

Another Interesting Cover

By Igor Grigorian

Recently, a cover mailed from Yerevan to Berlin came to my attention. The wax seals on the back of the cover were so nice! 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 are five gorgeous wax seals that are placed in key places to prevent the envelope from being opened by an unintended "addressee" (Figure

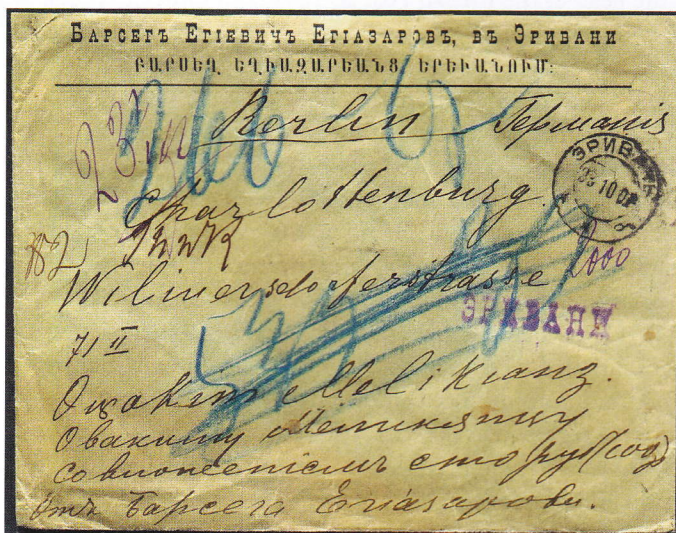
1). Four of these bear a seal with the letters "Эриванская П.Т.К." (or Erevan P.[ostal] T.[elegraph] O.[ffice] in English) along the upper rim, while the abbreviation "Част.(ный) Кор.(пус)," or Private Corps in English is along the lower rim.

The middle wax seal is different; it bears the letters "Эриванская" (Erevan) along upper rim and letters "П.Т. Контора" (P.[ostal] T.[elegraph] OFFICE), the latter being spelled out this time. Across the seal are abbreviations "СТР" (unknown) and "КОР," which stands for "Корпус" (Corps, as we already established).

Figure 2.



Figure 1.



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

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 canceled with an Erevan calendar

round cancellation on Oct. 5, 1907. There is also a receiver cancellation on Nov. 21, 1907, at the Charlottenburg post office in Berlin.

Now, let's look at the front of the cover (Figure 2). It is pre-printed with the name Barseg Egievich Yegizarov in Yerevan in Russian and Armenian. The addressee's name (Ovakim Melikianz in Russian and Latin alphabets) and his address (382 Wilmersdorferstrasse, Charlottenburg, Berlin and Germany in Latin) are hand-written. The front also bears an *Erivan* violet stamp and Erivan cancellation. It also bears a hand-written inscription "*With Enclosure of 100 rubles From Barseg Egiazarov.*"

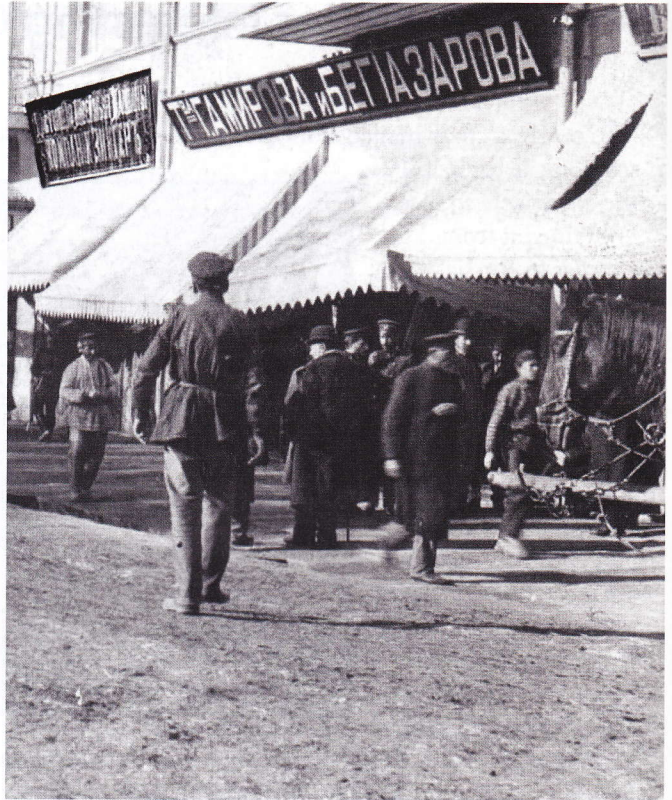


Figure 3.

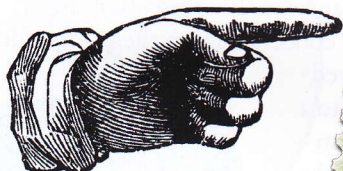
The only reference to the Second Guild Erevan Merchant Barseg Egievich Eliazarov places him as keeper of the Delijan-Nakhichevan route postal station. He was mentioned in I.Ya. Semenov's book, *Russians in the History of Armenia*, in regards to his complaint to the head of the Erevan Post & Telegraph Office that due to overuse and lack of legally prescribed rest time, postal horses are almost exhausted and that postal stations are overcrowded by people awaiting rides and numerous are complaints for delays. He reasoned that the 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 adding eight horses at each of Erevan, Elenovka and Semenovka stations, and another six horses at each of Eilar, Sukhoj Fontan and Nizhne-Akhtinskaya stations. Based on his request, the head of the Erevan Post & Telegraph Office suggested the Erevan Governor increase financing to service the tract and upkeep 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 to those of the Russian Orthodox Church, and they were regarded as heretics (sektanty) and were pushed away from Russia's main territory. In Armenia, Molokans were originally 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 beginning of the 20th century it was a trade street as well. One could also assume with some degree of certainty that Mr. Melikianz either resided there or – most probably – had a store in the street. So why is Barseg Yegiazarov 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.

Just couple of weeks ago I found a picture of the front of the store (Figure 3) where Mr. Barseg Yegiazarov conducted his business in Yerevan. The signboard says Association of G. Amoriv and B. Yegiazarov.

Any additional information by readers is greatly appreciated. ☐

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