

UN SHOW IMPRINTS  
By F. Adams

United Nations exhibition imprints are unique and have a special niche in U.N. philately. Even though new to the scene, imprints are now becoming accepted throughout much of the collecting community--occasionally with displeasure or angry words, but usually with enthusiasm. Purists may object to such material since it does not relate directly to bona-fide postal duty. Yet collateral material has an accepted place in the philatelic scene. Collectors of pre-October 1951 postal history have many beautiful and exciting items in their collections relating to the formation of the United Nations, items which may in no way relate directly to any postal activity.

Imprints, however, do; they are part of the story of the U.N. Postal Administration rather than the U.N. Post Office. While the latter predates 1951, UNPA came into being as an organ to publicize the message of the UN: Peace, Justice and Security. One film produced to tell the story of UNPA is aptly titled "Messengers of Peace" -- which they consider their stamps to be. While the originally tied to their base in New York, UNPA has, over the past decade and a half, begun to "show the flag" (literally!) in all parts of the globe. To this there is no better witness than the UN show imprints, ranging from all parts of North America and Europe to the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Australia. Strange as it seems, many people are not aware the United Nations produces postage stamps and attractively cacheted and/or imprinted cards or covers may equally serve UNPA's purpose of spreading information at philatelic exhibitions.

Let's continue with definitions of some common terms relating to this field.

These definitions taken from Webster's may help establish guidelines which should assist imprint collectors. SOUVENIR: "something that serves as a reminder"; a souvenir should be an item prepared for a particular event. CACHET: "a design or inscription on an envelope to commemorate a postal or philatelic event". IMPRINT: "something imprinted . . . a mark". Cachet and imprint are frequently interchanged; however, a cachet is normally a printed design on a cover while an imprint is a special design (rubber stamp type) applied to commemorate a particular show. VARIETY: "the quality or state of having different forms or types", a variety differs slightly from the original. ERROR: "something produced by mistake", an item outstandingly different from the original. OFFICIAL: "prescribed or recognised as authorized"; these items being prepared by U.N.P.A.

The following are the more popular official European souvenirs. Others are also produced, but not as often or in as great quantities.

**Blue Cards:** these are the best known of the souvenirs and in some instances, difficult to obtain due to the limited quantities (200-500) produced during the earlier years. These cards were first distributed at the IBRA '73 exhibition in Munich, Germany. Popularity of this particular item has grown to the point that UNPA Geneva usually doesn't attend a show without them. While usually of a general type, some have printed messages relating to a specific show.

**Brown Cards:** (or Tan or Beige, depending on who is describing them) were introduced and included in information packets given freely to visitors at some major international shows and usually bear special inscription for the show.

A new addition is the **White Card** used in much the same manner. The **Dove Art Cards**, available in two designs and **Globe Covers** are produced for special anniversaries and U.N. commemorative days at



Figure 1 - UNPA Geneva Blue Card

exhibitions, and also often bear a special inscription.

Of a less official nature are UN stationary items, as well as souvenir cards, FDC's, folders and a wide variety of other UNPA materials sold at shows. They may also be imprinted upon request providing they are addressed and prepared for posting-- a point on which UN Geneva is insistent. Foreign postal administration items may be imprinted providing a UN theme cancellation from the show is applied. Everyone likes to strive for completeness in a collection, and this area is no exception. What should one collect of these many items? The main point to remember is: to be aware of the item's origin and nature, collecting whatever is right for you and your collection.

More detailed information concerning exhibition and imprint materials is available from the writer and the UNEEI Newsletter. Please enclose an SAE for a prompt reply. F. Adams, Hawk Project, Field Fac. (EUR), APO New York 09028.

[Editors Note: UNP announces the formation of an Exhibition Items Study Unit, which will be chaired temporarily by F. Adams, at the above address. A Permanent Chairman will be elected to an initial term through the Journal. The study unit will have a regular column in this Journal, and will produce studies to be published by UNP. Opportunities exist for the formation of study units in other areas--military mail, errors, forerunners and meters spring to mind. If anyone is interested, please write to President Gus Knoeckel.]