

Yesterday in STAMPS:

The Postage Stamps of the Far Eastern Republic

by Seymour Gibrick (From STAMPS Magazine, September 6, 1941, with images added)



The short-lived Far Eastern Republic of Siberia was one of the little known Russian States that emerged from the wreck of the old Russian Empire, having been created in the searing flames of the Russian Revolution.

After Admiral Kolchak's Siberian White Army was decisively beaten and routed by Lenin's and Trotsky's Red Army, all of Siberia up to the city of Irkutsk was occupied by Soviet troops. The only remaining organized anti-Bolshevik Russian forces in Siberia were those of Ataman Semenov in Chita and the smaller White force of General Diedrichs.

Semenov occupied Chita by grace of the Japanese Army of Occupation in Eastern Siberia, which were extending supplies and protection to him. However, after Kolchak's downfall the Japanese, seeing that a clash was inevitable between the advancing Red Army and Semenov's troops, and having little desire to clash outrightly with Moscow, made the best of a bad situation, and agreed to a compromise whereby Moscow was to sanction the creation of a democratic buffer state stretching from Lake Baikal to the Pacific Ocean and embracing the provinces of the Amur, TransBaikalia, Priamur, the Maritime Province, Russian Sakhalin and the Kamchatka. In return the Japanese were to withdraw their troops immediately from Chita and eventually from all of Siberia, and to cease giving any further support to Semenov's Army.

On April 6, 1920, the Far Eastern Republic was formally established at Verkhneudinsk under the Chairmanship of Alexander Krasnochekoff, a former Russian emigrant to the United States who had established himself as a Labor Attorney in Chicago, returning again to Russia in August, 1917.

The Far Eastern Republic is unique in a political sense by reason of the fact that although it was mainly a creation of totalitarian Moscow, the fullest democracy was maintained throughout the Republic with absolute freedom of speech, of press, and of organization in political parties, so that elections to the Constituent Assembly on January 20, 1921, seated reactionary Whites and extreme Reds alike. Economically, a moderate co-operative socialist planning was initiated.

The Vladivostok Issue of 1920

Shortly after the establishment of the republic, all of the old imperial Russian type stamps found in the Vladivostok post office and in other post offices through the Priamur Province, received the surcharge "D V P," which are the Russian initials of Dalni Vostochni Respublika



1920 2k, Far East. Rep. Sc. 2 (No Scott I listed)

(Far Eastern Republic). [Scott describes this as "D B P" with the same interpretation. JFD.] The postal rates were set at seven kopecks for domestic mail and at ten kopecks for foreign mails (100 kopecks equal 1 ruble). All values



1920 3k on 35k, Sc. 4



1920 10k, Sc. 9

were based on the gold ruble. However, as there was an insufficient stock of the 7 and 10 kopeck stamps, the 15 kopeck value, both perforated and imperforated, was surcharged 7 kopecks, (Russia type A9) and the 3 and one half ruble (Russia type A 10) also both perforate and imperforate was surcharged 10 kopecks.



1920 7k on 15k, Sc. 8, Gutter Block



Left to right, 1920 1 ruble (Sc. 18), 1k imperf (Sc. 18), 35k on 2k (Sc. 30), 70k on 1k (Sc. 32)



The other small values were soon speedily exhausted, so the old Imperial Savings Bank stamps (Far Eastern Republic type A1) and the 35 and 70 kopek stamps (Siberia-Omsk issue) were surcharged 1, 2, 3, 4



kopecks respectively. These surcharged issues were overprinted by the National Bank of Vladivostok and normally should have the "D V P" letters surcharged horizontally across the Imperial Arms, but in the printing of the surcharge numerous errors were made, some of the more important ones being as follows:

(1) A sheet of 100 of the Omsk 35 kopeck issue (Far Eastern Republic Sc. 30a) was surcharged on the reverse side, also surcharged in a like manner were 10 of the 14 k. surcharge on 20 k. (14 a) and 5 of the 10k. (9 a).

(2) A sheet of 15 k. surcharged 7 k. (8 a) received an inverted surcharge.

(3) A sheet of one Kopeck imperforated, #21, received the surcharge on the lower part of the stamp, right on the inscription I K.

(4) An unlisted variety is a single stamp of the 10 kopeck Imperial Savings Bank stamp that received the 2K. surcharge but without the initials D V P. Another stamp had the first K of the surcharge K 2 K omitted, and many other stamps of the same sheet were not surcharged. These errors were due to the interception of a different sheet while the stamps were being overprinted.

(5) Some sheets of the 1, 2, 3, kopeck values, during the printing received the surcharge slightly misplaced, and 10 stamps of the three and one half Ruble (#10) received the surcharge greatly misplaced.



1920 15k with inverted 7k surcharge, Sc. 8a

The Chita Issue of 1921

As the smaller over-printed values were exhausted throughout the Republic a permanent issue of 2, 4, 5, and 10 kopeck values (#38-41) was printed by the Typographical Department of the National Bank of Chita. The number of the printings being 2 kopecks, 600,000; 4 kopecks, 800,000; 5 kopecks, 800,000; 10 kopecks, 1,000,000.



1923 2k, 4k tied by Vladivostok c.d.s on picture postcard to Petrograd



1921 10k Arms tied by Vladivostok c.d.s on cover to U.S.

The Blagoveschensk Issue of 1921



Left to right, top row first, 1921 3r (Sc. 43), 5r (Sc. 44), 15r (Sc. 45), 2r (Sc. 42), 1921 Chita Issue 7k (Sc. 53), 1921 2r (Sc. 42)

These stamps were issued in 1920-21 by the authority of the Blagoveschensk Soviet and were placed in use for the region of Blagoveschensk-Habarovsk-Verkhneudinsk. The 5 rubles #44a (right) and the 30 rubles value #46a exist tete-beche. Except for the fact that these stamps can be technically considered as a local issue (as they were specifically issued for use within Amur Province) very little else is known about them.



Sc. 44a

The Chita Issue of 1922



Top right single: 1922 20k (Sc. 56); cover: 1923 10k pair tied by "Vladivostok 21.3.23" on registered cover to U.S. with Seattle and Chicago backstamps



Above, 1922 4k Gutter Block (Sc. 51); right, 1922 50k (Sc. 58) strip of five with control number

After the conclusion of the agreement with Japan which led to the establishment of the Far Eastern Republic, Semenoff's forces in Chita, no longer receiving aid from the Japanese, evacuated Chita and dispersed into Manchuria and Mongolia. The troops of the Far Eastern Republic immediately entered and occupied Chita.

The stamps issued by Semenoff during his occupation of Chita (N1-N4) were still in use, being sold in Soviet paper currency. However the Far Eastern Republic postal authorities in Chita, having noticed that the gold ruble basis being used in Vladivostok at the time was much more profitable than the almost worthless paper currency being then accepted, hastened to institute the use of the gold ruble basis for accepting payment of postage, and a new set of stamps were ordered printed at the National Bank of Chita (#49-58) and were in use on a gold ruble basis in the region Verkhneudinsk-Chita-Vladivostok.

The Vladivostok Issue of 1922

In the latter part of 1922 the Soviet Government at Moscow, having finally liquidated the remaining anti-Bolshevist forces in the rest of Russia, wished to settle once and for all the question of Japanese intervention in Eastern Siberia as well as the last remnant of organized White troops, that of General Diedrichs. The Moscow government instructed the Far Eastern Republic to request an immediate withdrawal of Japanese troops from Russian soil. The Japanese wishing to avoid an open clash with Moscow, finally agreed to a complete withdrawal from Siberia by October 30, 1922. In the meantime the Red Army, together with the forces of the Far Eastern Republic, having badly defeated the White forces of General Diedrichs, were steadily closing in on Vladivostok, where the remnants of Diedrichs's troops and other anti-Bolshevist elements had taken refuge. With the possibility of destruction of Vladivostok in event of a battle, the Foreign Consular Corps in Vladivostok negotiated with the Red forces, who agreed to wait a few days before occupying Vladivostok, during which time the last White and Japanese troops were evacuated from the city on October 20, 1922.

On November 17, 1922, the National Assembly of the Far Eastern



Republic voted to amalgamate with Soviet Russia, and on November 19, 1922, the Far Eastern Republic was officially declared part of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic.

Thus the epic of the Russian Civil War and Allied Intervention drew to a close.

A few days after the occupation of Vladivostock, the Executive Committee of the Far Eastern Republic directed that the Chita Issue of 1921 be surcharged to commemorate the Bolshevik revolution of November 7, 1917. (#62-65). 10,000 sets were issued.



Left, 1922 2k with inverted overprint (Sc. 62a); right, 1922 4k with double overprint (Sc. 63b)

During the overprinting various errors occurred, there having been inverted surcharges on each of the values, and double surcharges on each of the 4 and 5 kopeck values. In addition every setting of twenty-five stamps shows several varieties. The two last stamps of the bottom row show a different variety of the figure 2. The last by one stamp shows the two 2s of the date 1922 curved, while the last two show the first 2 higher than the second. All in all there are about twenty-eight surcharged varieties of this issue.

The Vladivostok Issue of 1923

These stamps (#66-70) cannot be technically classified as issues of the Far Eastern Republic, as the republic ceased to exist on November 19, 1922, while these stamps were issued in 1923. It is



1923 1 and 2k overprints on local cover (Sc. 66-67)

presumed that this was a specific issue for the Soviet Far Eastern territory and sold only on a gold basis, since Soviet Russia had in 1923 placed her greatly inflated currency on a gold par. Inflation of Soviet paper money reached such heights that for a short while the Soviet Government abolished all money.

The Chita Occupation Issue of 1920

Ataman Semenoff had occupied Chita in 1919, and until the fall of 1920, he controlled the entire territory ranging between Verkhneudinsk and Manchuria, not even recognizing the orders of Admiral Kolchak, then the supreme ruler of Siberia and commander of the Siberian White Army. Semenoff's troops engaged in several armed encounters with the American Expeditionary Forces in Siberia, who were then principally engaged in guarding the Trans-Siberian Railroad. General Graves, the American commander during a Congressional investigation, accused Semenoff and his principal subordinates of the most inhuman cruelty to the inhabitants of the areas under the Ataman's rule.

Far Eastern Republic...

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This issue (N1-N4) was issued in Chita by Semenoff's postal authorities in the early part of 1920. The stamps were necessitated on account of the depreciation of the paper currency issued by Semenoff and because of an increase of postal taxes. The overprinting of the surcharge was done by the Typographical Department of the National Bank of Chita. There are no known errors of this issue.

Today the Russian people once more are in a struggle to the death with their hereditary foe, Germany. And Japan, who is closely watching the tide of battle on the European Russian front, is believed to be poised once more for the occupation of Eastern Siberia, should the Red Army be vanquished.



*1920 Occupation
1r on 4k (Sc. N1)*



*Single, 1923 20k
on 1k Airmail
Overprint, not
listed in Scott,*

Michel 45A, only 25-75 issued; cover: 20k Soviet Issue on cover from Chita to Berlin May 21, 1923

