

The United Nations and Palestine : 1947-1951

This thematic exhibit documents efforts between 1947 and 1951 of the fledgling United Nations organization to settle the land dispute between the Arab and Jewish populations in the Palestine Mandate.

Prelude

Following World War I, the Allied Supreme Council met in San Remo, Italy (19-26 April 1920) to address civil administration and defense obligations for Palestine. The 1917 *Balfour Declaration* previously affirmed establishment of a “*national home for the Jewish people*” in Palestine. Governing responsibilities transferred from the Ottoman Empire to Great Britain. On 2 April 1947, Britain announced it would terminate its jurisdiction due to financial burden, ongoing political unrest and escalating civil violence between the Arab population and Jewish immigrants. The issue became the first test of the fledgling United Nations to promote peace.



Lord Balfour (1848-1930)
Balfour Declaration



Villa Devachan, San Remo, Italy, site of the Mandate Conference, *Photo postcard*
San Remo to Salerno, Italy, 22 April 1920, Domestic postcard with Registration, 35 Lira



British Mandate Palestine
Sept. 1923 - May 1948



Certificate VSPV 4'028

League of Nations
Overprint Inverted
100 printed



Normal



Error

The League of Nations
was succeeded in 1946
by the United Nations.



United Nations
Triangle cutout
denotes 1st printing

Exhibit Plan

	Significant items (1-3 examples reported) have a gold/red matt	
Special Session on Palestine	- General Assembly forms Special Committee	Pg 2
Special Committee in Jerusalem	- Committee gathers data & develops proposals	Pg 4
Special Committee in Geneva	- Committee moves operations to Geneva	Pg 10
Major and Minor Reports	- Committee in Geneva prepares formal reports	Pg 13
Palestine Commission & Secretariat	- Monitoring transition to independent states	Pg 14
Truce Commission & Monitoring	- Administration of cease-fire, truce & armistice	Pg 15
Independence and War	- Israel's Independence triggers Arab-Israeli War	Pg 16
Palestine Mediators	- Count Bernadotte & Ralph Bunche seek peace	Pg 17
Relief for Palestine Refugees	- United Nations aid to Arab refugees	Pg 21
Conciliation Commission for Palestine	- Resolution for ongoing issues & assistance	Pg 23



United Nations General Assembly
Margin inscription

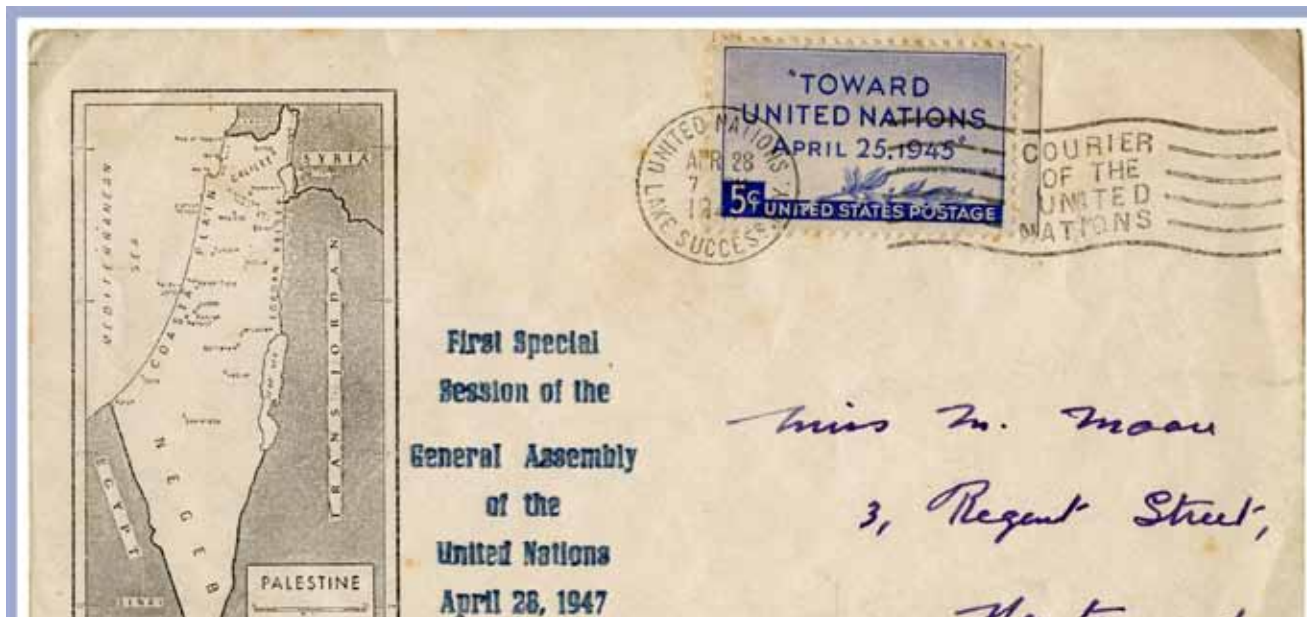
The First U.N. General Assembly *Special Session* was held in Flushing Meadows, N.Y. under Session President Oswaldo Euclides Aranha (1894-1960). Its purpose - to form a committee *"whose duty was to prepare material for consideration in the next regular session of the General Assembly concerning the government of Palestine."*



Flushing Meadows, N.Y.



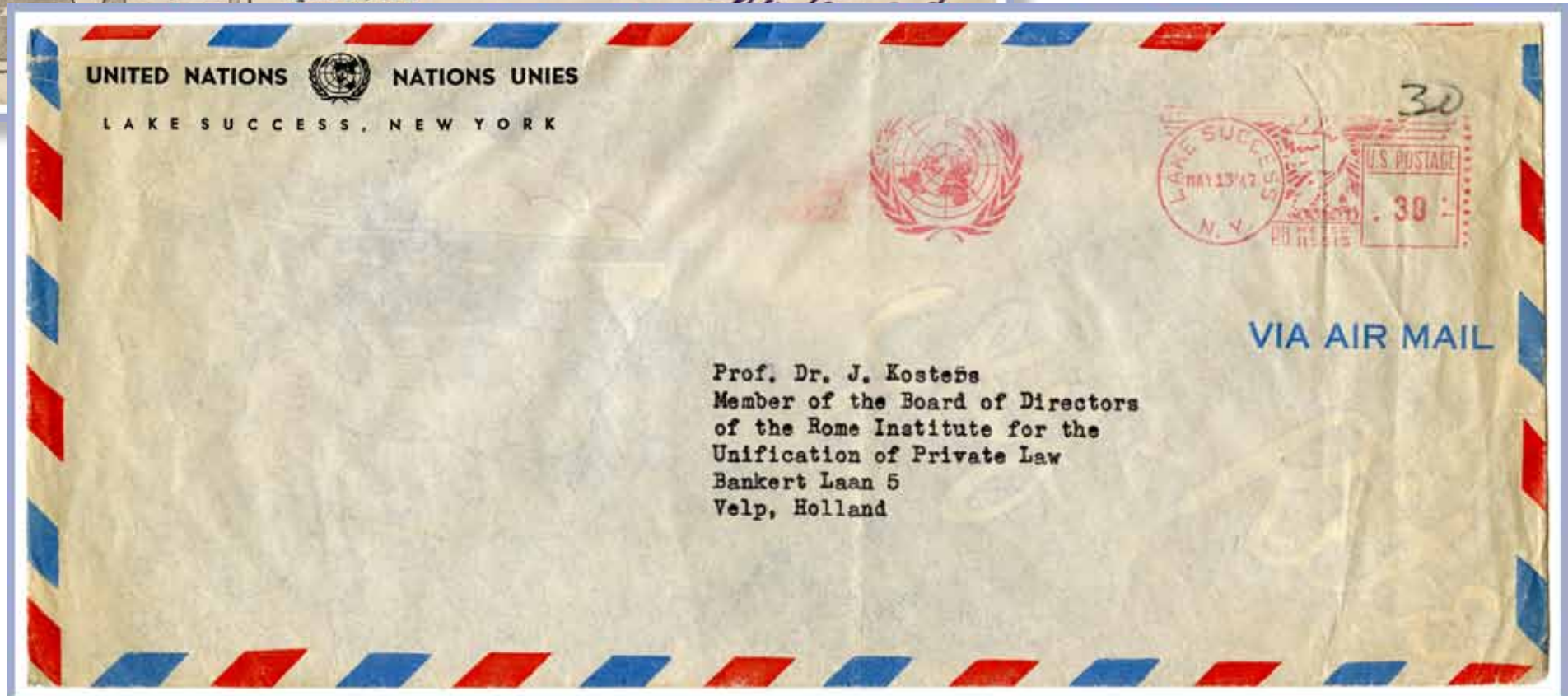
Oswaldo Aranha
Semi-postal



The Session met 28 April - 15 May 1947, resulting in the *United Nations Special Committee on Palestine* (UNSCOP). Representatives of eleven neutral nations and 20 staff members completed their plans by 30 May and left for Palestine.

United Nations, Lake Success, N.Y. to
Newtownards, Northern Ireland. 28 April 1947
5 cents International surface letter rate < 1 oz.
'Courier' machine cancel used 23 Sep 1946 - 31 Dec 1950
Private cachet commemorates the first special session

The U.N. post office used U.S. postage.



United Nations, Lake Success, New York to Velp, Holland, 13 May 1947; 2 x 15 cents European airmail rate per half-ounce (30 cents total)
Pitney Bowes postage meter PB 115515, used 15 Jan - 28 Nov 1947, Mailed during the General Assembly's 'Special Session on Palestine.'

Special Session on Palestine

28 April - 30 May 1947

Three Preparatory Working Group meetings were held in the Empire State building. Refugee camp internees sent requests for relocation of Jewish refugees to Palestine.



Empire State Building

To Mr. Trygve Lie,
Secretary General of the United Nations,
Lake Success.

Dear Sir,
I, the signed underneath, Kirstein Abram,
inmate of the camp Team 1069 in Weilheim/006.
U.S.A. Occupation Zone in Germany, do apply to you to transmit
my following request to the meeting of the United Nations which
will consider the problem of Palestine.

During the World War II I have had suffered in the
German Nazi camps. There the Nazis killed before my eyes all
of my dearest and nearest. The vic
brought the liberation of all oppr
Jewish people. 21 months after the
camp in Germany, among the murder

Englische Sprache



Mr. Trygve Lie
Secretary General of the United Nations

Lake Success

U.S.A.

Mr. Trygve Lie

Secretary General of the United Nations

LAKE SUCCESS

U. S. A.

Assembly Center 538
Wetzlar a.d. Lahn, Germany
to Lake Success, New York, 25 April 1947
75 pfennig international surface letter rate

Camp Team 1069 - Weilheim o.d. Bad, Germany
to Lake Success, New York, 2 May 1947
75 pfennig international surface letter rate



Jerusalem Y.M.C.A., Real photo postcard, split back

Committee offices were opened in the Jerusalem Y.M.C.A. and members were housed in nearby hotels with the first meeting on 16 June. Committee mail often included a manuscript 'Y.M.C.A.' in the return address.



Enrique Fabregat
(1895 - 1976)
Committee member



Dr. Alphonso Garcia Robles
(1911-1991)
Principle Secretary

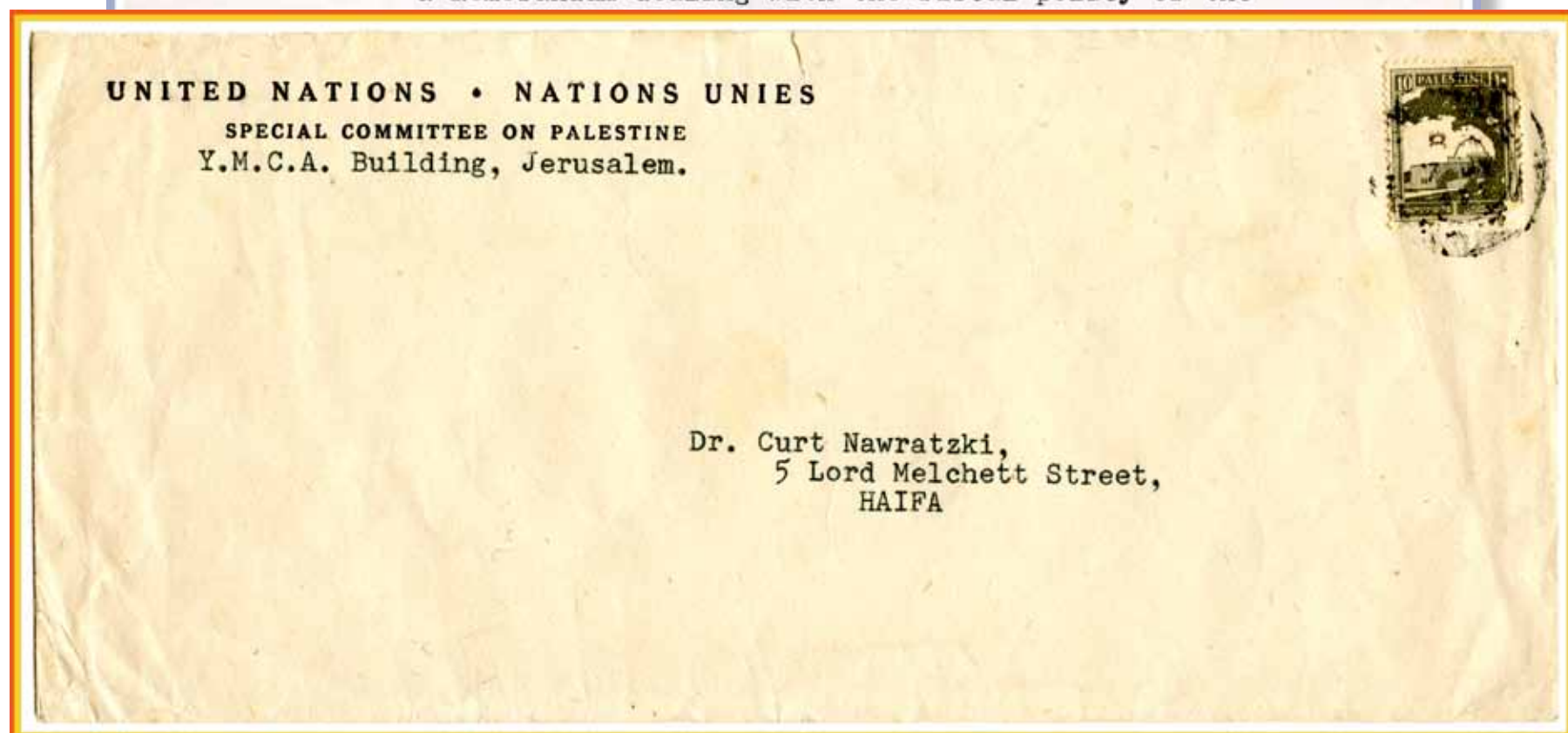
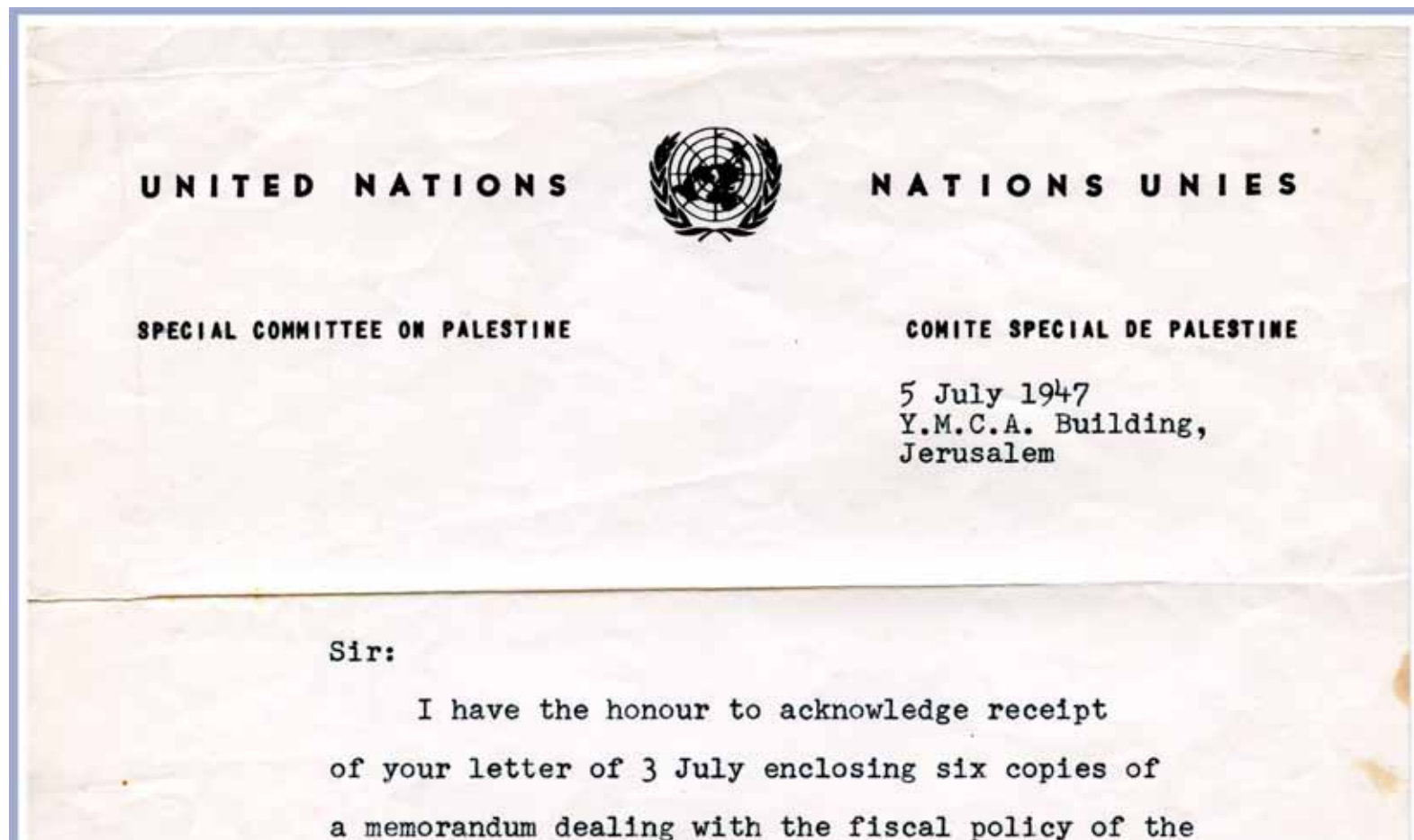


Jerusalem
ATM Vending Machine stamp



UNSCOP Committee mail with 'Y.M.C.A.' manuscript return address
Jerusalem to Richmond Hill, Long Island, New York, 19 July 1947, 65 piaster foreign airmail letter rate
Six reported examples of official Committee service mail sent Internationally

The Committee began its administrative work by requesting both governmental and private documents.



UNSCOP, Jerusalem to Haifa, 5 July 1947; 10 piaster domestic letter rate, after receipt of documents
Two reported examples of official Committee service mail sent to Haifa

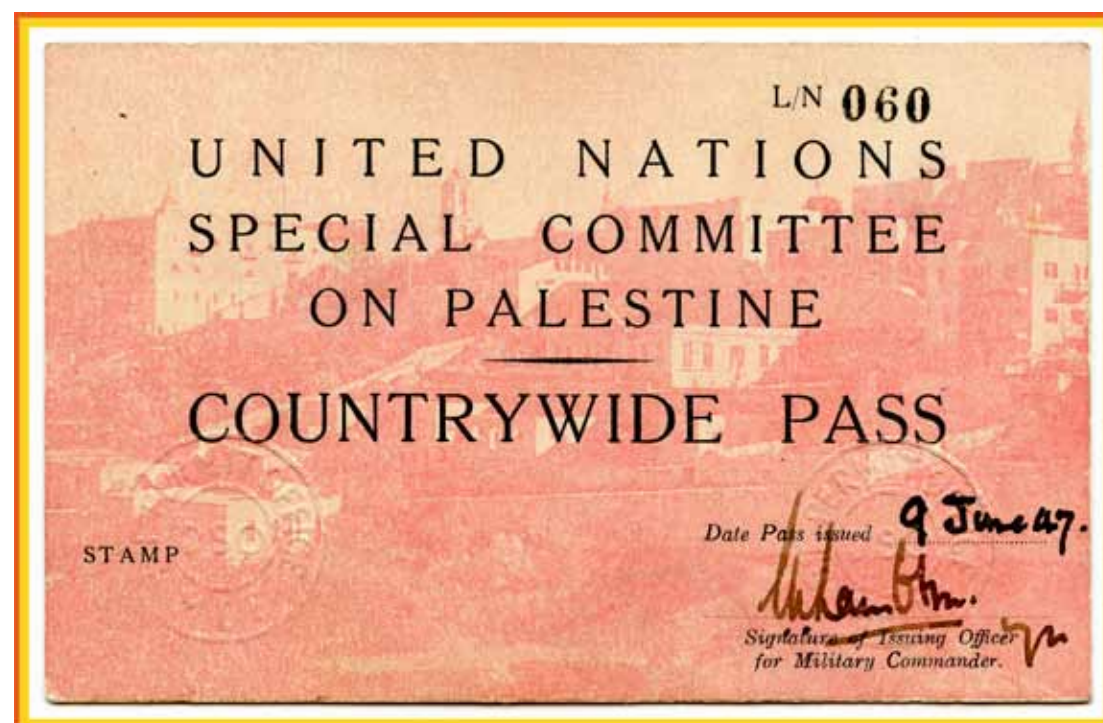
Committee members were issued special 'Countrywide Passes' which allowed them to travel extensively within the mandate, surveying areas and collecting testimony from both Arab and Jewish populations. Dr. Ralph Bunche coordinated the visits to Arab representatives.



Dr. Ralph Bunche
(1904-1971)
Palestine Mediator
Value in Euros

UNSCOP countrywide pass
with embossed seal issued to
American committee member
J. Stieren, Salvia Hotel
Passes printed 29 May 1947
and issued by
M.E.F. Permit Office

Only reported example



Two meetings were also held in Beirut with the Arab League government representatives of Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Syria. As Transjordan was not a member of the Arab League, committee members traveled to Transjordan to meet with King Hussein.

Leaders of the Arab League



Egypt
King Farouk
(1920 - 1965)



Iraq
King Faisal II
(1930 - 1958)



Lebanon
President Bechara el-Khoury
(1890 - 1964)



Saudi Arabia
King Abdul Aziz ibn Saud
(1875 - 1953)



Syria
President Shukri el Kouatly
(1891 - 1967)



Transjordan
King Abdullah ibn Hussein
(1882 - 1951)



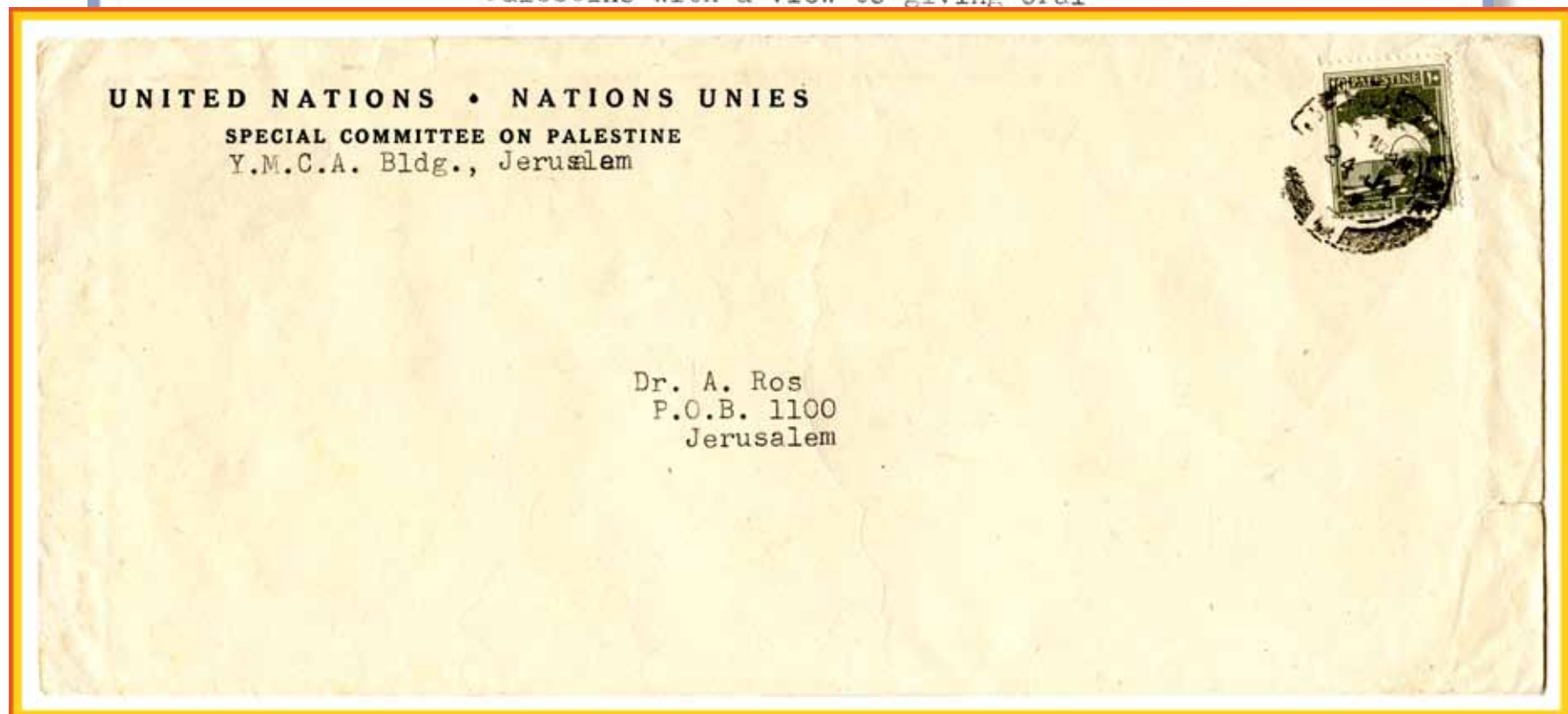
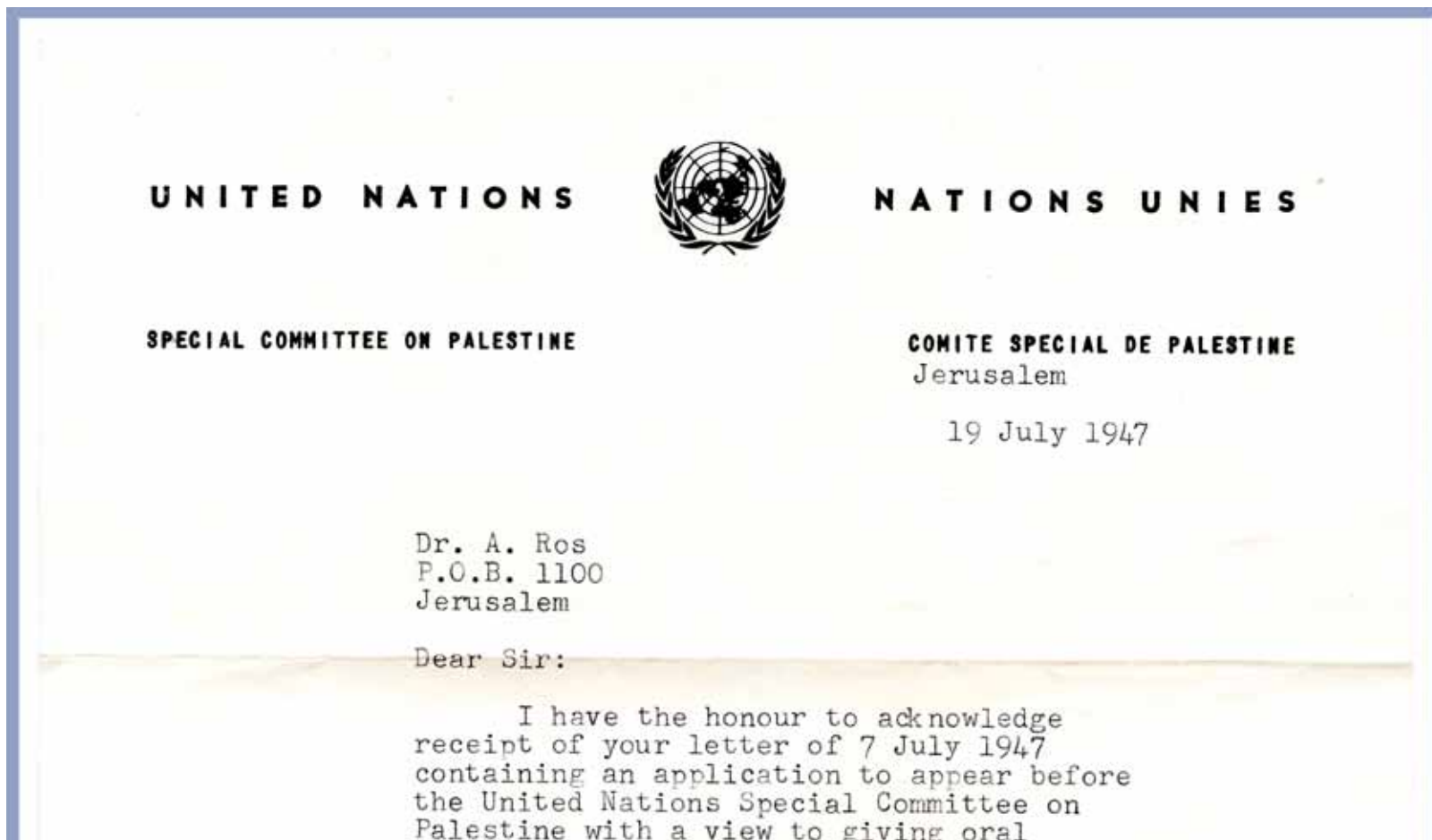
Transjordan

King (Amir) Abdullah ibn Hussein of Transjordan met with committee members on 25 July 1947. During the meeting, he suggested that the proposed Arab sections of Palestine should be added to Transjordan. The Arab League grudgingly agreed to accept that proposal as a last resort.



Arab League

Applications to testify were also received from prominent Jewish and Arab residents.



UNSCOP, Local service within Jerusalem, 24 July 1947; 10 piaster domestic letter rate, thanking sender for their willingness to testify although it was late
*Mailed on last day of mission operation in Palestine. **Only reported example of official Committee service mail sent within Jerusalem***

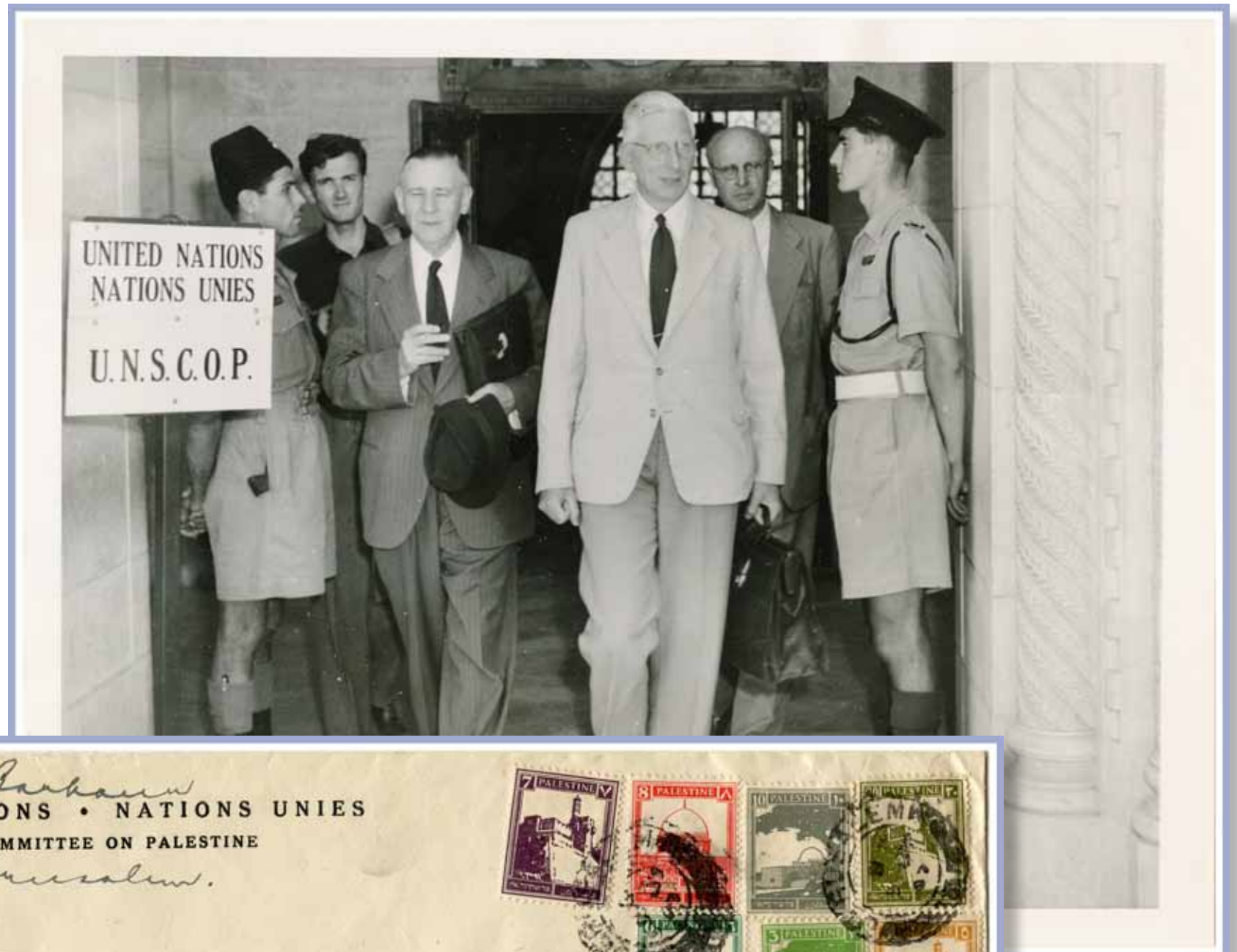


Jerusalem YMCA
Missing phosphor tag

Dr. Nicolaas Selhorst Blom. Former Director of Justice in the Netherlands East Indies, Now a member of the United Nations Inquiry Commission on Palestine, leaves the Y.M.C.A. building in Jerusalem after an informal but secret meeting. Violence in the Holy Land has simmered to nothingness during the group's deliberations. The Arabs have been unusually quiet having boycotted the Commission.

Official Photo:
(Fabcox) (E-6-1.1-47)
June 24 1947

In addition to procedural and document requests, committee internal discussions, interviews, and special hearings were held. The hearings took place from 4-17 July 1947 in the Jerusalem Y.M.C.A.



UNSCOP
Jerusalem, Palestine
to Ottawa, Canada,
8 July 1947
65 piaster
foreign airmail rate
Mailed during hearings

**Six reported
examples of official
Committee service
mail sent
Internationally**

Official correspondence was key to presenting information before the committee for review and evaluation.

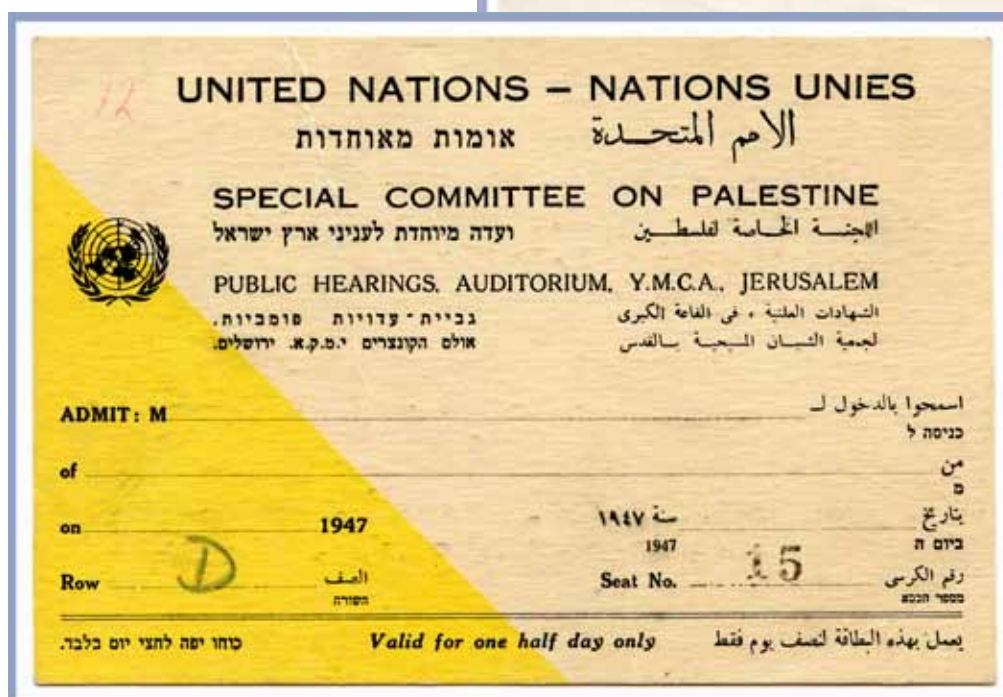
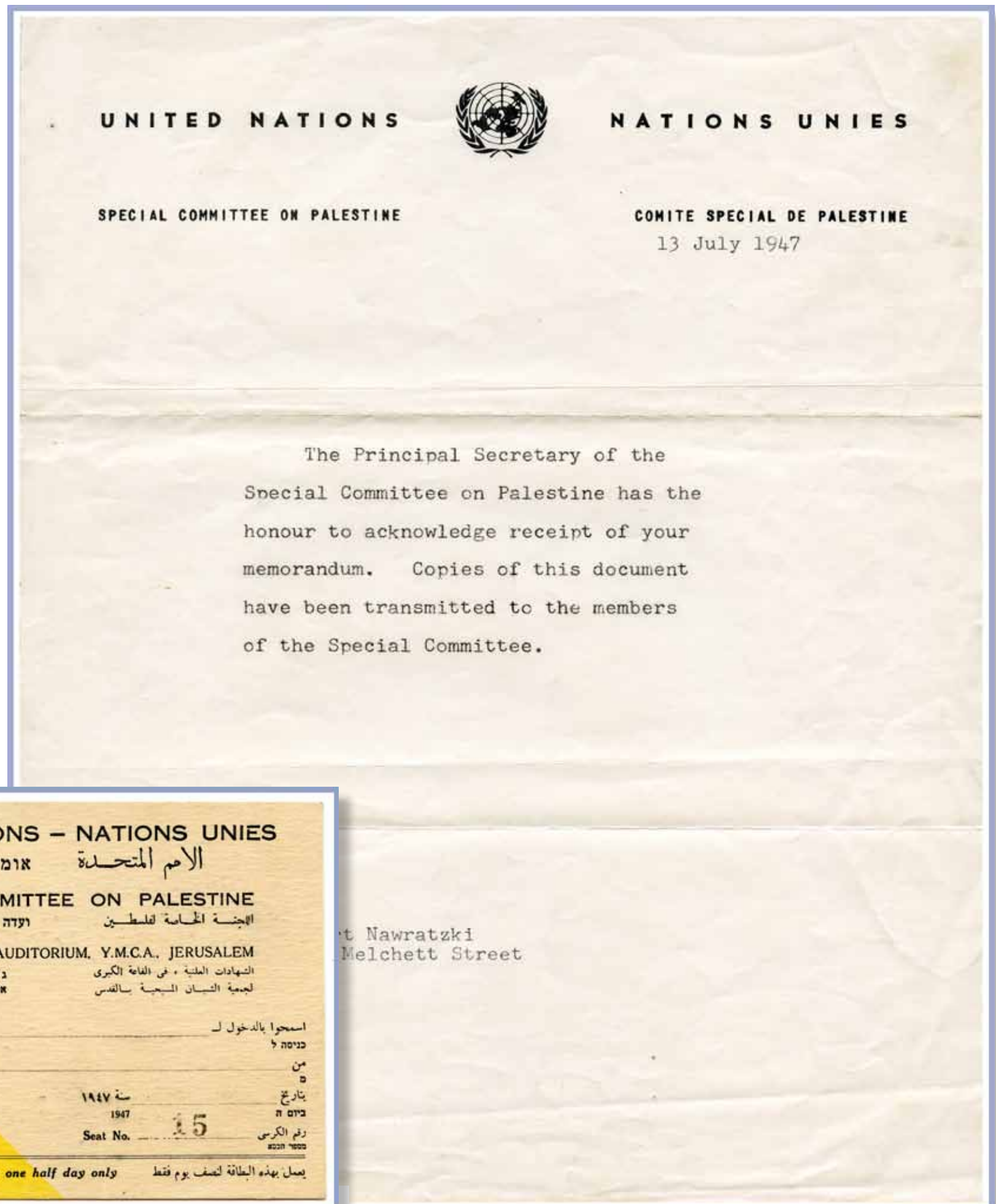


Dr. Chaim Weizmann
(1874-1952)

*tab quote Jeremiah 31,17
"...your children shall come
back to their own country."*

Dr. Chaim Weizmann,
provided testimony as a
private Jewish citizen.

Public Attendance Hearing ticket
in English, Hebrew and Arabic





Max Nordau
Blockaded ship
carrying illegal
immigrants



H.M.S. Ajax (22)
British light cruiser

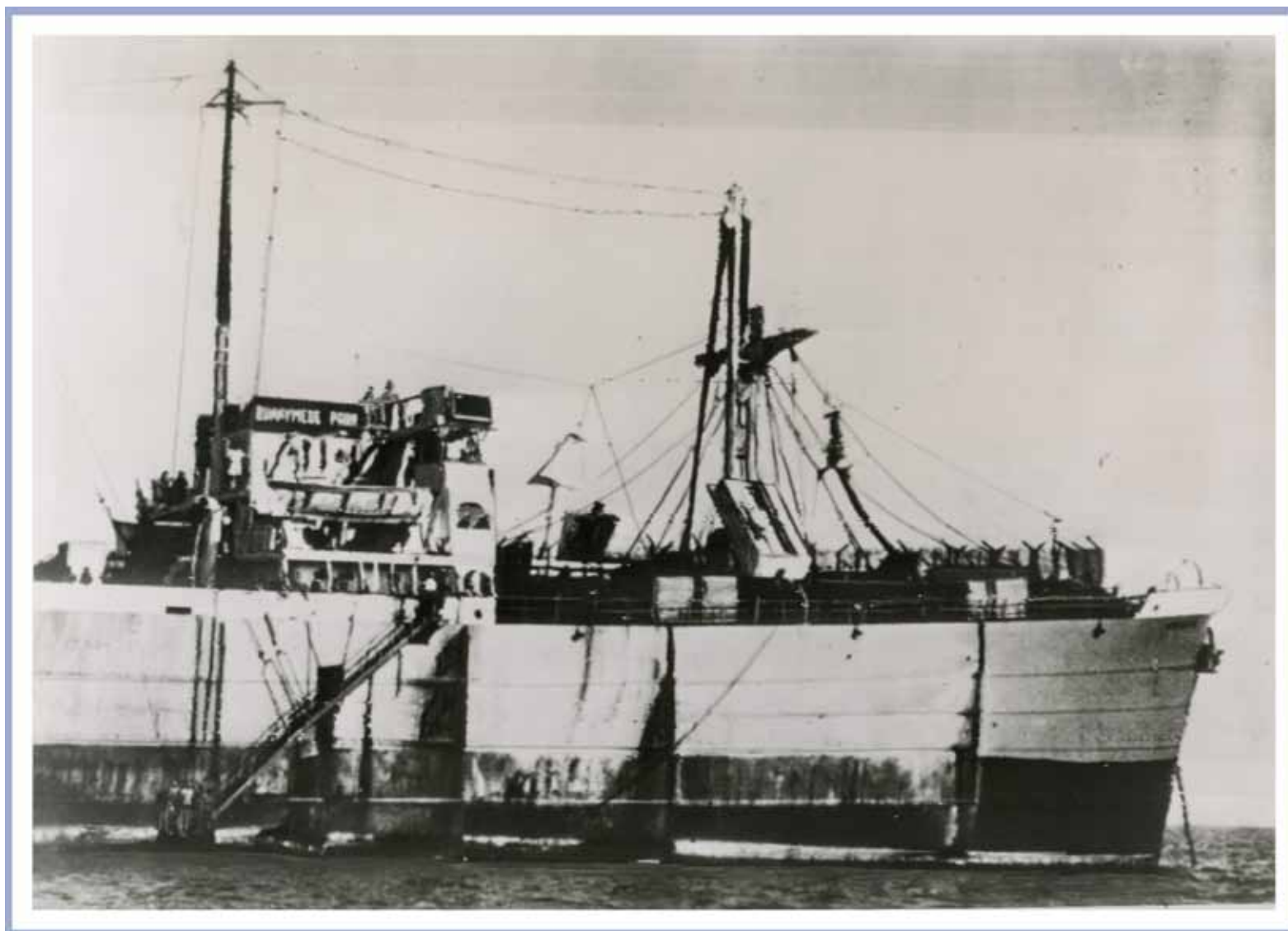


S.S. Exodus 1947 in port of Haifa under British Royal Marine control
(Photo credit : Wikimedia Commons)



S.S. Exodus 1947
Moored in the
Port of Haifa

Great Britain didn't want additional illegal immigrants arriving in Palestine and the British Navy blockaded the Palestinian coastline. Ships with over 120,000 Jewish refugees continued to attempt to land but were turned away or sent to detention camps in Cyprus. Exodus 1947 (ex-President Warfield (IX-169) with 4,515 refugees was boarded by British marines from the HMS Ajax and brought to the Haifa anchorage.



Several UNSCOP members working in Eratz witnessed the Jewish refugees being removed from the Exodus 1947 and placed on ships returning to Europe.

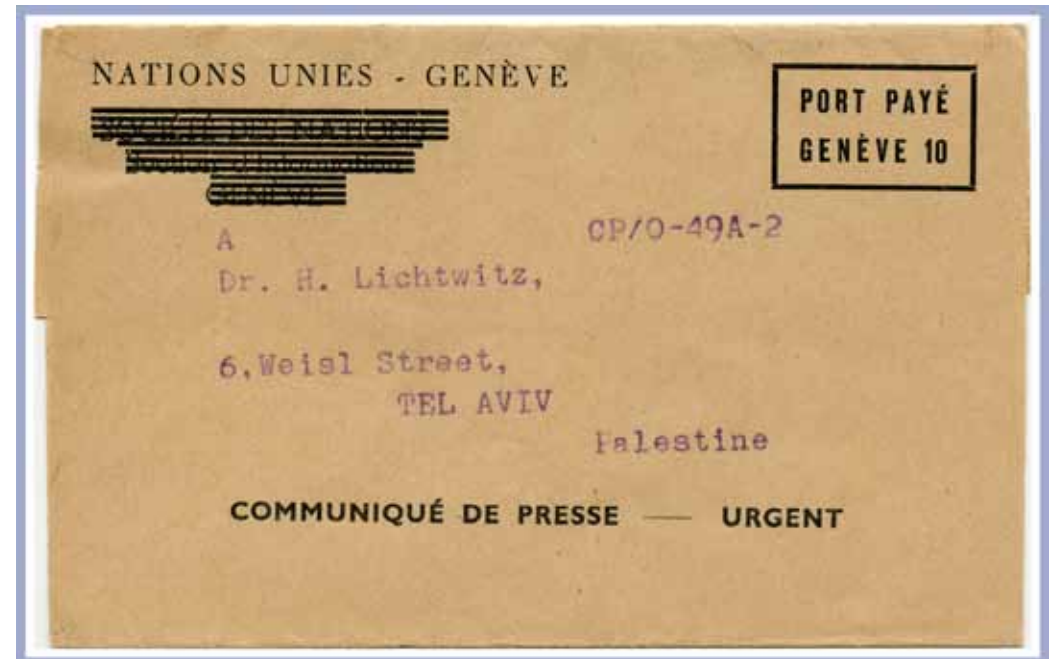
"British ship Runnymede Park, with prisoner cages on the bow, at anchor in Port de Bouc, France after it and two other British ships brought in Jewish refugees turned back from Palestine. Refugees have refused to leave the ship."

*Acme Telephoto
30 July 1947*

The Runnymede Park, Empire Rival and Ocean Vigor returned to France and Hamburg, Germany with refugees from the Exodus 1947.

The Special Committee completed its business in Jerusalem and moved to the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland.

United Nations, Geneva, Switzerland
to Tel Aviv, Palestine, circa 1947
News release wrapper
with pre-printed "port payé"
(postage paid) indicia
for printed matter
Content likely announced
United Nations activity in Palestine



Jerusalem, Palestine
Plate number

Overprinted League of Nations
wrapper use is recorded
between late 1946
and early 1948



UNSCOP manuscript return address on rear flap of cover
Jerusalem, Palestine to Ottawa, Canada, 12 June 1947
65 piaster foreign airmail letter rate

**Six reported examples of official
Committee service mail sent Internationally**

Palais des Nations
Geneva, Switzerland
Specimen overprint
in red ink



UNSCOP, Jerusalem to Fort Garry, Canada, 25 June 1947
35 piaster foreign airmail postcard rate

Only reported example of official Committee service mail using a postcard



JNF label depicting majority report partitions
Overprinted for postal use
Slanted '5' variety

Jerusalem was to be an independent city, not part of either proposal.

The committee developed two reports. A majority report recommended two independent states, one Arabic and one Jewish, with independent governments. A minority report recommended a single state of Palestine with an inter-dependent government administration and shared economy.



Albert Einstein
Margin with tab

Albert Einstein (1879-1955), expressed his reservations about partitioning the land into two states separating Arabs and Jews.

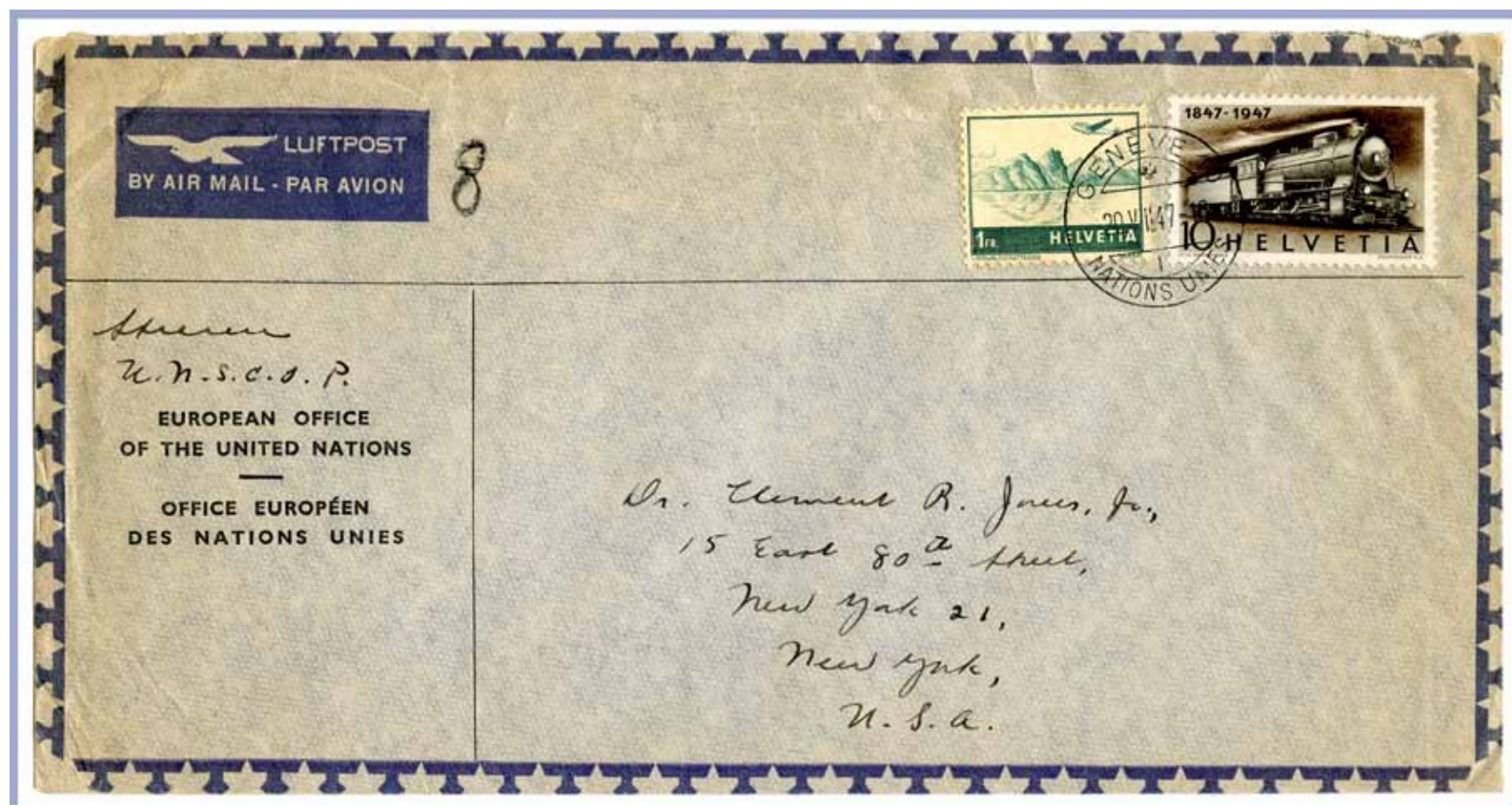
Orange:
Palestinian population

Blue-green:
Jewish population

White:
International City of Jerusalem



Majority Report Map



UNSCOP, Geneva, Switzerland to New York, N.Y., 20 August 1947; 30 centimes <20 grams, 2 x 40 centimes airmail fee per 5 grams (1.10 Franc total)

Hand cancel device with shaded cross, mailed during the committee's Geneva deliberation period by J. Stieren (manuscript)

Nine reported examples of official Committee service mail from UNSCOP while in Geneva

The Majority report recommending Mandatory partitioning was presented to the 2nd General Assembly and adopted as Resolution 181 by a vote of 33 to 13 with 10 abstentions and 1 absent on 29 November 1947.



Lake Success, New York to Beirut, Lebanon, 1 October 1947; 2 x 25 cents airmail letter rate per half ounce (50 cents total)
Pitney Bowes postage meter PB 115515, used 15 Jan - 28 Nov 1947, Mailed during the 2nd session of the U.N. General Assembly

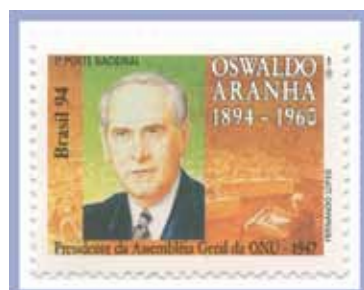


Paul Henri Spaak
Belgium

The majority report of 3 September was favored by Western Europe, North and South America, as well as Oceania generally supported the partition plan. Paul Henri Spaak, Carlos Peña Romulo, Oswaldo Euclides Aranha, Asgeir Aesgeirsson, John Foster Dulles and Lester Bowles Pearson agreed. The Jewish Agency accepted the partition plan, the Arab League rejected it.



Carlos Peña Romulo
Philippines



Oswaldo Euclides Aranha
2nd Assembly President



Asgeir Aesgeirsson



John Foster Dulles
(1888-1959)
1st class letter rate

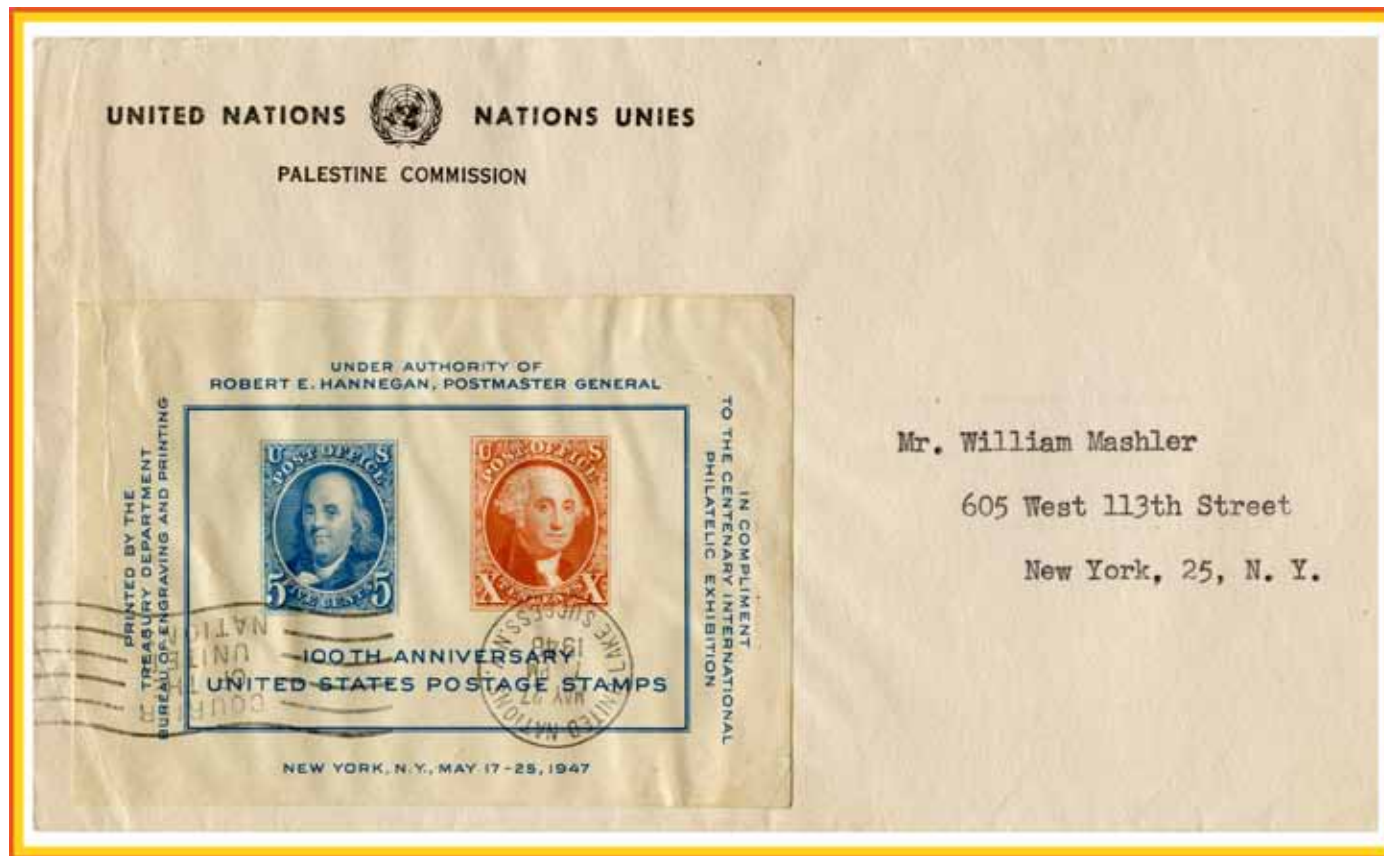


Lester Bowles Pearson
(1897-1972)
Vertical Phosphor Bars

Palestine Commission and Secretariat

9 January - 11 December 1948

The new Palestine Commission first met in Lake Success on 9 January to discuss the civil administration and security of the mandate after the British left. A working paper on 3 February outlined plans for an interim administration on 14 May. The Secretariat headquarters was in Hotel Zion in Haifa and assisted the Palestine Commission with fifty police guards.

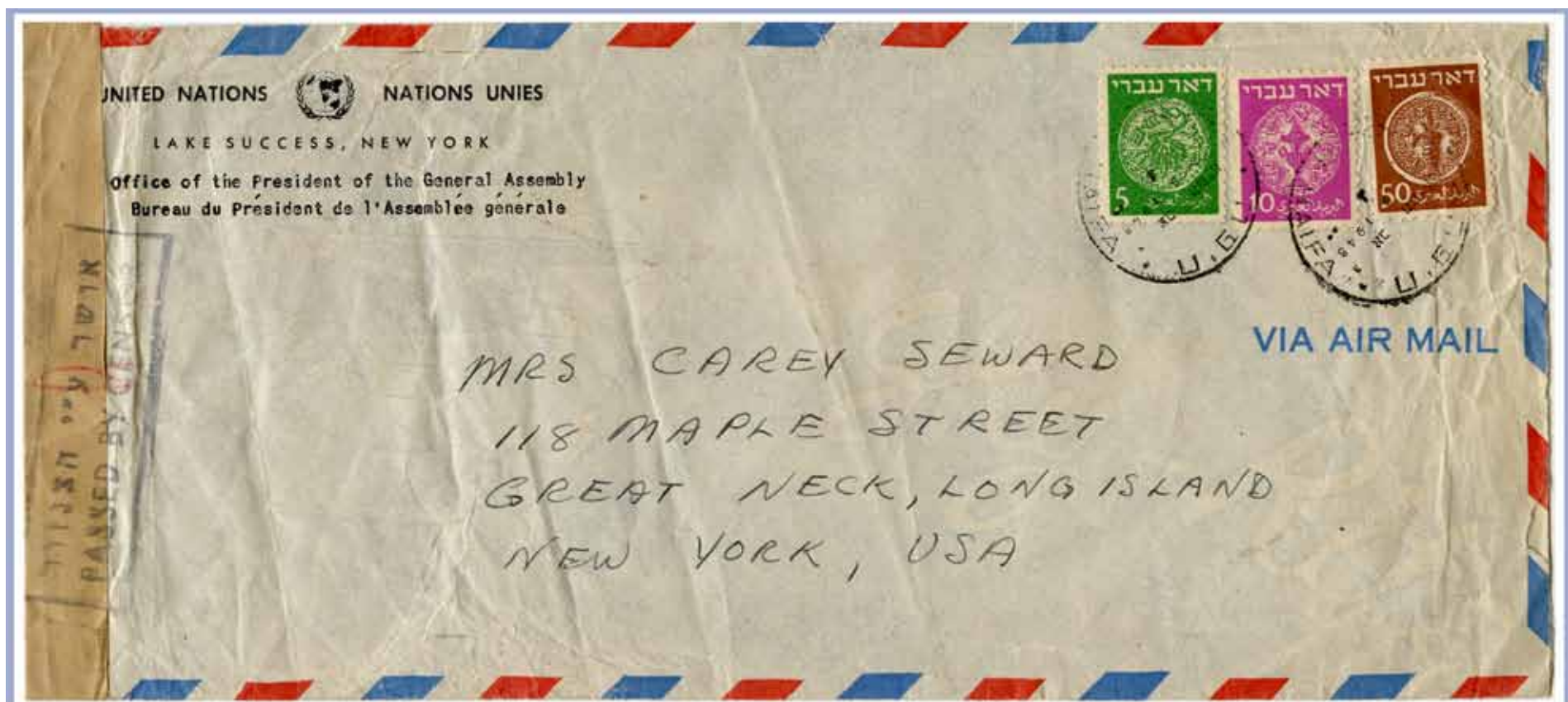


Palestine Commission, United Nations, New York, to New York, New York, 27 May 1948

Three reported examples of official Palestine Commission service mail



U.N. Police Force



Palestine Commission, Haifa, Israel to New York, N.Y., 3 August 1948, 20 mils <25 grams, 45 mils airmail fee per 10 grams (65 mils total)

Mailed after Israeli independence declaration with Israeli censor tape and handstamp

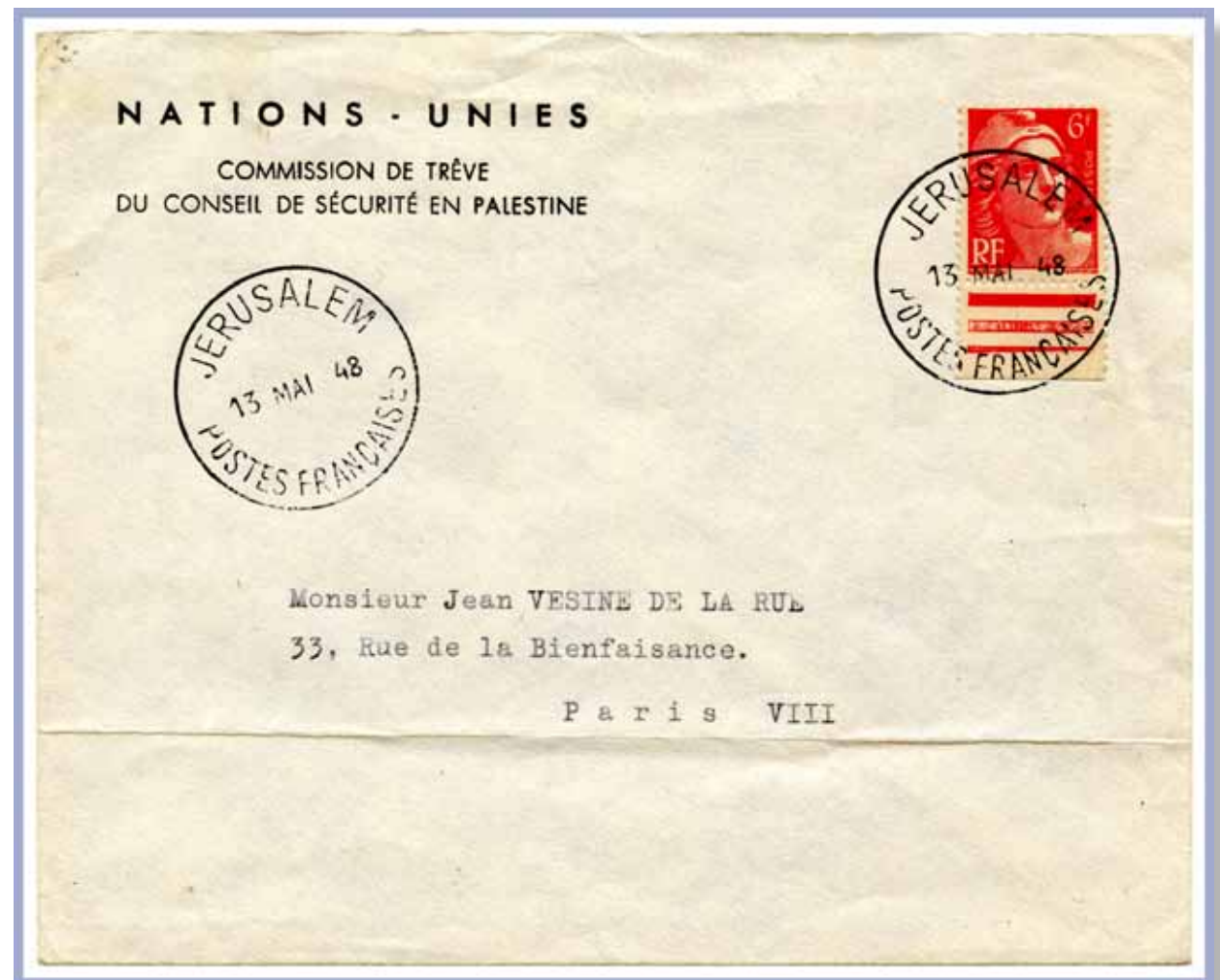
Service mail of the U.N. Secretariat in Palestine was sent using General Assembly Presidential cornercard stationery

A blockade of Jerusalem's roads and postal functions resulted in the opening of an interim French consulate 'emergency post office'.



Mountain road to Jerusalem, color alignment dots

Mountain roads avoided blockades



Palestine Truce Commission, via French consulate, to Paris, France, 13 May 1948, 6 Francs surface rate
French consulate was granted temporary postal functions per a 1781 French emergency ordinance
Five reported examples of Truce Commission mail - in use for only 9 days (6-14 May)



The Arab League rejected the partition plan and conflict ensued. The Security Council called for a truce on 17 April, replaced the UNSCOP with a Truce Commission on 23 April composed of local consuls of Belgium, France and the U.S.

Palestine Truce Commission
Circular origin hand stamp
20 May 1948 - after official dates of use
Considered a souvenir
produced by Rene Neuville
son of the French Consul General

On 14 May 1948, the British forces evacuated Palestine and left the temporary government to address any issues of policing or conflict. The evacuation presented the Jews with an opportunity to invoke the Balfour Declaration and claim a homeland. Immediately after the British left, David Ben- Gurion declared Israel as an independent nation.



British evacuation



Balfour Declaration



Independence Declaration



David Ben-Gurion (1886-1973)

Continued conflict resulted in Jewish militia groups engaging in attacks on Palestinian civilian populations which in turn prompted attacks on Jewish communities. War broke out with both sides battling each other and British forces. A short time later, Egypt led the Arab Liberation Army consisting of troops from Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Transjordan to occupy Palestine under the command of Ismail Safwat Pasha, of the Arab Liberation Armies on 15 May 1948.



Massacre of Deir Yassin by Irgun and Stern militias

A postage stamp from the USA (USA 20c) featuring a portrait of Harry S. Truman. It is a Small Block Tag with a perforation of 10.9.	A postage stamp from the USA (USA 20c) featuring a portrait of Harry S. Truman. It is a Large Block Tag with a perforation of 11.2.
<p>Small Block Tag Approx. 16x18mm L-Perforated 10.9 January 26, 1984</p>	<p>Large Block Tag Approx. 19x21mm Bullseye Perf. 11.2 circa 1988</p>
A postage stamp from the USA (USA 20c) featuring a portrait of Harry S. Truman. It is an Overall Tag with a perforation of 11.2.	A postage stamp from the USA (USA 20c) featuring a portrait of Harry S. Truman. It is a PP Mottled Tag with a perforation of 11.2.
<p>Overall Tag Dull Gum Bullseye Perf. 11.2 circa 1990</p>	<p>PP Mottled Tag Shiny Gum Bullseye Perf. 11.2 September. 29, 1993</p>

In the evening of 14 May, President Harry S. Truman (1884-1953) was under political pressure from members of the U.S. congress concerned about the Jewish vote in U.S. elections and was convinced to recognize Israel.



Ismail Safwat Pasha
Commander in Chief
of the Arab
Liberation Armies

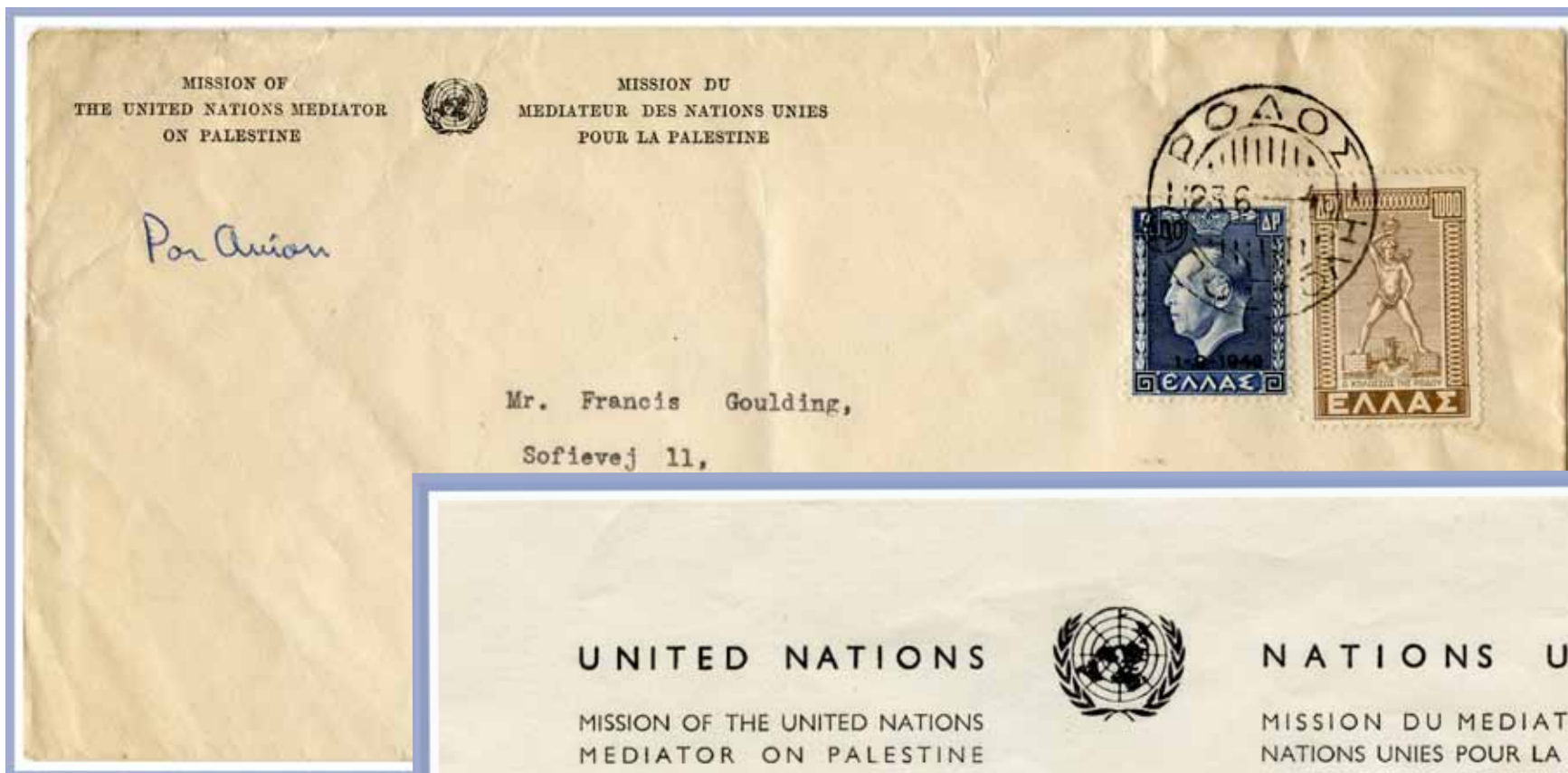


Lebanese
Soldier



Egyptian soldiers
invade Palestine

20 May 1948



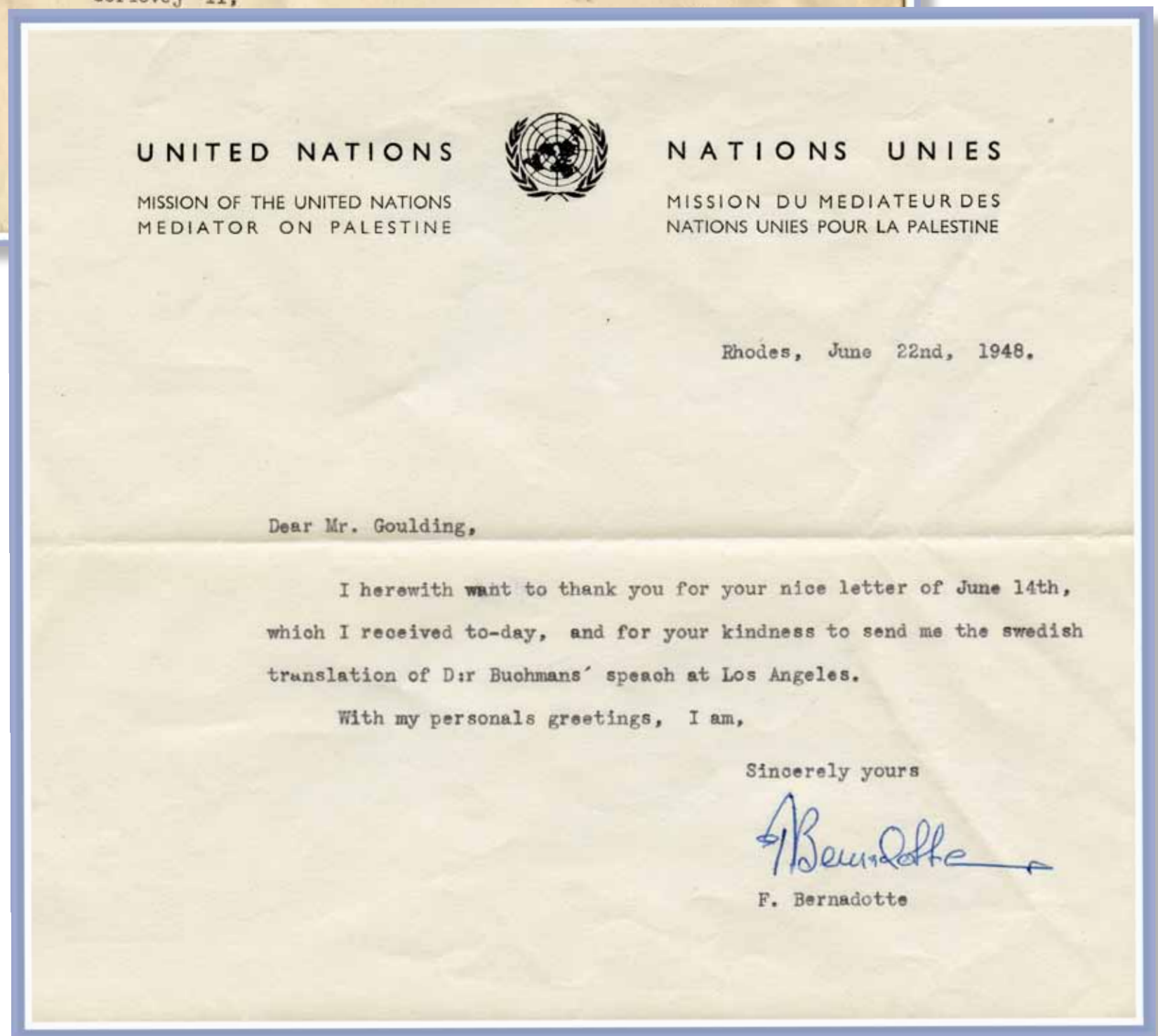
Palestine Mediator
Rhodes, Greece
to Hellerup, Denmark
23 June 1948
1600 drachma
<20 grams
airmail letter rate
to Europe

Secretary General Lie appointed Count Folke Bernadotte (1895-1948) of Sweden on 20 May as Palestine Mediator to aid the peace process.



Count Folke Bernadotte
Booklet pane single

Count Bernadotte was a Swedish nobleman and diplomat who worked during WWII for the release of concentration camp internees.



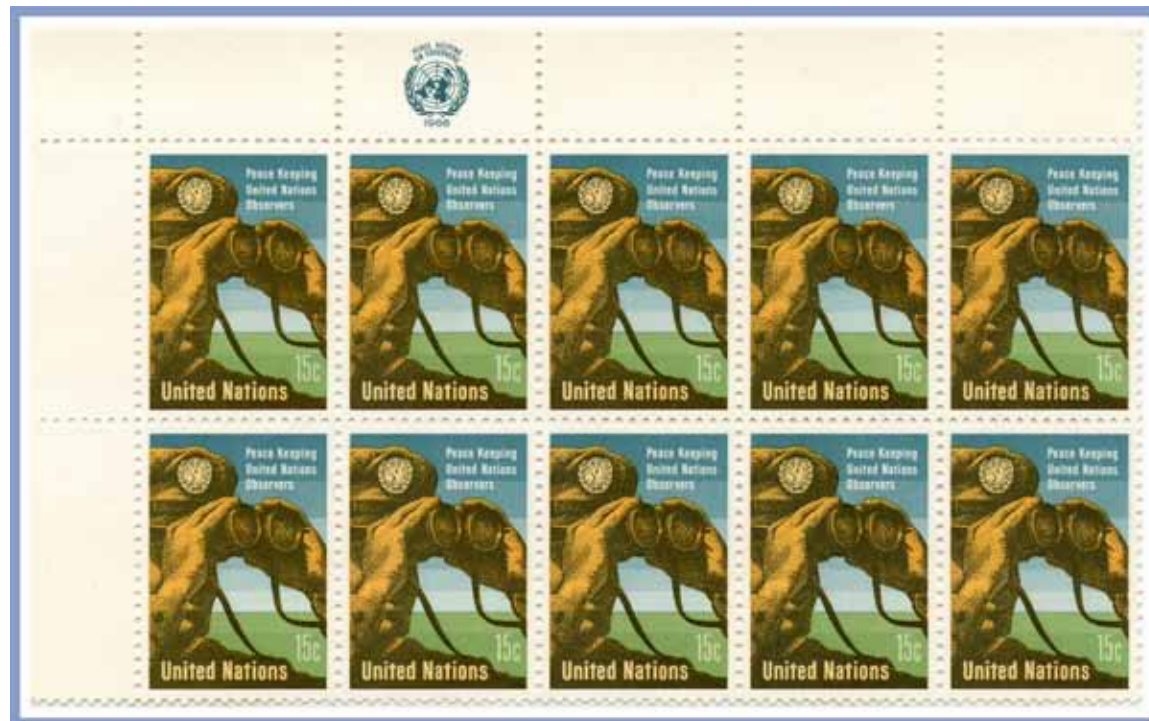
Security Council Resolution 50 (1948) called for a cessation of hostilities. To assist the Palestine Mediator in monitoring cease-fire and truce agreements, U.N. Secretary General Trygve Lie announced a group made up of diplomatic and military personnel and equipment from Belgium, France, Sweden and the United States for use in a supervisory capacity as observers.



Belgium



France



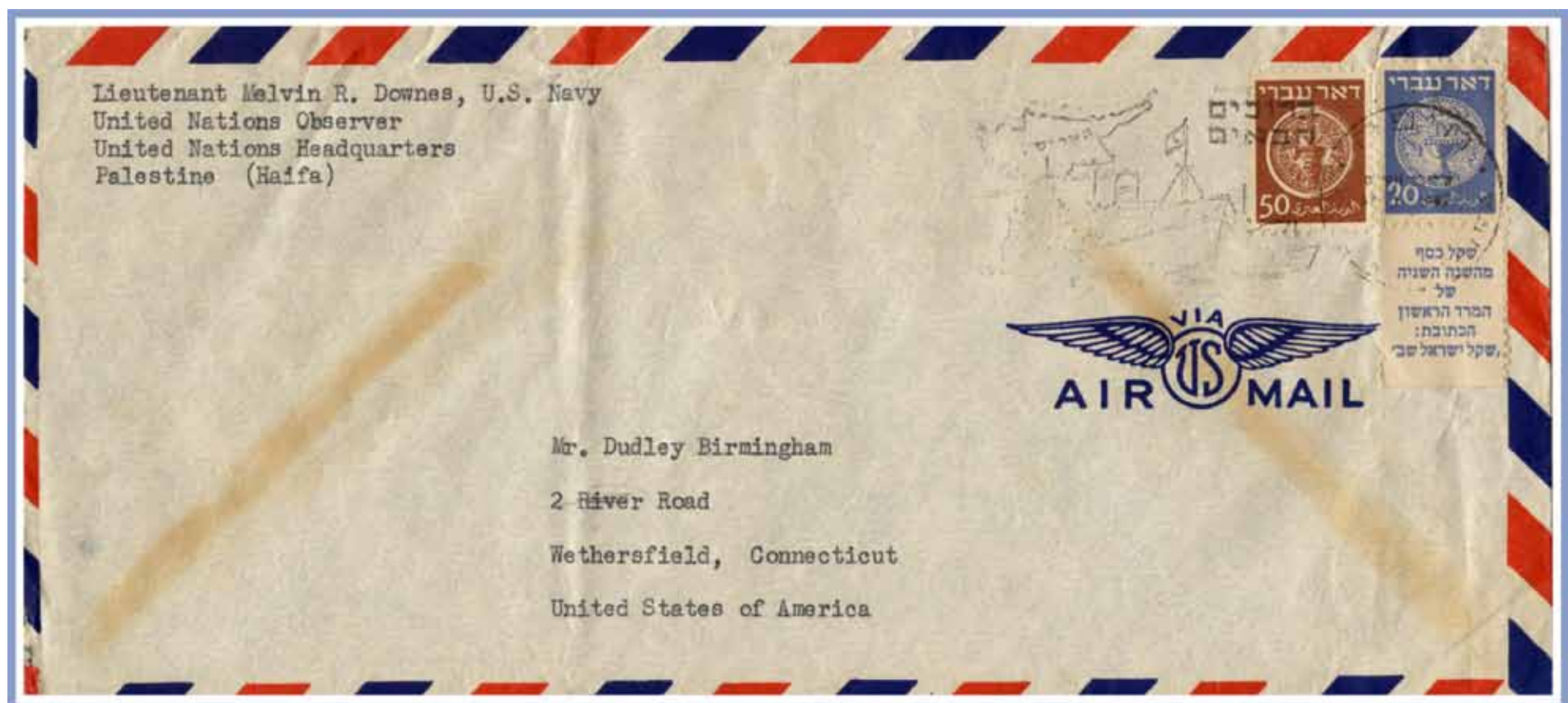
United Nations Observers, 15 cents domestic surface letter rate in USA



Sweden



United States



United Nations Headquarters, Haifa, Palestine (Israel) to Wetherfield, Connecticut, January 1949, airmail letter rate 70 Mills
Pictorial cancellation commemorates the elimination of Detention camps in Cyprus



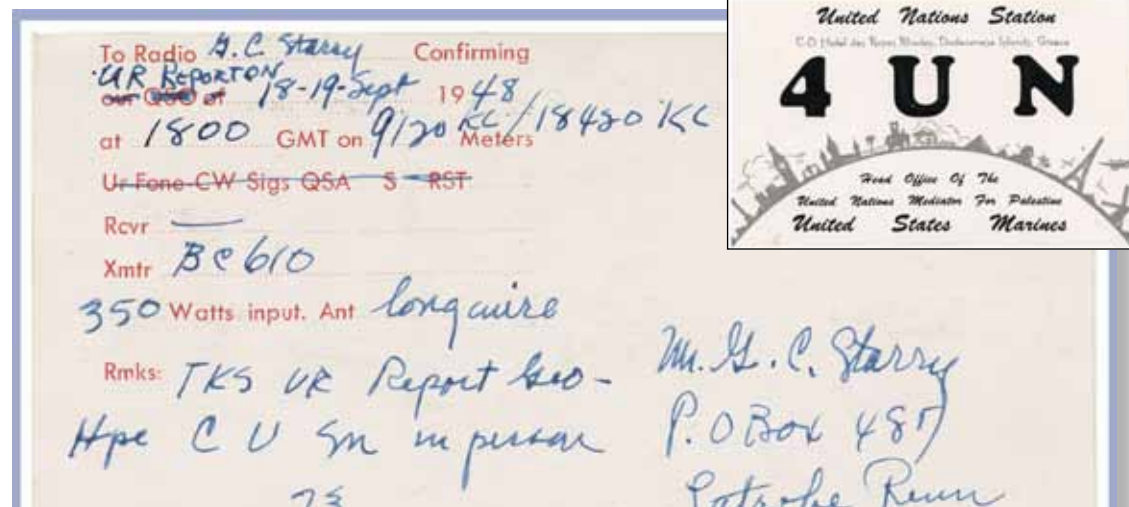
Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Lehi Extremist Group
Plate number block with inscriptions

The 'Lehi' Jewish extremist group was founded by Avraham Stern (1907-1942). They set up a fake road checkpoint on a Jerusalem road and assassinated Colonel André Sérot of France and Count Folke Bernadotte on 17 September.



Avraham Stern
Founder of 'Lehi'

QSL card confirming receipt of September 18-19 radio broadcast of Count Folke Bernadotte's assassination on 17 September sent in cover Signed by Arnold Ziegler, station manager



Palestine Mediator Ralph Bunche

19 September 1948 - 11 August 1949

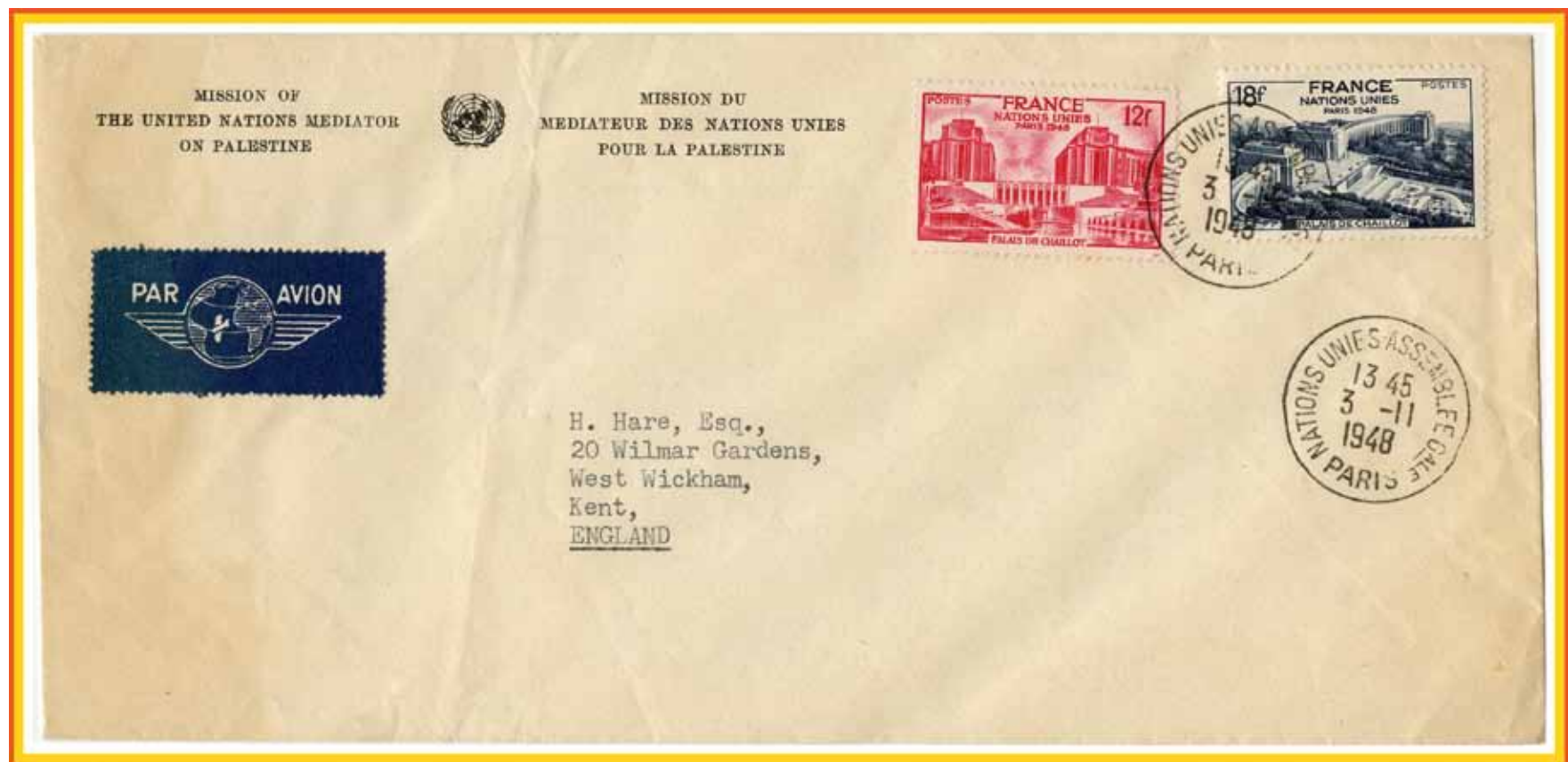


Trygve Lie

Following the assassination of Count Folke Bernadotte, U.N. Secretary General Trygve Lie (1896-1968) appointed Bernadotte's deputy, Ralph Bunche of the U.S., to succeed Bernadotte as the new Palestine Mediator on 19 September.



Ralph Bunche
Swiss Franc and U.S. Dollar denominations



Palestine Mediator, Paris, France to Kent, England, 3 November 1948; 18 Francs < 25 grams, 12 Francs second 25 grams (30 Francs total)

Hand cancel device (type 'b') with hour and minute designation, in use 21 Sep - 15 Dec 1948

Three reported examples of Mediator service mail from 1948 Paris General Assembly



Palestine refugees



King Abdullah
(1882-1951)
Transjordan
occupation
overprint

Ralph Bunche presented several peace initiatives to the 1948 third General Assembly in Paris, France. Most were rejected but support for Palestine refugees was approved. Armistice negotiations were signed between February and July and negotiators included King Abdullah, Yitzhak Rabin (1922-1995) and Moshe Dayan (1915-1981). The position of Mediator was terminated on 11 August.



Yitzhak Rabin, Israel



Moshe Dayan, Israel

The ongoing conflict forced many Arabs to abandon their homes and become displaced refugees. On 1 December, Graf Carton de Wiart of Belgium proposed an interim U.N. Relief for Palestine Refugees (UNRPR) organization based in Beirut, Lebanon.

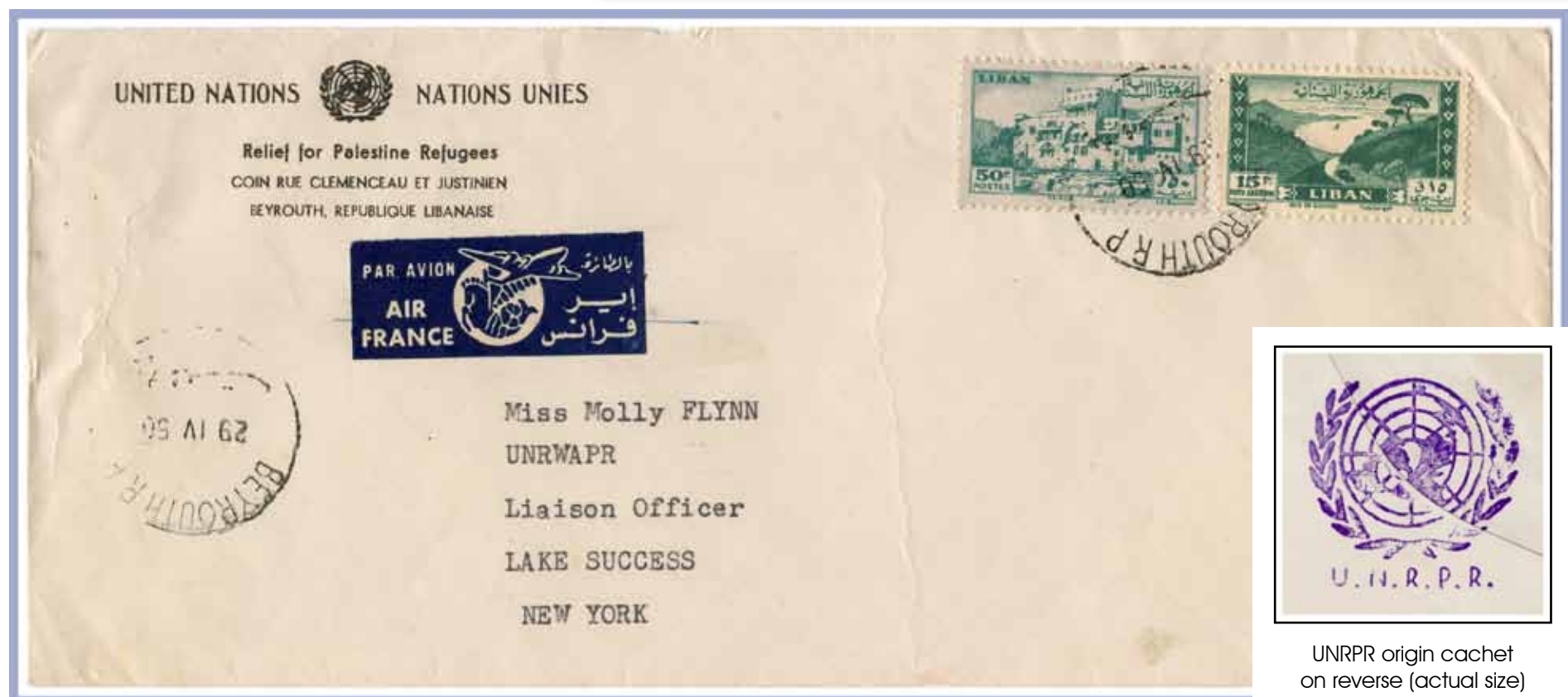
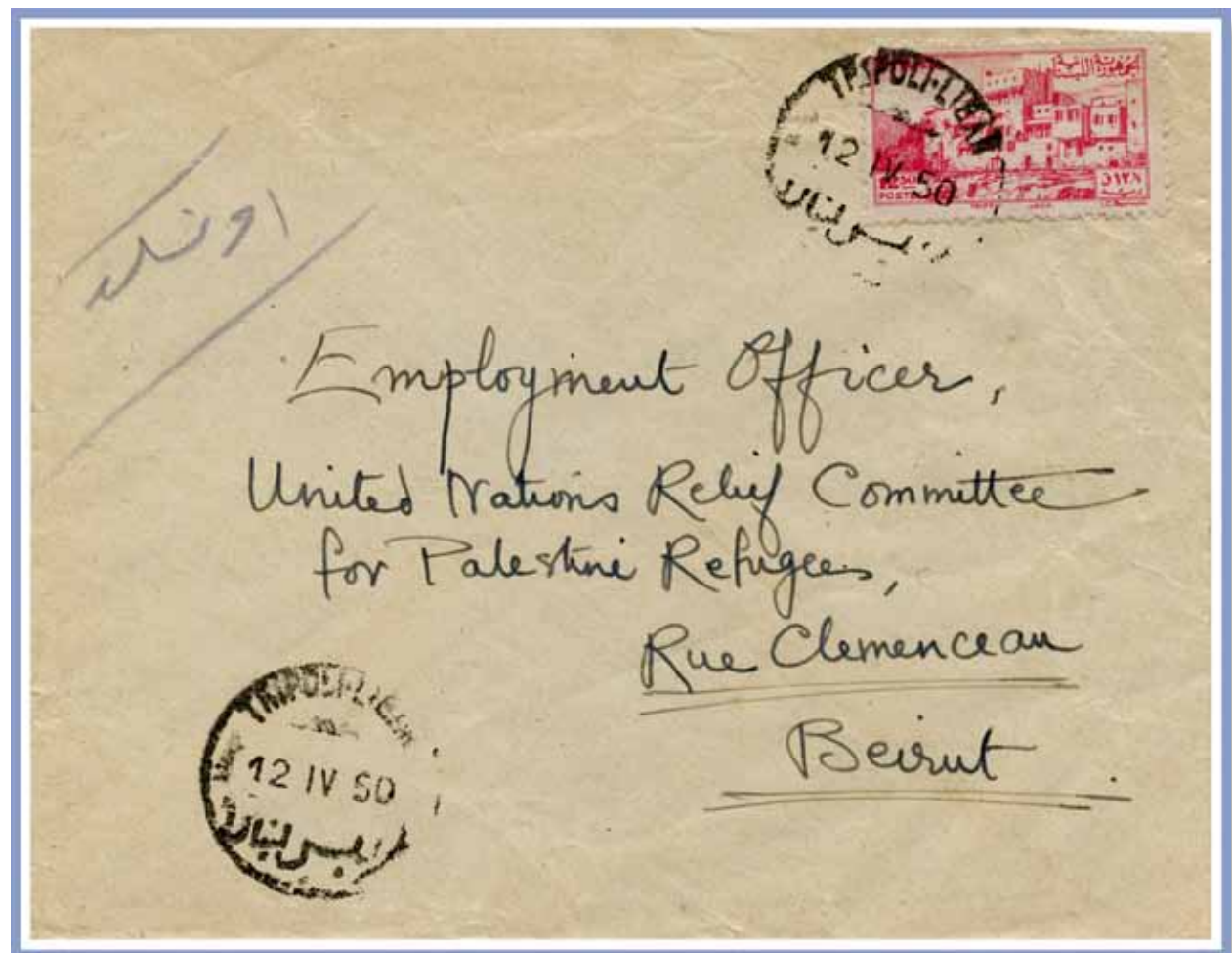


Graf Carton de Wiart
(1880-1963)



UNRPR office in Beirut
based in the
UNESCO building

Tripoli, Libya to Beirut, Lebanon
12 April 1950
12.50 piaster surface letter rate



UNRPR origin cachet
on reverse (actual size)

UNRPR, Beirut, Lebanon to U.N. Refugee and Works Agency (UNRWAPR) in Lake Success, N.Y., 29 April 1950; 25p <20 grams, 40p airmail fee (65 piaster total)
Four reported examples of UNRPR service mail from Beirut, only reported example with origin cachet

The U.N. 3rd General Assembly authorized a temporary United Nations Relief for Palestine Refugees (UNRPR) organization also maintained an office in Geneva at the European Headquarters in addition to the Beirut Office.



UNRPR, Geneva Office to Ottawa, Canada, 1 May 1950
Foreign printed matter airmail, 21 grams, 90 centimes
Boxed origin cachet for Relief for Palestine Refugees
Mailed on last operational day of the UNRPR

As the Special Committee began meeting at the United Nations Headquarters in Geneva, the U.N. invited the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC = Quakers) and other non-governmental agencies to assist with refugee relief.



AFSC / UNRPR, Geneva, Switzerland to Hanover, New Hampshire, 8 April 1949
40 centimes <20 grams, 2 x 40 centimes airmail fee per 5 grams (1.20 Francs total)
(Howard Wiggins was the AFSC Liaison)
Only reported example of AFSC service mail

The Conciliation Commission, formed by UN Resolution 194 on 11 December 1948, mediated agreements, disputes and residual issues. Its headquarters was in the Jerusalem Government House as of 24 January 1949. The commission members, France, Turkey and the United States, ceased operation in 1951.



UNCCP, Geneva, Switzerland to Lake Success, N.Y., 5 May 1950; 40 rappen < 20 grams, 2 x 40 rappen airmail fee per 5 grams (1.20 Fr total)
Hand cancel device with un-shaded cross and long 'l' in lower semicircle, **Four reported examples of Conciliation Commission service mail**

Jerusalem was designated as an independent, international city and the Conciliation Commission continued its functions by working with people of all faiths, be it Muslim, Jewish or Christian.



Jerusalem,
Palestine



Dome of the Rock
Finished 691-692 A.D.



Omar el Khatab Mosque
Finished 1216 A.D.



Western Wall (Wailing Wall)
Built approx. 19 B.C.



Church of the Holy
Sepulchre - 335 A.D.

The existing U.N. Relief for Palestine Refugees organization (UNRPR) was absorbed on 1 May by the newer U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWAPR).



U.N. Relief and Works Agency
(UNRWAPR)

When the Conciliation Commission ceased operations, its duties were partially assumed by the newer UNRWAPR organization.

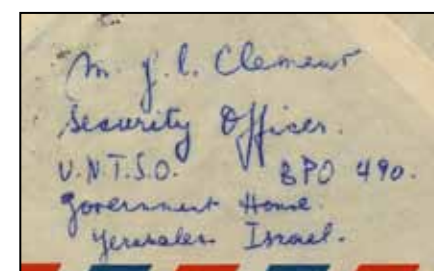


UNRWAPR, Beirut, Lebanon to Versailles, France, 27 November 1953
15 piaster <20 gram letter, 20 piaster airmail fee (35 piaster total) to European destination

Remaining UNCC responsibilities were assumed by the U.N. Treaty Supervision Organization (UNTSO) in late 1951. Peace efforts continue to this day as the **final resolution of the land dispute has yet to be realized.**



Jerusalem, Palestine to Chiny sur Semois, Belgium, 7 June 1952, 40 fils surface letter rate
From UNTSO Security Officer, BPO 490, Government House, Jerusalem, Israel
via the Jordanian branch post office in Jerusalem



UNTSO return address
In manuscript
on cover reverse



UNTSO Peace-keepers
15¢ domestic letter rate