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Monsieur Milenko H. Raitchevitch visited Djibouti, Dire Dawa, and Harar in 1913. He kept a log of persons he met with their seals and signatures. This was part of a larger diary of his travels. (See added notes below.)

Madame et Monsieur M. H. Raïtchevitch,
-correspondant du "Vaherine Novost" - sont présents
ce jour au cabinet du Gouverneur de la Côte Française
des Somalis.

Djibouti le 27 Octobre 1913

POUR LE GOUVERNEUR ET PAR ORDRE
LE CHEF DU SECRETARIAT DU GOUVERNEMENT

[Signature]

¹⁴⁰² **M. KÉVORKOFF** *[Signature]*
Le Vice Consul de Russie

[Signature]

COMPTOIR DE DJIBOUTI
Le Directeur
[Signature]

**P. MARILL
DJIBOUTI**

**MARILL, ALLEGRE & Co
SUCCESSIONS**

*R. Vorpeccian
M. Kévorkoff*

1. Governor of Somali Coast by his secretary, seal and stamp - Pour Le Gouverneur et par Ordre le Chef du Secretariat du Gouvernement.
2. M. Kevorkoff
3. Vice-Consulat De Russie * Djibouti *
4. A. N. Kalos * Djibouti *
5. P. Marill djibouti
6. Georges Papaconstante Djibouti

7. Marill, Allegre & Cie Successeurs
8. Cie De L'Afrique Orientale, (seal) Agence De Djibouti

Djibouti and Harrar - 3 Nov 1913



1. Max Klein
2. Compagnie des Messageries Maritimes Agence de Djibouti
3. Gerolimato * Harrar (Abyssinia) * [on stamps]
4. Comptoir Europeen Djibouti Protect. Francais de la Cote des Somalis
5. P. Pon J. Gerolimato
6. S. A. Livierato * Harrar Abyssinia *
7. Hotel Contental A. Rhigas Djibouti
8. R. Agenzia Italiana in Harrar (3 Nov 1913)
9. J. Tzelatis * Harrar (Abyssinie) *
10. Vosikis & Cie
11. Ato Joseph de Galane Representant de S. M. L'Empereur D'Ethiopia (embossed)

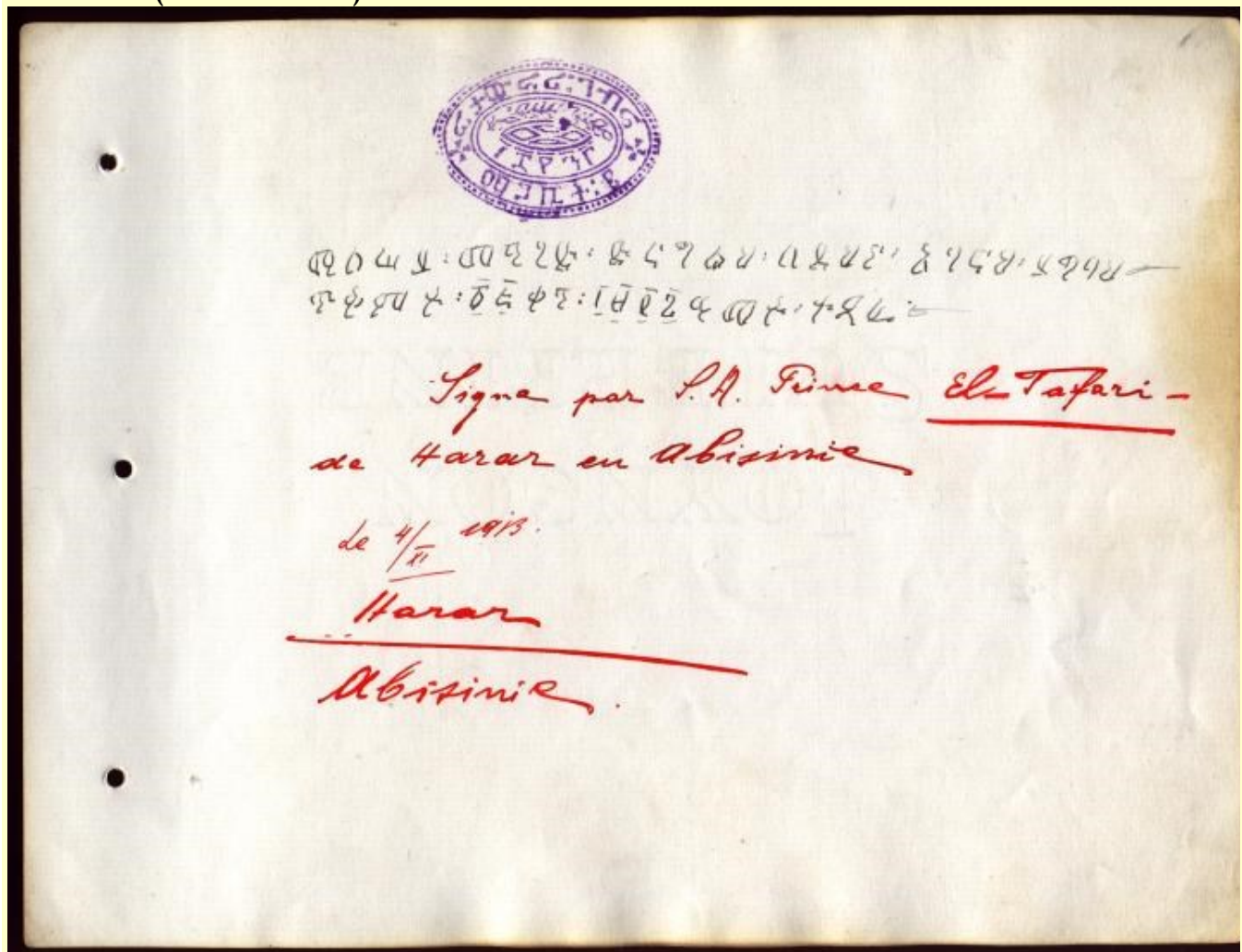
Harrar - 3 Nov 1913
British and Turkish Consulates



1. British Vice-Consulate * Harrar * signed by S. E. Kay, Acting British Consul
2. Consulat General de Turquie o en Abyssinie - Harrar o

Harrar - 4 Nov 1913

Ras Tafari (Haile Selassie)



Ras Tafari (Haile Selassie) The Amharic reads: "May you have a good journey and reach your country safely. Written Tikimt 25th 1906." The seal reads: "Fitewrari Gebrey, Megabit 2, 1893." Fitewari is a title like General, the date being about March 10, 1900.

Harrar - 4 Nov 1913

Princess Wazerou (Mrs.) Menen Mikael



$\phi \in H^1(\mathbb{R}^n) : \phi \geq 0 \Rightarrow \phi \equiv 0$

Signe par S. A. la Princesse
"Waxerou Alauncu Mikael" de
Arar en Abissinie

6 4/ 1913.

arrar
Abissinie

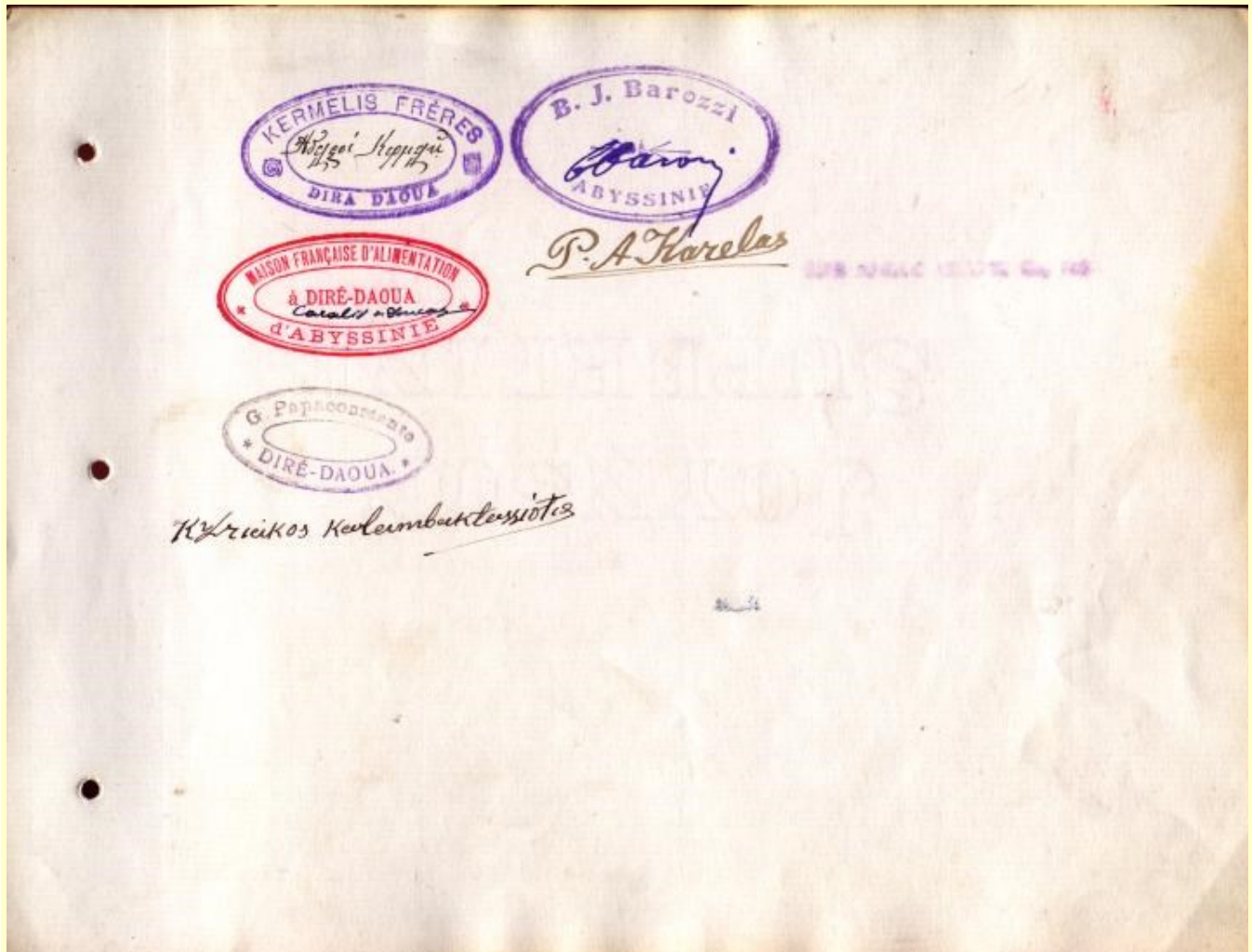
Princess Wazerou (Mrs.) Menen Mikael

Harrar - 4 Nov 1913



1. Bank of Abyssinia 4 Nov 1913 Harrar
2. Bank of Abyssinia Harar Agency
3. Max Klein
4. Clayton, Ghaleb & company, Limited Harrar
5. A. N. Kalos * Harrar (Abyssinie) *
6. P. Pon Vanmali Virjee
7. Goodlamally M. Mohamedally & Co & Harrar *
8. Vasanjee Nathoo Harrar
9. Matig Kevorkoff Harrar
10. Hebtoolabhaj M. Mahomedally & Co. * Harar *
11. Epicerie Ethiope ...ri Zanios, ... Place Farasmaga ...llah Fab... (seal) ...

Dire Daoua - 1913



1. Kermelis Freres, Dire Daoua (seal and signature)
 2. Maison Francaise D'Alimentation a Dire-Daoua d'Abssinie (seal and signature)
 3. G. Papaconstante * Dire-Daoua *
 4. B. J. Barozzi, Abyssinie
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No longer have pages. Interest email added May 3, 2025:

"Thank you for posting the log of Milen Raitchevitch in Ethiopia. I am trying to retrace Milen's journey from the time he was impersonating Prince George Obrenovic in Paris in 1907 to the time he was sought under a U.S. extradition warrant in 1924. While he was staying (and selling forged stamps) in Australia in 1914-15, he showed around his diary which included the signatures of the Sultans of Turkey and Morocco, the Maharaja of Nawanagar and many other world rulers. Does this diary still exist, and do you have more information on Milen? Regards, Yves Drolet, RPSC, AQEP Email: yd61[at sign]hotmail.com" (Following is his article received a few days later. Thanks.)

MILENKO RAITCHEVITCH, WORLDWIDE SCAMMER, POSTCARD SELLER AND STAMP DEALER

Yves Drolet, AQEP, RPSC – May 2025

Ken Doig's online Ethiopia Stamp Catalogue includes a log of the visit of a certain Milenko Raitchevitch to Djibouti, Harrar and Dire Daoua in 1913. These pages are part of a larger diary of Milenko's travels which was auctioned in sections in 2002. For her part, in 2015, Barbara Hancock, honorary secretary of the Philatelic Association of New South Wales, wrote an article on a certain Milan Raitchevitch, a stamp dealer and forger active in Australia and the United States between 1914 and 1922. As it turns out, Milenko and Milan were one and the same person, who went by various names and whose whereabouts can now be retraced in large parts thanks to the old newspapers and documents available through the web.

A bit of Serbian history

Based on a document he filed with the U.S. army in 1917, Milenko Raitchevitch was born on September 22, 1888 in Belgrade, then the capital of the Kingdom of Serbia. Although he did not belong to the ruling class, his life was closely intertwined with the vicissitudes of the Obrenović and Karađorđević dynasties that were vying for the Serbian throne.

At the time of Milenko's birth, Serbia was ruled by King Milan Obrenović, who was residing in Belgrade with his wife, Queen Natalia, and their son, Crown Prince Alexander. In 1889, Milan had another son with his mistress Artemisia Hristić (nee Ioannides), the wife of his personal secretary and the daughter of a wealthy Greek banker from Constantinople. An infuriated Natalia left Belgrade for Germany, but the presence of Artemisia at the royal palace caused a scandal. Milan abdicated in favour of Alexander in 1890, prompting Artemisia to return to Constantinople with her son baptized Obren Hristić.

In 1900, King Alexander also caused a scandal by marrying Draga Mašin, a disreputable widow. Three years later, Alexander and Draga were murdered by a group of disgruntled officers. The conspirators offered the throne to Peter Karađorđević, whose family had been ousted from power in 1858. King Peter's eldest son, George born in 1887, was named Crown Prince.

After the 1903 revolution, the supporters of the deposed dynasty turned their hopes to Artemisia's son who took the name George Obrenović and became a pretender to the Serbian throne. In 1907, a bomb went off outside the US embassy in Constantinople, and it was discovered that George, who lived nearby, had set it up himself to make it look like an assassination attempt. As a result, he was expelled from the Ottoman Empire and disinherited by his grandfather. He headed to Hungary, where he got into debt and eventually fell into relative poverty, forcing him to work as a stable boy, a jockey, and a singer in cafés and on stage.

A fake George

Around the time George Obrenović settled in Hungary, a young man was touring the provincial cities of Serbia posing as George Karađorđević. He was none other than Milenko Rajčević (Raitchevitch), who bore a close physical resemblance to the Crown Prince. Through this impersonation, Milenko was made privy to confidences potentially embarrassing for the

royal family. To avoid a scandal, he was offered a significant amount of money and ordered to leave the country.

Milenko headed to Paris, where he decided to impersonate the unfortunate George Obrenović. With this stratagem, he managed to be pitied by several Russian aristocrats living in the city, and even by former Queen Natalia who invited him at her table and gave him important sums. In the summer of 1910, still posing as Obrenović, he went to Vichy, then a hotspot of high society, where he seduced Ellie Johnson, the daughter of a wealthy Englishman who was in vacation with her family. He convinced her to steal money from her father, and the two ran away to Italy. At the hotel where they were staying in Genoa, they befriended an immensely rich prince Cantacuzenos. The prince started flirting with Ellie, and Milenko took the opportunity to go his room and steal a large amount of gold, banknotes and jewelry. Unfortunately for him, he was spotted by a maid, arrested and sentenced to six months in prison, while a repentant Ellie returned to her family.

After leaving the Genoa jail, Milenko went to Carlsbad in Austria (present Karlovy Vary in Czechia), another spa resort for the rich and famous, where he was detained for ten days for suspect behaviour. Expelled from that country, he went to Constantinople, and then to Sofia in Bulgaria, where he teamed up with Vasile Ionesco, a Romanian swindler who styled himself Prince Lahovary. In November 1911, the two of them came to Budapest and paid a visit to the real George Obrenović. They proposed that he join them in going to Paris and threatening scandal to extract money from King Peter during his official visit there. George pretended to go along with the scheme, but he denounced the pair to the police. Milenko was expelled from Hungary, and the Serbian authorities, notified of the incident, did not allow him back in his native country.

Another Raitchevitch

While Milenko was scamming his way across Europe, a young Serb named Milorad Rajčević (no relation) was gaining international fame. Born in 1890 in Lescovac, Milorad wanted to travel the world. The owners of Belgrade's Mali Journal offered to give him a monthly allowance of 150 dinars to cycle the world in two years, on the condition that he send them a letter and certificate from the authorities in each of the places he visited. He began his journey on March 14, 1910, carrying in his backpack an empty travel book in which he would collect signatures of all the important people he would come across during this trip. The first persons to sign his travel book were prince George Karađorđević and prince Danilo of Montenegro. His journey led him to Italy, then Switzerland, France, England, Germany, Sweden, and finally Russia where he spent a month in the best hotels and visited government representatives and prominent personalities to sign his travel book.

After crossing through Siberia, he arrived in Japan where Crown Prince Yoshihito refused to sign his book because the Japanese emperor was considered a deity. He continued to Singapore, Malaya, and Siam where King Vajiravudh signed his book and gave him his own motorbike. By then, foreign media were reporting on his venture, and he had an extraordinary reception in India, Ceylon, Persia, and Syria where he was greeted by the patriarchs of Jerusalem and Armenia. On September 21, 1911, he returned to Belgrade where he was received as a hero. Articles about his journeys and adventures were regularly published in the Mali Journal throughout 1911 and 1912 as a feuilleton entitled The Journey

around the World. After serving in the Serbian army during the First Balkan War from October 1912 to May 1913, he crossed the Atlantic to travel through the Americas. In January 1915, he was leaving Jamaica for Nicaragua. In the 1920s, he completed his tour of the world by roaming across Africa from Cairo to Cape Town.

A copycat traveller

While Milorad was becoming famous, the infamous Milenko had turned into a persona non grata in his country and most of Eastern Europe. After being expelled from Hungary in November 1911, he landed in Constantinople where he married a Greek girl. He could no longer impersonate Serbian princes, but the sudden celebrity of his almost-homonym Milorad gave him an unexpected opportunity to devise a new scam and continue making money off the wealthy.

In 1912, he and his wife started introducing themselves as Mr. and Mrs. Milenko Raitchevitch, Serbian journalists to whom the Večernje Novosti newspaper had proposed a reward of 60,000 francs (\$12,000) if they succeeded in going round the world on a motorcycle in three years. They had to earn their living exclusively by selling autographed illustrated postcards, while keeping a log of the persons they met with their seals and signatures. Not surprisingly, the whole story was a fabrication; for one, a newspaper by the name of Večernje Novosti had indeed been founded in Belgrade in 1893, but it had been renamed Jutarnje Novosti in 1909. The subsequent dispersal of Milenko's diary and the highly unreliable nature of his later accounts of his travels make it virtually impossible to track down the exact route taken by the couple. In March 1913, they were in Lisbon, where they told a local newspaper that they had travelled throughout Europe, Asian Turkey, Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco and would continue on to America. If their goal was America, they certainly took the long way around. Instead of crossing the Atlantic, they went eastwards. As shown in the diary pages posted by Ken Doig, they arrived at Djibouti where Milenko's log was signed by the secretary of the French governor, the vice consul of Russia and several merchants on October 27, 1913. A week later, they headed to Harrar, capital of an Ethiopian province governed by Ras Tafari (the future emperor Haile Selassie), who signed the log along with his wife Princess Woizero Menen, the representative of Emperor Menelik II and many diplomats and merchants. From Ethiopia, they went to Ceylon, India, Singapore, and finally Java in the Dutch East Indies (present Indonesia). In Batavia (now Jakarta), they boarded the SS Charon en route for Australia in June 1914.

A noble title and a missing leg

When Milenko and his wife landed in Fremantle, on the west coast of Australia, they introduced themselves as Count and Countess of Monteforte, following the example of Milorad who styled himself Count Raitchevitch during his trips. Remarkably, Milenko was now wearing an artificial left leg below the knee.

Milenko's reputation had preceded him, and his arrival was greeted with curiosity. He was interviewed by several newspapers, and the direct and indirect quotes cited by reporters enable us to piece together the elaborate story he was now telling about his adventures:

"As a student, I had contributed articles to the Vetchernie Novosti, and was acquainted with the editor. The presence of some American freak world tourists in Belgrade gave the idea of sending a Serb on a similar trip. I had just completed my studies, and I was of the opinion that

it would be comparatively easy for me to travel round the world on no capital. My opinion was challenged by the editor, who bet 60,000 francs that I could not travel the world on a motorcycle in three years, starting with no capital and only relying on selling postcards to pay my way. I took the bet and I started my long journey on January 28, 1912. I had motorcycled through the Balkans, Asia Minor, Egypt and Tripoli when the Balkan War broke out, and, being an officer in the Serbian Army reserve, I went back to Belgrade to join my regiment. I was present at the battle of Uscub and the Siege of Scutari for six months, where I was shot in the leg by the Turks. I was treated in a field hospital, and amputation followed wounds that might have been healed by less drastic means at another time. With an artificial leg, I was discharged from the army to continue my tour of the world, but the editor of the Vetchernie Novosti amended the conditions in my favor. He agreed to allow me to travel by boat, train, or car, but stipulated that the time occupied must not be more than three years, and that I must not obtain revenue other than from selling my autograph photographs. This time I was accompanied by my wife, and so far, we are well within our scheduled time. I am contributing articles to the Belgrade paper, sending instalments every three days, for which I do not receive payment. I carry autograph books with me, and seek signatures of big men of every city and town I visit, so as to prove to the wagerer in Belgrade that I have actually visited these towns. I have travelled through Belgrade, Turkey, West and North Africa, Morocco, Spain, Portugal, England, Germany, Russia, Abyssinia, Ceylon, India, Singapore, Java, and then on to West Australia, where I shall stay a fortnight. Then I will proceed to Tasmania, Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Shanghai, China, Japan, San Francisco, through North and South America, and then home to Belgrade to collect my 60,000 francs."

This account of events is highly problematic, especially with respect to the Balkan War. As Milenko was motorcycling with this wife in Lisbon in March 1913, he could hardly have fought and lost a leg during the siege of Scutari which lasted from October 1912 to April 1913. In a document he filed with the U.S. army in 1917, he did state that he had served one year as infantry sergeant in the Serbian army, which may have occurred before he impersonated George Karađorđević around 1907, but he mentioned that he had lost his left leg in an automobile accident, which must have occurred after his departure from Lisbon. On a firmer ground, the Fremantle journalist looked at the now dispersed diary and saw the signatures of Grand Duke Alexandrovitch (either the uncle or brother of Czar Nicholas) in St.

Petersburg, Sultan Mehmet V of Turkey in Constantinople, Ibrahim Hilmy (uncle of the Egyptian khedive) in Alexandria, Sultan Hafid of Morocco, and Maharaja Ranjitsinhi of Nawanagar. This is consistent with the route described by Milenko in 1913 and 1914, with an uncertainty as to whether the England-Germany-Russia part of the trip took place before or after the travel from Turkey to Portugal.

A stamp dealer and forger down under

By July 1914, the couple had reached Sydney. Asia was now apparently moved off their travel list, and they told a journalist they were planning to go to Brisbane, thence to New Zealand and to America. The reporter described how Milenko had developed the art of selling a card worth a halfpenny for five shillings:

"It does not follow that because the couple have travelled through so many countries that any person could do so merely by selling post cards. One must have the art like the Comte de

Monteforte. The Raitchevitchs call at the business houses of prominent citizens. The Comte produces his books showing where men of a dozen nationalities have testified to his having been in London, in Rangoon, in St. Petersburg, in Lisbon, and Alexandria. He tells of his experiences in limited English, and madame, who is a Greek, born in Constantinople, smiles approvingly where she does not understand. The business man is then asked to sign his name in the book, and a little further talk may lead to the exchange of postcards for coin or conviviality, and a puzzled merchant will be scratching his hard business head while the Comte and Comtesse from Servia will be ceremoniously bowing their way through a counting-house full of amazed clerks. When post cards are sold in that way enough money is presumably obtained to pay the expenses of 200,000 miles of travel."

Milenko was also devising other ways to make money. Based on his spurious military experience, he delivered lectures on the Balkan War, where he contrasted the gentle Turks who looked well after their prisoners and the barbarian Bulgarians who slit the nose and cut off the ears of the wounded enemy soldiers.

More importantly, in Sydney, Milenko discovered that selling postage stamps to collectors could prove a much more lucrative trade than everything he had tried before, and even allow him to stop travelling and settle in Australia. In August, he and his wife went into business as Raitchevitch Milan and Elen Milan, under the name R. Milan & Co, stationers and stamp merchants, with offices at 94 Hunter Street. In early November, they partnered with Henry Almy Howe, and the business was renamed The Russian Stamp Company.

This move coincided with the outbreak of World War I. In the South Pacific region, an immediate consequence of the war was the occupation of the German colony of Samoa by a New Zealand Expeditionary Force. In September, the stamps of German Samoa were overprinted "GRI" (Georgius Rex Imperator) with a new value in British currency. These provisional issues were eagerly sought by philatelists, and forged copies started to circulate in Sydney. As explained by Barbara Hancock, on November 17, Milan Raitchevitch was identified as the forger and arrested. In December, he sold his business to Howe. At his trial in March 1915, Raitchevitch stated that he had never guaranteed that the stamps were genuine and was acquitted. He then arranged for the issuance of a bogus statement claiming that he had left Australia to fight for Serbia. He and his wife did leave the country, but they went to New Zealand, where he claimed to have worked as correspondent for Belgrade newspapers during the Balkan War and gave talks on this conflict. From Wellington, the couple boarded the SS Manoa en route for San Francisco, where they landed on June 18 and where their son George was born in September.

A stamp dealer in America

Upon arriving in San Francisco, Milenko made the extraordinary statement that he and his wife had been wrongly detained as German spies in Sydney, probably to blur the trace to his judicial problems in Australia. As mentioned by Barbara Hancock, he quickly set up a stamp business under the name of Franco-American-Russian Stamp Co, where he resumed selling counterfeit stamps, prompting the issuance of a warning against him in the bulletin of the American Stamp Dealers Association. In November 1915, the couple then known as Milen and Marguerite Helen Raitchevitch left California for New York City, where they rented an apartment in Manhattan at 10 West, 98th Street. There, Milen set up the Oriental Stamp

Company at 101 West, 42nd Street, Room 403. In the summer of 1916, he sued the Serbian consul and his registrar Pavle H. Pavlovitch over the payment of a purchase of Serb stamps, but the complaint was dismissed.

By January 1919, the Oriental Stamp Co was managed by Marguerite, and Milen was President of another company named Empire Stamp Co at Room 405, in partnership with François Chevalier, most likely a French immigrant, and Monongahela de Beaujeu, a Canadian journalist who had immigrated to the United States in 1899. The scion of a French noble family, Beaujeu held his first name from the Battle of the Monongahela in the Ohio valley where a member of his family had been killed by a party of British soldiers and American militiamen led by George Washington in 1755. The partnership did not last long, though, and Beaujeu became a successful stamp dealer on Broadway.

As reported by Barbara Hancock, Milen's career in the stamp business came to an abrupt end in November 1922, when he was arrested for selling washed and restored U.S. documentary internal revenue stamps. This was considered the criminal offence of uttering forged or falsified official acts of the Government. At his trial in June 1923, he was sentenced to 5 years imprisonment and fined \$1,000. However, he managed to flee the country. In April 1924, Harold C. Keyes, the Secret Service operative who had unmasked him, was given an appointment by the State Department as an agent to execute a presidential warrant for the purpose of extraditing him from France. Beyond that point, there is no reference to Milenko Raitchevitch in the information available through the web, except that his son George was still living in New York City in 1940.

Epilogue

After a life of scams and impersonations, Milenko Raitchevitch could have settled as a family man and a prosperous stamp dealer, but he seemingly could not resist the thrill of gaming the system and teasing the law. Ever restless, he always found a way to create a situation that forced him to pack his bags and continue his adventurous ride across the globe, the details of which are not yet fully known.

Should anyone have more information on Milenko's itinerary in 1912-1914 or what became of him after 1924, I would be pleased to add these details to this short essay. I can be contacted at yd61[AT SIGN]hotmail.com.

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