



THE SOCIETY OF RUSSIAN PHILATELY

Bulletin 73, Summer 2024

Steve Volis, Nik Sorokin - Bulletin Editors

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President's Message

Greetings from Alabama! It is hard to believe we are looking at fall already with cooler weather and the craziness of the Presidential Election. The GASS is behind us, and the Jersey Shore is calling. We are making plans for CHICAGOPEX in November.

Congratulations to our own secretary Vesma Grinfelds for being awarded the APS's "Ernest A. Kehr Award" for enduring contributions that help guarantee the future of our hobby. In addition to being Rossica's Secretary for many years, she has been very active in working with youth programs both in the APS and the AAPE. She is an accomplished exhibitor and serves as a US Commissioner for international shows, the latest being Mare Baltcum in Estonia this year. She is also the awards chairperson for WESTPEX. Well done, Vesma!

The Society is in pretty good shape. Membership is holding and the treasury remains strong. Members are asking intelligent philatelic ques-

tions, and the Society is finding answers. The publications are solid, and our editorial staff and authors continue to put out great article. But remember if you are not seeing articles that address your collecting interests let us know! If we can, we'll find additional articles but in the end the authors publish what interests them so if you're looking for something more, get with your fellow members and start a study group or ask Randy to add it to a Zoom meeting agenda.

The next big show for Rossica is CHICAGOPEX in November. This is traditionally a great show with several Russia-related exhibits and a few dealers who carry Russian area material. We are having our annual on-site membership meeting there and will have it broadcast live via Zoom. So please plan to attend the show or log-in. There are also several other national shows coming up in the fall and winter. BALPEX will be held at a new location on a different date - late October instead of early September, and FLOREX will take place in December, to name just two.

In the last Journal, I reviewed the new book: *Russian Federation and Commonwealth of Independent States Spurious Issues from 1992-1995* by David E. Race. I am happy to report that Volumes 2 and 3 are now available from the publisher. Make sure you contact the Andromeda Publishing out of Quincy, IL, not the UK. The new volumes continue the listing of the various issues in color. More volumes are to follow.

There are several regular auctions that offer Russia area material. Several, such as Cherrystone, Raritan, and Sigel, have been promoting Russian material for years. I have started following another auction site - Old Louis Auctions. They are on-line only but have a very interesting format. Most of their auction lots have a very low starting bid - as low as \$1. The amount of material offered is always quite large - 100s. It's a great site to track down that medium priced material that is so hard to find at shows and other on-line sites. But as with any on-line auction site, be cautious. While the photos have consistently been of the material offered, one must look at the picture carefully. Flaws and damage are not always mentioned in the text. But it is still a great site to search for

unusual material such as revenues, labels, zemstvos and the like.

If you are a members of a local stamp club, you already know about this but for those who collect mostly by yourself this is important. I'm talking about making sure that your heirs know what to do with your collection when you close your album for the last time. Being the past president of our local club and a judge, I have seen several people coming to our meetings with inherited collections. They don't know what is in it, they have no interest in collecting and don't know how to get rid of it. That is our fault! As the current owner of the collection, it is our responsibility to ensure its safe disposal. This mean engaging with your relatives: wife, children even grandchildren. Most important is to first find out if there is any interest in continuing to collect. This is not a one-time conversation! If there is interest, you need to take the time to grow that into an understanding of the collection. We are Russian philately collectors and understanding the collection will take time. But most times there will be no interest in continuing to develop the collection. That means you must prepare for the disposal of it. You need to develop an inventory of it and an estimated value (don't worry it will be wrong anyway, but it is a starting place). Ensure you have identified the rare items at least. Then you need to identify dealers whom you can trust to dispose of it for your family. Is it large enough for an auction or is it going to be sold as a lot? Over the years, I have seen great Russian collections sold for peanuts because the dealer did not understand the material. I also have seen key items of a collection sell for several multiples of the estimates. Therefore you must ensure that your family's agent knows what you have. We are a grey hair society so be prepared. The APS has a good program to help develop an estate plan. Look into it.

As always remember that this is a hobby. Take the time to not only enjoy it but also to spend time with your family and friends. As I am writing this, the summer holiday season has started. I'll be heading to the Jersey Shore to enjoy the beach, the boardwalks, and the great food. It is important to take care of your health and remain active - they

will not let you bring your stamp projects with you into the hospital! So, I hope you all have a great summer and I hope to see a lot of you at CHICAGOPEX.

Raymond J. Pietruszka
Rossica President

Brief Summary of the March 23, 2024, Rossica Board of Directors Meeting

In attendance: Ray Pietruszka, Semyon Brayman, Nik Sorokin, Steve Volis, Randy Woodward, Greg Mirsky and Vesma Grinfelds.

The meeting was called to order at 12:10 PM (Pacific Time) by President Ray Pietruszka via Zoom with a quorum.

Treasurer's Report: Steve Volis noted that we have about 274 active members although 20 are likely to drop out. The 260+ membership number is holding. Some BSRP members have joined. Our Facebook group has 340 members. Steve also noted that we have ~\$31,000 in the bank. Our expenditures equal our income. Increasingly more members are requesting digital versions of the Journal. The Journal printing costs us ~\$9,000 annually. Nik noted that the next issue of the Journal (*Spring issue No. 182*) is coming along and will be very good.

Bulletin Report: Randy Woodward has turned over the publication of the Bulletin to Nik Sorokin and Steve Volis.

Zoom Meetings: Semyon Brayman will be the speaker at the April meeting. Ivo Steijn has also volunteered to do a presentation in the future. Randy would like to start a series of meetings on philately of the RSFSR; rates in particular. Mikhail Dymshits is a well-known expert on the subject and he speaks English. It would be nice if he would offer a presentation on the subject. The recordings of the meetings will be moved to the cloud. Greg Mirsky will move them and provide links to those recordings on our web-site.

Website: The host has been changed for our website. Everything is slowly being moved over. The fellow who

is using our Facebook group to get free advertising for his auctions will be asked to join Rossica.

New Business: Concerning our Annual Meeting to be held at CHICAGOPEX - a judge has been requested but then Ray would not be able to exhibit. We have 4 active Russia related exhibitors at present. A program and presentation are needed for the Membership Meeting. In 2025, the Annual Meeting will be held at WESTPEX taking place in April. In 2024, there will be a Regional Meeting of Rossica held at WESTPEX on Saturday April 27 at 11:00 AM. We should also have a table at BOSTON 2026. We are willing to donate \$200 to secure a table. Vesma Grinfelds will check on how to secure the table.

Publication: Greg Mirsky, Librarian, has written and

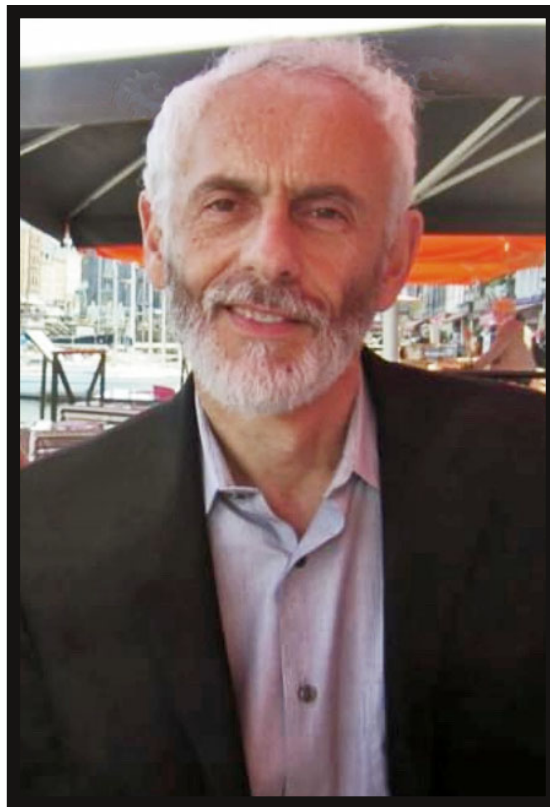
published a book about Russian revenues. It is a specialized catalog.

Future Election: Next year is an election year. A list of people to potentially ask needs to be created. Meeting adjourned at 1:00 PM (Pacific Time).

New Rossica Members

We welcome the following new applicants into the Rossica Society:

2252 - Michael Semenov, FL. USA
2253 - Mark van Helvoort, Netherlands
2254 - Keith Stiver, CA. USA



Alexander Kolchinsky
May 10, 1952 - August 3, 2024

The editorial board of the *Rossica* journal is greatly saddened by the passing of our colleague Alexander Kolchinsky, Sasha, as he was known to his friends. Despite his extended and worsening illness he continued to actively participate in editing the *Rossica* journals including this year's spring issue. Our heartfelt condolences go to his wife Irene, their sons and families. We will publish his full obituary in the fall issue of *Rossica*. Rest in peace, dear friend, memory eternal.

Authenticator's analysis of a Soviet Philatelic Association's Forgery

by Mikhail Dymshits

Translated by Steve Volis



Figures 1a-b.

A forged cover of the Soviet Philatelic Association (Figures 1a-b) was found with an authenticator's markings. The authenticator pointed out some of the many errors made by the forgers, including incorrectly cancelled postage stamps of the Pushkin series (stamps should have been cancelled individually); incorrect date stamp design (during this period, the date stamps used in Moscow P.O. branches contained the indication of the postal branch); most likely an initial omission of a number on the registration label; incorrect address format; and an excessive number of postal routing marking and U.S. handstamps.

The cover is fully franked at the international registered letter rate effective May 1, 1936, (50 kopeks per letter and 80 kopeks per registration).

It should be noted that the forgers missed

one more point: international letters from the USSR during that period always had a date stamp of the outgoing international expedition, in this case it should have been the date stamp of the International Post Office, working from July 1932 to July 1937.

The fact of active falsification of postal items by the Soviet Philatelic Association and later by the "Международная Книга" (Mezhdunarodnaya Kniga – Soviet foreign trade organization engaged in export-import trade operations with books and periodicals) has never been a secret for philatelists. But there was no documented evidence of this activity except for personal recollections, thus the recently found cover is quite a rare confirmation of it.

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SPECIAL CATALOGUE

This Russian language publication by Rossica member Mikhail Dymshits, *Philatelic Propaedeutics, a Reference Dictionary*, contains a detailed study of a broad range of presently known labels and markings on postal items and postal documents. It includes postage stamps and dated postmarks that allow for a more precise identification of the time period and territorial area from which a postal item was mailed. That knowledge can be crucial for understanding the reasons why specific labels and markings are present on various covers.

For additional information and purchase
please contact Steve Volis at
SlavaV@aol.com

This is a bilingual catalog in English and Russian. It has 575 pages, 4,500 illustrations and about 100 tables and diagrams; the prices are quoted in US dollars. In addition to traditional information, the catalog presents stamp varieties by printing types, paper, glue, and perforation, as well as the information on stamp sheets and their elements, specimens, proofs, drafts, stamp booklets, history and dates when the stamps were issued in postal circulation, local issues, revaluations and perforations, and postal use of rare stamp varieties.

Михаил Дымшиц



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