

A STAMP COLLECTION THAT REVEALS HISTORY LESSONS

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Dreams turn into reality, if you are growing with the dreams. Since my childhood, I knew that I could be a designer of spacecraft that would reach other planets in the Universe.



Fifty years ago, my father introduced me to the world of passionate dreams. In October 1957, he brought me a blue post stamp that was dedicated to the launch of the world's first artificial satellite, Sputnik-1. This stamp (left) [1] had started my collection of 350 Russian stamps that covered all the major events in the history of space exploration for five decades.

Text on the stamp: "4 October 1957. The world's first Soviet artificial satellite of the Earth. The Post of the U.S.S.R. 40 kopeks" [1].

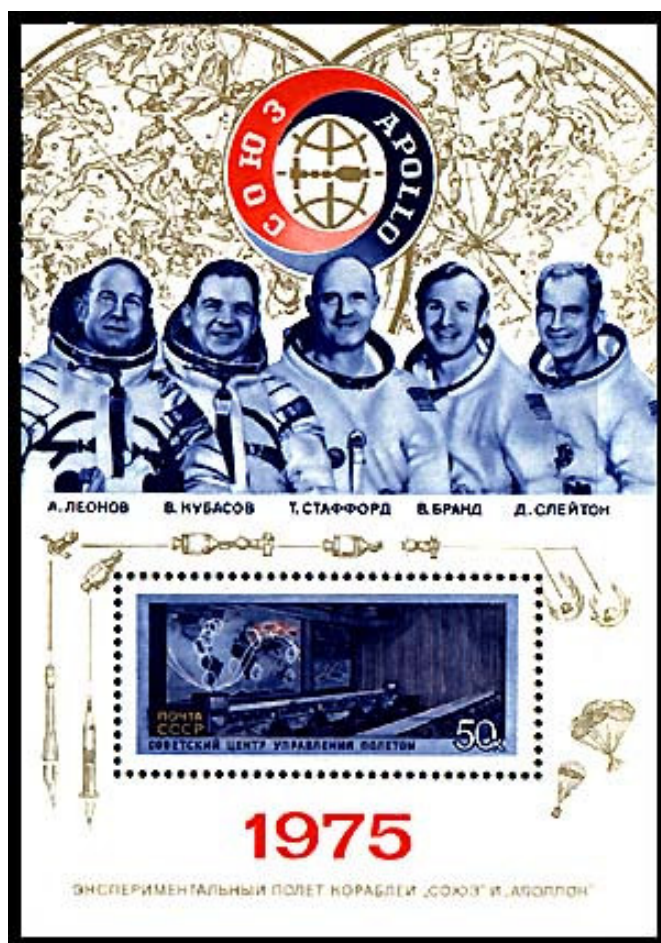


The second stamp (left) [2], also issued in 1957, commemorated 100th birthday anniversary of Konstantin Tsiolkovsky, Russian scholar and schoolteacher, who was the first to predict the inter-planetary flights and offer mathematical formulas for calculating the rocket motion. His life story and devotion to sciences and education had inspired me to become a scholar and educator.

Text on the stamp: "4 October 1957. 100th birthday anniversary of K. E. Tsiolkovsky. The world's first artificial satellite of the Earth. The Post of the U.S.S.R., 1957. 40 kopeks" [2].

Then I learned that the launch of Sputnik-1 "transformed American higher education" [3]. At that time, Americans felt threatened by the Soviets, who turned to be ahead in the space race and launched the "red moon" just 12 years after the end of the destructive World War II. In response to this event, the U.S. Congress supported an unprecedented increase of federal spending for research and education that helped to significantly expand the number of research projects and scientists in academia and industries.

Nowadays, we have to return to this lesson of the past again, and meet the country's new challenge by many European countries, Japan, and China in outpacing the United States economically and technologically [3]. Congressional investments into science research and education would solve many problems for years to come, but not all of them. Another resource could be found in deeper cooperation of American scholars, colleges and universities with foreign partners.



Text on the stamp: "A. Leonov, V. Kubasov, T. Stafford, V. Brand, D. Slayton. Experimental Flight of Soyuz and Apollo spacecraft. Soviet Spaceflight Control Center. The Post of the U.S.S.R., 1975. 50 kopeks" [4].



"Experimental Flight of Soyuz and Apollo spacecraft. A. Leonov, V. Kubasov, T. Stafford, V. Brand, D. Slayton. The Post of the U.S.S.R., 1975. 10 kopeks" [5].



"Experimental Flight of Soyuz and Apollo spacecraft. The Post of the U.S.S.R., 1975. 12 kopeks" [6].



"Apollo-Soyuz, 1975. The Post of the U.S.S.R., 12 kopeks" [7].



Text on the stamp: "Experimental Flight of Soyuz and Apollo spacecraft. The Post of the U.S.S.R., 1975. 16 kopeks" [8].

In my collection, I have a set of five stamps (above and left) [4-8] that were issued in 1975 to commemorate the flight of Soviet cosmonauts (Aleksey A. Leonov and Valery N. Kubasov) and American astronauts (Thomas P. Stafford, Vance D. Brand, and Donald K. Slayton) on board of the first international space-lab station, Soyuz-Apollo [9, 10]. At that time, I was a graduate student at Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology (which is similar to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology) and attended the lectures of Professor Konstantin D. Bushuyev, the Soyuz-Apollo project co-director. I was fascinated with the opportunities for collaboration between our great countries. This partnership between scholars, engineers, and astronauts has been lived through many political turmoils and nowadays continues successfully in building and exploring the International Space Station.

These stamps help me to remember the remarkable events in the history of civilization and space exploration. They are landmarks of global changes and lessons that are still valuable nowadays.

References

1. Russian stamp, “40k indigo, Sputnik Circling Globe, 1957.” CPA Stamp Catalog, No. 2093, "Soyuzpechat" Central Philatelic Agency under the Ministry of Communications of the USSR, Moscow, 1983. [Also, see S. Ivanov, *Stamps of the Soviet Era (1918-1990)*, 2002. Retrieved October 28, 2007, from <http://www.stamprussia.com/>].
2. *Ibid.*, Russian stamp, “40k blue, K. Tsiolkovsky and rockets, overprinted in black; 1957.” CPA Stamp Catalog, No. 2092.
3. Jeffrey Brainard, “50 Years After Sputnik, America Sees Itself in Another Science Race.” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 12, 2007, pp. A22-A23.
4. Russian stamp (block), “50k multicolor, Souvenir Sheet; 1975.” CPA Stamp Catalog, No. 4478, "Soyuzpechat" Central Philatelic Agency under the Ministry of Communications of the USSR, Moscow, 1983.
5. *Ibid.*, Russian stamp, “10k multicolor, Astronauts and Flags, 1975.” CPA Stamp Catalog, No. 4474.
6. *Ibid.*, Russian stamp, “12k multicolor, Spacecrafts and Earth; 1975.” CPA Stamp Catalog, No. 4475.
7. *Ibid.*, Russian stamp, “12k multicolor, After Link-up; 1975.” CPA Stamp Catalog, No. 4476.
8. *Ibid.*, Russian stamp, “16k multicolor, Soyuz Launch; 1975.” CPA Stamp Catalog, No. 4477.
9. Charles Redmond, “The History of the Flight of Apollo-Soyuz.” NASA, October 22, 2004. Retrieved October 28, 2007, from <http://www.hq.nasa.gov/office/pao/History/apollo/apsyhist.html>
10. Edward Clinton Ezell and Linda Neuman Ezell, “The Partnership: A History of the Apollo-Soyuz Test Project,” NASA Special Publication-4209 in the NASA History Series, 1978. Retrieved October 28, 2007, from <http://www.hq.nasa.gov/office/pao/History/SP-4209/toc.htm>

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