

The United Nations Special Committee on Palestine - 1947

○ Exhibit Scope

This exhibit documents efforts of the fledgling United Nations organization between 28 April and 3 September 1947 (4 months), to settle the land dispute between the Arab and Jewish populations in the Palestine Mandate.

Historical Background

In late 1946 the newly formed United Nations organization inherited the League of Nations' resources and responsibilities, including the oversight of international mandates. In April 1947, Great Britain announced it would no longer administer the Palestine mandate as of May 1948. They proposed a 'special session' of the U.N. Security Council to address administration and security under U.N. auspices once British forces departed. The Special Session produced a Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) to evaluate the issues and propose a solution which would prevent future disagreements and violence.

Exhibit Development

Exhibit development progresses chronologically from the Allied conference assigning Great Britain the responsibility for the Palestine Mandate to a special session of the Security Council, and the resulting U.N. Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP). Events are outlined in the exhibit plan chronologically (date range top right of exhibit pages - some ranges overlap) and presented using related material to illustrate each subject.

Exhibit Plan

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|---|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| 1 | U.N. Special Session on Palestine | - | General Assembly discusses British departure recommending a special committee to investigate the mandate's status |
| 2 | Special Committee (UNSCOP) | - | Special Committee is formed and relocates to Jerusalem |
| 3 | Documentation Gathering | - | Document Information is gathered and prepared for review |
| 4 | Field Surveys | - | Committee interviews residents throughout the Mandate |
| 5 | Hearings and Interviews | - | Formal hearings held with testimonies and interviews |
| 6 | From Jerusalem to Geneva HQ | - | Special Committee moves to Geneva to write reports |
| 7 | Writing Report Proposals | - | Major and Minor Report proposals formulated and presented |

Subject Knowledge

The story-line of this exhibit includes major events arranged by date and illustrated with diverse official documents and philatelic elements selectively chosen to demonstrate specific story-line details and balance presentation.

○ Philatelic Knowledge

Care is taken to ensure the proper descriptions of all elements to demonstrate knowledge of philately which includes information on stamps, cancel devices, rates, rarity or other justified information as appropriate.

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Philatelic Elements

This exhibit utilizes a rich array of materials spanning many exhibit types (traditional, thematic, postal history, etc.) to carry the story forward, ie. postage stamps, specimen, plate numbers, postage meters, surface and airmail services, printed matter, miscellaneous markings, ephemera, etc. Material from the appropriate period and offices is incorporated.

Condition and Rarity

Due to the committee's brief existence (only a little over 4 months), official service mail is extremely scarce. Mail of the Special Committee (UNSCOP) was sent from two locations, one being Jerusalem and the other Geneva. Examples of both are included in this exhibit.

Covers are selected for the best condition available, bearing in mind official service mail is seldom pristine. Folds, creases, nicks, small tears or missing corners are common and are indications of actual transit through the mail systems of the time and place.

Challenge is quite high as items are either scarce or unique, Fewer than 30 examples of UNSCOP mail are reported, 8 in this exhibit. Key items (1 or 2 reported) are matted on gold.

- Special Committee service mail from Jerusalem to New York (#1 of 6 reported) Page 4
- **Special Committee service mail sent to Haifa (two reported)** Page 5
- **Committee member countrywide pass with embossed British M.E.F. seal (only reported)** Page 6
- Special Committee service mail from Jerusalem to Ottawa, Canada (#2 of 6 reported) Page 7
- **Special Committee service mail sent within Jerusalem (only reported)** Page 8
- **Special Committee service mail sent as postcard to Fort Gary, Canada (only reported)** Page 10
- Special Committee service mail from Jerusalem to Ottawa, Canada (#3 of 6 reported) Page 10
- Special Committee service mail from Geneva to Ottawa and New York (#1 and #2 of 9 reported) Page 11

Rarity is determined from published sources and personal correspondence.

- Articles from "*The Journal*" (UNPI) and "*The Israel Philatelist*" (SIP)
- Gaines Catalog / monographs of international U.N. philatelic societies
- Philatelic exhibits (international) / web sites / personal correspondence
- This is the most comprehensive exhibit of official UNSCOP service mail to date

Political Viewpoint

This exhibit attempts to remain non-partisan on a very controversial subject.

Key Literature References

- "*1948 Security Council Truce Commission*", The Journal of United Nations Philatelists, 2014, **Vol. 38 #2**
- "*To Consider the Future of Palestine*", The Israel Philatelist, 1998, **Vol. 49 #4**
- "*UN Conciliation Commission*", The Journal of United Nations Philatelists, 2015, **Vol. 39 #2**
- "*UN Relief for Palestine Refugees*", The Journal of United Nations Philatelists, 2015 **Vol. 37 #2**
- "*United Nations Philately*", Arleigh Gaines, R&D Pubs, 1980-92, **pages 1715-1717, 3026, 1791 and 1425**