

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 League of Nations met in San Remo, Italy from 19-26 April 1920 to decide the question of civil administration and defense obligations for the lands of Palestine. The governing responsibilities for the territory were transferred from the Ottoman Empire to Great Britain and they maintained that authority until April 1947. On 2 April 1947 Britain announced it would terminate its jurisdiction over the Palestine mandate due to the financial burden and ongoing political unrest and escalating civil violence between the Arab population and Jewish immigrants over possession of land.



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

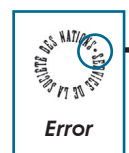


British Mandate Palestine
Sept. 1923 - May 1948



Certificate VSPV 4'028

League of Nations
Overprint Inverted
100 printed



The British proposed a 'Special Session' of the U.N. Security Council to discuss a civil police force and governmental administration for the mandate, under the auspices of the United Nations, after the British withdrawal in May 1948.



United Nations
Security Council
3¢ Letter Rate

Exhibit Plan

Significant items have a wide **blue border**

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|-------|
| Special Session on Palestine | - General Assembly discussion of the issue | Pg 2 |
| Special Committee on Palestine | - Committee gathers data & prepares proposals | Pg 3 |
| Palestine Commission & Secretariat | - Monitoring transition to independent states | Pg 6 |
| Truce Commission | - Administration of cease-fire, truce & armistice | Pg 7 |
| Palestine Mediators | - Count Bernadotte & Ralph Bunche seek peace | Pg 8 |
| Relief for Palestine Refugees | - United Nations aid to the Arab refugees | Pg 11 |
| Conciliation Commission for Palestine | - Resolution for ongoing issues & assistance | Pg 12 |



Flushing Meadows, N.Y.
margin inscription

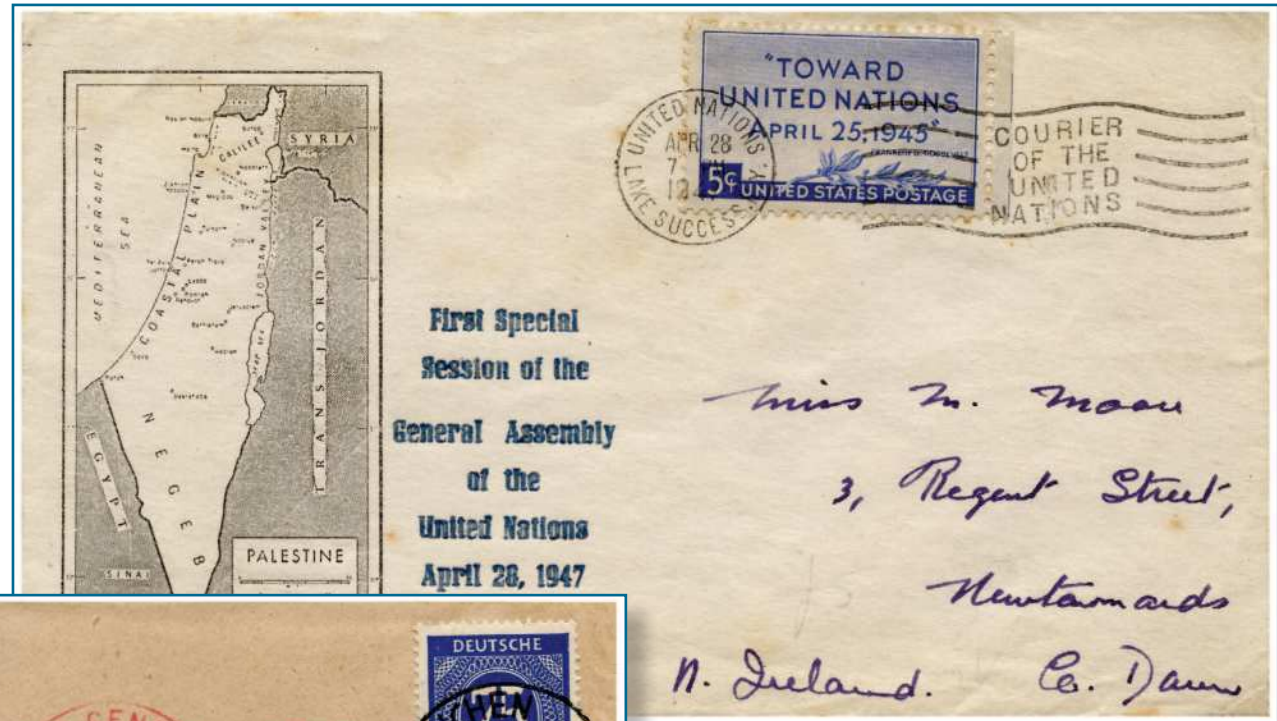
Flushing Meadows, N.Y. was the site of the first ‘Special Session’ of the General Assembly under Session President Oswaldo Aranha. The session’s purpose was to form a committee “whose duty was to prepare material for consideration in the next regular session of the General Assembly concerning the government of Palestine.”



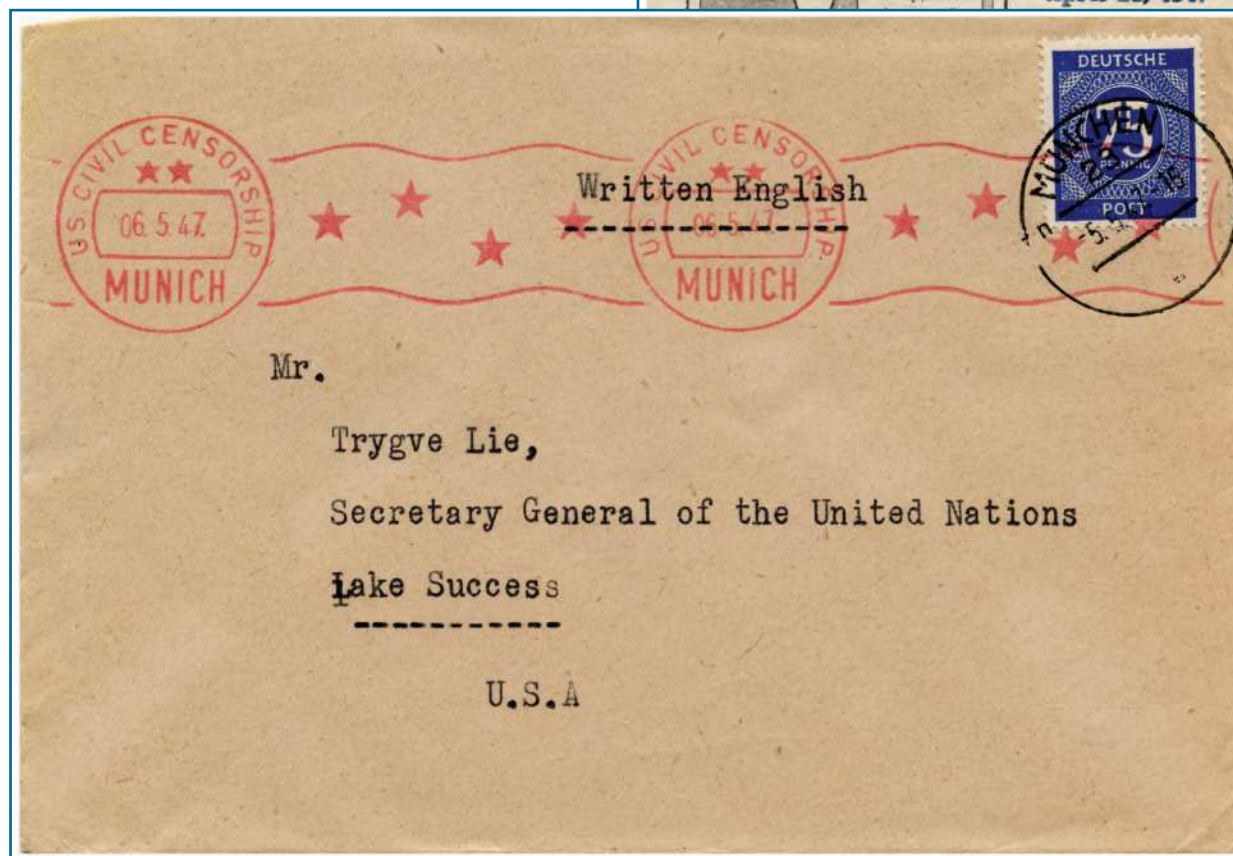
Oswaldo Aranha
semi-postal

The United Nations post office used U.S. postage stamps, rates and services.

The U.N. ‘Special Session’ met from 28 April - 15 May 1947, and resulted in the *United Nations Special Committee on Palestine* (UNSCOP). Eleven representatives and more than twenty administrative staff members completed their plans by 30 May and traveled to Palestine.



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



Camp 1065 - Neu-Freimann Siedlung, Munich, Germany to Lake Success, New York, 6 May 1947
75 pfennig international letter rate

Mimeographed letters to United Nations Secretary General Trygve Lie during the ‘Special Session’, described the individual’s military service on behalf of the Allied forces and were sent from UNRRA camps in Germany. They solicited support for relocating the Jewish camp populations to Palestine.



Palestine Mandate
plate number

Enrique Fabregat of Uruguay was one of 11 neutral country representatives on the committee.



Enrique Fabregat

Offices were opened in the Jerusalem YMCA and public hearings were held 4-17 July.



Jerusalem YMCA
missing phosphor tag

The special committee on Palestine began its administrative work on 10 June, obtaining the governing documents for the Palestine Mandate. They traveled extensively in the mandate, surveying and collecting testimony from Arab and Jewish populations. Two meetings were also held in Beirut with Arab League government representatives of Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Syria, before traveling to Transjordan.

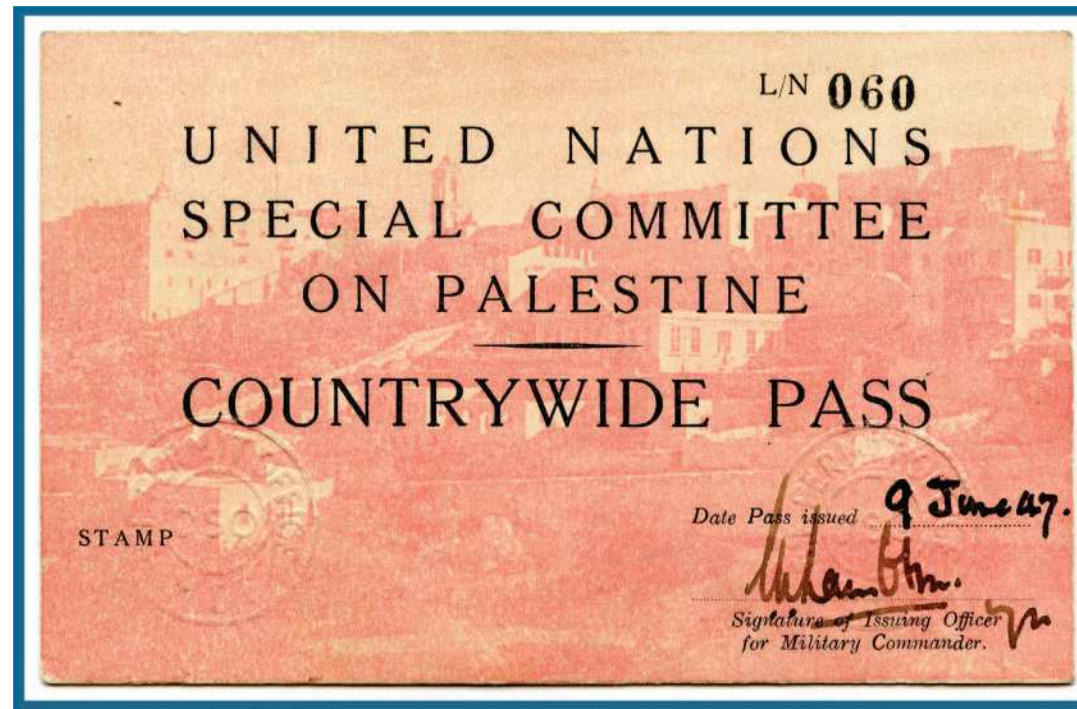


Lebanon
1947 issue



Arab League

King (Amir) Abdullah ibn Hussein of Transjordan met with the committee 25 July and suggested the Arab portion of Palestine be added to Transjordan.



UNSCOP countrywide pass 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**



King Abdullah ibn Hussein
of Transjordan
Arab League issue



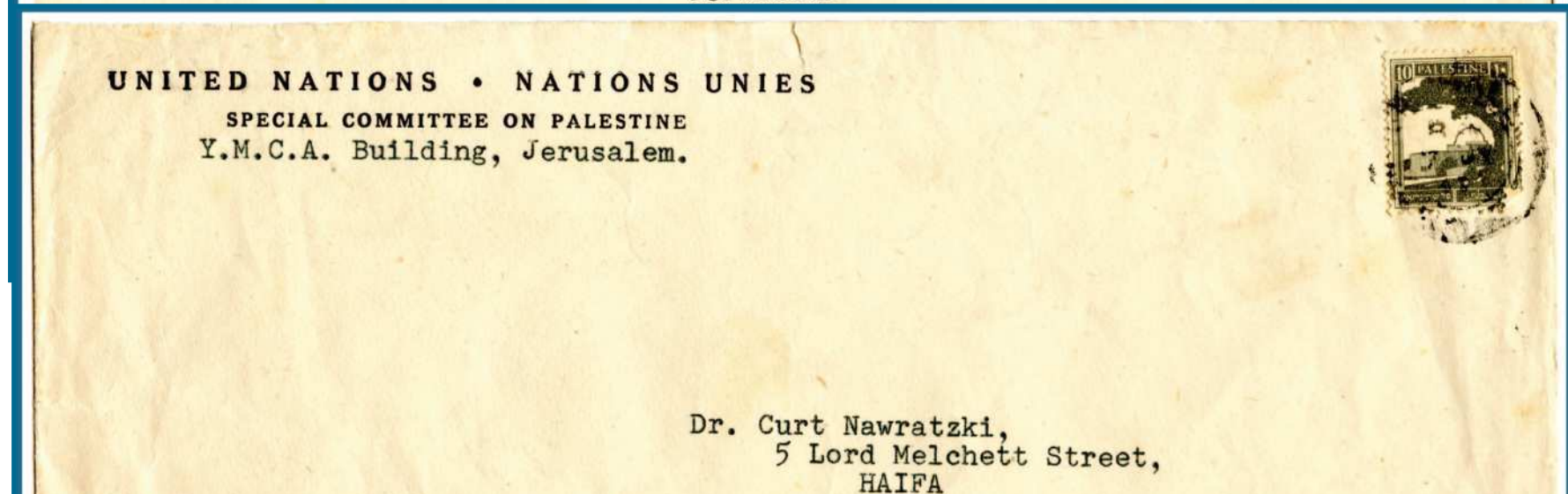
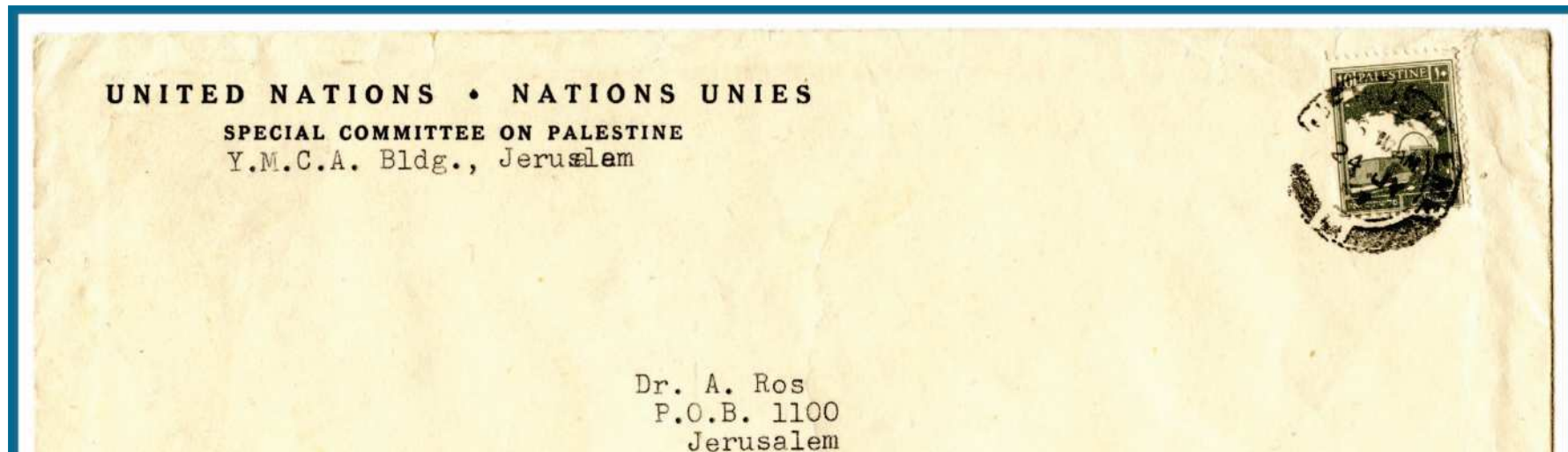
UNSCOP, Jerusalem to Fort Garry, Canada, 25 June 1947, 35p foreign surface postcard rate
Only reported example of Committee mail postcard from Y.M.C.A.

Jewish leader Dr. Chaim Weizmann, testified as a private Jewish citizen.



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

Mail contained requests for documents, hearing attendance or personal correspondence.



Jerusalem local delivery, 24 July 1947
Only reported example sent within Jerusalem

Jerusalem to Haifa, Palestine, 7 July 1947
Two reported examples sent to Haifa

Jerusalem to Long Island, New York, 7 July 1947
Six reported examples sent Internationally



Jerusalem

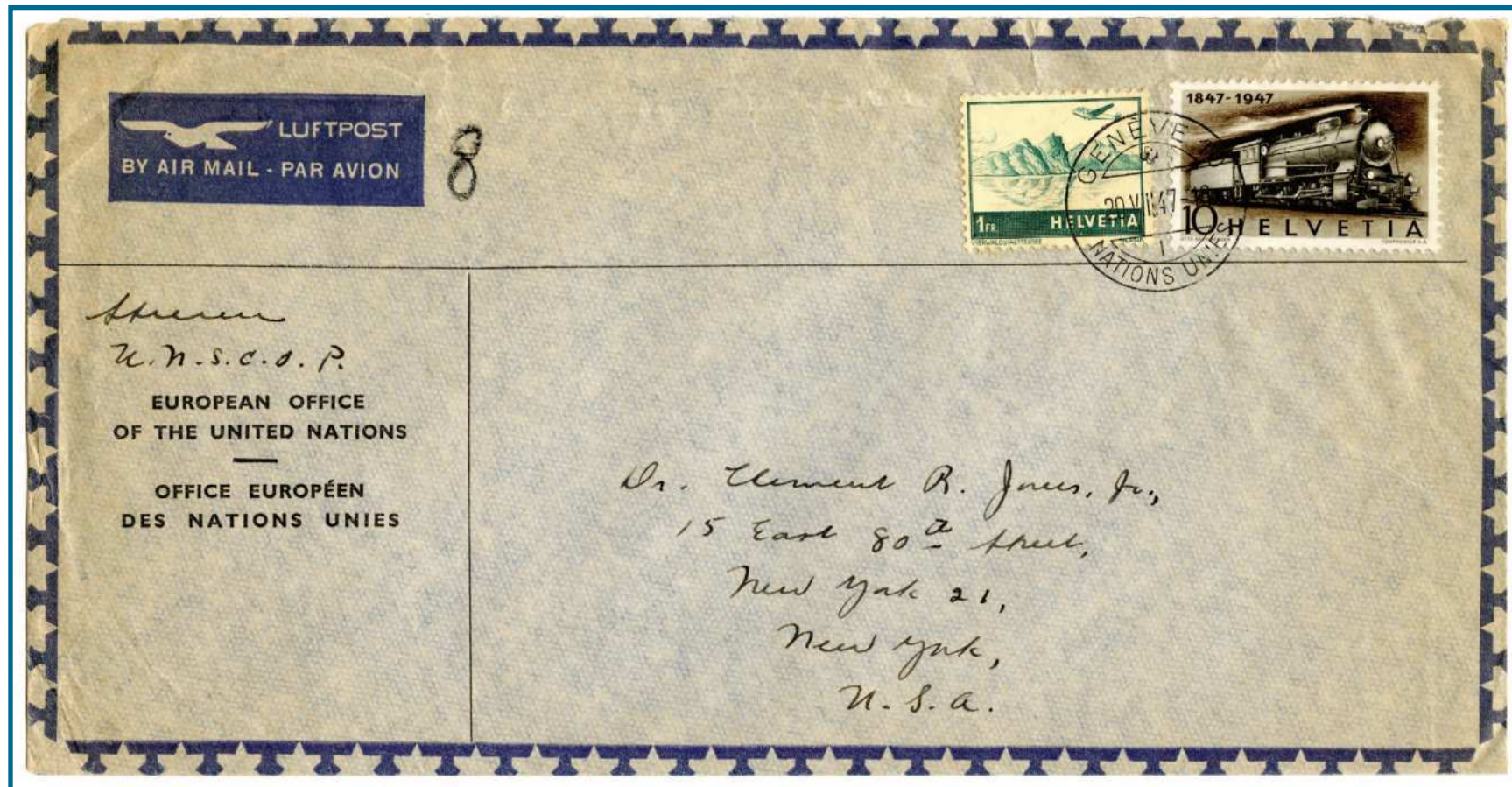
The special committee moved operations from Jerusalem to the European Office of the United Nations in the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland by 28 July. Two reports were finalized, a majority (two independent states) and a minority (single state) report were prepared for consideration by the 2nd General Assembly.



Palais des Nations
specimen overprint

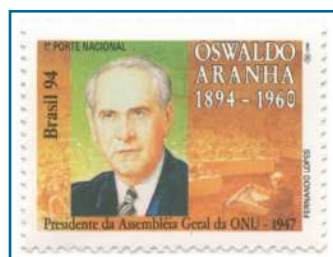


JNF label with majority report partitions
overprinted for postal use, 'slanted 5' variety



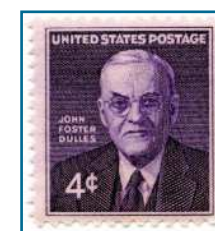
UNSCOP, Geneva, Switzerland to New York, N.Y., 20 August 1947; 30rp <20 grams, 2 x 40rp airmail fee per 5 grams (1.10Fr total)
Hand cancel device with shaded cross, mailed during the committee's Geneva deliberation period by J. Stieren (manuscript)

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



Oswaldo Aranha
2nd Assembly President

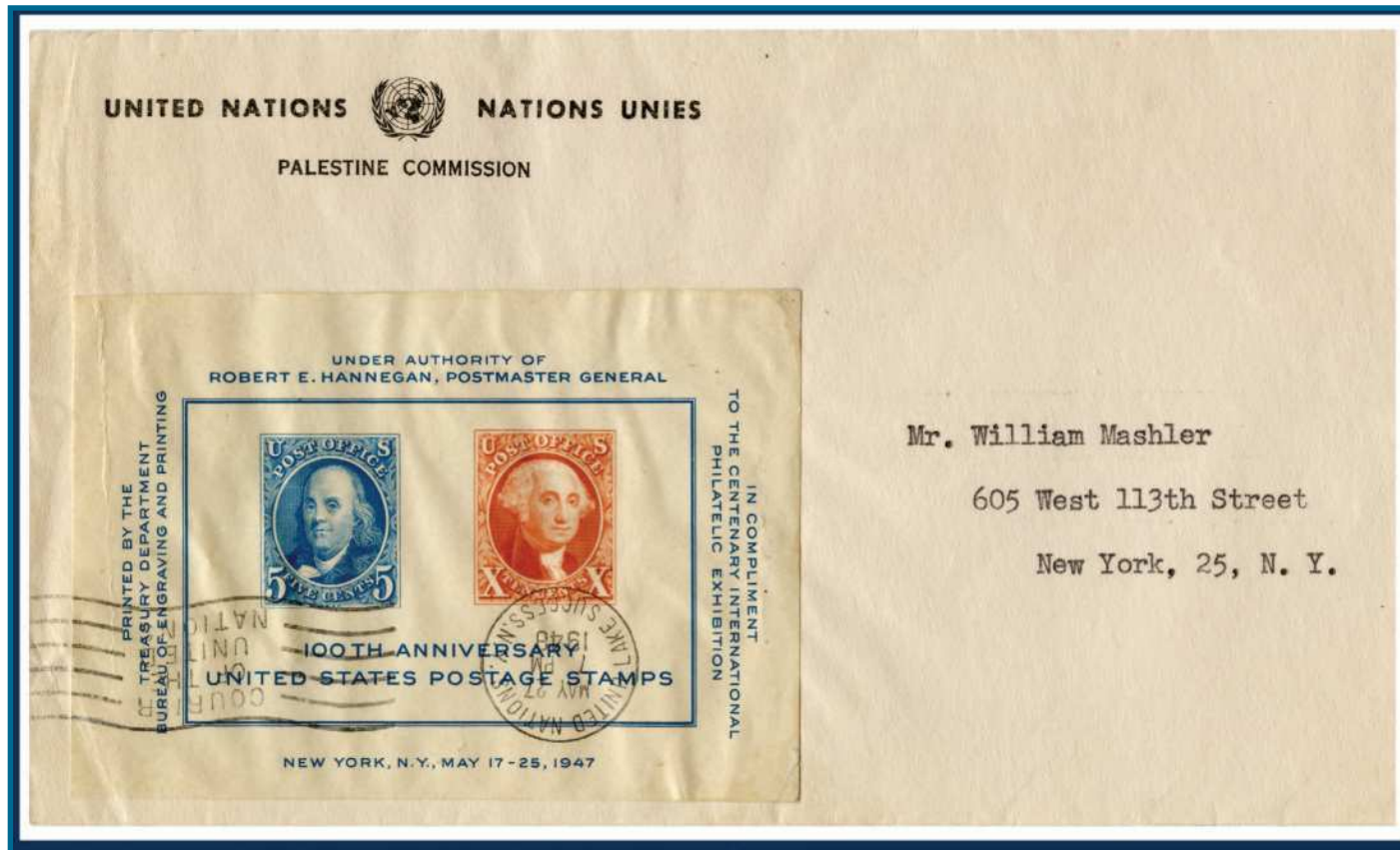
The majority report proposed dividing the mandate into two independent states for Arabs and Jews while Jerusalem was designated as an international city. The majority report was formally adopted on 29 November by the 2nd General Assembly, supported by Oswaldo Aranha of Brazil, John Foster Dulles of the United States and Aesgeir Aesgeirsson of Iceland.



John Foster Dulles
1st class letter rate



Aesgeir Aesgeirsson



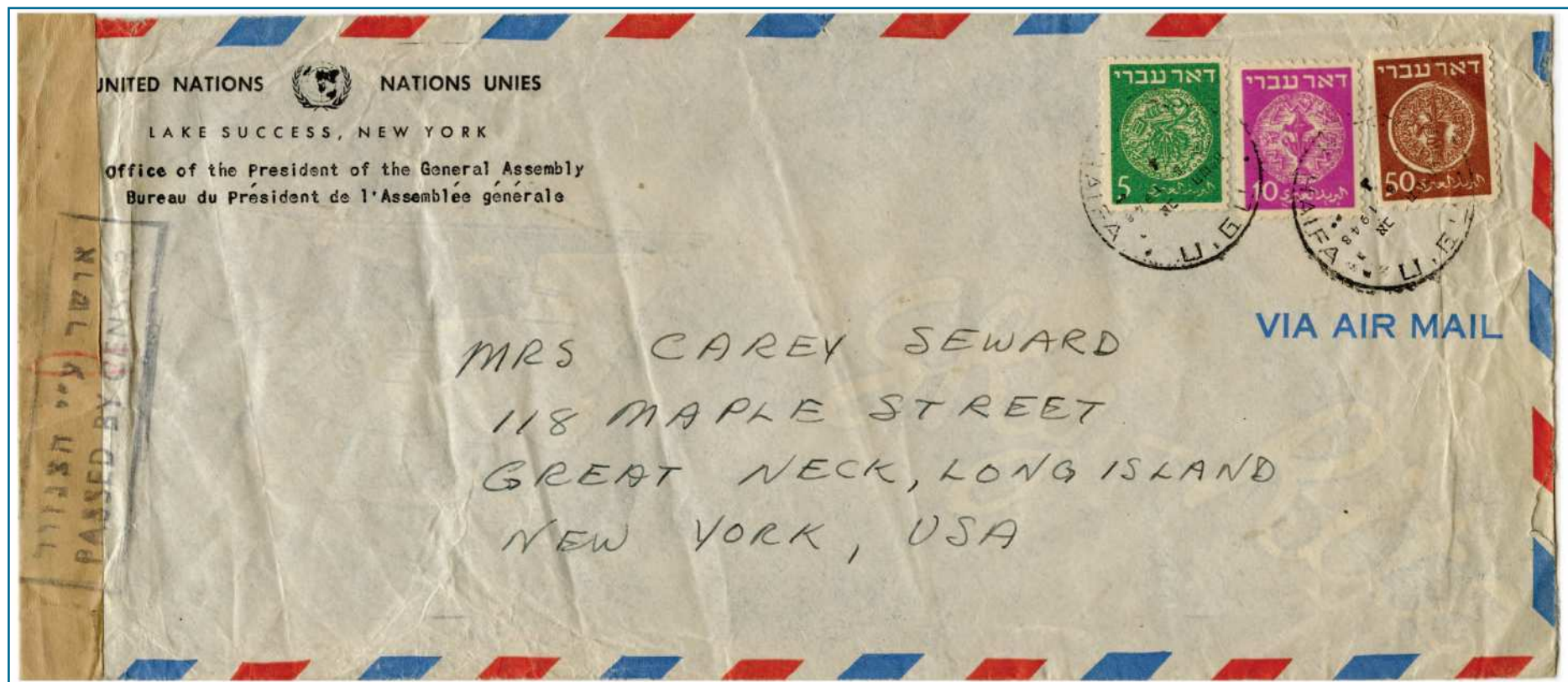
The Palestine Commission first met in Lake Success on 9 January to discuss the civil administration and security after the British left. A working paper on 3 February outlined plans for an interim administration on 14 May. The Secretariat headquarters was in Hotel Zion in Haifa and assisted the Palestine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



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

Three reported examples

U.N. Police Force



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

Mailed after Israeli independence declaration with Israeli censor tape and handstamp

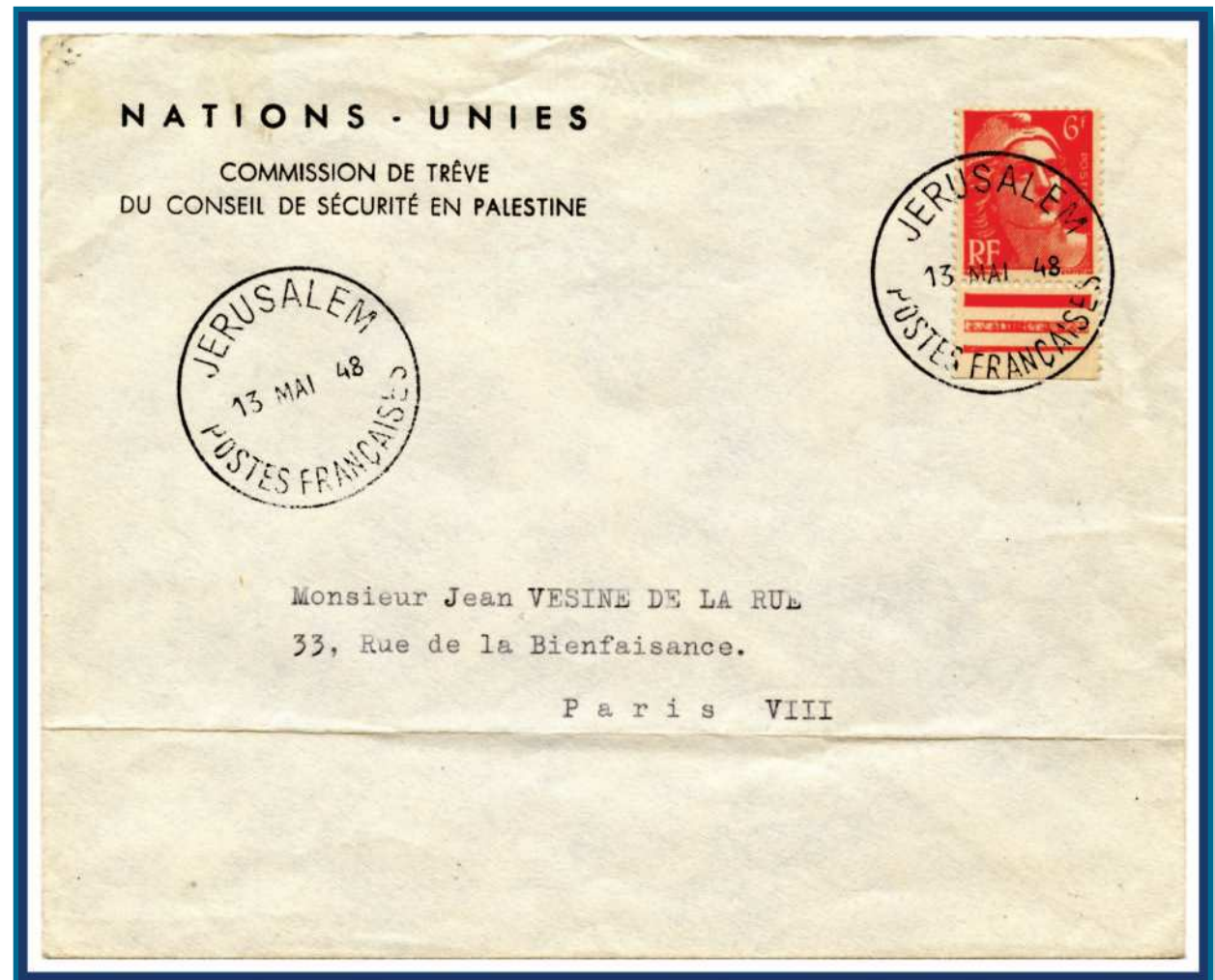
Service mail of the U.N. Secretariat in Palestine was sent using General Assembly Presidential cornercard stationery

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



Mountain road to Jerusalem, color alignment dots

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



Palestine Truce Commission, via French consulate, to Paris, France, 13 May 1948, 6Fr 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)



Israel declared independence on 14 May and on 15 May, conflict escalated as Egypt led all four Arab armies to occupy Palestine.



Israeli Independence



Egyptian soldiers invade Palestine

Palestine Truce Commission origin hand stamp
20 May 1948 - after officially recorded dates of use,
souvenir produced by Rene Neuville, son of the French Consul General

20 May 1948

UNITED NATIONS

MISSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
MEDIATOR ON PALESTINE



NATIONS UNIES

MISSION DU MEDIEATEUR DES
NATIONS UNIES POUR LA PALESTINE

Rhodes, June 22nd, 1948.

Dear Mr. Goulding,

I herewith want to thank you for your nice letter of June 14th,
which I received to-day, and for your kindness to send me the swedish
translation of Dr Buchmans' speach at Los Angeles.

With my personals greetings, I am,

Sincerely yours

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



Count Folke Bernadotte
booklet pane single

The Mediator's office was located on the island of Rhodes.

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

MISSION OF
THE UNITED NATIONS MEDIATOR
ON PALESTINE



MISSION DU
MEDIATEUR DES NATIONS UNIES
POUR LA PALESTINE

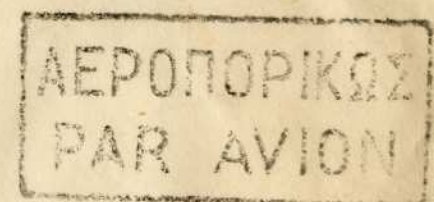
Par Avion

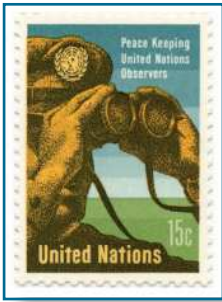
Mr. Francis Goulding,

Sofievej 11,

Hellerup

Denmark.





Truce Supervision



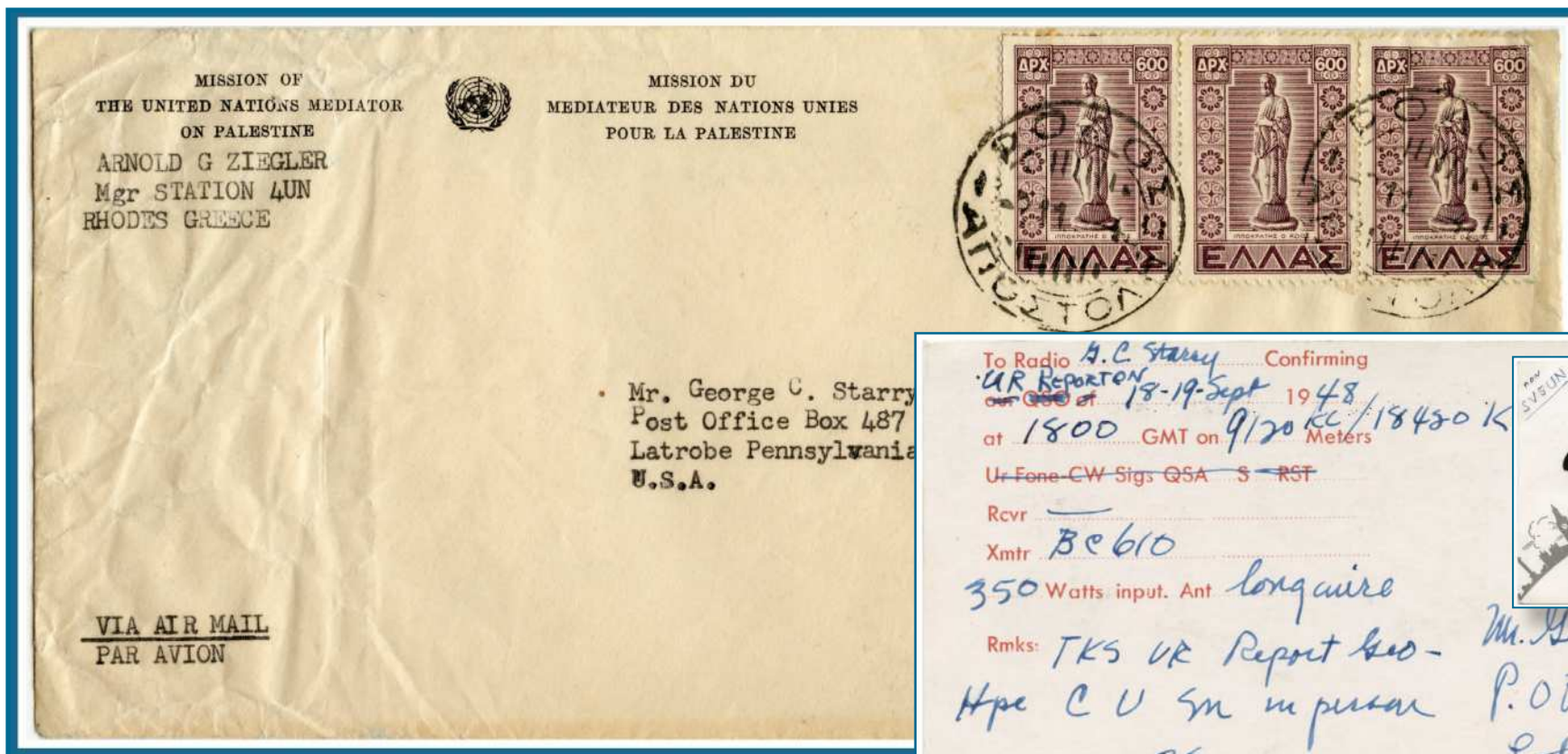
Abraham Stern
Leader of 'Lehi'

To assist the Mediator in monitoring cease-fire and truce agreements, U.N. Secretary General Trygve Lie appointed a Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) on 29 May. UNTSO was made up of diplomatic and military personnel from Belgium, France, Sweden and the U.S.

'Lehi' Jewish extremists led by Abraham Stern, set up a fake checkpoint on a Jerusalem road and assassinated Count Folke Bernadotte on 17 September.



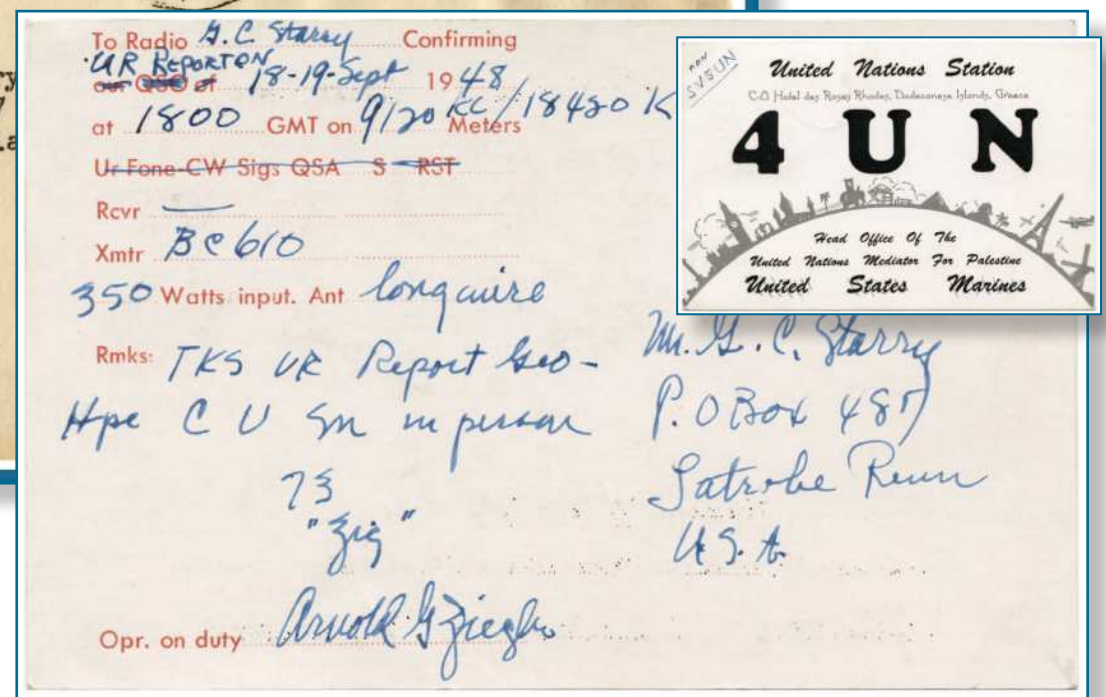
UNTSO, Military Observer, U.S. Naval Member, Haifa, Israel to Camp Lejeune, N.C., 29 August 1948
Mailed from Israeli post office with censor mark on reverse - Few reported examples



Palestine Mediator / Radio Station Manager
Rhodes, Greece to Latrobe, Pennsylvania
2 November 1948
1800dr <20 grams, airmail letter rate to USA
Only reported example

Signed by
Arnold Ziegler
station manager
Reverse and reduced front

Cover content:
QSL card confirming
receipt of
September 18-19
radio broadcast of
Folke Bernadotte's
assassination on
17 September



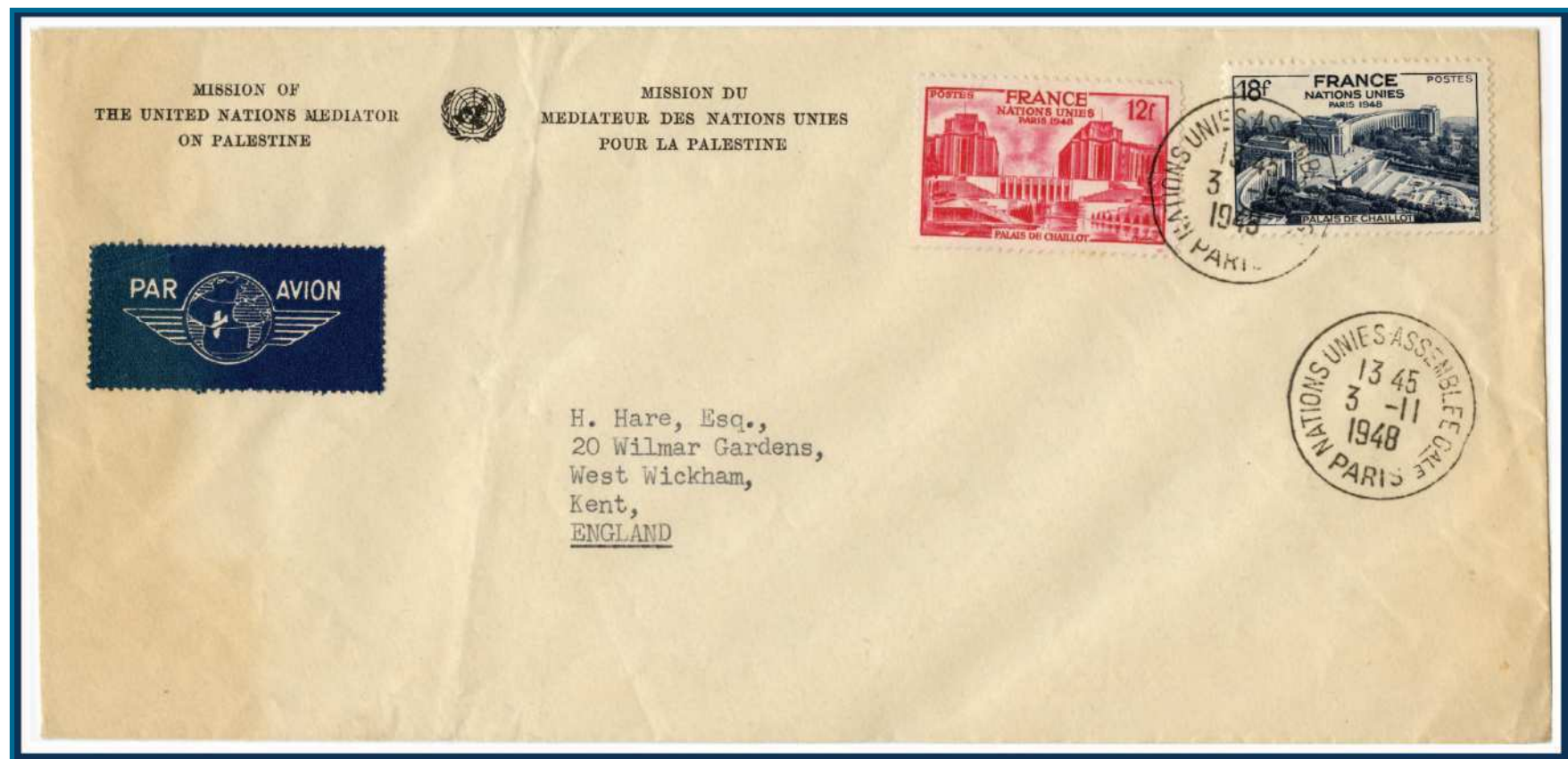


Trygve Lie

Following Count Folke Bernadotte's assassination, U.N. Secretary General Trygve Lie 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, Euro and U.S. Dollar denominations



Palestine Mediator, Paris, France to Kent, England, 3 November 1948; 18Fr <25 grams, 12Fr second 25 grams (30Fr total)
Hand cancel device (Gaines catalog 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
Transjordan
occupation
overprint

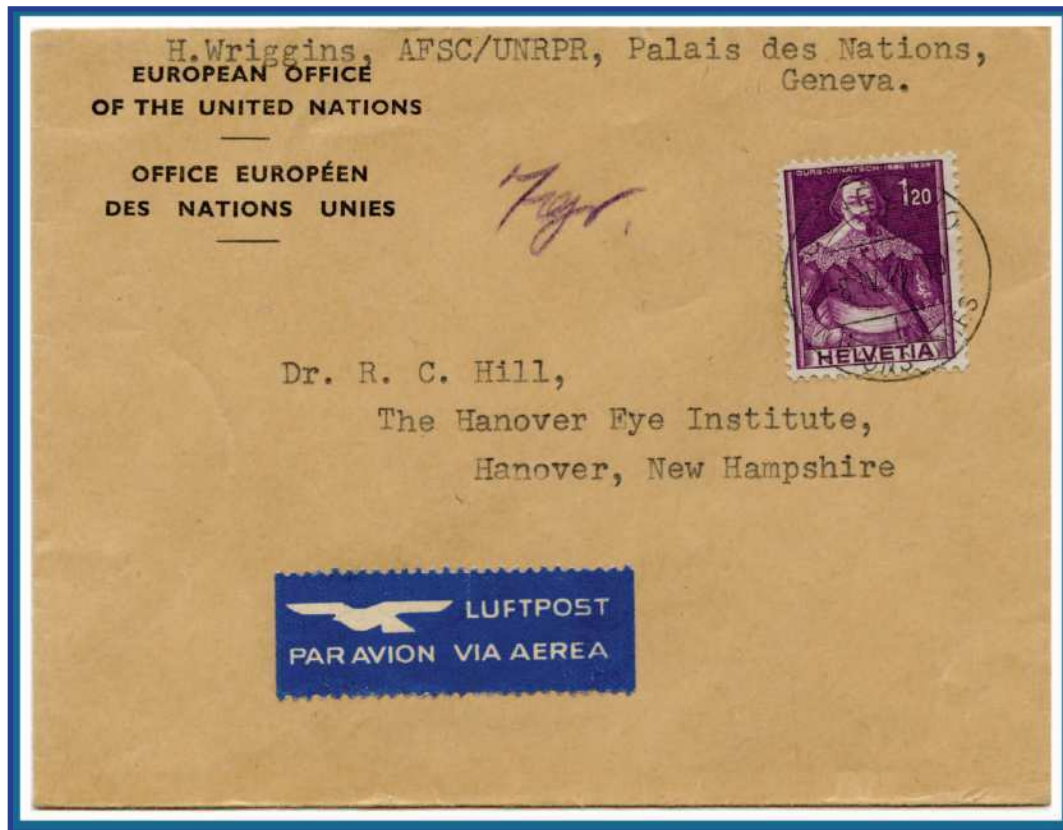
Ralph Bunche presented several peace initiatives to the 1948 3rd General Assembly in Paris, France. Most were rejected but support for Palestine refugees was approved. Armistice negotiations were signed between February and July and negotiators included King Abdullah, Yitzhak Rabin and Moshe Dayan. The position of Mediator was terminated on 11 August.



Yitzhak Rabin, Israel



Moshe Dayan, Israel



Graf Carton de Wiart



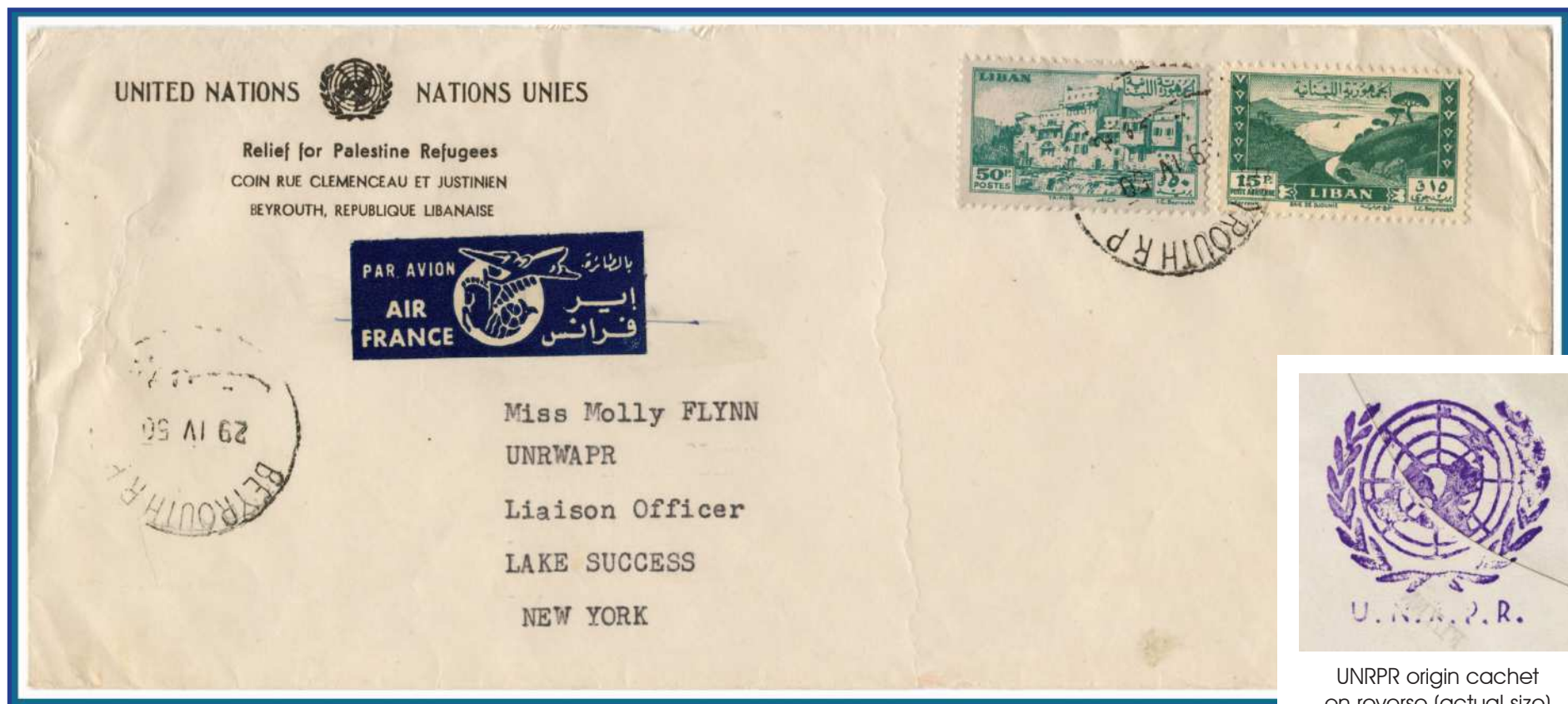
UNRPR office in Beirut



U.N. Relief and Works Agency

The ongoing conflict forced many Arabs to abandon their homes. On 1 December, Graf Carton de Wiart of Belgium proposed an interim U.N. Relief for Palestine Refugees (UNRPR) organization. The U.N. invited the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC - Quakers) to assist with refugee relief efforts. The UNRPR was absorbed on 1 May by the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWAPR).

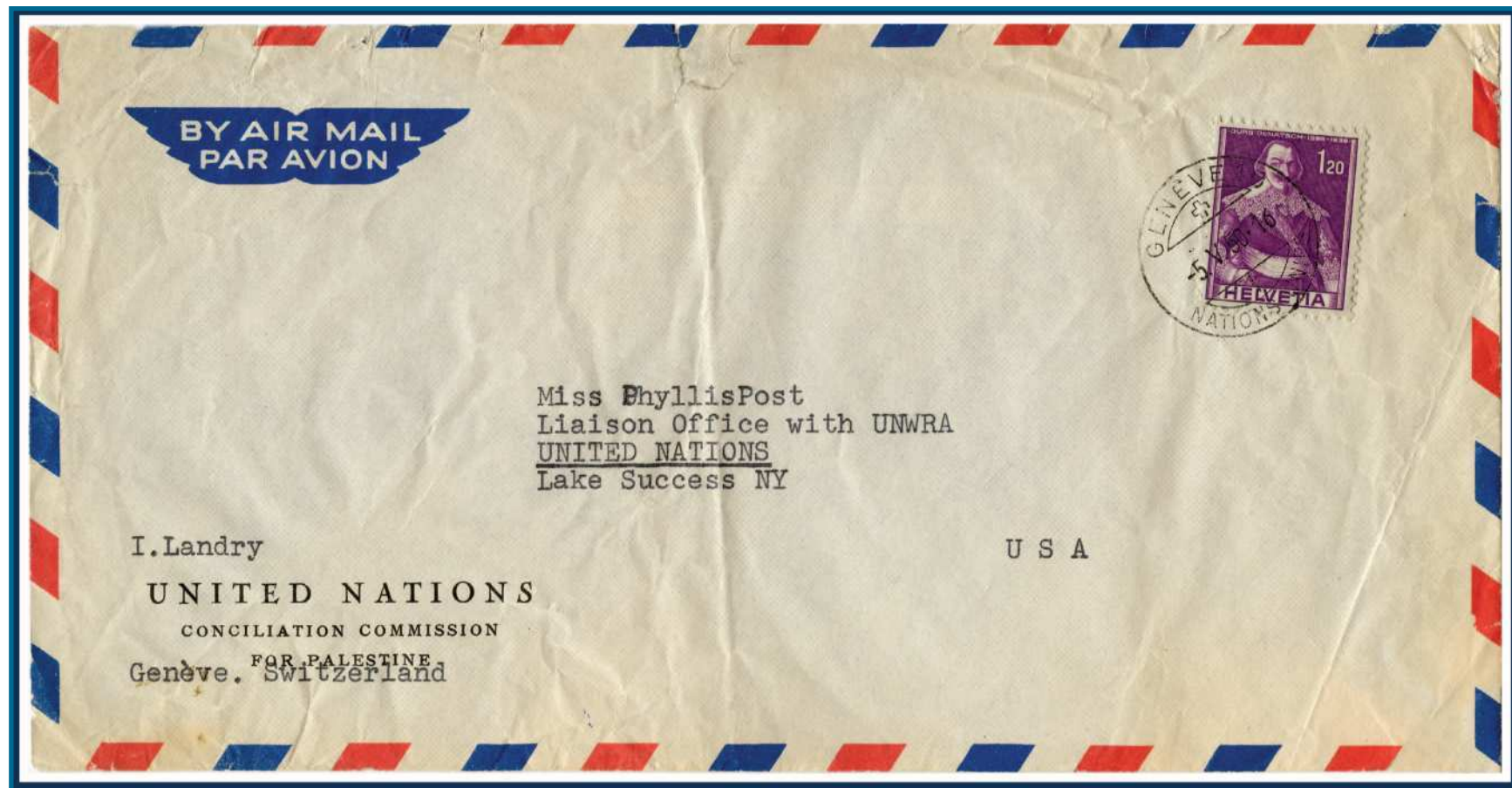
AFSC / UNRPR, Geneva, Switzerland to Hanover, New Hampshire, 8 April 1949
40rp < 20 grams, 2 x 40rp airmail fee per 5 grams (1.20Fr total)
Howard Wriggins was AFSC Liaison. **Only reported example of AFSC service mail**



UNRPR origin cachet on reverse (actual size)

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

The Conciliation Commission, formed 11 December, mediated agreements, disputes and addressed residual issues.



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



UNRWAPR, Beirut, Lebanon to Versailles, France, 27 November 1953; 15p <20 grams, 20p airmail fee (35p total)

Conciliation Commission duties were assumed by both the Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWAPR) and the Treaty Supervision Organization (UNTSO) in late 1951.



UNTSO Peace-keepers
1st class letter rate

Peace efforts continue to this day as the final resolution to the land dispute has yet to be realized.