



## THE SOCIETY OF RUSSIAN PHILATELY

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### President's

#### Message

Greetings from Alabama! Yesterday it was 73° (F) and today it was 43° (F) and we may get snow and ice on Monday! I hope the New Year has started out well for you and everyone is healthy. The first two months of 2021 have been busy here. My daughter and her husband are visiting from Germany and that makes for a hectic schedule. Mail has been slow. I just got a letter from the Ukraine that was mailed 22 December 2020! Even domestic mail has been slow – the pandemic is really impacting things.

COVID-19 vaccine availability is increasing – I got my first vaccine today – we can hope that there will be stamp shows by the end of the summer. The APS has started planning for the GASS (The Great American Stamp Show – their name not mine). The show is being planned for August 12-15, 2021 in Rosemont, IL, and is sponsored by the American Philatelic Society, the American Topical Association, and the American First Day Society.

Rossica is on the list as an attending Society and we will have our annual meeting at that time providing COVID restrictions have been lifted and

we have enough members attending the show. If you think that, due to COVID, we should postpone our annual in-person meeting this year, please let an officer know so we can get an estimate of attendance and adjust plans accordingly.

One possibility under consideration is to have our annual meeting be a virtual meeting. There are a couple of hurdles to overcome but the meeting is not until late August, so there is hope. Help may be necessary.

In addition, I have been asked to be a Judge at the show. So, this is an excellent opportunity to show your exhibit and have it judged by a Russian specialist. Plus, as an attending Society, Rossica should have a strong representation of exhibits. Start planning now!

As most of you know, our Webmaster resigned at the end of last year but is still willing to help in an emergency. We have found a new person, Peter Petrenko, to help bring the new website online, but until that is accomplished, the old website is still up. Please be patient as we work through the transition.

Now for a friendly reminder. **Please, pay your Rossica dues if you have not already paid them.** The dues are due by March 1, 2021 and if they have not been received by then, this will be the last Rossica publication you will receive. Dues are normally due by the end of January but because of the pandemic, we have extended the due date to the beginning of March.

2020 was a bad year for losing members. We lost at least 4 long time members to age and COVID-19 last year. Obituaries for them can be found in the Fall 2020 Rossica Journal. We are not getting any younger and the pandemic is very serious for our age group. So, if you can, get the vaccine. Stay healthy for you and your family – and to collect another day!

I hope you all enjoyed the last issue of the Journal. It was full of a number of interesting articles covering a wide range of subjects.

(Continued on page 4).



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**OLDLOUIS**  
AUCTIONS

APRIL-MAY  
**2021**

## BIG ZEMTSVO AUCTION



COVERS, POSTAL STATIONERY, RARE STAMPS,  
BLOCKS OF FOUR, TÊTE-BÊCHES, AND MORE

The depth and breadth of Russian Philately never ceases to amaze me. So many things to study so little time to do so, which makes the Journal so important. It covers so many areas that others have studied, and we can learn from.

Raymond Pietruszka  
President, Rossica

## Delivery of Aid to Russian POWs in 1915

By Alexander Kolchinsky

It is well known that during WWI the Russian government did not provide any aid to its prisoners. All supplies and money were sent by charities, chiefly the "All-Russian Union of Cities," and relatives. Benefactors from other allied countries were aware of the situation and sent some aid as well. Most of this aid including the money sent via Switzerland in registered envelopes (Fig. 1). Such empty envelopes are rather common, but here I describe a rare envelope with its complete contents.

The sender, the wife of a soldier in German captivity, had submitted a check in the amount of nine francs through the Petrograd branch of a large international bank, "Crédit Lyonnais," with the following note (Fig. 2):

*Hereby I have the honor to inform the Russian Department affiliated with "Non-interfering Committee of Aid for Prisoners of War in Germany" that today I have deposited to the Bank "Credit of Lyon" in Petrograd for further deposit to the account of "Pury et Cie." nine francs asking to send 12 loaves of bread to my husband soldier Alexander Ivanovich Ivanov held in captivity in Germany, Lager Grafenwöhr, Barrack 5, Company 9.*

*Irina Vasilievna Ivanova*

*Petrograd, Shirokaya ul. 23. December 3, 1915*

Apparently, a small old Swiss bank "Pury et

Maybe there is something new for you to collect. As I said before, the mail is still slow, so journals and books may take time to get to you. Keep warm; enjoy your family and your collections.

## New Applications to the Rossica Society

We welcome the following new applicants with Tentative Membership into the Rossica Society. If there are no objections from the membership, they will become full members in the Society:

<b>2205</b> – Ira Rubin	NY
<b>2206</b> – Enrique Setaro	FL
<b>2207</b> – Jack Weiss	CT
Reinstated:	
<b>1635</b> – Craig Marshall	NE

Cie." was responsible for sending the aid. The envelope contains a check for 9 francs (Fig. 3). Checks in Russia were exempt from any additional taxation,<sup>1</sup> and it is not endorsed probably because the money never left the main bank. It does not indicate if the money was in French or Swiss francs. At the beginning of the war they were exactly the same, but in the course of the war the inflation of French currency was much higher than that of Swiss francs. The cost of bread in Switzerland was about 0.5 francs per kg, so one could assume that the rest of the money was spent on shipping.

The note is written by a well-educated woman, without a single mistake, and her return address is in an upscale suburban area of Petrograd. It makes it all the more unexpected that her husband is a rank-and-file soldier.

The camp Grafenwöhr was the largest in

<sup>1</sup> This regulation is included in the "Statute of Fiscal Collections" published in 1913 by "Pravovedenie" in Moscow (p. 144) and kindly found for this note by Greg Mirsky.



Bavaria, reaching at its peak 21,000 prisoners. The conditions in the camp were very bad, and mortality high. It was created as military training ground before WWI and at the beginning of the war converted to POW camp. In the 1930s, it

became again a training camp. During WWII it trained Italian and Belorussian troops to fight in the German army, and currently is a large NATO training camp.

**Figure 1**  
(Front)



**Figure 1 (Back)**

**Figure 2.** From the wife of German prisoner explaining the purpose of the check enclosed in the envelope.

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Целю есть уведомить русских  
 братьев при Невинномиславском  
 комитете помощи военнопон-  
 ным в Германии, что мною  
 сего числа выдано в "Лондон  
 Кредит" в Петербург на счет  
 текущий "Войны и Мир" девять  
 франков с прокатом выдать  
 12 буханок хлеба на имя Виктора Ивановича  
Иванова, находящегося в  
 плену в Германском Lager  
Grabenstraße, Borsach 57 Kom-  
mando 9.  
Ирина Васильевна Иванова.  
Петербург. Широкая ул.  
д. 23.  
 3 Декабря 1915г.

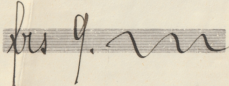
№ 104

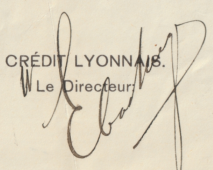
Reçu de Madame I. Ivanoff à Petrograd

la somme de neuf francs

au crédit du compte chez nous de M. M. Pury & Cie à Neuchâtel  
 pour compte de la Sous-Section Russe de Secours aux Prisonniers  
 de Guerre.

Petrograd, le 4/17 Dec 1915

for 9. 

CRÉDIT LYONNAIS.  
 Le Directeur 

Crédit Lyonnais.  
 AGENCE DE PÉTROGRAD.

**Figure 3.** Uncashed check for 9 francs to pay for 12 loaves of bread for WWI prisoner.



## Prophetic Grandma

by Steve Volis



Figures 1a-b (Joseph Geyfman collection).

Figures 1a-b show a picture postcard that was sent from Moscow on June 2, 1931, and arrived in Leningrad three days later, on June 5. It was sent as Registered Mail (Zakaznoe) and franked with an 18-kopek “Workers” stamp (Zagorsky #207). But this is not your regular stamp by any means. This is a stamp with a 50% perforation shift, which is very rare on any correspondence.

Luckily for a boy named Fedya (Likhachev), his Grandma knew her stamps when she was fortunate enough to see some for sale in one of Moscow’s post offices. She bought 4 stamps, affixed one of them to this postcard and sent it to her grandson Fedya with the following text:

*“Dear Fedya!*

*Pay attention to the postage stamp.*

*Bought 4 copies at the post office at the double price. Don’t soak it off. In time it will be a great rarity.*

*Your Grandma (Babushka)”.*

It seems that Fedya was a good boy, and listened to his Grandma’s advice. This postcard survived for 90 years with its postage intact, unlike many others pieces of mail during that time when stamp collectors cared only about stamps for their albums and would soak or rip them off from the postcards and covers.

So we can say “thank you” to both Grandma and Fedya for this surviving postal history pearl.



### UKRFILEX 2020

The National Philatelic Exhibition “UKRFILEX 2020” demonstrated the high philatelic spirit of Ukrainian collectors. It took place in Kharkov in September of 2020 during the peak of the COVID pandemic and was not virtual! Kharkov Philharmonic Hall provided lots of space, and the organizers thoroughly followed the rules: they measured the temperature of

attendees, restricted the number of people in the hall, and requested masks.

The exhibit lasted four days and had 100-150 visitors per day. Not bad for such a difficult time! It was sponsored by the office of the Kharkov Mayor and supported by the Ukrainian Post. During the exhibition, the Post organized the First Day ceremony and

cancellation of a new miniature sheet dedicated to Scythian culture and offered special cancels on post-cards celebrating 30 years of Independence.

This national exhibition was a traditional yearly show, and it was the first such exhibition held in Kharkov. It had 112 exhibits, mostly in five frames, and 129 participants. The exhibits were extremely diverse: although the majority of them naturally displayed Ukraine-related subjects, there were exhibits of British, American, Austrian, German philately, Faroe Islands, and many topical multi-country collections.

We at the Rossica Society really envy the success of Ukrainian philatelists in engaging young collectors to the hobby: there were nine exhibitors under 18 years and two under 21.

Rossica member Joseph Lyubin received a Grand Prix for "Postal history of Kiev Gubernia, 1708-1805." Andrey Grodetsky received National Grand Prix for his exhibit "Postal history of Podolia in XIX-early XX centuries." Another Rossica member, Dmitry Frenkel ("Postal history of Odessa in 1798-1900"), Denis Tsitkov ("From the history of Russian steamship mail on Black, Azov, and Mediterranean Seas 1843-1914"), and Anatoly Kravchenko ("Collection of revenues in Ukraine, 1782-2000") received Large Golds. In the Honor Class, Rossica member Vitaly Katsman received Large Gold for the book, "Zemstvo post of Kharkov Guberniya" and Dmitry Frenkel received Large Gold for "Stamps of RSFSR 1918-1923."

#### UKRFILEX Illustrations:



UKRFILEX 2020 - special show cancel



UKRFILEX 2020 – gold medal