

RETURNED COVER THAT COULD NOT BE FORWARDED

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A most interesting cover was recently acquired that highlights the non exchange of mail between the People's Republic and the Republic of China. When it comes to the forwarding or redirecting of mail between the two countries during the 1950-1980 period, not too many covers are available for study. Most of the covers seen are those that were missent to either the ROC or the PRC in error. By far the most appear those addressed to the Republic of China and sent to the People's Republic in error. These are marked and forwarded to Taiwan through Hong Kong. (I am not sure, but believe all mail during this period went through Hong Kong).

The cover in question highlights the problems during this period. (fig. 1) it was mailed from Denmark on June 3, 1959 destined for the Singapore, where it arrived on June 15 (fig. 2), back stamp. It was addressed to Capt. Georg R. Hansen, M/S "Clara Jepsen" in Singapore. The name of the company and address had been covered by a slip forwarding the "re-directed mail" to Canton, China (fig. 3).



figure 1



figure 2



figure 3

When the cover arrived in Canton it was forwarded to the China Ocean Shipping Agency which determined that the ship had already sailed. A mimeographed slip was attached (fig. 4) with a red chop reading "China Ocean Shipping Co." two characters above the date for telegraph, the date 1959 (month and date unclear), receiving section at the bottom (fig. 5). The slip was tied to the cover with a cancel reading Guandong (province), Guanzhou (Canton), Huangpu (Whampoa) 1959.7.2 (fig. 6). Handwritten on the slip is return to Denmark. The printed characters on the slip mean "This item cannot forward, return to originator".

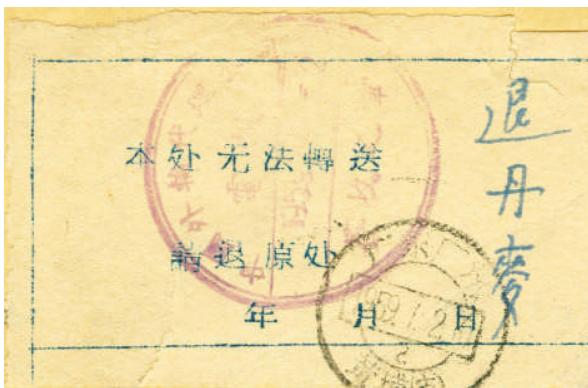


figure 4

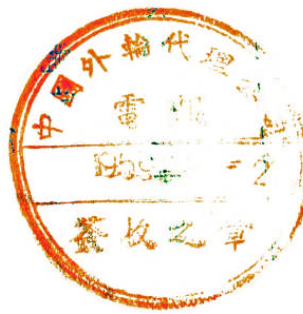


figure 5



figure 6

Affixed on the left side of the cover (under the slip applied in Denmark), is a small label which has the reason for return. Please note the slip is glued down on the label, so both halves are shown, (fig. 7 and 8). At the bottom of the label is a hand stamped which reads "Navire AQuitte Leports" in French, which means the ship has left the port. This label was tied with the same cancel as before, except it is dated July 6.



figure 7



figure 8



figure 9

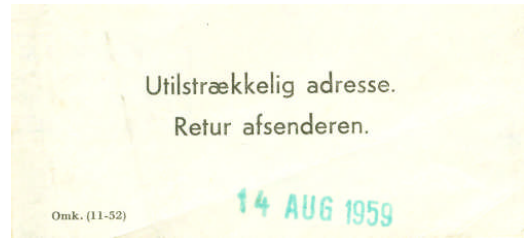


figure 10

The forwarding or maritime mail is very common. It is not unusual to find a cover that has been forwarded many times in an effort to catch up with the ship. In this case, the letter could not be forwarded for one reason! The next destination was probably Taiwan (either Kaohsiung or Keelung). If the mail had been forwarded to Hong Kong, then it would have been forwarded to Taiwan with no problem.

The cover was returned to Denmark on August 14, 1959 with a label reading Insufficient Address, Return to Sender.

This is the first of this type cover I have seen, perhaps you have others in your collection - if so, please share with us.