

AN EXCEPTIONAL USAGE OF A MODERN ROMANIAN POST CARD

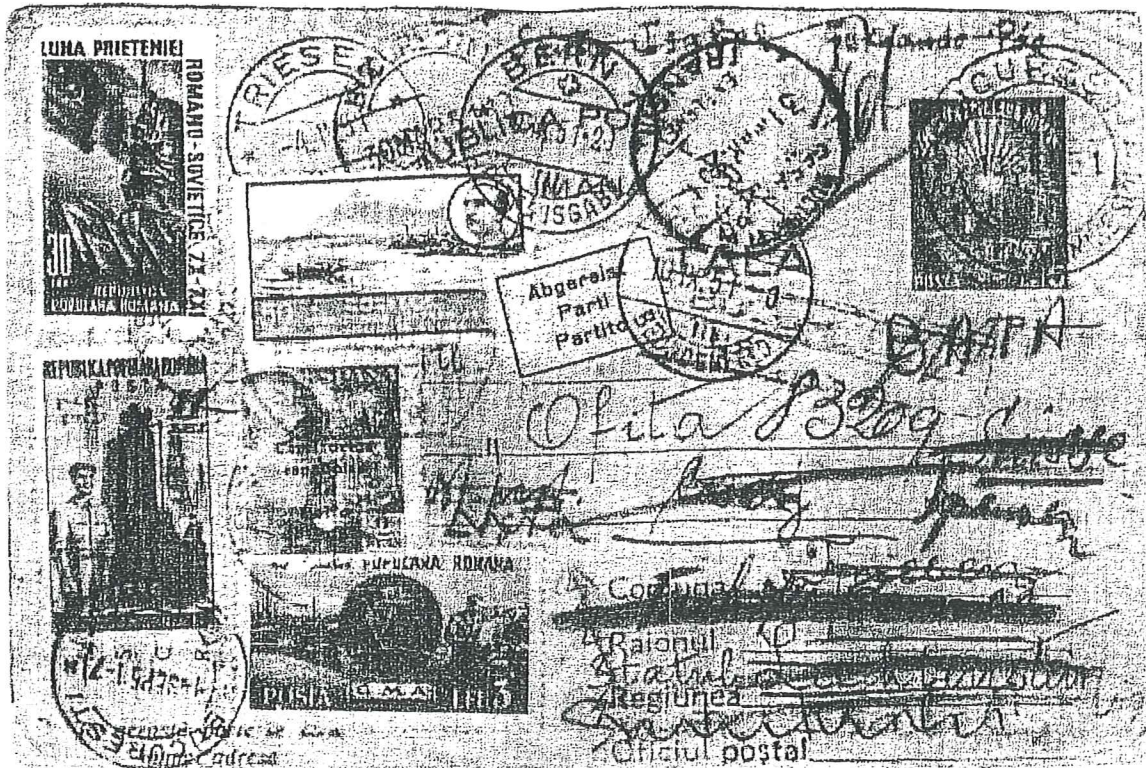
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As mentioned in one of the previous articles, published recently in the RPHB, the Romanian postal history between 1947 and 1950 can offer the enthusiastic collector a lot of interesting and beautiful surprises. Such an item is the post card illustrated in this article, both sides being shown.

The item in discussion (see below) is a very common postcard with a 6 lei imprinted-stamp, registered and sent in 1951 from Bucharest by a stamp collector to a fellow philatelist in Liechtenstein. In 1951 the postal rate for a registered post card sent from Romania to Liechtenstein was 8 lei (postal rate for a post card) + 21 (additional rate for registered mail) = 29 lei. The post card was franked with 3 additional pictorial stamps from that era (Scott # 757, 759, and 766), having a total face value of 44 lei. The sender paid a total of 50 lei to send this item, 21 lei more than necessary. The fact that it bears a scarce franking combination and has a big difference between the value of the franking affixed and the necessary amount required for postage does not make this post card worth mentioning. However, the route on which this item traveled makes it unique and extremely desirable.

The post card left the post office of origin, Bucharest (postmark dated March 30, 1951), went through the Bucharest External Transit Office (postmark dated March 31, 1951) and arrived in Triessen, Liechtenstein (arrival postmark dated April 4, 1951; a record delivery time for an item sent to Western Europe from Romania in the early '50's and not a common destination!). The addressee had left Triessen in the meantime and moved to Santa-Isabel, Fernando Poo (a former Spanish colony known today as Equatorial Guinea, an independent republic on the West Coast of Africa). The post card was forwarded to this new destination. One of the two postmarks affixed on the back (Cadiz, April 8, 1951 and a second one, hardly readable) suggests the fact that the post card went through Spain and then via sea mail to Fernando-Poo (Santa-Isabel arrival postmark, July 25, 1951). Why it took so long, almost 3 months, to reach this new destination remains a mystery. The "trip" of this post card does not end in Santa-Isabel, since the addressee moved again, probably to Bern, Switzerland, where the post card was again forwarded in August 1951 (postmark affixed on the front of the post card). This time 2 Spanish stamps (worth 2 pesetas and 50 centimes) issued for the "Spanish Territories from the Gulf of Guinea" were affixed on the front of the post card to cover the postal rate to Switzerland. Who paid for the postage this time is another mystery. Was the postage value recovered from the Swiss Postal Administration when accounting between UPU states was made at the end of the year? Sorry, but I do not have an answer to this question. Anyway, the post card arrived in Bern on September 9, 1951 (see postmark on the front). The addressee had left his Bern temporary address this time without leaving any information about his whereabouts to the post office, thus a trilingual label (in German, French, and Italian) that reads "moved" was affixed on the front of the post card and this was finally returned to the sender in Bucharest, Romania (see Bern September 10, 1951 departure postmark, "Bucuresti Tudor Vladimirescu" September 13, 1951 and "Bucuresti 23 August" September 14, 1951 arrival postmarks).

That was a very interesting journey for a post card and most of us I am sure would like to do the same thing as a vacation trip. Hopefully, some of the readers will be able to do that. Anyway, from a postal history point of view this unique item deserves the right of being made known to Romanian postal history collectors.



202 București, le 30/III/1951

Messieurs,

J'ai reçu votre lettre circulaire concernant l'échange des timbres, et je vous prie d'accepter l'échange des cartes des colonies rattachées avec les meilleures salutations et amicalement.

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