



Baltic States Philatelic Society

Bulletin #5

March 2011

Dear BSPS member,

I hope you are having a good beginning of 2011! In this Bulletin I present to you one of the original articles on Ob. Ost kindly translated by Jan Kaptein. I very much welcome your questions, comments, and suggestions.

Please consider attending the BSPS meeting to be held at WESTPEX 2011! The meeting will take place Saturday, April 30 at 2:00PM. Please bring your Baltic related items of interest for discussion to the meeting.

A complete schedule of events to be held at WESTPEX can be found at:
www.westpex.com

Kindest regards,
Anatoly Chlenov

BSPS article translation

FROM THE BALTIC

by Carl Bohnert (translated by Jan Kaptein)

[Article originally published in the German magazine Illustriertes Briefmarken-Journal 20/21 (1918), S. 231-235, Reprint in Postgebiet Ob. Ost 1981 ; nr. 5 (1981/1). – S. 30-34]

Three years later! The Russian steamroller is smashed to pieces. In a tenacious struggle with very strong enemies German and Austrian-Hungarian troops have driven back the Russians and followed them to their own territory. Poland and Lithuania are occupied by the German troops, and in August of 1917 the old City of Riga opened her gates for the long-awaited liberators, whereas by the year end the Peace Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was drafted.

German-inhabited Baltic countries that were still in Russian possession, suffered from the crimes of Kerensky regime. Help came to them soon; German troops cleared the Baltic countries of the Russian criminals and brought German order. And as part of the German order came the German Post. German Military post was established first, it was accessible to civilians, and provided a connection to Germany. Soon thereafter German post offices were opened, which will be discussed below.

We will refrain from discussing the supplemental postage stamp issue of the post office of Dorpat which is discussed in number 8 of this magazine. Apart from the Romanian Ajutor- and Porto (?) stamps, are both Russian postage stamps the only foreign postage stamps, which from German side are overprinted for postal use, very contrary of the French and English, who overprinted all stamps, which they could get., and when it were only 2-3 items. And which a enormous material of Belgian, Romanian and Russian postage stamps could be used by the German administration, if they would handle like this! She has it not done, let we be cheerful, also when we by this are missing a great number of interesting war-postage stamps. However, when both Dorpat-postage stamps also are put under the ban of the Empire and Church by some fault-finders, because they are not put into circulation with the official blessing, it goes too far in my opinion. We are here dealing simple with a help-issue, which enough interesting things offers, also if put into circulation by an unjustified side. In any case the issue has served really a need, maybe more as the innumerable issues of the Balkan-war and such-like, which every catalogue enumerate. Or dare only the German something like it not to do?

As already said, in the beginning the fieldpost-offices forward the civil correspondence. Such correspondence was prepaid with postage stamps of the Postgebiet Ob.-Ost **[translator: some fault finders say it is a wrong indication, because there is no Ob.-West]** and by the fieldpost cancelled by a ink- or penicillin. The place of delivering was handwritten and then all these correspondence was send to Riga, where it were censored and get the German local cancel Riga.

Of course this fieldpost-arrangement could be only temporary, and in the most important places government-post offices were established so soon as possible. The establishment must be gone so surprising quickly, that for the most post-offices there were no cancellation-stamps on the spot, so that in hot haste provisional postmarks had to be used. In most cases one helped oneself with gum-postmarks, which superficial have some resemblance to the, –in South Africa used-, so-called ‘Wanderstempel’, [**‘travelling postmarks?’> someone is looking for more information, but is some provisional postmark**].

The use of these provisional’s was moreover short. Because the definitive postmarks already arrived not many days afterwards, they shall –according reports- been in use not longer as 3-10 days. But the periods of use are not just to determine, it must stay reserved for further investigations. I ask therefore just information on behalf of publication. In all cases these postmarks are without exception great scarcities, which sure interest the German collectors very much. The circumstance that correspondence in Estonian and Latvian writing is not permitted and thus native inhabitants of the lower classes most times were excluded from use of the post, contributes to the scarcity.

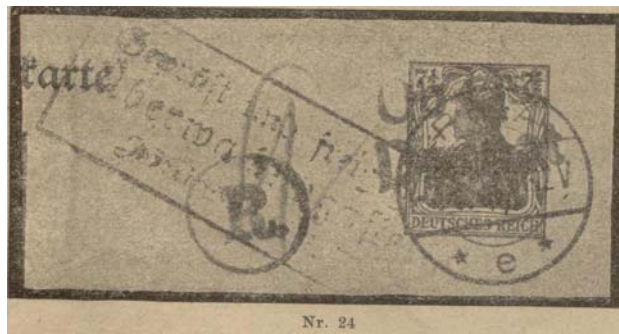
Up to the present the following are known to me:



Nr. 22. Dorpat, the Russian Jurjew in Livonia. The already mentioned help-issue shall be used to 22. III, 1918, on which day the Ober-Ost-stamps arrived. The illustration Nr. 22 let see a cancellation, which date is unfortunately not to recognize, with the old Russian Jurjew-postmark, from which the place name is removed and used already on the provisional issue. The indication ‘Balkenstempel’ (**beam-postmark ?**) in the already mentioned article in nr. 8 is leading astray, in fact it is a double-ring postmark, but both thick lines, forming the date-bridge, could cause the wrong name. Besides the postage stamp bears yet the one-line gum-postmark Dorpat in blue-lilac color. Next to the postage stamp also a long-postmark Dorpat, which –to my knowledge- not was used as cancellation, and maybe onle made more clear the origin, as also the censor-postmark of Riga, R in circle. To the cancellation in Dorpat should objected, so in future the old Jurjew-postmark is set only next the postage stamp, the last even just in Riga cancelled, to where still all correspondence was sent for investigation.



Compare illustration Nr. 23. Date 26. IV. 18. The color of the gum-postmark became later red-lilac. This postmark should be in use only about 8 days, it was relieved, probably because it was too little and unclear, by:



Nr. 24. Ober-Ost Dorpat, two-line long-postmark of 2. V. 18 in black color, which later also occurs in violet. Also this card is censored in Riga and cancelled. This postmark should be used also only 8 days, from other side is even stated only 3 days, a for me present letter from 3. V. 1918, shows anyway the new finally German double-ring postmark Dorpat.



Nr. 25. Fellin, Government Livonia, station on the line Walk-Reval. Date not to ascertainable. The to me known correspondence shows, except the one-line long-postmark Fellin and the censorship-postmark of Riga, no other postmarks, but that can be chance. Postmark-color is black.



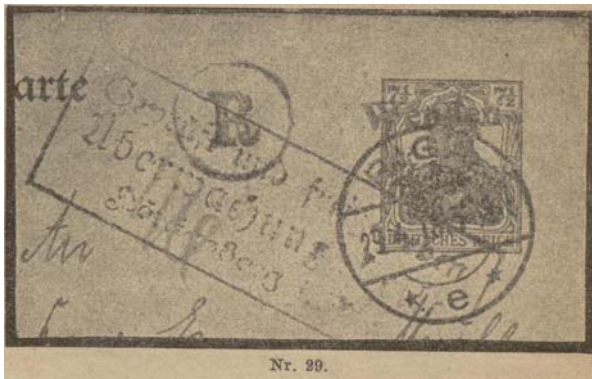
Nr. 26. Hapsal, government Estonia. 2. V. 18. Also with this postmark the old Russian postmark was used, from which the place name and in addition the right one of the three decorating stars are removed. The place name was by an one-line long-postmark particularly cancelled in black color.



Nr. 27. Lemsal, district Wolmar, government Livonia. 21. VI. 18. One-line long-postmark in black color.. The on the illustration visible W censorship-place “Wenden”, about which is talking later.



Nr. 28. Reval, government Estonia. 29. IV. 18. One-line long-postmark. Postmark color black.



Nr. 29. Wenden, government Livonia. 27. IV. 19. Likewise one-line long-postmark in red-violet color.



Nr. 30. Wolmar, government Livonia. 1. V. 18. It is the old Russian wood stamp from the year 1914 (see Nr. 21) [translator: in an earlier article: **IBJ 1918, NO 18/19. – p. 213-217**] The German post-office was opened on 6. IV. 18, but until 20. IV the field post look after the service and cancelled by ink line or blue pin line. The final cancellation followed only in Riga. From 21. IV. 1918 the Russian mute postmarks, found in a drawer, were taken in use by the German post office officials. His color was first black, then dark blue. It was replaced already on 5. V. 18 by the final German place-postmark.

One of the most interesting cancellations of the World War [translator: in the time of the article there was only 1 world war] shall be the following:



Nr. 31. Pleskau, the Russian Pskow. This city belonged years ago to the Hanseatic League, therefore the German name Pleskau, but is now really-Russian. She is also not located in the so-called Baltic, but in Great-Russia, district and government Pskow. In February 1918 Pleskau was conquered and occupied by the German, the city was the Head-supply-place [**‘Haupt-etappen-‘: ‘Etappe’ is the area between the front and occupied area**] and emporium for the Russian armies, which operated from the Gulf of Riga to Dünaburg, and therefore the carrying off as a prize there was yet the greatest of the World War. By a special regulation of the Peace Treaty of Brest-Litowsk Pleskau, though a Great-Russian city, stayed occupied by the German. She is also now in our possession and has lately get more significance by replacing the German embassy in her walls. The postal circumstances of Pleskau are characteristic. There was no state post office, [**‘Landespostamt’ is civilian postoffice as opposed to the fieldpostoffice**], but the field post office cared for the there located Reserve Division and the civilian post together. Also in Pleskau the old Russian mute cancels were discovered and in the beginning used for cancellation (Nr. 31). The color of these very interesting, only a short time being in use, postmarks is always black. The in Pleskau offered letters, were censored by the there located censorship-office, which fitted her P in a circle in violet color and sent for further postal handling to Walk, where they get the transit postmark Walk. These transport seems to be a very slowly, because the represented card is written on 6 June and get just on 2 August the postmark Walk.



A card of 6 August shows the Russian postmarks not longer on the postage stamp was just cancelled in Walk, probably because of saving of time. But as place of origin the card bears the one-line postmark Pleskau (Nr. 32) in Gothic decorative writing and violet color. The postmark was not used for cancellation, but is only indication of origin. Another German postmark of Pleskau, for instance a place-postmark in German style, is not be known to me. Censorship-office Pleskau seems also to be missing, because this card was transported to censorship-office Riga, as clear to see on the illustration. The censorship-office for all correspondence from the Baltic, was in the beginning only in Riga. As censorship-mark this office used a R in a circle in two different sizes, which both are to see on some of our illustrations. Also without surround shall the R be found. Color is black or green-black. I have found these postmarks also more times as cancellation, probably it concerns in these cases postage stamps, which mistakenly were stayed not cancelled. Already soon after the capture Dorpat also seems to have had a

German censorship-office, which her censored items marked with a D in circle in lilac or blue color, in last time is used a postmark with distinctive bigger **D** and violet color. Begin June of this year was also opened in Wenden a censorship-office, which first postmark had a real provisional appearance, to see by the illustration Nr. 27 (Lemsal). In last time this censorship-office used a big W in an 30 mm wide circle. The color of both postmarks is black. Already I have mentioned the censorship-postmark of Pleskau (see Nr. 31) and as latest censorship-office is to mention Fellin, whose mark is not yet known to me.

Also for the collectors of registration labels, such are there also, from the Baltic come a very nice provisional for his collection. The Russian registration label of Jurjew (Dorpat), the place name and number black, surrounding blue, was from German side with "Riga" in gothic writing and violet color over-printed and used, he is present for me on cover of 5.VII. 18. Also Dorpat used in May 1918 a very simple help-label. A by means of red pencil made rectangle shows the also with red pencil handwritten herein brought two-line inscription: R. N. – Dorpat, which then the number by ink is added.

The official publication of the state post-office has announced the establishing of the following post-places:

On 29. IV. 18: Dorpat, Fellin, Reval, Walk, Wolmar, Wenden.

On 17. V. 18: Baltischport, Hapsal, Lemsal, Narwa, Pernau, Weißenstein (Estonia), Werro, Wesenberg (Estonia)

On 16. VI. 18: Petschory (Livonia).

These post-offices themselves were spread without exception on such places, which during our last march were occupied also on Livonia and Estonia, Kurland, that was already earlier in our possession for the greater part., thus comes not in consideration for the provisional postmarks. Narwa, that is located on Great-Russian area in government St. Petersburg, was also with Pleskau together the both German post offices, which we possess in Great-Russia. I do not believe, that all these post-offices have had help-postmarks, but I do not know also my overview is a complete or not, further discoveries are therefore yet possible.

On the isles Oesel, Dagoë and Moon the fieldpost-office in Arensburg delivers the civilian post, also on the mainland in distant regions the fieldpost-offices takes civil correspondence for further sending.

Of course in such cases also has to be franked with Ober-Ost postage stamps, the cancellation follows yet with the postmarks of the concerning fieldpost offices.

So incomplete my explanation in relation to the yet difficult connection with the Baltic countries and Russia can be, so I hope to have shown, that it concerns with the described postmarks, the German and also the Russian, very interesting collection-material. I hope thus, that the given very good illustrations, many collections animate, to give this area attention and communicate the redaction of further discoveries,

Advertisements

1. Looking for postal history of Estonia and Latvia during German occupation in 1918, especially in March-April of 1918 (expansion into Livland and Estland following Brest-Litovsk treaty) and November-December of 1918 (late usage, mixed usage following Independence), as well as correspondence between Ob.Ost. and Russia. By Anatoly Chlenov (achlenov@yahoo.com)
2. Seeking: Latvia 100 Ruble stamp (1922 – Sc. 112) showing its usage on cover or anything! By Dzintars Grinfelds (zzipzin@yahoo.com)
3. Do you have oval TPO postage due markings from Latvia on covers or cards? I am seeking to expand and update the list of earliest and latest known usages which was part of an article recently published. Scans and information would be gratefully accepted. By Vesma Grinfelds (dzvesma@sprintmail.com)
4. Looking for covers from Estonia 1918-1940 sent to locations outside of Europe. By Randy Tuuri (tuurifam@comcast.net)
5. Looking for used Lithuanian #1-8 stamps as I collect by positions (can send want list by positions). I am also interested in Lithuanian provisional cancels 1919. Willing to buy or trade for similar or other Baltic material. By Greg Wilson (wilson.greg@ssd.loral.com)
6. Wanted: Covers and usages from Central Lithuania. Please send scans to: zzipzin@yahoo.com By Dzintars Grinfelds

General Society information

BSPS Bulletin mailing address:

Baltic States Philatelic Society
5719 Drysdale ct
San Jose, CA 95124

BSPS Board of directors:

Peter Devenis (ingadevenis@aol.com)
Maris Tirums (mxtirums@hotmail.com)
Randy Tuuri (tuurifam@comcast.net)

BSPS Executives:

President: Anatoly Chlenov (achlenov@yahoo.com)
Secretary: Vesma Grinfelds (dzvesma@sprintmail.com)
Treasurer: Dzintars Grinfelds (zzipzin@yahoo.com)