

**MANUAL OF RUSSIAN
COMMERCIAL
CORRESPONDENCE**

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Manual of Russian commercial correspondence by Mark Sieff

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BY

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PREFACE.

THE present manual has been compiled with a view to supplying a deficiency that has hitherto existed in English commercial literature.

Bearing in mind that the *phraseology* of Russian Commercial Correspondence is bound to present greater difficulties to the English student than that of any other European language—the study of Russian in this country having only recently been taken up seriously—I have made every endeavour to treat this side of the subject of the manual as thoroughly as possible.

Besides the section on *Phraseology* (Section I.), where a variety of examples of general phraseology of Russian Commercial Correspondence is given with a parallel English translation, in the section treating on the *Construction* of a Russian business letter (Section IV.) the most up-to-date Russian commercial expressions in current use have been so classified and arranged as to enable the student to acquire a thorough proficiency in the use of the *phraseology* of any given section of Russian Commercial Correspondence. This section is also provided with a parallel English translation. In the Russian letters themselves, twenty-five of which have been provided with a full English translation (Section II.), much attention has been given to *Commercial Terms*, and more than one alternate expression has frequently been supplied in square

brackets. Those letters that have not been provided with an English translation are furnished throughout with English *foot-notes* (Section III.), and a *précis* in English of all the letters has been appended, which should enable the student to tackle every letter more intelligently, and which should also provide material for the independent compilation of Russian business letters by the student.

An extensive *Index of Commercial Terms and Phrases*, both Russian and English, has been appended, which should also serve as *Vocabulary*, since the respective *Russian* or *English* meaning of every word or phrase referred to in the text is given either in the parallel translation or in the foot-notes.

The restricted scope of the present manual has compelled me to confine myself to the treatment of a comparatively limited number of Russian business letters, and, besides a few circular and sundry letters, my chief aim has been the thorough treatment of four staple groups of business letters, namely:

I. Correspondence concerning the offering, purchasing, and supplying of goods.

II. Correspondence about payments made and payments received.

III. Correspondence relating to Bills of Exchange, Promissory Notes, etc.

IV. Correspondence relating to shipping, forwarding, and clearing.

The number and nature of letters falling under these four groups are more fully set out in the *Analytical Summary* of letters.

A proper sequence has been maintained throughout, and with the exception of the last three letters (101-103), relating to statements of account, there are no stray or

casual letters in this manual. The sequence in which the letters run is given at the end of the *Analytical Summary*.

Simple transactions—mainly relating to the export and import of merchandise likely to come within the range of Anglo-Russian trade—have been selected and, as far as possible, the entire correspondence relating to each transaction has been treated.

In compiling Section IV. of this manual I have consulted the excellent Manual of Russian Commercial Correspondence of *N. A. Blatov*, and have modelled this section after his plan.

I take this opportunity of tendering my thanks to Mr. Basil T. Timotheieff, B.D., M.I.A.I. (Petrograd), Professor of Russian in the Institut Français du Royaume Uni (Université de Lille), London, for his many valuable suggestions and also for looking through my MS before going to press.

MARK SIEFF.

[The author has in preparation a "Dictionary of Russian Commercial Terms," which he hopes to publish shortly as a companion volume to this manual.]

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

ARRANGEMENT OF A RUSSIAN BUSINESS LETTER.

Arrangement.—The arrangement of a Russian business letter is practically the same as that of an English business letter as regards spacing, paragraphing, address, subscription, and signature, except that the name and *Address* of the person for whom the letter is intended—Звѣніе, Имя и Фамілія, или Наименованіе адресата—always appear near the top of the note-paper, after the date, and are much nearer to the right-hand side of the paper than the rest of the lines. Mr. A. N. Pavlov, Riga; Mrs. A. N. Pavlov, Riga; Messrs. Pavlov and Ivanov, are rendered (in dative): Господіну (or Г-ну) Андрею Николаевичу (or А. Н.) Павлову, Рига (въ Ригѣ); Госпожѣ (or Г-жѣ) Надеждѣ Александровнѣ (or Н. А.) Павловой, Рига; Господѣмъ (or Г-мѣ) Павловъ и Ивановъ, въ Ригѣ; Господѣмъ Брѣтья Сомовы въ Москвѣ.

Patronymics are used in writing to persons with whom the writer stands in more or less familiar relations; in ordinary business correspondence the Christian name and patronymic are usually rendered by initials—Господіну А. П. Оѣдорову, Здѣсь.

Banks and corporate firms are addressed: Рижскому Коммерческому Банку; Въ Торговый

Домъ „Брѣтья Антоновы“; Въ Петроградскую
Контóру Госудáрственнаго Банка.

Date.—The date—Число, Дáта—stands immediately after the name of the place, which is very rarely supplemented by the number of the house and the name of street, etc., as in an English letter, these forming part of the heading (name of the firm)—Бланкъ Фíрмы.

Old and New Style.—If the letter is intended for a correspondent abroad, both the Old and New Styles are given, as: Петроградъ, 5/18 Мájа 1915; Москвá, 7/20 Áвгуста 1915; Москвá, $\frac{25 \text{ Мájа}}{7 \text{ Юнjá}}$ 1915;

Кíевъ, $\frac{23 \text{ Декабрjá}}{5 \text{ Январjá}}$ 1916.

In dating letters sent to Russia from places where the New Style is in use, the New Style is placed first: $\frac{10 \text{ Сентябрjá}}{28 \text{ Áвгуста}}$ 1915; $\frac{9 \text{ Январjá}}{27 \text{ Декабрjá}}$ 1915;

$\frac{20}{7}$ Мájа 1915.

It is the custom to write the names of months in business letters with a capital letter, although otherwise the small letter is the more correct according to the new orthography.

Salutation.—The salutation—Обращéние—should commence a little nearer the right-hand side of the paper than the beginning of a new paragraph. The English salutations, “Dear Sir,” “Dear Sirs,” “Gentlemen,” “Dear Madam,” are rendered by: Мíлостивый Госудáрь, Мíлостивые Госудáри, Мíлостивая Госудáрыня, and are followed by *commas*. These are very rarely rendered by initials only (M. G.), except in circulars.