It sent a hefty stock of stamps to Kiev, and Borisfen duly overprinted them with the same (or nearly the same, see below) design as it had used for Kiev. Chernigov also accepted, and had stamps overprinted in four values, again in the same design as had been used for Kiev, by Borisfen. Chernyvtsi also had three values overprinted, but in different designs and colours than Kiev, again by Borisfen. But oddly enough, in a later statement (Letter to R. Byshkevych, dated 25 August 1993) the Ministry of Communications maintained that only Kiev and L'vov had been given permission to issue overprinted stamps, landing Chernigov and Chernyvtsi in legal limbo.

But the real problems began when many post offices throughout Ukraine read the bit about having stamps overprinted *in Kiev*, but either decided to do it themselves or simply ignored that bit about Kiev. In that way, the Overprint Apocalypse began in Ukraine. In later statements the Ukrainian Ministry of Communications simply declared that all non-Kiev/L'vov overprint issues were illegitimate, but that position is hardly tenable as the only aspect in which they differ from the Kiev/L'vov issues is that they were overprinted in another place, by another printing firm.



Top: registered letter from L'vov to Riga, Latvia. Rate of 35 Krb includes a 3.00/3k L'vov surcharge.

Below: registered letter from Chernigov to Kiev. Rate of 6 Krb franked with 6 x 1.00/1k Chernigov surcharges.



Even worse, Borisfen also produced a whole flood of overprinted stamps which did not belong to either the Kiev/L'vov issues or the original Chernigov/Chernyvtsi issues. So it being produced by Borisfen is rather a dubious honour, and certainly unsuitable as an acid test for legitimacy...

The issued stamps of Kiev, L'vov and Chernigov

In all the following stamps were overprinted by Borisfen for these three cities:

<u>Value</u>	<u>Colour</u>	<u>Kiev</u>	<u>L'vov</u>	<u>Chernigov</u>
0.35/2k	blue-green	306,900	10,000	-
0.43/2k	red-brown	504,100	9,200	-
0.45/2k	blue	545,900	9,200	-
0.50/1k	carmine-rose	120,000	1,002,600	42,700
0.50/2k	carmine-rose	423,100	-	18,800
1.00/1k	black	-	-	540,800
1.00/3k	black	488,000	502,000	-
3.00/3k	olive brown	462,000	276,000	51,000
5.00/3k	carmine	289,000	-	-
10.00/3k	dark blue-violet	326,900	106,600	-
20.00/2k	carmine	34,800	12,100	-
30.00/3k	carmine	29,300	276,600	-
50.00/1k	red-purple	32,400	192,600	-

The colours listed here should only be taken as an indication, as even within the issues for one city, there is considerable variation in overprint colour, sometimes even within one sheet.

The L'vov overprints were issued around 21 August 1992, and the three lower values sold out very quickly. The higher values have been described as "being for the philatelic trade", but were certainly sold at some or all post offices in the L'vov area. The Chernigov overprints were delivered to Chernigov on 28 June 1992 and were put on sale soon after.

Postal use was widespread, for both private and commercial mail. Two examples are shown on the previous page.

Differences between the Kiev, L'vov and Chernigov issues

So how do we tell these stamps apart? Well, the fact that we can tell them apart (if we're lucky) at all should be cause for surprise, as they consisted of the same basic stamps, overprinted by the same printing firm with the same values in the same design!

The easiest to pick out is of course the unique 1.00/1k, issued only in Chernigov. No room for confusion there. For individual stamps it's very difficult indeed to tell the Kiev and L'vov stamps apart. In complete sheets there are a few tell-tale signs.

The most obvious of these is the marginal inscription, which *as a rule* is in the top left hand corner for the Kiev surcharges, but in the right hand margin of the sheet for the L'vov and Chernigov surcharges. The exceptions are the 0.45 and 0.50 surcharges (on 1k and 2k stamps) for which the inscription is in the top left corner for the L'vov/Chernigov versions as well. This doesn't help!

Colour differences certainly exist, but since shades differ quite a bit even within the sheet, this is a dubious indicator. The 0.50 surcharges from L'vov that I've seen have all been in a distinctive light pink shade which I haven't seen for the Kiev stamps. Consult an expert, would be my advice.

There are a number of plate flaws which, to the initiated, can be of some help in identifying which issue one's dealing with. For details I would refer the reader to the excellent study by Peter Bylen and Inger Kuzych in Ukrainian Philatelist 69/70 (1994).

Narrow spaces and wide spaces

An interesting feature of the surcharges is that the space between the numerals of value and the hyphen separating them is not always of the same width. Some stamps have wide spaces (e.g. "0 - 35"), others have narrow spaces (e.g. "0 -35"). These are distributed over the sheet as follows:

0.35, 0.43, 0.45, 0.50: all wide gaps except sixth column of stamps, which hve narrow gaps.

1.00: narrow gaps except positions 8,9,19,47,54,71,81

other values: all wide gaps

However, an odd "second edition" of the 5.00/3k exists which faithfully reproduces the sheet payout of the 1.00 surcharge, including all "wide gap" varieties. The status of this variety is not clear.

Of the many forgeries on the market, some of which were very probably produced by the Borisfen printing firm itself (!), many have a different distribution of wide-gap and narrow-gap varieties over the sheet, and this can sometimes help in identifying forgeries, see below for examples.

(to be continued)

Top row: plate inscription blocks of the 3.00/3k Kiev and L'vov surcharges, showing the respective positions of the marinal inscription.

Bottom row: top marginal block of 3.00/3k forgery, showing impossible distribution of narrow and wide gaps.



Reviews

SPECIALISED CATALOG RSFSR/USSR 1918-1960 (in German)

by Rolf Weinbrecht. Over 500 A4 pages, loose-leaf in black four-ring binder. Price DM 120 including postage and packing within Europe. Order from the author, Kastanienallee 15, D-76189 Karlsruhe, Germany. Payment cash with order, by Eurocheque or remittance to Giro account no. 1905 75-752 at Postbank Karlsruhe, Germany.

I don't believe it! We have had to wait an awfully long time for it, but here it is at last, a superb specialised catalogue of Soviet stamps (up to 1960) which collects all previously published information, arranges it in orderly form and liberally sprinkles the whole with excellent illustrations. In one fell swoop an enormous body of philatelic literature has been collected and presented in a format that's easy to consult.

What do we find in this handsome black volume? Well, all definitive, commemorative, airmail, express, postage due stamps and souvenir sheets are listed and priced. Information on papers used, watermarks and their positions, printing methods, and (up to 1955) sheet size and layout is here. The sheet layout of composite sheets is shown and the resulting se-tenant pairs are listed and priced. The various perforations, including compound perforations, are catalogued and priced separately. All known essays, proofs and specimens are listed, priced and, where possible, illustrated.

The complex definitive issues of the RSFSR period and the Twenties are all dealt with superbly, and different methods of printing, watermarks, papers, cliché types and perforations are catalogued in a highly transparent manner, which makes life a lot easier for the collector. The definitive issues of 1948-1959, which are extremely complex and worth a specialised collection by themselves, are catalogued exhaustively, with shades, cliché types and printing methods all set out in a very clear manner.

The various screen types of the photogravure printings, used from the end of the Thirties, are separately catalogued and priced. The "repeated printings" of stamps originally issued during the late Forties and Fifties are described in detail, including the different screens used, and if possible illustrated. All are priced separately. Different paper colours are also listed and priced.

The different types of cliché used for miniature sheets, a subject that is routinely ignored by catalogues outside Russia, are described, illustrated and priced. Also priced are known shades, plate flaws, imperforate and partly imperforate stamps. The number of stamps issued and the period of use/validity (where applicable) are also given for all issues.

Forgeries are not merely "said to exist" but are described in depth and, where possible, illustrated. In this respect alone this catalogue is a worthwhile addition to any collector's library. Illustrations are uniformly excellent, with clear enlargements for varieties, etc.

The section that had me agape with admiration was near the end of the book. We all know that Soviet definitives 1930-1959 are rather difficult to sort, with all their varieties in paper, printing method, perforation, etc. Well, this handbook has a special section where the stamps are grouped *according to their design*. So when you find a definitive stamp showing a stern-looking pilot, you turn to this section and are immediately informed which stamps were issued in that design, when they were issued and what the differences between them are. An excellent idea, and long overdue.

Are there any drawbacks? Well, the catalogue is in German, but there is an exhaustive German-English philatelic dictionary in the back as well, so that should not be a serious drawback. Besides, the illustrations are so clear and the listings are so orderly that I suspect that even someone with no German at all could use this catalogue with minimal effort. The prices given seem entirely realistic.

A catalogue like this is simply indispensable if you collect stamps of the RSFSR/USSR. A superb addition to our bookshelves, and we eagerly await a similar catalogue for the Imperial period. All collectors owe Mr. Weinbrecht a huge debt of thanks.

3AKA3HOE - Recmandirt (in English)

by Harry von Hofmann, translation into English by P.E. Robinson. 80 pages, softbound. Price DM22.
Orders to Harry von Hofmann Verlag, Postfach 520518, D-22595 Hamburg, Germany.

This is an English translation of all the text of Harry von Hofmann's well-known book on Imperial Russian registered mail. It is a text-only version, so for the illustrations you need the original German book. This translation is therefore primarily aimed at people who already possess or who contemplate buying the German book, and wish to avoid having to turn to the dictionary all the time. An excellent initiative. The German book, reviewed in a previous BJRP is still available at DM68 from the same address.

IT DOESN'T HAVE TO HAVE AN IMPRINTED STAMP (in German)

by Leon Nebenzahl. 96 pages, softbound. Price DM28. Orders to Harry von Hofmann Verlag, Postfach 520518, D-22595 Hanburg, Germany.

Behind this intriguing title lurks an excellent little book on an unusual subject. Nebenzahl (who previously wrote a rather nice book on the Arms stamps and their use during the RSFSR period) cheerfully ignores postal stationery cards and instead concentrates on their poor cousins, postcards without an imprinted stamp. In this category we find postcard 'blanks' (formular cards) issued by the Imperial Posts from 1872-1889, often in conjunction with a stamped postcard in a similar design, but also picture postcards, privately-produced form cards (only after 1895), POW cards from WW1, use of all the above during the early Soviet period, and lots more besides. The book also contains an interesting history of the postcard in general, and is lavishly illustrated throughout.

This is such an unusual and obscure subject I'm delighted that someone has taken the time and trouble to produce a good book on it. It's because of the efforts of dedicated and able philatelists such as Mr. Nebenzahl that we know what we're doing. Nice book, definitely recommended.

UKRAINE - POSTAL RELATIONS, PROVISIONALS AND PRIVATE ISSUES 1992-1994 (in German)

Second volume: additions and errata to the original volume reviewed in a previous BJRP. By Dr. Alfred Stollberg. 228 A4 pages, softbound. Price DM40, to be paid in cash, by money order or Eurocheque to the author, Sudenburger Wuhne 12, D-39112 Magdeburg, Germany.

Things move fast in Ukrainian philately. Dr. Stollberg's original catalogue of Ukrainian postal history, provisional stamp issues and private issues was a pretty hefty volume, but here's an equally hefty volume of additional information, information on new issues, addenda and errata to sections in the previous volume, and much more besides. It's an indication of how much Ukrainian material there is to describe and categorise.

For this volume, Dr. Stollberg was able to cooperate with Vsevolod Onyshkevych, who had produced a similar catalogue of provisionals. By pooling their information, this impressive second volume came into being. Dr. Stollberg also received much useful information from Ukrainian philatelists "on the spot".

What can I say? Indispensable if you collect post-Soviet Ukraine. Yes, it's in German (aside: Hmmm, I seem to be saying that quite often in this review section. German philatelists are producing an impressive and steady stream of useful books at the moment) but it's quite easy to use and lavishly illustrated. Highly recommended.

INFLATION IN SOVIET RUSSIA (in German)

by Dr. Alfred Stollberg. 153 A4 pages, softbound. Price DM50, including postage and packing. Payment in cash, by money order or Eurocheque to the author, Sudenburger Wuhne 12, D-39112 Magdeburg, Germany.

This is a wholly revamped second edition of a rather modest booklet that appeared a number of years ago. The original booklet received a rather harsh review in the BJRP, but this second edition is definitely worth a look. The quality of the printing, illustrations and binding is miles beyond that of the original version, and their is

much to enjoy. All the stamps issued during the 1917-1923 period are reviewed and catalogued, and the complex circumstances of their use are explained as clearly as possible, with many examples of stamps on cover shown. I'm sure that experts will be able to find fault with this book (personally I was rather disappointed that cash frankings did not receive more attention) but in general it's an excellent introduction to the subject, and a useful collection of tables. Astonishingly, new discoveries are still being made, as Alexander Epstein's recent study of foreign postal rates demonstrated so dramatically, but this is a good 'State of the Art' compendium. It's in German again! English-speaking philatelists must be feeling slightly inadequate by now...

WESTERN UKRAINE - a catalog-checklist

SOVIET UKRAINE - a catalog-checklist

both by Peter Bylen, Nos.1 and 2 in the "Ukrainian Philatelic Resources" series. 26 and 36 pages, softbound. Price \$5 each, plus \$1 each postage outside North America. Orders to Peter Bylen, P.O.Box 7193, Westchester, IL 60154-7193, USA.

Now here's an interesting initiative. These are detailed checklists of stamps, issued in Western Ukraine and Ukraine under Soviet rule, respectively. The listings are detailed and very clear. Where possible, extra information such as numbers issued is given, plus all the usual catalogue information. The volume on Soviet Ukraine also contains information on the "occupational issues" of 1918-1920 and 1941-1944, so German occupation issues and White Army issues are all covered.

Useful booklets for Ukrainian collectors and dirt cheap besides. Until someone publishes a comprehensive catalogue of Ukrainian issues, this will do very nicely indeed. The only complaint is that the stamps are not priced. Future volumes will deal with Carpatho-Ukraine, Belarus and post-Soviet Ukraine.

Due to time-space constraints, the Russian philatelic journals could not be reviewed in depth. The following issues were published:

Rossica 123, 124

Pochta 17, 18

Yamshchik 35, 36

As usual, all are well worth a look. Addresses and subscription information in any previous issue of the BJRP.

