

Occupation of Soviet Russia

Pskov (Pleskau) Local Post

With the exception of one city, Nazi occupation forces forbade all civilian communication by post, telephone, and telegraph in the areas of Soviet Russia that they conquered. The city of Pskov (renamed Pleskau), immediately to the east of the border with Estonia, fell to the Germans in July 1941. A local post began service there on August 7, when the postage on mail collected from letter boxes received crude handstamped provisional PLESKAU overprints applied diagonally in red or blue ink. Small supplies of unsold U.S.S.R. stamps, stamped envelopes, and postal cards were similarly marked. A second provisional issue, with boxed surcharges on German stamps, appeared on August 9, followed by the same overprints on Soviet postage. Regular issues appeared in due course; the local post closed April 30, 1942.

Above: A U.S.S.R. stamped envelope with provisional red PLESKAU overprint had been mailed by a Red Army soldier to a civilian address before German invaders overran the city; it was collected and canceled Pskov August 8, 1941, the second day of occupation postal service. Below: A local letter with provisional 20-kopeck surcharges on a 1-pfennig German stamp and a 60-kopeck Soviet stamped envelope, canceled Pskov August 14, 1941.

The August 8 cover, the scarcest variety of the first provisional occupation issue of Pskov, is signed Dr. Hermann Schultz and Hans Zierer, and has a 2002 Walter Zirath photo certificate. The August 14 cover, usage of the second provisional issue, has a 2000 Gerhard Krischke photo certificate; the 1-pfennig German stamp with boxed black Pleskau 20-kopeck provisional surcharge is seldom seen on cover.

