

# The French United Nations “General Assembly” Issues of 1948

**Purpose:** This is a traditional exhibit presenting the stamps issued by the French Government to commemorate the United Nations General Assembly meeting of 1948 at the Palais de Chaillot in Paris, France.

**Background:** Before completion of the United Nations Headquarters complex in New York City, Paris hosted two sessions of the U.N. General Assembly (the third assembly in 1948 and the sixth Assembly in 1951-52). Except for its first session in London in 1946, the General Assembly has not met in any other location outside of New York.

## A. Pre-Production

### I. Rejected Design (Unadopted Overprint)

In normal practice during the late 1940's, design of a French stamp issue began with the Ministry of Posts, Telegraphs and Telephones soliciting sketches of proposed designs from artists. A design then would be selected on the basis of the sketches, and the engraving process begun.

Possibly because of the brief time available, which was due to the lateness of the decision on Paris for the General Assembly site (at most five months), the starting point for the design of the 1948 General Assembly issue was experimentation with a 20.5 x 4mm letterpress overprint:

This overprint apparently was intended to be used either with existing or reprinted supplies of already designed commemorative stamps. It was not used. This essay overprint survives only on trial color die proofs. Three sets of two are believed to exist, based upon the quantity reportedly made in each color for ordinary trial color die proofs. The essay overprint right is on a trial color die proof of the revalued and re-engraved Palais du Luxembourg issue released on 10 May 1948. The actual issue color for the stamp was rose carmine.

## Exhibit Plan:

### Title Page

#### A. Pre-Production

- I. Rejected Design (Unadopted Overprint)
- II. Artist Drawing
- III. Artist Die Proofs - Unhardened Master Die
- IV. Artist Die Proofs - Hardened Master Die
- Color Trial Proofs
- Deluxe Proofs
- Collective Proofs

#### B. Stamp Production

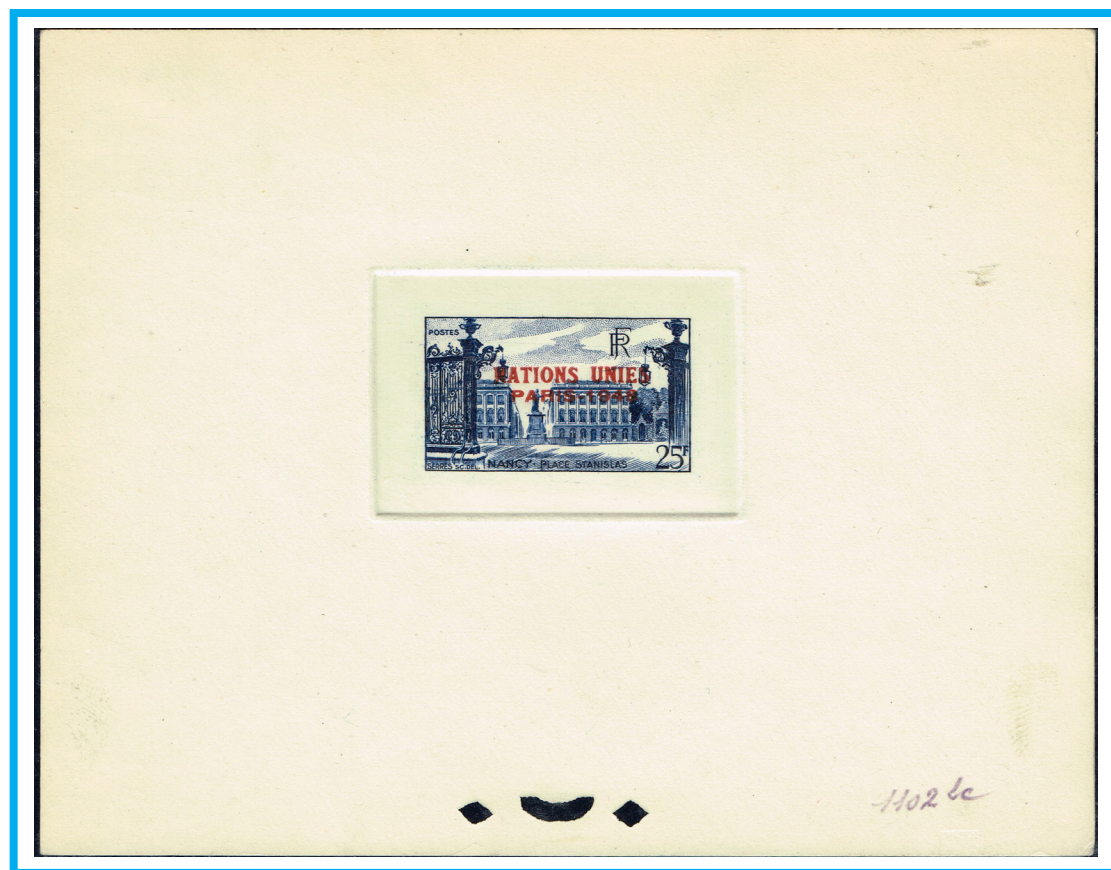
- I. Plate Proofs
- II. Epreuve Deluxe Proofs
- III. Sheet Layout and Production

#### C. Stamp Usage

- I. First Day Usage
- II. Domestic Mail
- III. International Mail
- IV. Last Day Conference Usage

A blue border is used to emphasize exceptionally scarce or important items.

20.6mm  
4.9mm  
NATIONS UNIES  
PARIS-1948



(Three known)



(Three known)

While it was possible that additional trial color die proofs were made for use with the Experimental “UN” overprints, it is more likely that the printer, the Atelier de Fabrication des Timbres Poste, used “leftover” trial colors on hand at the time. (The practice in the late 1940's was for the A.T.F. to produce these trial colors from the hardened master die, for use by the P.T.T. in selecting an issue's color. Generally, only three or four pulls were made in each color). This would account for the report ‘that only three of each type of “UN overprint” essay were made.

Although the precise reason these essays were rejected has never been made public, two possible reasons can be theorized: (1) the overprints were not very distinctive on the two stamps tested; and (2) the underlying stamps were totally unrelated to the “UN” theme or the General Assembly site, the Palais des Nations in Paris.

They do provide an interesting insight into the stamp design process, and the options considered when pressed for a commemorative design on short notice for a major international event.