

Synopsis for "The Universal Declaration of Human Rights"

The original intent of this exhibit was to use the United Nations stamps that were issued between 1989 and 1992 because they spelled out in tabs on the stamps, in three different languages, each clause of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Thus the treatment of this section of the exhibit is in considerably more extensive than others. It was necessary to provide some background, so I have looked at the history of the concepts addressed in the UDHR. The UDHR was adopted by the UN in 1948. In order for the ideas enshrined in the UDHR to become the law in the countries that ratified them, a series of treaties or covenants was passed by the UN General Assembly. I discuss all the covenants that have resulted from this document. Many of the concepts in these treaties are duplicative. Some have much more material to work with than others. There have been numerous items issued for Persons with Disabilities, for example. In addition to the legal treaties, a variety of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been organized to ensure that governments do in fact abide by the treaties that they have signed. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch are two of the better-known NGOs.

One of the guiding personalities in the drafting and passage of the UDHR was Eleanor Roosevelt. She is featured on a large amount of philatelic material. I have tried to classify all of the portraits used on stamps commemorating Mrs. Roosevelt. Unfortunately, I have not been able to identify all the photographers who furnished the photos from which the designs were taken. This is an area of ongoing research. One of two unique pieces in the exhibit is the original artwork and proof for the Eleanor Roosevelt stamp issued by Barbuda. In November 2003 Greg Manning & Associates auctioned the UN archive of proofs and original art. Included was material concerning the 1989-92 UDHR set. One piece of original art from that sale is shown in this exhibit. These items are unique. The photo of Lucretia Mott from the Sol Glass archives is a recent addition. It was used in the design for the 1948 American Woman centennial issue. The title page has been reworked and the page headings have been changed since last showing.

The most difficult challenge for this exhibit has been to find postally used pieces that carry the UN stamps from 1989-92. Especially difficult to find are covers originating in Geneva and Vienna. The inverted logo meter slogan for the International Year of Disabled Persons was discovered by the exhibitor. Proofs from the French area of which 5-20 copies are known have been included. EFOs are also shown, some of which have only 10 known copies.

References:

- Baur, B.C. 1996. Franklin Roosevelt's concept of four freedoms could not be endorsed by many nations until end of World War II. *Global Stamp News*, Issue #72, July, page 86.
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- <http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/humanrights/timeline/index.cfm>
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