

Over the Century old Interesting Cover

By Igor Grigorian

Recently, a cover mailed from Yerevan to Berlin came to my attention. So nice were the wax seals on the back of the cover that I obtained it from a dealer in Russia (thanks to my friend Greg Balagian, who bartered the deal).

Now came the time to closely examine it.

The first thing that hits one's eyes is five wax seals that are placed in key places to prevent the envelope from opening by an unintended "addressee" (fig. 1). Four of them bear seal with the letters **Эриванская П.Т.К.** (or Erevan P. (ostal) T. (elegraph) O. (ffice) in English) along the upper rim, while abbreviation **Част. (ный) Кор.(пус)**, or Private Corps in English is along the lower rim.

The middle wax seal is different; it letters **Эриванская** (Erevan) OFFICE (the letter being spelled out this time). Across the seal are abbreveiation **CTP** (unknown - IG) and **KOP**, which stands for **Kopnyc** (corp, as we already established above).

All five seals have Russian Imperial Double-Headed Eagle and two post horns underneath symbolizing Imperial Postal and Telegraph Authority.

fig.1



On the back, the cover is franked by four standard stamps, 1, 3, 5 and 25 kopeks which cover international delivery of 34 kopeks. Each of the stamps is cancelled with Erevan calendar round cancellation on 05/10/1907. There is also a receiver cancellation on November 21, 1907 at the Charlottenburg post office in Berlin.

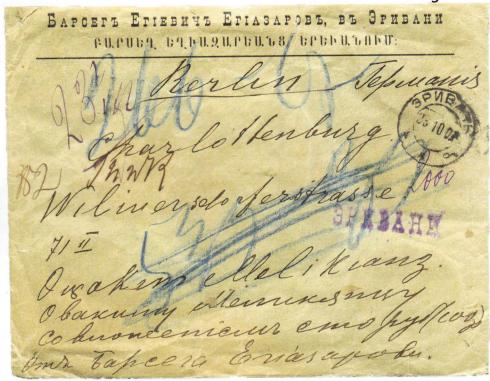
Now let's look at the front of the cover (fig.2). It is pre-printed with the name Barsegh Egievich Egiazarov in Yerevan in Russian and Armenian. The addressee's name (Ovakim Melikianz in Russian and Latin alphabets) and his address

(382 Wilmersdorfer strasse, Charlottenburg, Berlin in Latin and Germany in Latin) are hand written. The front also bears *Erivan* violet stamp and Erivan cancellation. It also bears hand-written inscription *With Incretion of 100 rubles From Barsegh Egiazarov*.

The only reference to the Second Guide Erevan Merchant Barsegh Egievich Egiazarov places him as keeper of Delijan-Nakhichevan route postal station. He was mentioned in I.Y a. Semenov's book *Russians in the History od Armenia* in regards to his complaint to the head of the Erevan Post & Telegraph office that due

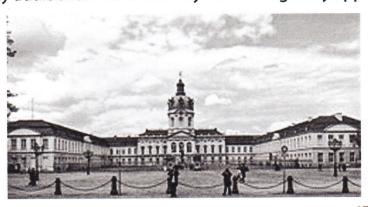
to overuse and lack of legally or prescribed rest time postal horses were almost exhausted; that postal stations were overcrowded by people awaiting rides and numerous are complaints for delays. He resoned that number of horses at the stations was inadequate for the increased traffic and because of the lack of rest the horses drop out of commission rather quickly. He requested to add 8 horses at each of Erevan, Elenovka and Semenovka stations, and another 6 horses at each of Eilar, Sukjoj Fontan and Nizhne-Akhtinskaya stations. Based on his request the head of Erevan Post & Telegraph Office suggested to the Erevan Governor to increase financing to service the tract and up-keep the station houses. It would also be beneficial to add that most of the mentioned areas were populated by Molokans. Molokans are members of various spiritual Christian sects that evolved from Eastern Christianity in the East Slavic lands. Their traditions did not conform those of the Russian Orthodox Church, and they were regarded as heretics (<code>Sektants</code>) and were pushed away from Russia's main territory. In Armenia, Molokans were originaly involved in transporting commercial cargo and passengers.

I was unable to find any information on Ovakim Melikianz. All possible variations of names and surnames were tried; nothing came up. I had to try a different approach. I started with keyword Charlottenburg. At first, only Charlottenburg castle in Berlin was coming up. Was it possible that Mr. Ovakim Melianz lived in the castle? I had my reservations; it did not seem like a hotel or a boarding home. Then I tried to search for the street address in Berlin, and search brought me to Berlin's Charlottenburg district. Although historical data on the



street and its inhabitants was not available, modern data showed that the Wilmersdorfer Strasse is a very populated trade street in Berlin. It is very likely that in the begining of the 20th century it was a trade street as well. One could also assume with some degree of certainity, that Mr. Melikianz eitheresided or, which is most probable, had a store in the street. So why is Barsegh Yegiazarov is sending 100 rubles to Ovakim Melikianz? is It a payment for goods? Is it a debt pay off? This remains unknown, as the letter (or any enclosures in the envelope) were missing.

Any additional information by readers is greatly appreciated.



1905 post cards Charlottenburg district in Berlin, Palace and Town Hall

