

Sanubar GASIMOVA
PhD in History

Rovshan AHMADOV

AZERBAIJAN'S FIRST POSTAGE STAMPS

Postage stamps, fulfilling their responsibilities along with the money (metal and paper) of the states that release them, carry and promote the ideology, culture and national traditions of their countries. Accordingly, stamps represent one of the major groups of modern symbolism. This makes stamps an important source for the study of the history and life of sovereign states. One of these states was the first democratic republic in the East - the Azerbaijan Republic, on behalf of which the first postage stamps of Azerbaijan were released. The Numismatic Fund of the National Museum of History of Azerbaijan (hereinafter NF NMHA) keeps a full collection of postage stamps of the Azerbaijan Republic of 1918-1920.

The development of the new stamps was assigned to a senior official for special assignments at the Ministry of Post and Telegraph, painter Zeynal bay Aliyev. Zeynal bay Aliyev, also known in some documents as Zeynal Haji Aga oglu Alizadeh, was born in Baku in 1895. He studied at the Baku real school; in 1919-1923 he improved his skills in the Rome Academy of Fine Arts (5, p. 19). According to the painter's project, it was planned to issue postage stamps of nine denominations and four drawings. On the instructions of the republic's government, the Ministry of Post and Telegraph started preparing for the release of stamps in June 1919. The first information



about it was published in Azerbaijan newspaper, which said: «The Ministry of Post and Telegraph releases a new type of stamps. The stamps are decorated with oriental ornaments and various patterns: a soldier with the Azerbaijani flag, a farmer with a sickle («Land and Freedom»), Surakhani («Burning Lights») and a fortress. The stamps are issued in denominations of 10, 20, 40 and 60 kopecks and 1, 2, 5, 10 and 25 rubles. Currently, they have started printing test stamps (1, p. 23)». The independent postal issues of Azerbaijan date back to 20 October 1919.

The first image depicted an Azerbaijani soldier (asgar) with a gun in his right hand and the Azerbaijani tricolor in his left hand. Two stamps in denominations of 10 and 20 kopecks were printed with this story. The second picture shows an Azerbaijani peasant gathering the harvest in the rays of the rising sun. This picture is repeated on stamps worth 40 kopecks, 60 kopecks and 1 ruble in different colors (2, p. 14). The third picture shows a panorama of medieval Baku with a castle gate and the silhouette of the Shirvanshah palace complex. Stamps in denominations of 2 rubles, 5 rubles, and 10 rubles were planned with this story. Finally, the plot of the fourth picture portrayed the famous historical and architectural monument - the Atashgah temple of fire worshipers in Surakhani. This plot was designed for stamps with a denomination of 25 rubles. (2, p. 15). Later, a stamp with a denomination of 50 rubles was printed with this picture, and its origin is explained below.

The pictures of all stamps had the words «The Azerbaijan Republic» - at the top in Turkic (Azerbaijani), at the bottom in the French language and in the Indian style. The price of the stamps was indicated in the corners. In order to simplify the process of printing, stamps were printed without the teeth. The printing was planned to be carried out with a lithographic method (3, p. 20).

Unfortunately, the original drawings of the painter, prints of test stamps and designs certified by the Ministry of Post and Telegraph, about which the local press wrote in August 1919, have not been found yet. The archives of some ministries were taken out of Azerbaijan in April 1920, and some were taken to Moscow in the first years of Soviet rule. Throughout the history of the USSR, the collection, processing and publication of materials on the history of the Azerbaijan Republic were actually banned.

By the beginning of the printing of stamps, the number of denominations was increased to 10. A new denomination of 50 rubles appeared, and information about this was published in Azerbaijan newspaper on 28 August 1919 (4, p. 2). It was due to the forthcoming increase in postal rates. Employees of the Ministry of Post



and Telegraph made an absolutely correct decision to include an additional denomination before the rise in the rate of all kinds of postal and telegraphic correspondence was officially announced.



The new rates were approved by the Ministry of Post and Telegraph on 9 September and were published in Azerbaijan newspaper on 13 September (4, p. 2). They were put into circulation from 10 October 1919. That is why the number of authorized denominations included an additional denomination of 50 rubles. (5, p. 20).

Talking about the history of post and postal circulation in Azerbaijan, it is necessary to note the great and fruitful work of the Ministry of Post and Telegraph was led by the literate, educated specialist and lawyer Jamobay Suleyman oglu Hajinski, who knew his business very well. He was minister in the period from 14 March 1919 to 1

April 1920. He was also elected a member of the first parliament (6, p. 70).

Returning to the question about the importance of the first independent emission of postage stamps in the Azerbaijan Republic, it should be noted that the timely and competent resolution of postal issues concerning the organization of the postal business and the issue of postage stamps stopped the outflow of money from the state treasury, strengthened the financial position of the postal authorities and stopped the inflow of cheap tsarist stamps illegally brought into the country.

Of certain interest is the process of printing stamps

and identifying the historical places where these activities were carried out.

The order for the production of the first postage stamps was sent to the Azerbaijani expedition of state papers and placed with the chromo Partnership of A. M. Dagesov and P. K. Zalinov. This chromo printed banknotes, bills of exchange and other officially stamped papers of the Baku City Council, the National Economy Council of the Azerbaijan Republic in 1919-1920 and the Azerbaijan SSR in 1921-23. (5, p. 20). The order of the Ministry of Post was carried out in between the printing of banknotes. This chromo was next to the building of the National Bank at the intersection of Karantinnaya and Krasnovodskaya streets (now Samad Vurgun and Hazi Aslanov streets). The former lithograph and later the Krasniy Vostok printing house worked for its intended purpose until 1991 (5, p. 20; 7, p. 42).

So, on 20 October 1919, postage stamps of Azerbaijan came into circulation. These were postage stamps of the following denominations:

- 40 kop black, gray-green and yellow,
- 60 kop black, brown, red and yellow,
- 1 rub black and yellow,
- 2 rub black, brown, red and yellow,
- 5 rub black, blue and yellow,
- 10 rubles black, gray-green and yellow,
- 25 rubles black, blue and brown-red,
- 50 rubles black, gray-green and brown-red.

Two small denominations of 10 and 20 kopecks came into circulation on the evening of 20 October: 10 kopecks black, green, red, blue 20 kopecks black, blue, green and red

Stamps of the whole series were published on thin white paper without the teeth, lithographically. The glue of the stamps had many shades ranging from white to dirty brown. The overlay of the adhesive cover was equal, banded and vesicular. The peculiarity of the edition is slight differences in the shades of stamps, as well as shifts in additional colors. Stamps of this issue have a number of varieties and misprints (2, p. 14, 3, p. 20)

Before the release of stamps, a lot of preparatory work was carried out with the public in the press. For example, Azerbaijan newspaper published a government report for three days on 11, 12 and 13 October 1919: «From 20 October, Azerbaijani national postage stamps will be introduced for the payment of mail at all post offices of Azerbaijan» (8, 9, 10, p. 2).

This is the end of the story about the first public issue of postage stamps of the Azerbaijan Republic in 1919. 🌟



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