



The Prexie Era

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Louis Fiset, Editor/Publisher
fiset@uw.edu

Early Solo Use of the 50-Cent Transport Stamp

by Joseph Bock



The 50-cent Transport was the highest value of the 1941 Transport Airmail Series and the last of the eight stamps to be issued. It first appeared on October 29, 1941 at the World Wide Philatelic Convention, in St. Louis, Missouri.

The stamp's primary purpose was to pay the 50 cents per half-ounce airmail rate to the Philippine Islands. However, it also found usage for partial payment of higher international airmail rates then in effect, some as high as \$1.10 per half-ounce. Being the highest value, this stamp had the smallest printing total of all stamps in the issue.

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Solo uses were possible by paying for combinations of lower airmail rates combined with registry or special delivery service.

The cover shown here illustrates one of only two reported (to date) 50-cent Transport commercial uses to the Philippines, received and not returned, prior to the Japanese attack on December 7, 1941. Paying the 50 cents per half-ounce airmail rate from the continental U.S., it was flown on a Martin M - 130 on the last *China Clipper* flight, which departed San Francisco (Treasure Island) November 19, 1941. A backstamp shows it was received in Manila (Cavite) on November 28th. The cover has a circular receiving backstamp showing

“4:30PM NOV 28 MANILA P.I.” After December 7th the trans-Pacific commercial routes were closed beyond Hawaii for almost four years, not to be resumed until late in 1945.

The addressee, Dr. Robert Minssen Kleinpell (1905-1986), was senior geologist at the National Development Company of the Philippines. He was trapped in Manila by the Japanese attack and interned, first at the Catholic University of Santo Tomas in Manila and later at the agricultural college at Los Banos. Kleinpell was repatriated in 1945.

Some of Kleinpell’s wartime correspondence as an internee survives.

Cover Surfaces with 71 Copies of the \$5 Prexie

by Edward Field



Figure. 1: May 17, 1946 inter-bank correspondence likely bearing treasury bonds indemnified for almost \$3,000,000. The cover bears postage and fees totalling \$358.70.

A cover with multiple copies of the five-dollar Prexie stamp has recently surfaced and is shown here. This may be the first time it has seen the light of day in four decades. Like most covers with large numbers of the Coolidge definitive, this, too is inter-bank correspondence registered with high indemnity.

Franking includes 71 five-dollar Prexie stamps, including two blocks of 25 on the reverse. Also, a single one-dollar and a two-dollar Prexie stamp are on the front, along with 70 cents worth of lower value Prexie stamps. Total franking: \$358.70.



Figure. 2: Reverse side revealing two blocks of 25 five-dollar stamps and May 17, 1946, and May 18, 1946, San Francisco postmarks.

The purpose of the correspondence was the transfer of bearer bonds from Wells Fargo Bank and Union Trust Company, San Francisco, to the Bank of America in Sacramento. Both locales were within Postal Zone 2. The supplemental fee was 12 cents per \$1,000 dollars of indemnity. Subtracting six cents postage and 20 cents basic registration fee leaves a supplemental fee of \$358.44 paying for \$2,987,000 indemnity. Contents were probably treasury bonds. (assuming a weight of six ounces, rather than two, reduces the indemnity by \$1,000.) Note that a Wells Fargo employee took pains to get the postage correct to the penny. Banks did not always do that.

All stamps, with the exception of the two-dollar Harding, bear Well Fargo & Union Trust Co. perfins.

A close cousin to my cover is illustrated on the front of *US Domestic Postal Rates, 1872-1999* by Beecher and Wawrukiewicz. Same sender, same recipient, same mailing date. The main difference is that the Beecher & Wawrukiewicz cover has “only” 40 five-dollar

Prexies on the reverse, and the indemnity was “only” \$2,008,000. These two examples may well represent the largest known number of five-dollar Prexies on cover.

Another well known example of a commercial cover with a large multiple of five-dollar Prexies may be seen in Bill Helbock’s book, *Prexie Postal History*. His example, on inter-bank mail going from Wilmington, Delaware, to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, shows \$141.36 in postage and fees, represented by 28 of the high value Prexies. The negotiable securities contained within were valued at more than \$1,250,000.

I bought my cover from Richard Searing several years ago. He had owned it for at least thirty years, so it has been out of sight for around forty years. Note that the two-dollar stamp is a replacement; the original was cut out decades ago by a prior owner who apparently valued the off-cover stamp more highly than the intact cover. That attitude may explain why so few high--indemnity covers have survived.

Twilight of the Prexies - End of the Era

by Stephen L. Suffet

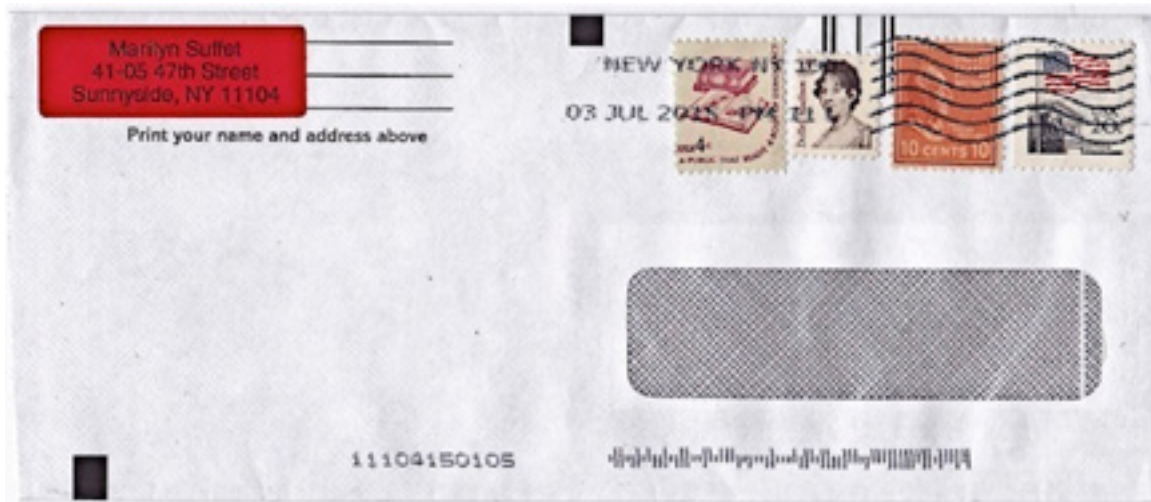


Figure 1: 10-cent Prexie paid part of the 49-cent first ounce letter rate in 2015.

This is the fifth and final article in a series that looks at usages of the United States Presidential Series stamps after the Post Office Department (P.O.D.) began to introduce the Liberty Series with the release of the 8-cent value on April 9, 1954.

The Prexie era began April 25, 1938, with the official release of the 1-cent sheet stamp in Washington, D.C., but when did it end? There is no simple answer. Like all regular U.S. postage stamps issued since August 1861, the Prexies remain valid to the present time, and they still occasionally turn up on mail. Figure 1, for example, shows a 10-cent Prexie paying part of the 49-cent first ounce domestic first class letter rate on a cover postmarked July 3, 2015.

That cover, of course, is of philatelic origin. The return address label is from my wife, and while she is not a stamp collector, I certainly am. The 10-cent stamp was one of several Prexies that came in a lot of discount postage I had purchased earlier in the year. Nevertheless, the 49-cent rate was correctly paid and the cover did pass through the mail.

While I have not done a scientific study, it is my personal experience from collecting Prexie postal history in earnest since the early 1980s that after 1954 the proportion of Prexie covers (cards, wrappers, etc.) with philatelic connections continuously increased, while the proportion of those apparently without philatelic connections shrank. As the next few years passed, this trend rapidly accelerated, and some time around 1959 or 1960 the majority of covers bearing one or more Presidential Series stamps were addressed to or from stamp dealers, philatelic organizations, philatelic publications, or well known stamp collectors.

Furthermore, after the end of 1962, nearly all Prexie covers that I have seen have some sort of philatelic connection. The cover from the West Springfield Stamp Club of Massachusetts illustrated in Figure 2 is typical. Postmarked January 21, 1963, the cover bears a 5-cent Prexie coil stamp paying the 5 cents per ounce domestic first class letter rate that went into effect two weeks earlier, on January 7. By that time the P.O.D. had already issued the 5-cent George Washington coil stamp in the



Figure 2: 5-cent Prexie coil paid one-ounce letter rate on 1963 cover from the West Springfield Stamp Club of Massachusetts.



Figure 3: 25-cent Prexie paid the half-ounce air mail letter rate to Australia in 1970.

unnamed three-denomination regular series of 1961-1966. Nevertheless, the West Springfield Stamp Club still had a supply of 5-cent Prexie coils, last distributed to post offices in Fiscal Year 1956 (July 1-June 30), on hand.

A reasonable rule of thumb, therefore, is to consider December 31, 1962, as the end of the Prexie Era. At least that is the cutoff date I generally use for my own collecting.

Exceptions exist, of course, and it is possible to find some post-1962 Prexie covers that are apparently non-philatelic in origin. Figure 3,

for example, shows a 25-cent Prexie paying the half-ounce air mail letter rate to Australia on a cover postmarked February 27, 1970. That was nearly twelve years after the 25-cent sheet stamp in the Liberty Series had been issued, and more than ten and a half years since the end of Fiscal Year 1959, when the last 25-cent Prexies were shipped to post offices.

Let's return for a moment to 1961 and 1962. The last 11-cent Prexies had been sent to post offices during Fiscal Year 1957. In his posthumously published book *The Prexies*, Roland E. Rustad stated, "One would be hard pressed to

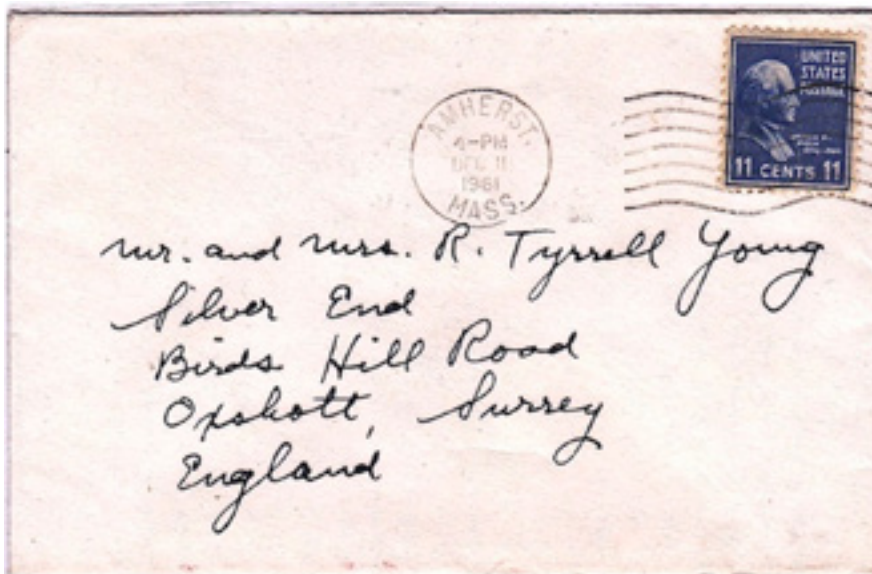


Figure 4: 11-cent
Prexie paid the first
ounce surface letter
rate to the U.K. in
1961, after the rate
increased from 8 to
11 cents.

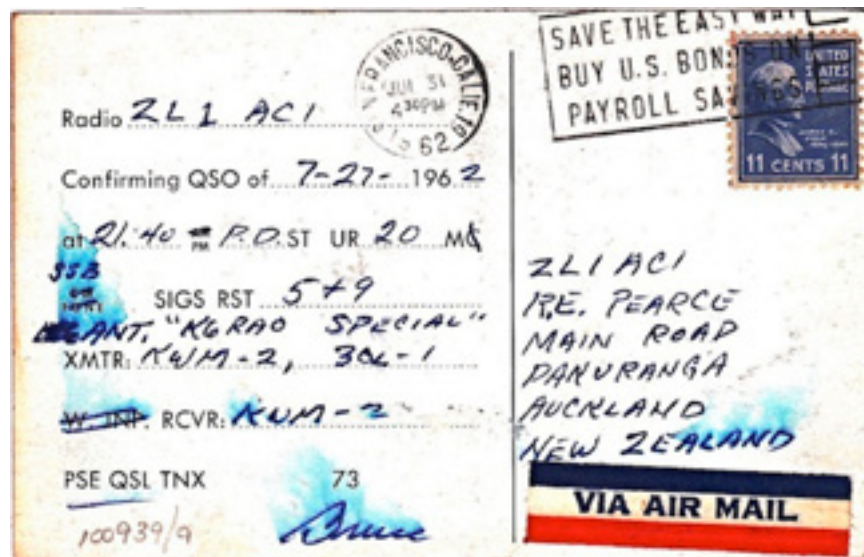


Figure 5: 11-cent
Prexie paid the air
mail postal card rate
to New Zealand in
1962.

say that this stamp was issued for any specific rate or rate/fee combination, and solo usages are not often found.”¹ Nevertheless, it is possible to find some such 11-cent solo usages in the last year and a half of the Prexie era. Effective July 1, 1961, the P.O.D. increased many of its postal rates to foreign counties. For example, the first ounce surface letter rate to countries other than Canada and Mexico climbed from 8 cents to 11 cents,* while the air mail postal and postal card rate to countries other than Canada and Mexico increased from 10 cents to 11 cents.

Figures 4 and 5 show usages at these two

new 11-cent rates, respectively. The first is a cover to the United Kingdom postmarked December 11, 1961, and sent at the surface letter rate. The other is a QSL post card postmarked July 31, 1962, and sent at the air mail rate to New Zealand. Amateur radio operators commonly used QSL post cards to confirm reception of each other’s broadcast signals.

The P.O.D. added an 11-cent stamp to the Liberty Series on June 15, 1961, primarily to pay these two rates.** However, as these two items prove, remaining 11-cent Prexies did the job just as well.

* At the same time, the surface letter rate for each additional ounce increased from 5 to 7 cents.

** The 11-cent stamp would be the last new value in the Liberty Series that had an equivalent in the Presidential Series. The last Liberty Series stamp, not counting tagging and gum varieties, was the 25-cent coil stamp, issued

February 25, 1965. There was, however, no 25-cent coil stamp in the Presidential Series.

Reference

1. Rustad, Roland E., *The Prexies* (Belleville, Illinois: Bureau Issues Association, 1994) p. 212.

Certificate of Mailing - Air Mail from Hawaii

by Bob Hohertz

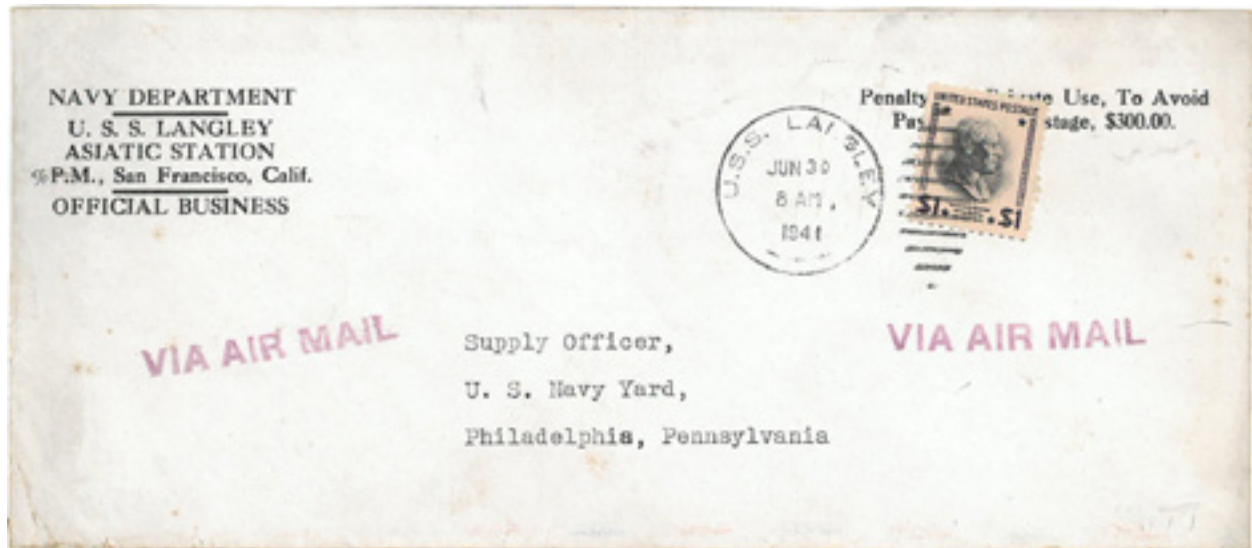
Post Office Department
OFFICIAL BUSINESS
REGISTERED ARTICLE
No. 233949
INSURED PARCEL
No. _____
Return to Oscar A. Litcher
Street and Number, or Post Office Box, Bx 1592 Hollywood Sta
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA.
Via Trans Pacific Route
RETURN RECEIPT
Received from the Postmaster the Registered or Insured Article, the original number of which appears on the face of this Card.
Capt. A. W. Litcher
Date of delivery 12/18/41
Form 3611
DEC 26 1941

This return receipt was mailed from Hawaii December 18, 1941, with air mail postage affixed. It was received in California December 26. Whether it went by air probably depends on how much time it spent in censorship (ICB = Information Control Bureau), and when air mail flights took place. I can't imagine it

got through censorship in time for the China Clipper's flight of December 18. It likely went on one of the shuttle flights between the Islands and the West Coast soon after. In any case, it appears to be a rather rare item, as Beecher and Wawrukiewicz fail to discuss the existence of such an item.

USS *Langley* Scuttled

by Jeffrey Shapiro



While some Prexie collectors covet solo usages, like this example of a \$1 Prexie paying the rate on a 1941 penalty cover, an additional fascinating story is associated with this cover.

The \$1 Prexie paid two times the 50 cents per half ounce Clipper air mail rate to/from the Philippines and the U.S. Mainland, (in effect April, 1937 until October 30, 1946). It was canceled on the USS *Langley* on June 30, 1941, while on patrol duty in the waters off the Philippines Islands.

The *Langley* (named after the astronomer and aviation pioneer Samuel Pierpont Langley) was the Navy's first aircraft carrier, having been converted in 1920 from the collier, USS *Jupiter* (originally built in 1913).

Officially launched in 1922, the *Langley* saw several historic firsts in Naval Aviation. Operating off the East Coast and in the Caribbean until 1927, she was next reassigned to the Pacific Fleet. After 12 years operating between Hawaii and the California Coast, the *Langley* was sent to Mare Island for overhaul

and conversion to a seaplane tender. In 1939, she was ordered on patrol in the Atlantic, then on to the waters off Alaska and subsequently to patrol duties with the Philippine Fleet.

After the Pearl Harbor attack on December 7, 1941 the *Langley* hurriedly departed the Philippines during the Japanese invasion, to patrol the waters off the Dutch East Indies. She then assisted with delivery of 40 crated P-40s to Australia and Java to counter the Japanese advance in the area.

After the final delivery, on February 27, 1942, the *Langley* rendezvoused with the destroyers USS *Whipple* and USS *Edsall* south of Java, where the convoy came under attack by 15 Japanese G4M bombers. As a result, the *Langley* burst into flames, with its engine rooms flooding and killing 16 crewmen. Now dead in the water, the decision was made to scuttle the ship so she would not fall into enemy hands. Surviving crew members were transferred to the USS *Pecos*. Most were killed a few days later, however, when the *Pecos* came under enemy fire and was sunk.

Merchandise From Hawaii Post-World War II and Before Air Parcel Post

by Daniel S. Pagter



The flattened mailing box top shown here demonstrates that products other than orchids were mailed from Hawaii after the end of World War II. The 80-cent Hawaii airmail stamp was issued for the newly created Air Parcel Post (APP) service, which began September 1, 1948. A one-pound zone 8 parcel cost 80 cents to mail, based upon the normal parcel post zones. Most surviving mail with this stamp involved orchid flower boxes.

With the war now history and with increased reliability of aircraft, more merchandise was being moved by airmail. This January 19, 1946 item was one such example. Likely containing jewelry, it was a commercial, company-to-company mailing from Honolulu to Los Angeles.

The \$1.04 in postage and fees paid by a 4-cent sheet Madison stamp and dollar Wilson stamp

with center line at top, rates out as follows:

- 4 cents Return Receipt Fee (valid March 26, 1944 to December 31, 1948); plus
- 2.5 ounces at 15 cents per half-ounce airmail postage (valid January 15, 1945 to September 30, 1946) plus 25 cents insurance fee (\$100.01-\$200.00 valid November 1, 1944 to December 31, 1948); or
- 3.0 ounces at 15 cents per half-ounce airmail postage plus 10 cents insurance fee (\$5.01-\$25.00 valid period as above).

The other surface (ship) reduced rate options for this item, both of which could have been similarly insured with return receipt, were third class merchandise of 1.5 cents per two ounces up to eight ounce maximum or parcel post zone 8 for 18 cents for the first pound or fraction.

In 1946 third class and parcel post merchandise matter was still subject to postal inspection to verify the contents qualified for lower than first class special rates of postage. Merchandise sent airmail paid at airmail was not subject to inspection, nor was merchandise sent at first class rates. The endorsement "May be opened for postal inspection" was not needed for either air or first class mail. However, beginning July 29, 1924, insurance services, which began with the start of Parcel Post in 1913, were extended to third class and airmail matter. The same order allowed third and fourth class mail to be sealed as long as it could be opened for inspection as

noted by such an endorsement. Prior to that order, if third class or parcel post matter was sealed it was to be considered first class matter and re-rated as such. Closure of contents of first class and airmail was always allowed.

From the start of Parcel Post Service in January 1, 1913, the goal was to reduce costs associated with mailing of merchandise for companies and citizens. This was done twofold; 1) by lowering the postage for such matter, and 2) increasing the weight limits allowable, first from four to eleven pounds then, rapidly in steps to the present day 70 pound limit (starting August 1, 1931) for all mail classes and zones (except second class). This took control away from the private, expensive express companies.

Air Parcel Post service followed that plan. This item mailed for possibly 90 cents in 1946 could have been mailed beginning September 1, 1948 for a dime less, for up to 16 ounces for APP zone 8 Hawaii to California travel. Or as non-APP at the lower standard unified air mail 5 cents per ounce rate for 15 cents postage.

Lastly, this hybrid item had the stamps tied by mute oval cancels consistent with parcel post or registered first class, as well as a fully dated parcel post cancel and finally, a normal four bar CDS as required for first class and airmail. The "VIA CLIPPER" inscription appears to date from the earlier clipper airmail service days.

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The Prexie Era

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Louis Fiset, Editor/Publisher
fiset@uw.edu

Postal Censorship during the Prexie Era Part 3: Post-World War II Censorship

By Dann Mayo



Figure 1: Finland censorship, March 1946, using the same devices employed earlier, during World War II.

While U.S. civil censorship ended immediately upon Japan's surrender announcement on August 15, 1945, civil censorship in some countries had later end-dates. For example: in the U.K., September 30, 1945 marked the terminal date;¹ in the Netherlands, domestic (vs. Allied, which appears to have lasted into 1947) censorship of neutral countries' mail ended on October 1, 1945.² In India and Burma civil censorship operations ended on December 31, 1945;³ and in Finland, December 31, 1946.⁴ Figure 1 shows Finnish censorship in March

1946, occurring long after the conclusion of hostilities.

In addition to ongoing civil censorship, many countries (including the U.S.) continued censoring mail of former POWs and civil internees until their ultimate release. Typical censorship devices used here were hand stamps of the individual camps. While surface mail to the home country of the sender was free under the Geneva Conventions, mail to other locations and airmail was not free. It is therefore possible



Figure 2: Incoming domestic mail to Ellis Island, 1947. Late internee mail to a U.S.-resident German national awaiting repatriation.



Figure 3: July 1946 air mail from a German internee in Australia, with camp censor handstamp at left. Censorship continued until January 1947.

for Prexie covers to exist during this post-war period. Figures 2 and 3 provide examples of post-war censorship of internee mail, both incoming and outgoing.

Post-War Occupation Censorship

Censorship of civilian mails was carried out in various countries occupied (in the case of the Netherlands, liberated) by the Allies. These censorships included Italy (and subsequently the Free Territory of Trieste), the Netherlands,

Germany, Austria, the Philippines, Japan and Korea. Excellent literature is available for Germany⁵ and Austria,⁶ while the other areas are more or less hit-and-miss. The challenge for the Prexie era collector grows out of the fact that covers sent to these foreign destinations do not circulate in the U.S. marketplace in quantity. The good news is that, if/when they are found overseas, they are likely to be cheaper than in the U.S. due to the reversed supply/demand imbalance.



Figure 4: Airmail to Japan, postmarked October 17, 1947, revealing allied censorship at Tokyo. Airmail service resumed on September 5, 1947.

Figure 5: September 1946 air mail to an addressee in the post-war American Zone of Germany and censored there.



Figure 6: Military censorship of incoming civil mail to Austria in 1946. Censorship continued until 1953.

Shown in Figures 4, 5, and 6 are typical censor markings to be found on mail to Japan, Germany, and Austria. In Germany, Post-V-E day censorship was carried out by American, British, French and Soviet examiners in their respective occupation zones.

Currency Control

In the postwar period through roughly the mid-1950s, customs/currency control examination was carried out by a number of European countries, notably those behind the Iron Curtain. Whether examination really was for economic rather than political reasons remains a matter to be decided on a cover-by-cover basis.

Figure 7 illustrates a currency control label on correspondence to Czechoslovakia in 1951. Note that text on the resealing label is in both Czech and French.

Small Events

The biggest “small event” of the later Prexie era is the series of Israeli-Arab wars that began in 1948. In addition to Israel, Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Jordan also carried out civil censorship at various times during this period. The Israeli side is well covered,⁷ while information on

censorship by the other countries remains spotty.⁸ Figure 8 shows a Jordan air mail cover with a handstamp left over from World War II.

Lesser events also occurred during the Prexie era for which, unfortunately, I have not yet seen examples of Prexie covers. Collectors with “small events” examples to Madagascar, Costa Rica, Colombia, Korea, Mali, Indonesia, and elsewhere, will have reason to brag in the event such treasurers come their way. Figures 9 through 14 show examples of the kind of censorship to be expected on Prexie era covers.

Madagascar revolt

A nationalist revolt occurred on Madagascar from March 29, 1947 to November 1948.

Costa Rica civil wars

Following a disputed election, in March and April 1948 Costa Rica experienced a brief civil war. For about two weeks in January 1955, the loser in that civil war occupied a small section of Costa Rica before being driven out.

Colombia civil war

The assassination of the charismatic Liberal leader Jorge Eliécer Gaitán Ayala on April 9,



Figure 7: Currency control (censor?) resealing label on 1951 cover to Czechoslovakia. Examined at Bratislava. [Collyer Church collection]



Figure 8: 1948 Jordan airmail correspondence censored using a resurrected World War II handstamp.

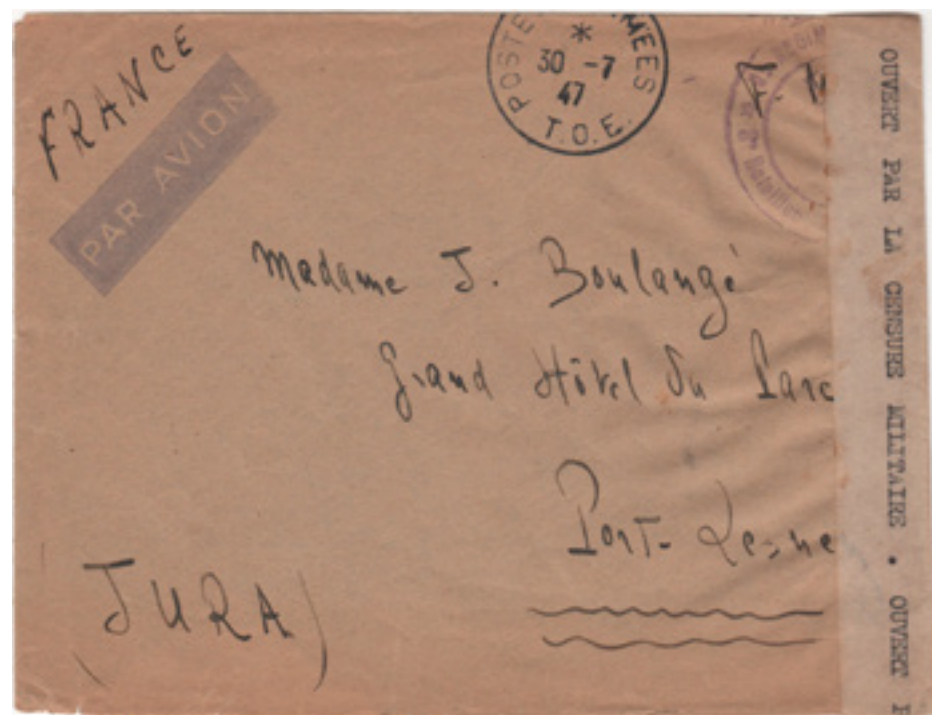


Figure 9: Mail from Madagascar to France during the 1947-1948 revolt.

1948 resulted in immediate riots in Bogota that led to 3,000-5000 deaths and set off a decade-long civil war known as La Violencia.

Mali Republic war

When the Republic of Mali was declared on September 12, 1960, President Kieta immediately set out to establish a centralized state based on Socialist principles (meaning that Americans and West Europeans were suspect). A very few censored covers are known sent during October-November 1960.

Korea guerilla war

A war in Korea occurred before the beginning of the Korean War. In 1949-50 an ongoing guerilla occurred in South Korea, with occasional pitched battles involving units up to regimental strength along the line of demarcation.

Indonesia guerilla wars

At different times between 1959-1962 various censorship hand stamps were used on mail from locations in Sumatra, Borneo, West Timor, Sulawesi and the Moluccas, suggesting



Figure 10: Mail showing variations of military censorship on civil mail during Costa Rica's civil wars.



Figure 11: Outgoing censored mail from Colombia during the decade-long civil war, known as La Violencia.

that censorship was local rather than national. The above cover was sent while the Republik Maluku Selatan guerillas were still fighting. The fact that the senders were Christians may also have played a part in the selection of this cover for censorship. While this one falls just outside my definition of the Prexie era it and the previous cover suggest that mail to US missionaries may be a potentially rich source of Prexie covers in small event situations.

References

- 1 *The History of the Postal and Telegraph Censorship Department 1938-1946*, 2 vol.; printed for the Home Office (UK Government) 1952.
- 2 LaBlonde, Charles: "Late WWII Netherlands Censorship;" *Civil Censorship Study Group Bulletin*, No. 187, pp. 93-97 (July, 2015)
- 3 *History*, op. cit., para. 269.
- 4 Private correspondence with Ali Muhonen, September 15, 2015. "Finland continued censorship measures until Dec 31, 1946, but only 15 percent of mail to abroad was inspected. The percentage was a lot smaller for the incoming mail." This end date points to the arbitrary nature of termination of censorship, since Finland did not sign its peace treaty with the U.K. and the U.S.S.R. (et al.) until February 10, 1947.
- 5 The basic work is Riemer, Karl-Heinz: *Die Postzensur der Alliierten in besetzten Deutschland nach dem II Weltkrieg; Poststempelgilde "Rhein-Donau"*, 1977.
- 6 The basic work is Krueger Richard A.: *Censorship of the Civil Mails in Occupied Austria, 1945-1953*; self-published, 1989.
- 7 Gladstone, Norman: *Postal Censorship in Israel, 1948-197*. Central Stamp Gallery, 1978.
- 8 A starting point for this and many other censorships is the only general catalog on civil censorship ever published. Wolter, Karl Kurt: *Die Postzensur*; 2 vols.; Georg Amm, 1965-66.



Figure 12: Air mail from the new Mali Republic early during its independence. Censorship of mail during the first few months remains scarce.



Figure 13: Incoming airmail from Korea during the guerilla war of 1948-1949 prior to the Korean War.



Figure 14: Outbound missionary mail from Indonesia posted in April 1962 during a period of guerilla warfare in the country.