ALL PERIODS & ASPECTS OF PHILATELY OF THE HOLY LAND
כתב העת לבולאות של ארץ ישראל | مجلة حول الطوابع من الأرض المقدسة

Interim mail prepared for registered service – but not sent as such: 9 May 1948 postmarked cover sent from Meshek Ein Harod to Tel Aviv, franked 23 mils for the 25 mils registered letter rate, endorsed as such and marked with a blue cross – but sent as regular mail, without a registry label affixed. A talking point for this bulletin's article.

מכתב שנשלח ב-9 במאי 1948 בתקופת שירות הדואר הביניים של מנהלת העם: המעטפה הוכנה לשירות דואר רשום, בוילה 23 מיל עבור התעריף של 25 מיל, סומנה בהדגשה ״באחראיות״ ובצלב כחול – אך לבסוף נשלחה כדואר רגיל וללא מספר רישום מודבק. היא משמשת דוגמה מיוחדת בכתבה ומחקר במהדורה הזאת.

CONTENTS

THE OPENING 'VORT'

The timing and content of this issue of the Bulletin were unplanned, but reflect perfectly the nature of the work in philately, that lessons and discoveries simply crop up as a byproduct of everyday work. At 142 pages this is a 'bare-bones' issue.

Some time ago, I displayed for sale a 15 May 1948 postmarked cover from the Ahuzat Samuel post office which I described as being 'true' first day Israel mail as this was posted literally on Israel's first day of existence, albeit on a Saturday, as opposed to mail from 16 May – Sunday, the first work day of the Jewish week, which is generally called "first day Israel" mail.

Shortly thereafter I received an email from a certain Israel philatelist/dealer who desired to correct an error in my description, pointing out that this type of mail was philatelic; that the post office in question was located in a small convenience store and that the manager had allowed the public to concoct all manner of mail using the postmarks. He concluded that only the 15 May dated mail from Safed is genuine "1st day" 15 May dated mail. The image that arises feeds off the popular imagination in our field, that as regards the interim period, it was a chaotic free for all era where anyone could access postal materials and create whatever postal items he wanted. Indeed, to judge by the sheer quantity of philatelic and fake material on the market, the average observer could be excused for thinking that way.

The philatelist didn't provide any evidence for his assertions. Taking the matter seriously I went back and assembled all the information I had used to formulate the description and replied back with it, noting the sources used, to support my position. Thereafter the philatelist wanted to continue the discussion over the phone though I preferred everything in writing and at that juncture the exchange ended.

Since then I've been motivated to write an article about this type of mail, to examine it and determine conclusively whether it is genuine and legitimate – or not. It took a few years to cobble together examples of mail and pieces of information in order to set out and script an article. And as occurs not once in this field, an examination of a matter in one place leads to questions and discoveries in other places, and so what began initially as an essay-inquiry into the matter of 15 May dated mail at Ahuzat Samuel diverged and mushroomed into a full blown investigation into the accompanying subject of registered mail service in the interim period, for the specialist literature specifically marks out Ahuzat Samuel as uniquely not having offered registered mail service during the interim period. **It turns out, there was no real registered mail service.**

A submotif for this research article is that our existing knowledge base of specialist literature and journal publications is both poor in due diligence, fact-checking and basic philatelic knowledge as it is compromised by ulterior motives and conflicts of interest. In the following pages it may seem from time to time that I have an axe to grind – and the truth is, I do. I've spent 3 months of my time discovering that the bedrock of our community's knowledge base is highly inaccurate and misleading (in some cases impacting the accuracy of my own cataloguing work), and I've had to go and confirm or reconfirm matters that most of us have taken as unquestionable "established facts". With that, I do believe that those who take the time to read the following article will be enriched in knowledge as well as in understanding.

It's important for me to stress that these Bulletins are not vehicles for me to drip-feed questionable ideas or philatelic articles into the market. Whatever I write in this publication is the result of exhaustive research, and as we see with issue #1 from May 2022, the published articles are continuously updated as I find more information.

This issue is dedicated to a former Professor of mine, Jeffrey Burds, then at the University of Rochester, who in my senior year exhorted me to use "primary sources" in my thesis paper. Back then I had no idea what he meant: 1995 was at the dawn of the internet age and all I knew was to access books at the library. After all, if a book (i.e. a "secondary source") mentioned a fact why ever would I need to travel to an archive to access a document which would state the same thing? Here now, in a field much less well researched and documented the only way to arrive at a conclusion to a thesis is indeed to use primary sources, and I've endeavored to do that throughout.

A reminder that Bulletin #1 is available online, and has been **revised 4 times** since its publication in May 2022 with much new material added to the articles, which are:
The "Crown Agents Acquisition Books" by Collins is incomplete[1] | Domestic Air Mail in the Mandate | **Legalized Taxi Mail and the Hidden History of the Haifa Head Post Office in April-May 1948** | There was More than 1 'Rosette' Postmark used in Interim Jerusalem Mail | **Understanding Postage Dues and Israeli Postage Dues Calculations** | "Doar Sadeh" and Police Mail through the Army Postal Service | **When did the WWII British Army Postal Concession in Palestine Begin** | Jewish Year-Dating Methods on Ottoman Palestine Mail

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[1] Now with Feb. 1947 documentary reference to "stamp vending machines", confirming the existence of coil stamps at this time.

ON 15 May 1948 'TRUE' FIRST DAY ISRAEL MAIL

A subtle but groundbreaking date in Israeli postal history seems to have gone unnoticed for over 70 years – mail postmarked on Saturday 15 May 1948, the first day of Israel's independence.

In the last 20 years I've seen 5 pieces of mail – covers – either postmarked or transiting the Ahuzat Samuel post office ('town agency') on this date but have not found any reference in the specialist literature (books and journals) to explain the circumstances of this mail on a day (Sabbath) when no post offices in Jewish locales would operate. Here we would be speaking of 'true' 1st day Israel mail as opposed to the generally accepted notion of mail postmarked on Sunday 16 May, the first working day of the new State of Israel (i.e. the 2nd actual day of the independent state).

As this would be a significant discovery and revision of our postal history, and in light of the abundance of philatelic mail from the interim/early Israel period, I set out to determine if the mail I observed was legitimate and under what circumstance it could have come about.

I checked all aspects of the observed mail – the postage paid, the stamps used, the names and addresses of addressees and senders, the manner of the postmarking, any indications of the postal handling/routing/procedures – to see if what appears on the mail is in line with legitimate, authentic mail of this period.

This study is divided into two parts: the first one examines the key aspects of the observed mail and reaches a conclusion about its authenticity; the second part is an in-depth study of the matter of interim registered mail. That second part is a byproduct of the original research and it yielded a shocking discovery – that there was no real registered mail service neither under the interim postal administration nor in the early weeks of the subsequent Israeli postal administration.

To establish points of reference in the time period of our study, let us note that the specific date of this examination is a moment succeeding the period of what we call the "interim" postal administration of the transitional 'interim government' (called the "Peoples' Council", or in Hebrew, "Minhelet Haam"), which existed in the brief period of time between the Mandate and the Israeli postal administrations.

The interim postal administration took control of postal services at all but the main 'head post offices' of the major cities of the future Jewish state (Tel Aviv, Haifa and tenuously Jerusalem), from 2 May 1948, and it assumed control of those head post offices (except in Jerusalem, on the 14th) on 6 May; it administered all the postal services until Friday, 14 May inclusive.

For its part the Mandate postal service terminated public postal services at rural "postal agencies" as of 16 April, followed by a similar termination of service at rural "post offices" and all other post offices, except the head post offices, as of 1 May. The acceptance of registered mail ended as of 21 April (with the final date for the delivery of such mail being 30 April).[2]

Outwardly the interim postal administration merely inherited the existing postal services, retaining the same postage rates and services (with a few bureaucratic-procedural adjustments in the processing of mail) – though we will see in the course of this study, not everything was actually retained or implemented as theoretically planned or as published to the public.[3]

I present here my research on this subject based on the mail items I have seen (handled or observed):

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[2] Per Public Notice #53 of 1948, page 63 in https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/489817

[3] Zvi Aloni z"l "The Postal History of the Transition Period in Israel 1948: Vol. 1 - Minhelet Haam and Israel", 2015, footnote p.65 states that the latest/last edition of the Mandate's "Palestine Post Office Guide April 1948" was printed but never distributed – that may leave the nagging worry that perhaps its regulations were not adopted or in force at the time of the interim period, and that the interim period somehow operated independently of existing procedures and policies: from the State Archives we have confirmation that the Guide was distributed and was the basis for postal policy into 1949 - see this 19 Jan. 1949 amendment to clauses referenced from the Guide, on pg.45 of this file https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/2461970.

* Aloni's book is a compilation of much existing information, taken from various sources. As such, **a critique of information referenced in his book is not to be taken as criticism of him personally**.

I. Meeting the Mail

Here is a survey of the 5 postal items I observed:

Item #1 (handled and inspected by me)
Postal item: standard white unmarked envelope
Addressed to (in Hebrew): Ludwig Rehr (or "Roehr") at "Rehr House" on Mount Carmel Haifa – written pedantically with accent marks as if by a recent immigrant
⇨ The name "Rehr House" is a common type of expression in this period, simply meaning "Rehr's apartment" or "Rehr's dwelling" as the primary resident at that address – it does not mean the actual building is his.
Return address (if any): none[4]
Postmarked: from Ahuzat Samuel on 15 May 1948
Franked: 25 mils – presumably for registered mail (10m + 15m) but this was not available at Ahuzat Samuel (more on this below); the stamps are counterstamped with the violet colored Tel Aviv "DOAR" handstamp – as generally observed in most regions of Palestine/Israel in this period.
Additional about the item: transit-marked by the interim postmark of the Mount Carmel branch post office (more on this below)

What we know about the address/es: I located online another piece of mail sent to this addressee, dated 14 May – also from Ahuzat Samuel:
⇨ The cover is an "air mail" imprinted envelope
⇨ Here also addressed in Hebrew, in different handwriting than above & a little less pedantic, with a slight clarification of the address – #7 Lotus street in the Mount Carmel neighborhood. The addressee's surname here is spelled in Hebrew as "ReR" whereas above even with accent marks it was spelled "ReHR".
⇨ The postage paid was 11 mils for the 10m domestic letter rate, using interim stamps bearing the Tel Aviv DOAR counter stamp in violet
⇨ There is a handstamped return address to a laundry business "J. Strasser Laundry", apparently at the same address. This is not problematic as many inner city Israeli buildings have stores on the street level and a number of floors with apartments above. From this cover we may deduce that the intended address for the 15 May cover is #7 on Lotus street; another cover addressed to someone else at this residence is also addressed to #7 Lotus Street.

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[4] Much mail in the late Mandate and interim periods is observed without a return address written: according to the philatelist Zvi Halperin, this was not a requirement on domestic registered mail, and that only later in 1948-49 return addresses were required on overseas mail (without which such mail would then not be accepted for registration). Reference Zvi Halperin "The Postal History of Israel During the Years 1948-1950, Part II" in Holy Land Postal History (HLPH) Bulletin #11 (Summer 1982), pg. 554. I confirm that I have seen such regulations in the Post Office Bulletins of 1949 but don't have an additional citation to add here for them as of this edition of the article. The Post Office Guide of April 1948, issued during the Mandate postal administration, similarly does not specify that a return address must be written on registered mail presented for dispatch.

⇨ Of note, there is no transit mark like on the cover from the 15th – see below in this article for further comments about this.

The surname "Rehr" is virtually unique in the historical records I came across, nevertheless there is a curious connection between a "Rehr" family member and a "Kuperstock House" in Jerusalem, as shown in this Jan. 1950 listing of name changes (i.e. from foreign sounding names to Hebraicized names) – here a Hans Rehr changing his first name to "Gideon".[5]

We will see further below, on information related to the Ahuza Samuel post office, that a Peretz and Hanna Kuperstock operated it in from the early 1950s and it appears that Peretz himself originally came from Jerusalem, and so here there may be a distant connection to the addressee on these letters. Indeed when we survey the history of that post office we shall find many curious connections between its owners and residents of the Ahuza neighborhood.

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[5] Yalkut HaPirsumim ('Government Notices') #56 of 4 Jan 1950, pg 405: https://www.nevo.co.il/law_html/law10/yalkut-0056.pdf

Item #2 (handled and inspected by me)

Postal item: standard brown unmarked envelope

Addressed to (in English): Mrs Mariane L. Hirsch at Gaton (i.e. Kibbutz Ga'aton near Nahariya)

Return address (if any): none

Postmarked: from Ahuzat Samuel on 15 May 1948

Franked: 33 mils – presumably for registered mail + extra weight (10m + 15m + 6m = 31m) but this was not available at Ahuzat Samuel (more on this below).

⇨ 5 different stamps were used for the postage; 4x are counterstamped with the violet colored Tel Aviv "DOAR" handstamp & 1x with the black Haifa "DOAR" handstamp.

⇨ The stamps appear to have been applied after the cover was addressed.

Additional about the item: some of the franks were not cancelled or fully cancelled at Ahuzat Samuel; here both re-postmarked and transit-marked by the interim postmark of the Mount Carmel branch post office.

⇨ Of note: Kibbutz Ga'aton was serviced by the Nahariya post office. At this time Nahariya was still under land siege and its mail serviced by its local sea-transported emergency postal service, which charged delivery fees – here 4x the standard amount for surrounding settlements serviced by the Nahariya post office[6]. Nevertheless that emergency service ended on 20 May and in any case the land route to Nahariya was reopened on the 17th, so the lack of Nahariya emergency post delivery fee stamps here is understandable.[7]

⇨ Also of note, Ga'aton was established in 1941 by Czech Jews and not in 1948 by Hungarian Jews as written on their own website and elsewhere.[8]

What we know about the address/es: the scant address was matched by equally scant information on the internet. Going through archives I did find a "Maria Hirsch" from Romania who arrived in Haifa on the ship SS Kedma on 22 Feb. 1948 – an overall possibility for a locale like this Kibbutz with its Eastern European associations, but the girl listed on the immigration records was born in 1932 (i.e. 16 years old in 1948) and this letter is addressed to a "Mrs.", so this is probably not the same person.[9]

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[6] David Kessler & Max Vogel "Postal History of Nahariya" (1952) cited in Zvi Shimony/Itamar Karpovsky/Zvi Aloni "The Postal History of the Transition Period in Israel 1948: Vol II - The Emergency, Local and Private Postal Services", 2009, p.46

[7] Ibid p.41

[8] Palestine Post of 5 Nov. 1941 p.1 (see entry in the Handbook of Holy Land Postal History - https://jerusalemstamps.com/Handbook_Holyland_Postal_History.pdf) versus https://www.gaaton.org.il/%d7%90%d7%95%d7%93%d7%95%d7%aa/ and the Wikipedia entry for Gaaton.

[9] See page 181 of the list (184 of the document), line 156: https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/462518

However I did find that a "Pension Hirsch" (with a Kosher kitchen) existed on the "southern end of Ga'aton", founded in 1939[10], and whose specific address was 41 Ga'aton Boulevard.[11] The apparent proprietor was called Felix Hirsch, who announced his request to renew his alcohol license in 1949 (#7 on the list of applicants).

I believe there is a high probability that the addressee here with apparently such a unique name in Israel was related to Felix Hirsch – and perhaps was his wife.

ha-Arets - הארץ, 17 November 1949 **3**

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הננו מודיעים ברבים כי הגשנו בקשה
למועצה המקומית נהריה לתידוש הרשיו־
נות למכירת משקאות חריפים במקום לשנת
1950 בבתי המלון שלנו.
1. פנסיון כהן, ריכרד כהן
2. גינתי, קפה־מסעדה,
   ארנסט סימונסון
3. קפה פינגוין,
   ארנסט אופנהיימר
4. קפה־מסעדה מקס פייבלמן
5. פנסיון אספלנד, ריכרד לדרר
6. פנסיון טוטי לוי,
   צ׳רלוטה רה פריו
7. פנסיון הירש, פליקם הירש
8. פנסיון נייברגר, אילזה נייברגר

[10] Reference: https://sites.google.com/site/toldotnahariya1/forty/nofesh
[11] Reference: https://sites.google.com/site/toldotnahariya1/forty/mischar1 , which was near the famous "Penguin" café at 31 HaGaaton
(https://www.ynet.co.il/food/foodnews/article/h1cbac3a5)

Item #3 (handled and inspected by me)

Postal item: Mandate 25 mils imprinted Air Letter

Addressed to (in English): Egon Meissner in London

Return address (if any): L Meissner at Vitkin 9 in Ahuza Haifa

Postmarked: 13 May 1948 from Mount Carmel branch post office – 2x strikes of the interim postmark tying the franking on the front + Mandate double ring postmark as a date device on the back

Franked: 25 mils using both the Mandate imprinted frank + the same amount using interim postage stamps (25m was the period air mail rate to the UK) – presumably double paid out of concern for which franking would be accepted in the end for the transmission, as Mandate stamps were declared to be invalid for postage as of 15 May (Circular 1 of the National Council of the Jewish Agency, dated 27 April 1948)[12]

⇨ The interim stamps are counterstamped with the Tel Aviv "DOAR" handstamp.

⇨ The interim stamps appear to have been applied after the cover was addressed.

Additional about the item: the initial postmarking at Mount Carmel, cancelling the franking, was against postal procedures for overseas-bound mail - mail sent abroad during the interim period had to be franked with Universal Postal Union recognized postage stamps (the Mandate stamps) and cancelled with UPU recognized postmarking devices (the Mandate cancellers)[13]; the cover was subsequently postmarked by the Mandate Ahuzat Samuel device (#117) on 15 May 1948 and tied just to the Mandate imprinted stamp.

⇨ This last step technically contravened the procedures as mail abroad was to be handed in un-postmarked at the secondary post offices and only postmarked for dispatch at the Head Post Office – but on the little mail from the interim period which was addressed abroad this is often not seen done, and here specifically the Haifa HPO suffered from a shortage of workers and logistic resources resulting in a backlog of mail.[14]

⇨ The original correspondence, dated 13 May, is included; family correspondence in German – this confirms that the letter was not posted prior to the 13th.

⇨ The noted philatelist Samuel Ray of Chicago has marked the lower edge of the letter with his micro handstamp


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[12] Duplicated document in Zvi Aloni "The Postal History of the Transition Period in Israel 1948: Vol. 1 - Minhelet Haam and Israel", 2015, p.33

[13] Per Circular 1 of the Department of Posts and Telegraphs + its Annex , dated 25 April 1948; replicated in Ibid p.496-500

[14] As researched and published by me in JerusalemStamps Bulletin #1 pg. 24-53 "Legalized Taxi Mail & the Hidden History of the Haifa Head Post Office in April-May 1948" - https://jerusalemstamps.com/JerusalemStampsBulletin001.pdf
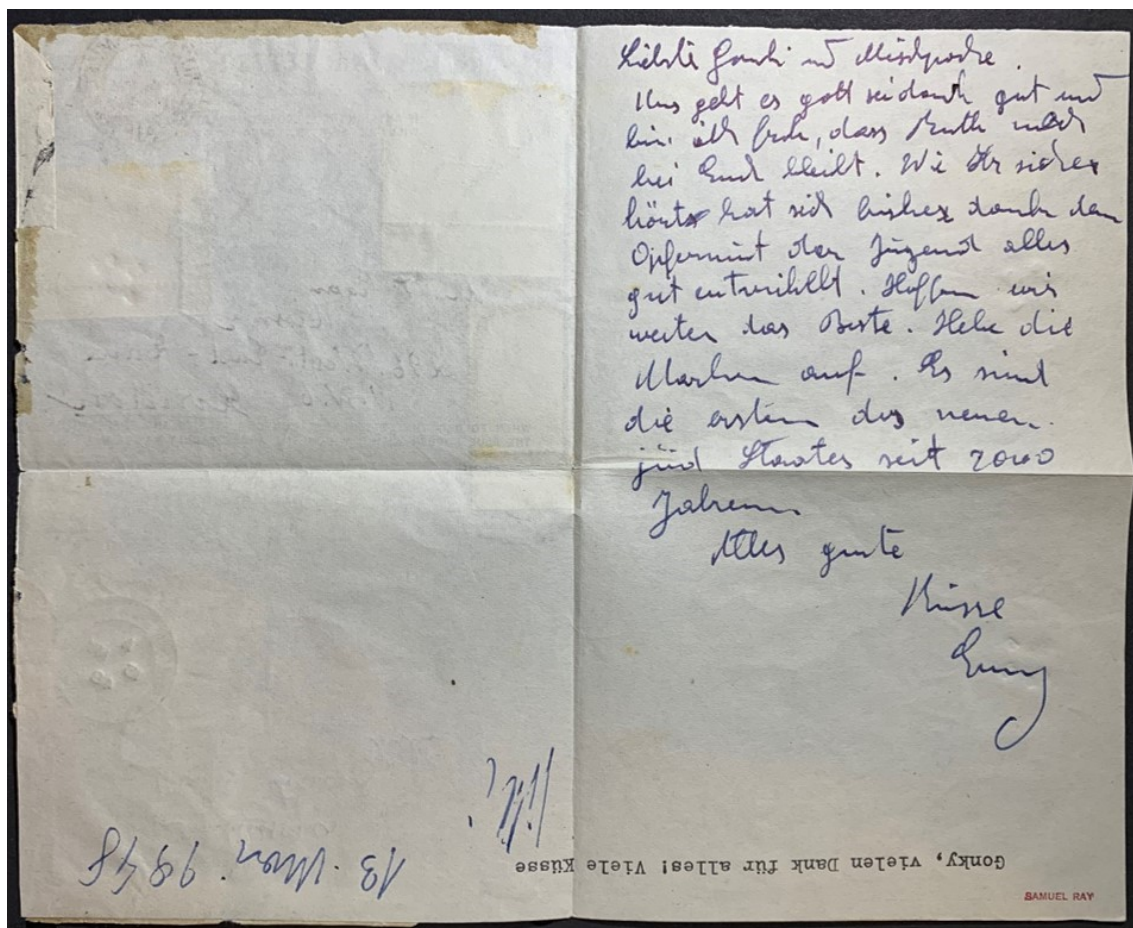
What we know about the address/es: I have both confirmed a Lilly Meissner living on 22a Vitkin Street as of 18 Dec. 1941 through the Land Ownership Registry ('Tabu')[15] and have also observed a 1944 letter mailed to her at Ahuza, from Mauritius:

Meissner's 1948 address at #9 Vitkin is literally across the street from 22a, being part of the same parcel #10786 cited above.[16]

Item #4 (handled and inspected by me)

Postal item: standard brown unmarked envelope

Addressed to (in English): Mrs Lilly Meissner at Vitkin 9 in Ahuza, Haifa (typewritten – but there are no signs that the cover was typewritten after the franks were affixed, like paper stretch or tension marks)

Return address (if any): none

Postmarked: from Ahuzat Samuel on 15 May 1948

Franked: 40 mils – presumably for registered mail (10m + 15m = 25m) this was not available at Ahuzat Samuel; here owing to the franking being a corner block of 4x 10m stamps I allow for the possibility of overfranking without payment for any extra weight purely for esthetic reasons (eg. at least 1x 10m stamp was unneeded for the basic registered letter postage).

⇨ Interim stamps while valid for postal use until 22 May were not convertible to the new Doar Ivri stamps and so had a short shelf-life from 15 May onwards.[17]

⇨ The interim stamps are counterstamped with the Tel Aviv "DOAR" handstamp.

⇨ The stamps appear to have been applied after the cover was addressed.

Additional about the item: although the address is in Ahuza (i.e. where the Ahuzat Samuel post office was located), the cover was backstamped by the Mount Carmel branch post office

What we know about the address/es: As per the research for item #3 we know of this addressee and her mailing address here on 15 May 1948 matches that of the return address on her letter to Britain from 13 May.

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[17] Per Circular 2 of the Department of Posts and Telegraphs, dated 9 May 1948 and reproduced in Aloni p.503-504.

Item #5 (not handled or inspected by me, only seen online)
Postal item: standard brown unmarked envelope
Addressed to (in Hebrew): Mr. Shmuel Rotstein at Sinai 11 in Ahuza "S.Ha.S" (possibly abbreviation for "Sir Herbert Samuel"), Haifa
Return address (if any): none
Postmarked: from Ahuzat Samuel on 15 May 1948
Franked: 10 mils for the domestic letter postage rate, counterstamped with the Tel Aviv "DOAR" handstamp.
Additional about the item: unlike the other 4 covers studied here, this one uniquely does not bear any interim postmarks (eg. of the Mount Carmel post office). Someone has written "Mandate Handstamp" in German on the back – but this appears to be in different handwriting (in blue) to that on the front (in black).

⇨ While we could dismiss this cover as being philatelic purely on account of the comment on the back + the lack of a Mount Carmel transit mark, a more reasonable evaluation of it may be – as will be shown below – this is the only cover of the examined sample to have been franked as a regular letter, so in principle we shouldn't expect to see any transit or arrival postmarks on it.

What we know about the address/es: The survey of the history of homes in the Carmel at the Library of the University of Haifa confirms by way of Municipal records, a Shlomo Rotstein living at this address as of 1941[18].

The purpose of this initial survey of the observed covers was to introduce the reader to the actual postal material, draw his attention to certain aspects of each one – and in particular to establish that each addressee (if not also the sender) was a genuine, confirmable entity. I also think that broadly we can see from these examples that none appear overtly philatelic; the stamps used for franking are unremarkable, ordinary and of low catalogue value – and whatever questions may remain about the postage paid or the Mount Carmel transit we will be able to better understand these in the subsequent chapters of this article.

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[18] Source: https://liblog.haifa.ac.il/index.php/item/386-haifabulding

II. Getting a Sense of the Geography

Establishing the addresses of the post offices are separate sections further down in this article, but in order to help the reader get a better sense of the geographic area involved in this study, particularly as it relates to the mail observed above, here are a few maps to show us where these places are:

The first map, from 1940, shows us the locations of the Mount Carmel and Ahuzat Samuel neighborhoods in Haifa; Haifa itself is built on along the base of a bay and up onto the top of a mountain which juts out into the Mediterranean Sea like a thumb – the 'thumb' tip is actually northwards, whereas the inland areas where the Carmel and Ahuzat Samuel are located, are southwards.
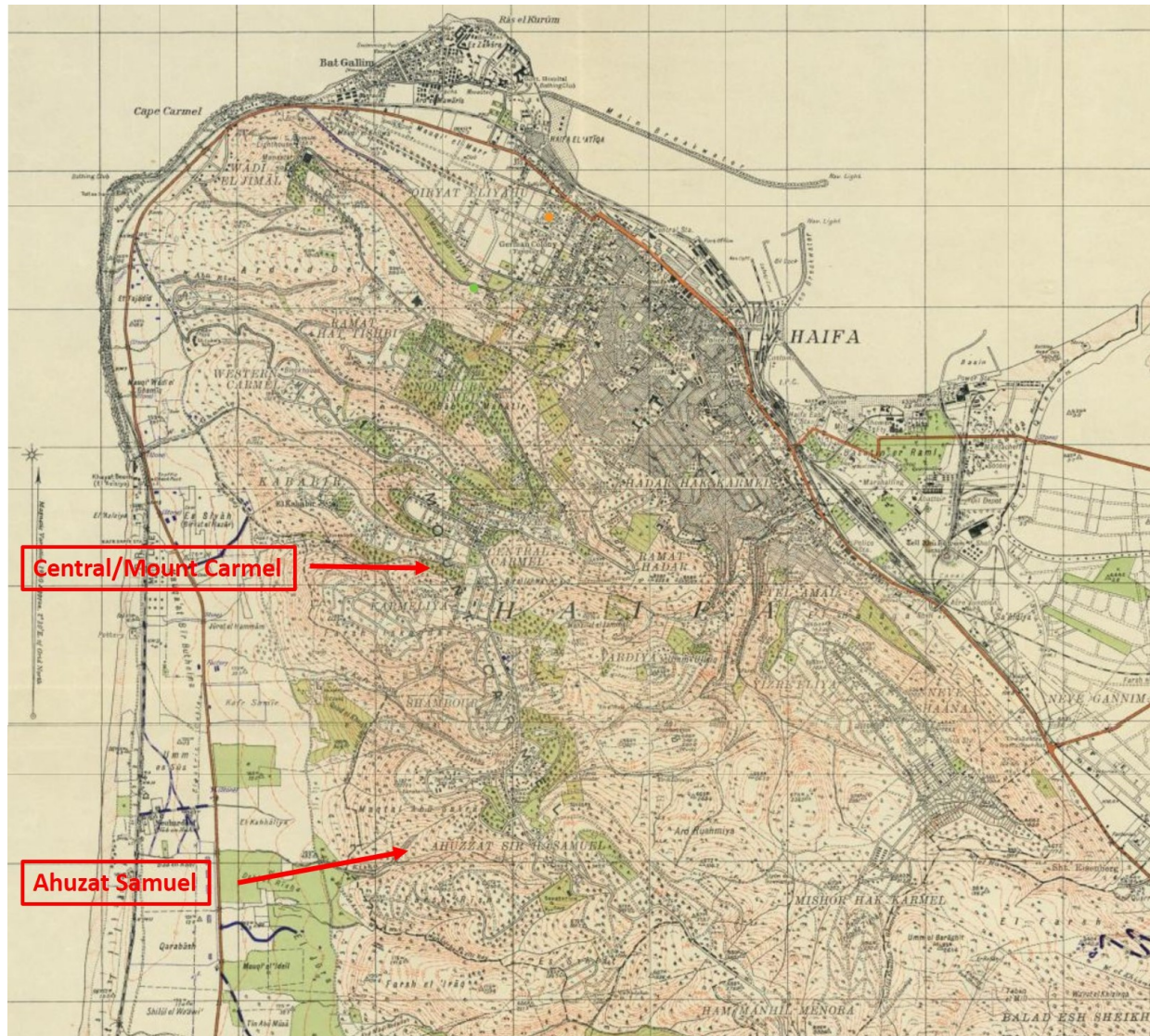
Below we have a map focusing on the specific local area involved in this study. Although it 'jumps the gun' by revealing addresses we will subsequently establish in this article, it's important for us to get a sense of the scale of the geography involved, the proximity of the relevant streets and addresses.

Having been unable to find a decent online street map in English, I made a mapping of the relevant addresses of the mail and post offices in this study by adding a few English labels in red onto a Hebrew map – as the map is rather tall its split onto 2 pages here, where the linear distance between the Mount Carmel branch post office and the Ahuzat Samuel post office is 3.26km, with the actual driving distance being 4.05km[19]:

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[19] As per: https://he.distance.to/%D7%A9%D7%93%D7%A8%D7%95%D7%AA-%D7%9E%D7%95%D7%A8%D7%99%D7%94-131,%D7%97%D7%99%D7%A4%D7%94/%D7%A9%D7%93%D7%A8%D7%95%D7%AA-%D7%94%D7%A0%D7%A9%D7%99%D7%90-125,%D7%97%D7%99%D7%A4%D7%94

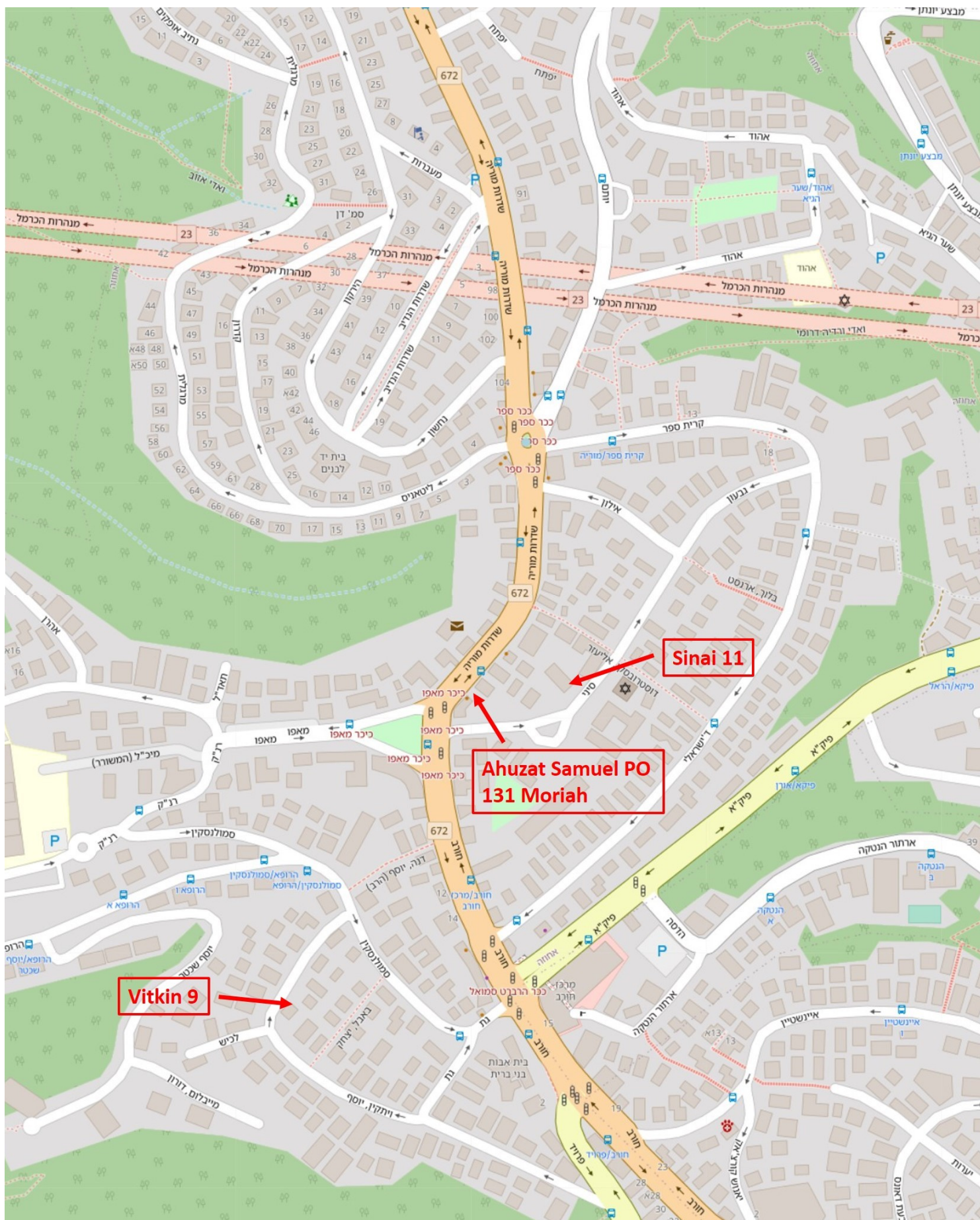**Mount Carmel Branch PO**
125 Hanassi / Pine Square

Lotus 7

Having been introduced now to the mail in question and the general "lay of the land", now we turn to the relevant post office, Ahuzat Samuel – what do we know about it?

III. On the Ahuzat Samuel Post Office

Remarkably for such an important post office in our study very little first-hand information about it exists. According to the specialist literature (Proud, Goldstein & Dickstein, Sacher etc)[20], presumably based on information in now-unobtainable 'Post Office Guides', this post office was designated a "Town Agency" and opened to the public on 18 Nov. 1935.

Having searched the press archives in English and Hebrew, the Official Gazette of the Mandate government and even the fairly generous scanned files at the State Archives, and elsewhere, I have not found a single mention neither of this post office contract being awarded to someone (i.e. an "Adjudication of Contracts") or of its opening, or more broadly of its specific operation. The lack of mention in the press is particularly surprising as events in the pre-State period were recorded in minute detail. In all the available, relevant files I've reviewed at the State Archives this post office appeared only once during my search of Mandate era documents.[21]

Compounding the problem is the terminology used in official documents like the Gazette to identify post offices: most broadly it divided the constellation of post offices into "post offices" and "postal agencies" – though sometimes using "post office" as a generic designation of any post office; if it had to make a distinction and identify key post offices – the main ones – it called these "head post offices" (the main post offices of the main cities of Haifa, Jaffa, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, where the primary one in Jerusalem was sometimes also referred to as the "General Post Office").

In rare instances where an actual distinction in the stature of a post office was made, the official terminology referred to "post offices", "branch post offices" and "sub-post offices". In some (rare) cases these distinctions were further split up as "head post offices", "sub-post offices" and "postal agencies".[22] Adding further confusion, sometimes official correspondences and the Gazette refer to smaller post offices as "rural post offices" – begging the question of, what is the difference?[23]

We receive some insights from comments made by the Postmaster General himself from one of a series of lectures he gave on the postal service: as of 1931 the Palestine Posts and Telegraphs service was divided into two divisions - Northern and Southern, each under the supervision of an Assistant Director and Engineer. Within each division there were 'districts' within which there were "head post offices" (eg. Jerusalem, Jaffa, Haifa), "branch post offices", "sub-offices" and "postal agencies" - all were staffed entirely by Post Office personnel except the "postal agencies", which were maintained by private individuals who received a fee (eg. a salary) in accordance with the value of the service performed.[24]

Of the 4 instances I found of Ahuzat Samuel's mention in the Gazette there is no definitive indication of its actual designation, location or function:[25]

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[20] For example: Edward Proud "The Postal History of Palestine and Transjordan", 2006, p.187; Carlos Goldstein & Emil Dickstein "Haifa and Jaffa Postmarks of the Palestine Mandate", 1983, p.13; Michael Sacher "The Postal Markings of Mandate Palestine", 1995, p.179

[21] See for instance correspondences between the Public Works Department and the Department of Posts and Telegraphs on the matter of maintenance of post office buildings (file https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/198035 covering 1937-1948; see in particular 1945-46) – on listings of "hired premises" such as on pages 148, 185, 232, 301, 361 & 376 the location simply doesn't exist. Mention of an "additional room" at Mount Carmel (pg. 361 & 376) does not appear to be this post office on account of its relatively high rent and maintenance expenditures compared to other post/branch offices; also relative to the costs specifically for the Mount Carmel branch office on p.301.

       In a moment of candid departmental self-effacement (1946) even the PWD acting director admits to there being "meager information readily available in this office" regarding the rents and values of the cited buildings (p.359); indeed much of the correspondence between the two departments is about revising and correcting their own lists of properties.

[22] See for example Palestine Official Gazette #1232 of 05-11-1942, p.1222

[23] Even the majesterial work of Michael Sacher ("The Postal Markings of Mandate Palestine 1918-1948", 1995, p.431) adds to the confusion by referring to all the Haifa post offices, for example, as "branch offices", including Ahuzat Samuel.

[24] See in the Handbook (ibid) - The Palestine Bulletin, 5 Nov. 1931 p. 2, "The Postal Union, Forerunner of the League" (part 2 of a lecture on "Post, Telephone and Telegraph" by the Postmaster General, Colonel William Hudson, at the YMCA in Jerusalem)

[25] From left to right: Palestine Gazette #705 of 22 July 1937, p.709; PG #818, 29 Sept 1938, p.1119; PG #891, 1 June 1939, p.533; PG #1292, 7 Oct 1943 p.899

II.

DEPARTMENT OF POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS.

Shortage of silver, nickel and bronze coins in circulation.

The Public is hereby informed that small change may be had on application at the counter of the following Post Offices and Agencies:—

Post Offices	Postal Agencies
Beersheba	Ahuzat Sir Herbert
Beit Jala	Samuel
Benei Beraq	Atlit
Bethlehem	Bait Vegan
Binyamina	Gedera
Ein Harod	Givaat Brenner
Hertsliya	Heftsi Bah—Beit Alfa
Jenin	Kfar Vitkin
Jericho	Kinnereth
Karkur	Nahalat Yehuda
Khan Yunis	Qalqilya
Lydda	Ramataim
Lydda Air Port	Ramat Hasharon
El Majdel	Shefa 'Amr
Magdiel	Shekhunat Montefiori
Metulla	Yajur Nesher.
Nathanya	
Nes Tsiyona	
Qiryat Haim	
Ra'anana	
Ramallah	
Rishon le Tsiyon	
Rosh Pinna	
Samakh	
Shekhunat Borochov	
Tel Mond	
Yavneel	

12th July, 1937.

NOTICE.

DEPARTMENT OF POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS.

Restriction of certain Postal Services.

It is notified for information that the undermentioned Post Offices have been closed until further notice:—

Beisan	Lydda
Beersheba	Majdal
Beit Jala	Qalqilya
Bethlehem	Ramallah
Jericho	Shefa 'Amr
Khan Yunis	

The Money Order and Postal Order Service has been suspended in respect of the following Post Offices:—

Acre	Kinnereth
Affula	Metullah
Ahuzat Sir Herbert	Nablus
Samuel, Haifa	Nahariya
Atlit	Nazareth
Bat Yam	Qiryat Haim
Beer Tuviya	Rosh Pinna
Binyamina	Safad
Ein Harod	Samakh
Gaza	Tel Mond
Gedera	Tulkarm
Givat Brenner	Yavneel
Hebron	Zikhron Ya'aqov
Heftsi Bah	Greek Colony,
Beit Alfa	Jerusalem
Jenin	Citadel B. O.,
Karkur	Jerusalem

The Public Telephone Service at Hebron has also been suspended.

20th September, 1938.

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העורך דין ישראל עמיקם קיבל מכ־
תב (מיום 24 דצמבר 1940) מאת המ־
נהל הכללי של בתי הדואר בא״י, שבו
הוא מודיעו, כי כיום ישנם בא״י
ארבעים וארבעה בתי דואר המקב־
לים מיברקים באותיות עבריות: תל־
אביב, אחוזת הרברט סמואל, בת גלים.
הדר הכרמל נחלה — כולם חיפה;
סניף הדואר ברחוב אלנבי, סניף הדו־
אר ברחוב דיזנגוף, סניף הדואר בר־
חוב הרצל, סניף הדואר תל נורדאו —
כולם תל־אביב; עפולה; בני־ברק; בנ־
ימינה; חדרה; הרצליה; כרכור; כפר
סבא; כנרת; נהלל; נתניה; נס ציונה;
פרדס חנה; פתח תקוה; קרית חיים;
רעננה; רמתים; רמת גן; רחובות; זכרון
יעקב; ראשון לציון; ראש פנה; יג'ור
נשר; עתלית; בת־ים; גדרה; גבעת בר־
נר; חפצי בה — בית אלפה; כפר
ויטקין; כפר יחזקאל; מטולה; נחלת
יהודה; רמת השרון; שכונת בורוכוב;
תל־מונד; יבניאל ומשק עין חרוד.

NOTICE.

DEPARTMENT OF POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS.

Postal Order Business.

It is notified for information that Palestine Postal Order business has been resumed at the following Postal Agencies:—

'Atlit
Ahuzat Sir Herbert Samuel
Bat Yam
Beer Tuviya
Gedera
Givat Brenner
Heftsi Bah, Beit Alfa
Metulla
Ramat Hasharon
Tel Mond
Yavneel.

24th May, 1939.

NOTICES.

DEPARTMENT OF POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS.

I.

TOWN POSTAL AGENCIES.

With reference to the notice published in *Gazette* No. 898 of 29th June, 1939, it is notified for information that henceforth telephone payments will not be made and wireless receiving licences will not be issued at the Town Agencies of Ahuzzat Sir Herbert Samuel, Bat Galim and Hidjaz Street, Haifa, or Greek Colony, Jerusalem.

27th September, 1943.

A search of the press archives yielded chiefly a Jan. 1941 press report celebrating 20 years of Telegraph service with Hebrew characters (credited to Israel Amikam, of the future 1948 "Haifa Messengers" mail delivery service), in which it cited a letter to Amikam by the Postmaster General, stating that 44 post offices offer this service – and lists Ahuzat Samuel 2nd on its list (after generically listing "Tel Aviv" first).

There were in fact 6 classes of post office in Palestine, each distinguished by the scope of their postal activities and hours of operation – "Head Post Offices", "Branch Post Offices", "Post Offices", "Town Agencies", "Postal Agencies – Category 'B'", and "Postal Agencies – Category 'C'".[26]

But what 'actually' distinguished each type of post office is somewhat of a mystery. In the specialist literature, David Dorfman uniquely attempted to describe each post office classification:

- regarding Town Agencies he wrote that their operating hours were the same as "Post Offices" (working 6 days a week for 7 hours, where in Jewish locales these were closed on Saturdays), and that these transacted the same type of business except money orders and insured mail, and that "Town Agencies were sometimes delivery offices";
- Dorfman described Class B offices as working 4 hours daily and offering all services as a "Post Office" – and all were delivery offices;
- And Class C post offices he described as working 2 hours a day and offering "limited" business transactions.[27]

Dorfman doesn't cite the sources for the specific information he provided, and I would take his information as something supplemental but not definitive, as we know just from the Gazette information above that Ahuzat Samuel did offer both Money Order and Postal Order services at various times.

As regards the specific case of this post office operating on a Saturday (15 May), Ernst Fluri offers a tantalizing clue, writing, "This little agency... kept irregular hours due to the patriotism of its manager and her desire to help people".[28]

A frustrating aspect of our specialist philatelic literature is that most of the time the authors don't cite their sources for specific pieces of information. Compounding the problem, as I've seen through access to archives, is that the information and accuracy of official departmental publications, like the Post Office Guides[29], informational notices and even annual reports, were often superseded by revised internal memorandums that whose content was overlooked by the assemblers of 'high level' and summarized information – the more 'high level' the document, the more theoretical its information.[30]

We need to understand something about how this post office operated, its location and association with the Mount Carmel branch office in order to better evaluate the covers showcased in this article. If Ahuzat Samuel operated "irregular hours" and may "sometimes" have been a delivery office, was it somehow independent of how the rest of the post offices operated, and if so how independent was it?

The only documentary information I found about Ahuzat Samuel in the archives was an April 1947 era salary document listing 62 post offices, in which this post office and 3 others are classified as "Category A" 'Town Agencies'; the others listed below it are all under the general heading of 'Town Agencies' – but classified as Category B or C post offices. According to this document what distinguishes each Category is the amount shown as "Salary per Annum" (2nd column from the left), where the amount goes down for each descending category: specifically for Ahuzat Samuel the right-most "Remarks" column shows that it worked 42 hours a week – in principle, 7 hours a day for 6 days a week.[31]

Here then we have documentary confirmation about a) the scale of this post offices operation (7 hours a day for 6 days a week), and b) the senior designation of this as a "category A" type of post office. Even if a "category A" town agency only "sometimes" served as a delivery office, it was still a more 'senior' post office than the other 2 categories – not a "small" or insignificant post office in the constellation of the postal system. We also see by way of minor adjustments for "Telegraph Services" or the weekly hours to work in the "Remarks" column that even within each category there were some variations.

[26] Aloni ibid p.145 reproducing page 211 of the Postal Guide

[27] David Dorfman "Palestine Mandate Postmarks" 2nd edition 2016, p.10/110. He too bewailed the lack of forthcoming information from a collecting community he estimated (1985) at 3500, p.109.

[28] Ernst Fluri "The Minhelet Haam Period", 1973, p.44

[29] Those published in Palestine during the Mandate were obtainable by the public, so not surprising, lacking in much detailed information which would be valuable to future researchers - like the names of the post office managers (to try and determine if philatelic mail was created by them and given 'favor' treatment), eg. Palestine Post: 5 Apr 1932, p.3 & 8 Jan 1946, p.4 in https://jerusalemstamps.com/Handbook_Holyland_Postal_History.pdf

[30] Incredulously for instance the 1st annual report of the Israeli postal services, covering the interim period until Sept. 1949, details a time line of events – as originally published by the Mandate postal service – but totally disconnected from what subsequently occurred, like "termination of airmail service – 10 May". See pg. 10 of the file: https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/2461961. Even with "source" information there is a limit to its reliability.

[31] Page 424 in this archive of postal documents for 1947-51: https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/2305020

(By this account there were many more post offices classified as "Town Agencies" in the Mandate postal system than our literature is aware of.)

POSTAL AGENCIES - PAYMENT AS FROM 1.1.47
CLASS A and CLASS B

Name of Agency	Salary per annum £P.	Additional Teleph Service		Bonus PA. £P.	Total PA. £P.	Remarks.
		Hrs. Weekly	Amount Annually £P.			
TOWN AGENCIES.						
Category A.						
AHUZAT SAMUEL	84	-	-	18	102	12 hrs. weekly.
BAT GALIM	84	-	-	18	102	10" "
GREEK COLONY	84	-	-	18	102	12"
HIDJAZ STR.	84	-	-	18	102	12"
Category B.						
EL BASSA	60	-	-	18	78	
BAT YAM	60	-	-	18	78	

The next mention I found for this post office was already from the Sept. 1949 issued 1st annual report of the Israeli postal service, for 1948-49: here this document is classic "salad", using in some places the Mandate classifications to segment the system's post offices, yet in its opening comments it newly revises the postal service's post office classifications into 4 (where there is no equivalent of a Class A town agency) – and does not actually assign these new categories to any of the post offices. The chief class is the "Head Post Offices" in Tel Aviv, Haifa and Jerusalem, followed by "post offices in the rest of the cities and towns", followed by 'postal agencies' working 4 hours a day offering all services, and finally 'postal agencies' working 2 hours a day offering "limited" services. We don't know from this document how Ahuzat Samuel (or any other non-HPO post office) was classified by the early Israeli postal administration. [32]
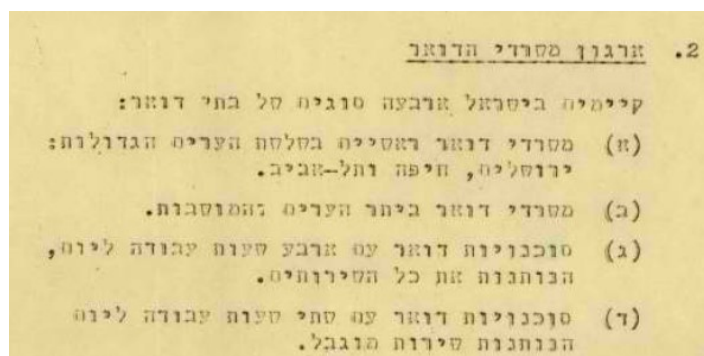
Characteristically the definitions used in the report were not applied to the report's list of the different post offices which appear to have retained the Mandate's classification labels, but it did show Ahuzat Samuel still listed as a Town Agency both under the Israeli administration as well as under the Mandate.

Now, even establishing the location of this post office was a bit of a mystery: only Aloni[33] throws us a clue by revealing it was located at 131 Moriah Street. But confirming this detail as a fact – because secondary sources, including his, are not entirely accurate – proved to be a full scale investigation: the vast press, Gazette and State archives don't reveal this piece

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[32] See pg 27 & 48: https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/2461961
[33] Ibid p.215

of seemingly standard innocuous information; only a study of the phone directories (1944 for Haifa during the Mandate, and 1950 and others for Israel) confirmed that the Ahuzat Samuel post office was located at that address.[34]

Here we have an image of Moriah 131 at the left and the adjoining address 133 on the right, at the corner of Sinai Street:

The scant information I scraped from the press archives as well as from oral first-hand accounts recorded in the University of Haifa's library placed a dairy-deli at this address. And while Fluri called this post office "small" and an unconfirmed story I'd heard in the past described the office as being inside of a small grocery, it was necessary to get an accurate picture of what this post office was – what it some 'free-for-all' sideline inside of an existing business or a true stand-alone post office?

The available information tantalizingly reveals quite a lot of information about what existed around this address – but none specifically confirms the existence or location of the post office: a husband and wife, Kalman (Kopel) and Yehudit (Ida) Miller ran a dairy-deli here at 131 Moriah[35] from around Dec. 1944[36]; sometime around 1940 a newly-wed couple, Menachem (Moni) and Lizet Tenenbaum, opened a restaurant-café at the adjoining building, #133, recently built at the start of the 1940s[37]; the Millers subsequently opened a business at this address as well (perhaps in place of that of the Tenenbaum's) around end of 1947.[38] From 1952 a Luba Bosin seems to have taken over the Miller's location at 131 and opened in its stead "Café Moriah".[39]

Some of these developments are confirmed by oral first-hand accounts given by the Millers' son, Haim, to the author Amira Kehat, who subsequently published histories of homes in the Carmel through the University of Haifa's Library – but nothing at all refers to the post office at this address.

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[34] The Mandate era phone books don't reveal address for anything at all; the Israeli phone books, whose earliest published was the 1950 Hebrew edition, do provide the address but the key detail is confirming that the phone number was the same – if yes, then indeed the address was the same.
[35] See:
https://liblog.haifa.ac.il/index.php/itemlist/tag/%D7%AA%D7%99%D7%99%D7%A8%D7%AA%20%D7%91%D7%A2%D7%99%D7%A8%D7%99?start=10
[36] Per new alcohol permit requests published in 'HaBoker' newspaper on 31 Dec. 1944 & 1 Jan. 1945, p.4/2
[37] See: https://liblog.haifa.ac.il/index.php/item/391-haifabulding &
https://liblog.haifa.ac.il/index.php/itemlist/tag/%D7%AA%D7%99%D7%99%D7%A8%D7%AA%20%D7%91%D7%A2%D7%99%D7%A8%D7%99?start=10
[38] Per new alcohol permit request published in 'Ha Mashkif' newspaper on 18 Nov. 1947, p.3
[39] Per new alcohol permit request published in 'Haaretz' newspaper on 27 Nov. 1952, p.3

It seems that sometime later in the 1950s a Peretz and Hanna Kuperstock, residing at 131, took over either the business or possibly the post office – until Peretz was declared bankrupt in Jan. 1961 (and passing away the following month); store space of 21 meters was subsequently offered for rent by way of auction as a "store for rent" by the postal service in 1964, and again later in 1969 by the Haifa regional housing committee – with all the subsequently notices referring to the location of 131 Moria as "Kuperstock House". The press archives show that both Kuperstock and Miller had financial-legal problems in the 1920s-1930s, with Kuperstock's woes beginning in Jerusalem – that may be an indirect connection to the Rehr family we observed in the records above residing at Kuperstock house in Jerusalem.

Newspaper advertisements into the early 1960s, for instance for the business 'Radio Goldman', advertise it as being at 133 Moriah "next to the post office". But was the post office a stand-alone entity or part of whatever business existed at 131?

Haim Miller supplied the University Library with this picture of his father outside the deli at 131, and this gives us a clue as to the size of the business and possible location of the post office: as per the image of the front of the building, the store must have been on the left half of the building with the post office (occupying similar space) located next to it on the right. We see from the lack of stairwell windows in the street photograph above that the entrance to the building was from its left side and not from the front, so in principle 2 evenly sized establishments could exist at the front. At 5x4 meters, this was not really a "small" post office[40] – and given its prominent placement as a "class A" town agency at the top of the cited in the salary document, we can't dismiss this post office by belittling it.

Nevertheless – was the post office run by the Millers? Was it part of the deli? Thankfully the Haim Miller (b. 1937) who collaborated with Kehat's history of homes in the Carmel is alive and well, active in community affairs in Ahuza. It was possible to locate a phone number for him and speak to him as I did (24 July 2022).

He confirmed that he was indeed the same Haim Miller, son of Kalman and Yehudit, and he also confirmed that the post office was a separate entity not related in any way to his parents' business. As Haim remember it, the various managers of the Ahuza post office were a Mrs. Swissa, a Mrs. Sudar, a Mrs. Rubin, whose husband was killed in an attack on the Solel Boneh construction company building in Haifa port, and who took over the duties from Mrs. Swissa; and Moshe Dim. He says all of these were 'Ahuzaim' – residents of Ahuza, but he does not remember their first names.

He also mentioned that there were few phones installed in the area back then and that he witnessed the pre-State militia, the Haganah, steal the phone from the post office, adding that subsequently a public phone was installed nearby.

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[40] Legal notices in Doar HaYom newspaper 23 Dec. 1926 p.4 & 27 Dec. 1929 p. 2 (Kuperstock), and 31 Mar. & 28 May 1933 p.7/3 (Miller)
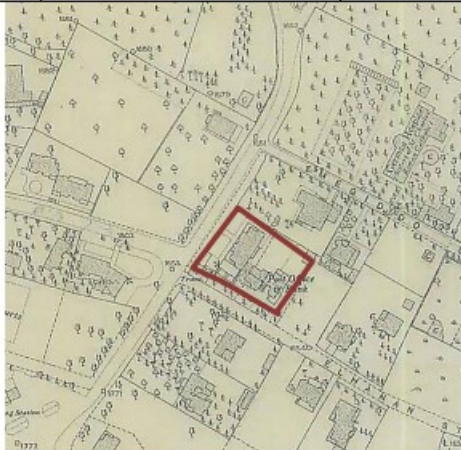
Mercifully the names Haim recalled are fairly unique and it's possible to assemble some basic information to get a general picture, though unfortunately I didn't (yet) find any information on "Sudar": Mrs. Swisa may have been Rachel "Shwisha" of "Suisa House" at #10 Givon Street in Ahuza[41] or – possibly more likely – the wife of A. Shwisha listed only in the English phone books (eg. 1952 ed.) as a customs clearer in downtown Haifa (Ha'atzmaut 33 – where the customs clearance center still is) & residing at Yiftach 4 in Ahuza (close to #90 Moriah, not far from the post office).

Mrs. Rubin's husband was Yitzhak Rubin (1898-1948), a member of the Haganah who died from injuries he sustained in an Arab car bomb attack on the Solel Boneh building on 21 March 1948[42]; Haim referenced the Irgun/Etzel organization when mentioning the event and it may be that he meant that Rubin was a member of that movement – a Yitzhak Rubin is listed as one of the movement's members who fell specifically "while carrying out his duties" (i.e. not killed in combat).[43] It may also be that Rubin and his family lived nearby on #11 Sinai street (where the addressee Shmuel Rotstein of item 5 above, lived), per the Kehat documentation of homes on the Carmel.[44] Although I didn't find a name for his wife (he was married prior to making Aliya in 1933) the 1955 phone book lists an "Emi Rubin" at the Sinai 11 address, and under the circumstances of Yitzhak's biography she may be the patriotic female manager referenced by Fluri above. While we may not know each detail of the post office we now have at least a fairly detailed picture about it.

In closing this chapter, confirming the location of the Mount Carmel branch office also required detective work: Aloni wrote that it was located on Elhanan street but didn't provide a number. The same phone books used to confirm the Ahuzat Samuel address helped confirm that the Mount Carmel post office was at 125 HaTznobar street (Pine Street). This street no longer exists: it was renamed Sderot HaNassi (Presidents Avenue) in the early 1950s. What remained is Pine Square, where the original 125 Pine Street is the present day 125 Sderot HaNassi, where indeed the post office was located.[45]

4	מס׳ בסקר כר 1+2	I שד׳ הנשיא Pine Square	חלק ממתחם לשימור	שד׳ הנשיא 125 / אלחנן יצחק 1,3	כתובת

ב	דרגת שימור בסקר כר 2/1+	351501	תיק בניין	13 חלקה	12512	גוש

1933	שנת הקמה
מסחר ומגורים	שימוש מקורי
מסחר מגורים משרדים	שימוש נוכחי
זאב וולך	בעלים/יזם מקורי
י. סירקין	מתכנן/ אדריכל
בינלאומי	סגנון בניה

המבנה במפת הכרמל משנת 1939

[41] Reference police report for 1947 at the national archives: https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/2162947

[42] See https://www.izkor.gov.il/%D7%99%D7%A6%D7%97%D7%A7%20%D7%A8%D7%95%D7%91%D7%99%D7%9F/en_45e62e755a6d83218ab9886cd640cd2c

[43] Herut newspaper front page of 29 May 1951: https://www.nli.org.il/en/newspapers/hrt/1951/05/29/01/article/4/?srpos=3&e=------195-en-20--1-byDA-img-txIN%7ctxTI-%22d7%99%d7%a6%d7%97%d7%a7+%d7%a8%d7%95%d7%91%d7%99%d7%9f%22------------1

[44] See https://liblog.haifa.ac.il/index.php/item/386-haifabulding

[45] Confirmed via Haifa Municipality "Survey of Carmel Buildings for Preservation" 7th ed. 2020, page 41: https://www3.haifa.muni.il/ironi/buildings.pdf

חזית לשדי הנשיא, פינת אלחנן יצחק

המבנה במפת הכרמל משנת 1939

IV. On Ahuzat Samuel and Mount Carmel

To better appreciate how mail was – or might have been – handled by the Ahuzat Samuel post office we need to understand what this neighborhood was like in the period of our study, 1948.

The Ahuza neighborhood of the mid-late 1940s was still a sparsely developed area, which only received electricity in early 1933.[46] It began as an agricultural settlement in the early 20th Century; in 1920 a "Herbert Samuel Residence" company (אחוזת הרברט סמואל) was established in Romania with the plan to turn the Ahuza area into a garden suburb of the Carmel neighborhood on the Haifa mountain. In the early 1920s the German-Jewish architect, Richard Kauffmann, prepared the master plan for the neighborhood; the first roads (Horev, Moriah and Sinai) were paved in 1924, and the cornerstone of the neighborhood was laid in 1925. The neighborhood grew very slowly in the 1920s and owed its subsequent development to the influx of German Jews of the '5th Aliya' immigration wave of 1932-1939, which was characterized by a mixture of Zionist ideology and the fleeing of anti-Semitic persecution.[47]

By the time the following aerial photographs were taken in 1946 the neighborhood was still sparsely developed:[48]

In the first image we see Haifa bay and the port in the background (at the top), with the downtown and Hadar neighborhoods crammed near the port area; in the middle-foreground of the image is a solitary water tower – that's in the "Heine Square" area of the Mount Carmel neighborhood, where Lotus street is two [vertical] streets away, to the left. The main road going straight to the bottom corner of the image is Moriah street, where at the fork, Hayarkon street splits off to the left downward and Rachel street horizontally to the left.

The cropped image below it shows the inland continuation from that fork junction, which is where roughly the Ahuzat Samuel neighborhood begins.

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[46] Palestine Post, 13 Feb. 1933, pg.5: https://www.nli.org.il/en/newspapers/pls/1933/02/13/01/article/32/?srpos=2&e=-------en-20--1-byDA-img-txIN%7ctxTI-Ahuzat+Samuel-------------1

[47] Ahuzat Shmuel in Hebrew: https://he.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D7%90%D7%97%D7%95%D7%96%D7%AA_%D7%A9%D7%9E%D7%95%D7%90%D7%9C

[48] https://digitalcollections.library.harvard.edu/catalog/W608232_URN-3:FHCL:4970996, https://digitalcollections.library.harvard.edu/catalog/W608232_URN-3:FHCL:4970995

The following is a composite of images from Amira Kehat's history[49], which appear to have been cropped out from another 1946 aerial photograph, here showing the very area of the Ahuzat Samuel post office:

the road we see at the left, with a house circled in red, is Sinai street – the large house just before the bend is Sinai #11; diagonally from it and partially circled is the neighborhood's Council House. Sinai street bends and enters the long north-south artery of Moriah and Horev streets, whose names change right at that intersection.

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[49] Assembled variously from images and information on pages 1-6 of the blog here:
https://liblog.haifa.ac.il/index.php/itemlist/tag/%D7%AA%D7%99%D7%99%D7%A8%D7%AA%20%D7%91%D7%A2%D7%99%D7%A8%D7%99?start=0

The corner of Sinai and Moriah is on the left side of that intersection: Kehat identifies that corner building as #1 Sinai – but that corner structure is in fact also Moriah #131-133, which we can subsequently confirm through the land registry among other things thanks to its parcel and subparcel numbers as they appeared in a 1969 notice by the municipality, following Hanna Kuperstock's death, that the sidewalk would now be paved.[50]
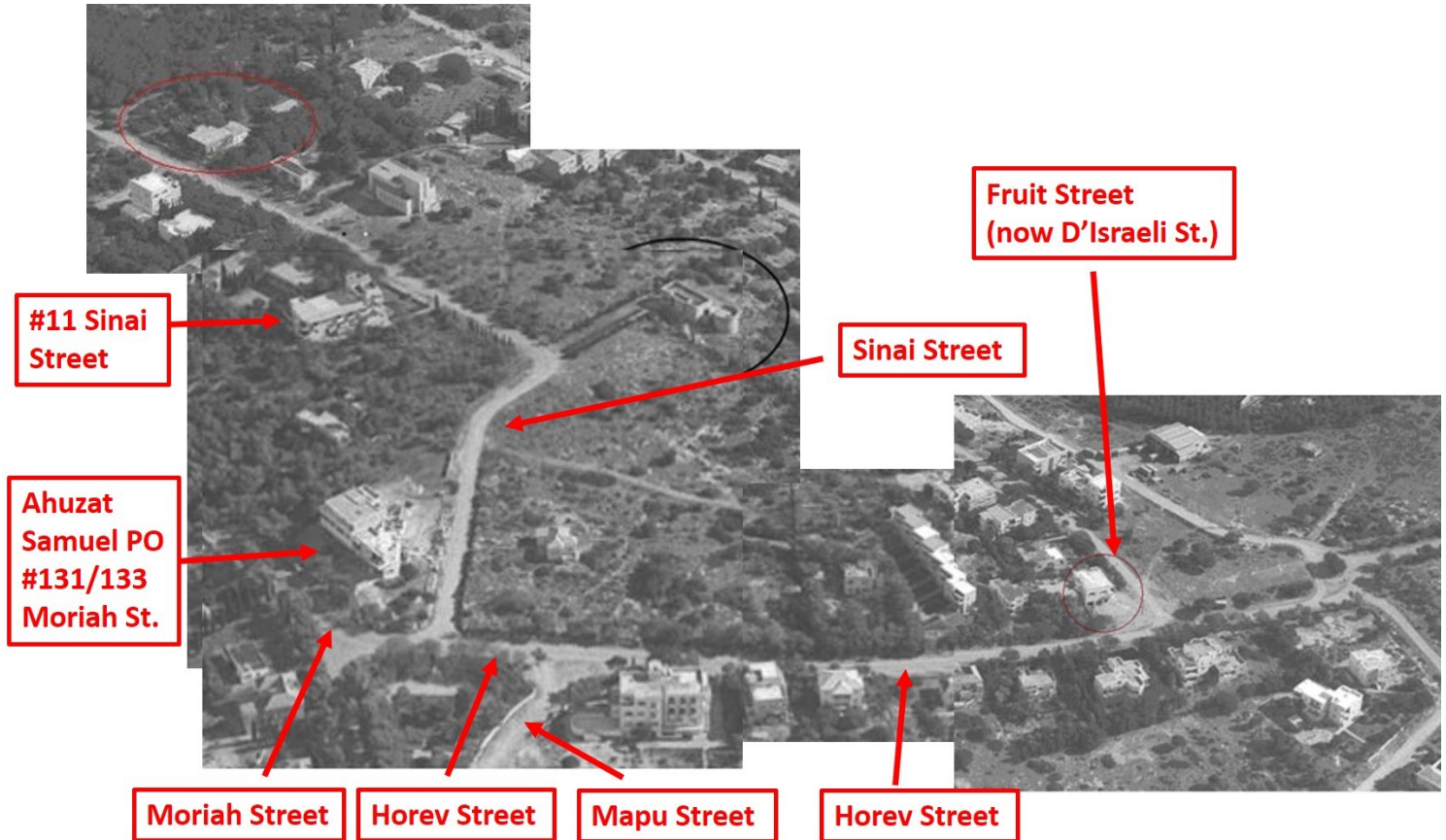
To the right of the intersection of Sinai and Moriah is the start of Horev street, where almost opposite that intersection is a hospital building (on the corner with Mapu street); going down to the far right we see Herbert Samuel Circle where the large structure above it on the right is the "Egged" bus company garage.

The physical impression that arises from this geographic survey is that Ahuzat Samuel was sparsely populated and fairly isolated from the rest of Haifa. The post office was somewhat of a beacon for neighboring settlements, as for at least a brief period of time it serviced the nascent settlement of Beit Oren in the nearby Carmel hills (eg. further to the right on the composite above) and served as the mailing address for the "Mishmar HaCarmel" workers' settlement society which helped establish that Kibbutz – the only instance I found of any entity referring to that post office as its physical address.[51]

The following are images more closely identifying the location of 131 Moriah street, from the land registration authority (the "Tabu"):

[50] Parcel #10781 and sub-parcel #2 per notice in Al HaMishmar newspaper of 12 Oct. 1969 p.7, identified here: https://www.gov.il/apps/mapi/parcel_address/parcel_address.html
[51] Davar newspaper of 18 & 21 Feb. 1941, p.4/6 + Palestine Gazette #1196 Supplement 2 of 21 May 1942, p. 685
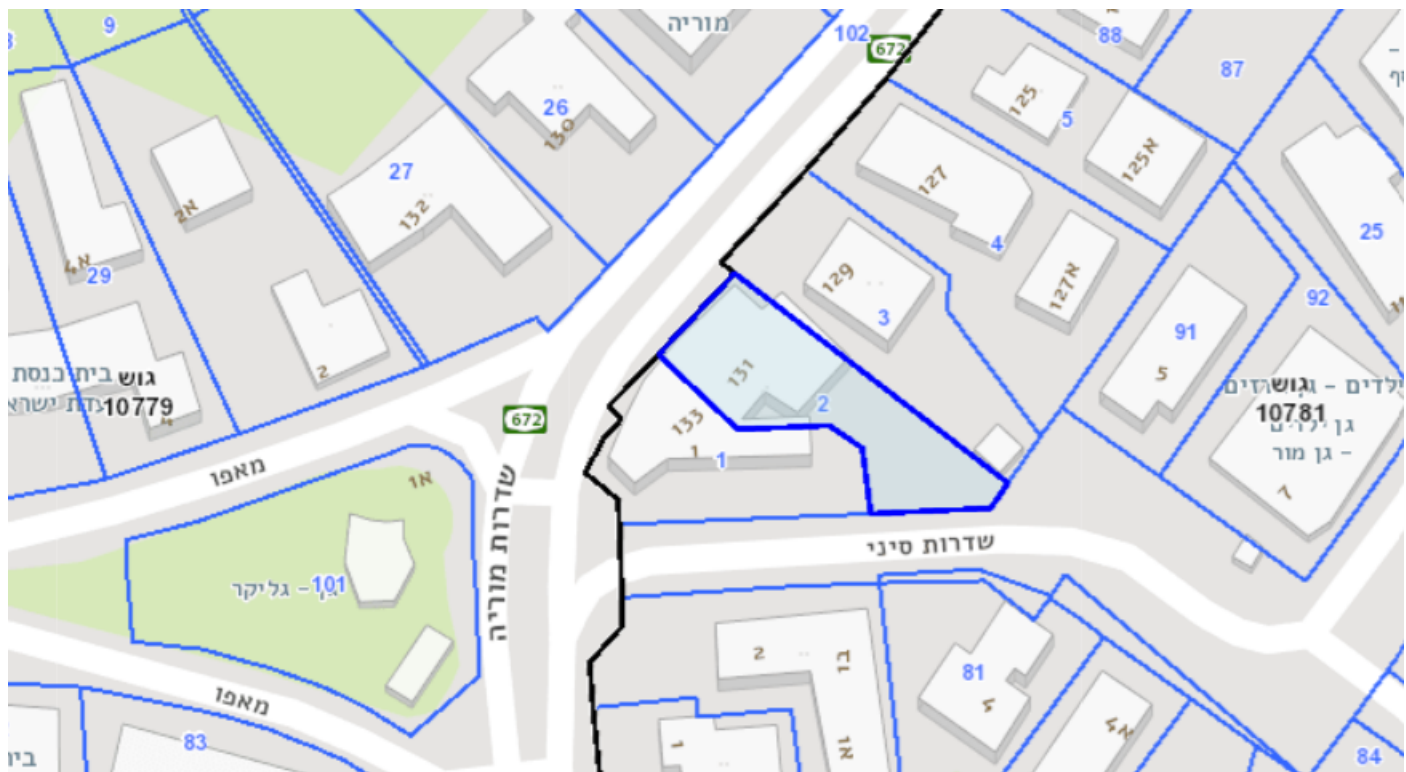
V. Factoring in Postal Procedures & Handling

Now that we've established the location and environment of the Ahuzat Samuel post office, let's refer back to the sample of mails that we examined: except for item 3, which was forwarded from Mount Carmel branch office to Ahuzat Samuel for correct cancellation of franking for overseas mail, and item 5 which was franked as a regular letter addressed to nearby Sinai 11, the other 3 postal items all originated at Ahuzat Samuel and subsequently bore the interim post mark of the Mount Carmel branch office.

How do we know that the interim postmark is indeed that of Mount Carmel?

The interim postmarks were all made of rubber, and from use or over-use these mostly developed various deformities which we could call "constant" – once they exist they don't go away, and the appearance gets more accentuated if exaggerated over time as they continue to be used to stamp mail.

We could therefore have compared the appearance of the strikes of the interim postmark to those of the other Haifa post offices which operated in the interim period – or, we could save a little time and examine specifically item 1, which was addressed to Ludwig Rehr at Mount Carmel. In this period there were no other post offices in the Carmel area: as such, logically if mail was being sent from "up the road" – the Moriah-Horev street artery – to an address "down the road" the involved post office should be relevant to that route, namely the Mount Carmel branch post office.

The interim post mark was definitely not Ahuzat Samuel's as this post office, uniquely, was not issued an interim postmarking device, and it continued to use the double-ring Mandate canceller throughout the interim period (and thereafter during the Israeli postal administration until it was finally issued the Israeli trilingual postmark on 6 Aug. 1948) – and we see this in the empirical evidence of mail in hand.[52] As we will see incidentally from examples of mail below, the split and in-bent section of the outer ring above the letters "HU" in the legend is consistent with strikes on other mail pre-dating all the 15 May covers.

In light of the lack of interim postmarking devices and the apparent restriction in offering registered mail service (alluded to at the start of the article and to be addressed further below), Ahuzat Samuel must have been functioning on a very limited resource basis. We see this clearly with item 1, properly franked exactly 25 mils for the base letter postage (10m) and the registry fee (15m) – but handled as a standard letter.

Getting a fix on the origin of the interim postmark is both easy and tricky: if we want to confirm that the postmark we see on item 1 (and the others covers too) is from the Mount Carmel BO, we're looking for a sample strike on a piece of mail we know conclusively is from that post office – registered mail with a registry label bearing the #3 index number. However, what complicates such an examination is – as mentioned above – that the special characteristics of the interim postmark lay in the unique deformities which developed over time from its use. As such, to examine a piece of mail from 15 May, we'd need a suitable subject for comparison from a date as close as possible to it – and this is surprisingly much less simple. But we do have an example in hand: a 10 May 1948 docketed cover sent from HAIFA-3 (Mount Carmel) to a person on Pevsner street in the mid-town Hadar neighborhood (i.e. not on the Carmel), with two fairly clear postmark strikes on the back.

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[52] Fluri, ibid, p.44; Aloni, ibid, p.55/215

If we compare clear strikes of the Mount Carmel postmark on the c.10 May cover to all the unidentified strikes on the 15 May cover, we see close similarities as regards two key deformities – the corrosive looking edge of the outer ring near the word DOAR and the intrusion/split below the right star.

To compare the appearance of a late-use Mount Carmel interim strike to the postmarks of the other Haifa post offices the methodology is as above, where if for the sake of simplicity we rely on the published but unattributed information in the specialty literature, we'd be comparing it to strikes from HAIFA-1 (the Hadar HaCarmel branch post office) and HAIFA-12 (the Nahla branch post office); all the other 19 post offices were allegedly closed during the interim period and the head post office supposedly only had a special type of interim cancel with "split ovals" on the sides rather than 5-pointed stars.

One the left we have strikes from HAIFA-1 (Hadar HaCarmel) from 12 May and on the right undated but clearly deformed strikes from the HAIFA-12 (Nahla) post office – none resemble the strikes from Mount Carmel: the later dated Haifa-1 strikes are characterized by a serious indent into the outer ring just after the word HAIFA, and those of Haifa-12 are characterized by a number of indents and repeating distortions along the outer ring – here specifically even on very early strikes there is a onward protrusion/thinning of the border on the inside perimeter of the outer ring between the letters PAY and HEY.

And so having established that the interim postmark on item 1 is that of Mount Carmel, we can now compare the interim postmarks from the other 3 pieces of 15 May mail and see how these compare to it (or those of Hadar and Nahla) – we see these are all consistently those of Mount Carmel:

⇨ Note though that the clarity of the strike is also a function of the absorbability of the paper of the envelope (eg. porous white paper versus the brown ribbed shiny type paper) – some paper types will absorb the ink better than others and so accentuate the distortions of the postmark):


NOW, having settled the issue of the identity of the interim postmark and determining that it belonged to Mount Carmel, we approach the critical question of – why? Why was mail posted at Ahuzat Samuel routed via Mount Carmel for delivery?

On the one hand we have Dorfman's comment that Town Agencies "sometimes" served as delivery offices; we also have indications that in this observed period (May 1948) postal service at this post office was somewhat limited. On the other hand, we also have empirical evidence that mail to or from Ahuza was actually always routed through Mount Carmel:

Here we have a registered letter from the late Mandate period, the latest known dated registered postal item sent from Ahuzat Samuel – postmarked 18 April 1948. Critically to our study, it was addressed within Ahuza to #4 Tel Mane street (a circular road accessible from Mapu street, which was just across the post office) – and yet, it was routed via Mount Carmel for delivery, being backstamped 20 April. The address is linearly 0.52km away, being 0.93km in driving distance. This is a

critical proving cover for this study, showing that even in fairly close proximity to the Ahuza post office and during the Mandate postal administration period, mail was being routed further away to Mount Carmel for the actual delivery.[53]
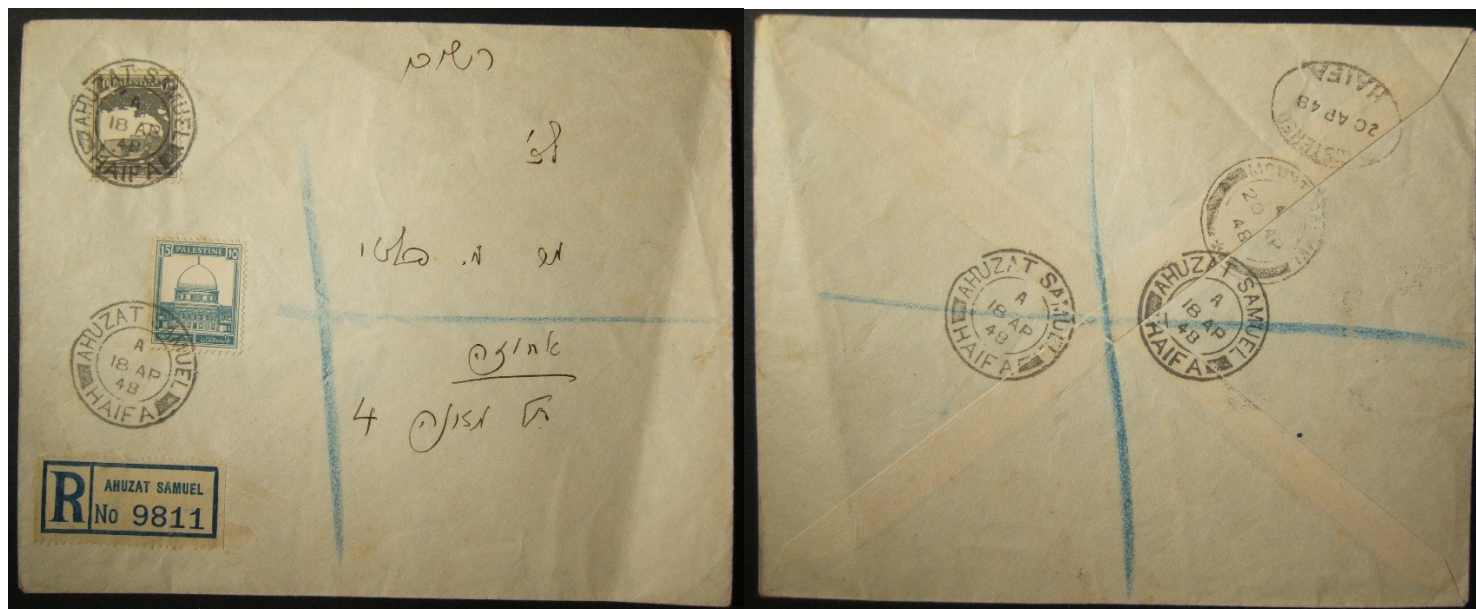
The registry number is high, possibly from the same roll as this lower numbered cover from July 1945, suggesting low daily usage:

At some point Ahuzat Samuel did serve as a delivery office, as evidenced by this July-Sept 1942 POW cover addressed to Ahuza – it was front-stamped 4 Sept 1942 Ahuzat Samuel arrival with postmark #117…

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[53] I am aware of the odd appearance of the oval REGISTERED HAIFA postmark on the back, also dated 20 April. Normally these are classified as head post office post marks. Here this would be impossible as a) the HPO was in the port area of the city well away from the Ahuza-Mount Carmel route, and b) this date was just a day before the Jewish military operation to liberate the city, and c) as I recorded in the article on the HPO in April-May 1948 it was suffering from staffing and logistical shortages. The subject of the possible allocation of these oval Registry division postmarks to other post offices will be covered in a separate future article.

…nevertheless by the time of our study, we see mail addressed to Ahuza from outside Haifa being received for delivery only at Mount Carmel – like this Ahuza-addressed (D'Israeli Street) registered express cover from Tel Aviv, backstamped 10 May Mount Carmel arrival:

Perhaps the only point of difference between the 15 May covers examined in this article and earlier examples lies in the lack of transit markings on regular mail before this date – and this is typical, as regular mail is generally not transit or arrival marked while registered mail is (as this is the whole point behind sending a letter by registered mail, to receive all the postal marks attesting to its journey).

Of note, on page 63 below we will see a 24 May 1948 postmarked registered cover from Ahuzat Samuel to an address in the Hadar HaCarmel neighborhood – here, now during the Israeli postal administration; the cover is backstamp-arrived by the HAIFA 2 postmark of Hadar HaCarmel, without a HAIFA 3 (Mount Carmel) transit – **evidentally the postal routing changed with the start of the new Israeli postal administration**. The Israeli postmark index number for Ahuzat Samuel was HAIFA 5.

Here we have 3x covers all properly franked for base domestic letter postage, from left to right: one interim cover postmarked 6 May addressed to Mount Carmel; another postmarked 14 May and addressed within Ahuza, and the 14 May Ludwig Rehr Mount Carmel addressed cover observed at the start of this study – all without transit or arrival postmarks, exactly as we would expect for regular mail like this:

In the case of the 15 May covers:

- item 1 was technically franked for registered mail as were items 2 and 4 – all were transit marked with the Mount Carmel interim postmark in the expected manner for registered mail (even though registration was not effected), though with 1x backstamp strike rather than 2x as observed on the 10 May registered Mount Carmel cover above;
- item 3 did not originate in Ahuzat Samuel but was sent there from Mount Carmel for the Mandate frank to be properly cancelled for overseas dispatch;
- item 5 was properly franked as a standard letter and does not bear a transit mark as we would expect for a standard letter.

What we see very clearly is that at Mount Carmel the Mandate postmark device – specifically the double ringed device we often see on mail – was not applied to these covers, and rather oddly the dateless interim device was used in its stead: perhaps the Mandate device was physically removed from use at the end of work on 14 May as per the instructions of the interim postal service (see **Appendix 4** at the end of this article for the full directive), or perhaps for patriotic reasons the Hebrew language interim cancel was preferred for usage on the 1st day of Israel's independence on the 15th. Either way, there is a clear consistency in the postal handling at Mount Carmel and Ahuza – almost pedantic as regards the circumstance of item 3 – and it adheres, with German/'Yekke' dedication, to correct postal procedure.

VI. Summing Up - Midway

This study set out to examine the circumstances of mail uniquely postmarked (or transited) on 15 May 1948, Israel's 1st actual day of independence, albeit on a Sabbath (likely in the night, after the actual day of religious observance of rest).

We reviewed 5 different observed postal items, examined their journey, senders and addressees, the postage paid and stamps used. All appear in the position of this writer as absolutely random, genuine (not forged, not philatelic) pieces of mail, not associated with any known or suspected philatelic address or personality.

We learned about the geography of the affected area of these postal items and of the two post offices which operated there. We also learned about the standard journey of the mail in this period and in times-past – and all the aspects of the examined covers checked out perfectly.

The newspapers would publish the names and addresses of pharmacies open on Shabbat for emergency duty, though this never seems to have happened as regards postal services and indeed I found no such mention for the activities of the Ahuzat Samuel or Mount Carmel post offices in preparation for or retroactively after the weekend of 14-15 May. This seems to have been a matter handled between these post offices on their own and not something published ahead of time for the general public.

As to why these two specific post offices operated on the 15th, there are a number of plausible reasons very specific to this area, beyond Fluri's comment that Ahuzat Samuel's manager was patriotic and worked unusual hours:

- chiefly, on the morning of the 15th the Israeli War of Independence reached its zenith with the invasion of Israel by 5 Arab armies; a bombardment of Tel Aviv by the Egyptian air force damaged the city's airport and an Air France plane, thereby closing it to civilian aviation – which was immediately transferred to Haifa airport (until Lydda airport was reopened in Nov. later that year);

- Since before the start of the War, from early November 1947, the site of Mount Carmel had been mooted as a possible location for the capital of the future Jewish State – and as late as 7 May 1948 the press reported on this possibility;[54]
- There was an improvised asphalted air strip at the end of Ahuza ("the end of the world"), on Freud Street (where the present day Ramat Eshkol neighborhood is located); some sources say this was built in 1948, likely by the Haganah, and serviced Piper planes. It was built out of fear the city would be besieged (as indeed were parts of the Galilee, like Nahariya and Safed);[55] [56]
- Militarily there were important installations in the area, such as the British radar station[57] and 'Camp Ahuza' a former British Army commando school which of late had housed soldiers of the Arab Legion (and subsequently became in Sept. a training base for the Israeli paratroopers), ideally located near the airstrip.[58] Mount Carmel itself had also been the staging area of the Jewish military operation to liberate Haifa in April.[59]

As mentioned at the start of this article, some other mail postmarked 15 May 1948 is also known – but those cases are either philatelically inspired or handled by unofficial emergency mail service, namely the sea-carried postal service in Nahariya, making those specifically examined in this article the only known pieces of mail actually handled by the Israeli post office on the country's first day of independence. These are images of these other postal items:

These are examples of 15 May 1948 mail created by the Pardess Hanna post office manager, Shlomo Dominitz; typically overfranked/underfranked or unnecessarily postally marked, as observed on any philatelic mail of this period:

[54] See Palestine Post of 10 Nov. 1947, p.4 "Lake Success Aspects" (https://www.nli.org.il/en/newspapers/pls/1947/11/10/01/article/74/?srpos=31&e=------194-en-20--21-byDA.rev-img-txIN%7ctxTI-%22mount+carmel%22----1947--------1) and Palestine Post of 7 May 1948, p.1 "State Offices in Sarona" (https://www.nli.org.il/en/newspapers/pls/1948/05/07/01/article/6/?srpos=33&e=------194-en-20--21-byDA-img-txIN%7ctxTI-%22mount+carmel%22----1948--------1)
[55] Uri Yanai - "How did the Trail become an 'Air Port'" in 'Kehilaton' #7 of Nov. 2017, p.15-17; citing also Haim Miller: http://beit-horim.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/nov-des_for_internet.pdf & (9 and 11 Sept. 2022) correspondence with Uri Yanai and Prof. Yossi Ben-Arzi.
[56] The strip was likely established on an original air grounds area used in 1940 for the "Week of Soaring" 1st glider competition in Palestine; it was held close to the "Zur veGal" hotel which appears to have been located at Mane 28 in Ahuza. The strip is described in that period as being on the Haifa-Atlit road, which would be Freud street. See press reports here: https://www.nli.org.il/en/newspapers/?a=q&hs=1&r=1&results=1&txq=glider+ahuza&dafyq=&datyq=&req=&laq=&puq=&ssnip=img&oa=1&e=-------en-20--1--img-txIN%7CtxTI-------------1; I have more source information on file.
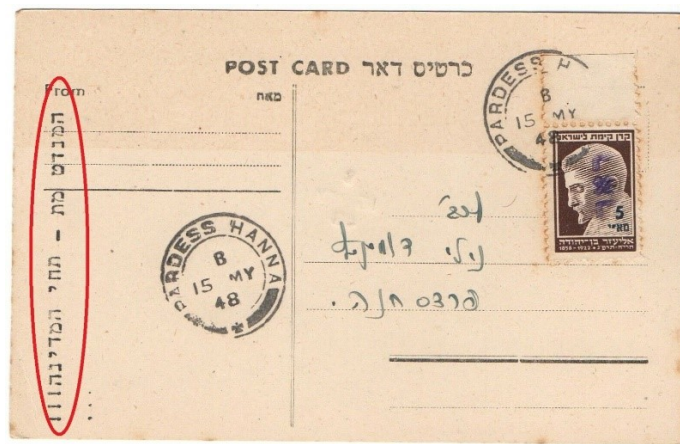[57] https://www.palmach.org.il/en/history/database/?itemId=6081
[58] https://www.202.org.il/Pages/gdud_890/history/b1948.php and https://www.202.org.il/Pages/gdud_890/history/ahuza.php ; the camp was located near al-Khureiba just past Ahuza towards the Carmel forest (see Palestine Post of 17 Feb. 1948 p.1 "Arab Legion Kills 3 More") - https://www.zochrot.org/villages/village_details/49166/en?alKhureiba and it may also have been known as "Palnord Base" by the British (https://www.mod.gov.il/Society_Economy/articles/Pages/15.11.15.aspx); as of 1953 the IDF military boarding school for commanders is located there.
[59] Palestine Post of 23 April 1948, p.1 "Haifa's Pivotal Points Fall to the Haganah After 30-hour Battle" (https://www.nli.org.il/en/newspapers/pls/1948/04/23/01/article/6/?srpos=30&e=------194-en-20--21-byDA-img-txIN%7ctxTI-%22mount+carmel%22----1948--------1)

This is an example of the 'fake' 15 May mail from Safed, created by the postal employee Yaakov Gamberg, who drove from Haifa to Safed to supply that post office with the first Doar Ivri stamps, on the 15th, for sale to the public on the 16th, and spent some time there creating philatelic contrivances for himself and others which he took back with him to Haifa for actual mailing on the 16th.[60]

This is 15 May dated mail from besieged Nahariya: the cover is addressed to the local council in Nahariya; it was couriered unfranked to the Nahariya emergency mail service's boat in Haifa on the 15th where upon arrival it was received by the city's emergency mail service, charged the 10 mils local delivery fee and cancelled with the Type 7 postmark, whose date was handwritten 15-5-48. This is not a philatelic cover but I would not classify it as 15 May 1948 handled by the official postal service (though likely the only one of its kind for the Nahariya emergency mail service, as none other has been seen).

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[60] Zvi Shimony, Yeremiyahu Rimon and Itamar Karpovsky "Jerusalem and Safad Postal Services in the Transition Period", 2004, p.359-363; **cited as JSPS**

Prelude to Part 2: *the second part of this article, examining registered mail service, reminds me of the World War II subject of "Blitzkrieg" – 'lightning war'. In the popular mind it's taken to be a military-economic grand strategy employing combined fast land and air forces to achieve rapid military victory. Many are familiar with the term and it is often associated with the wartime doctrine of the Third Reich.[61]*

Many books and articles were written about this concept after the war, and by the 1960s it even went as far as influencing the economic narrative of the war, as in Alan Milward's landmark book "The German Economy at War", which argued that the Reich strove to be able to wage large-scale war without significantly adversely impacting the civilian sector, a suspected reason for Germany's sudden collapse in the First World War – here balancing between "guns and butter" – by managing its economy agilely as a "blitzkrieg economy", adeptly and flexibly suiting its economic production at any given time to the key military front which needed to be supplied. Milward's implication was, by straining to avoid the exigencies of total war on her civilian population, there was 'slack' in her wartime economy and Germany therefore lost the war because she ironically had not fully mobilized her economy for total war.

The trouble with the Blitzkrieg concept, as observers could not fail to see, was that the German military was largely horse-driven – and this was especially apparent in the invasion of the Soviet Union. Germany's military victories were achieved through strategic surprise of unprepared opponents. It further transpired that the term "blitzkrieg" itself was not an official military term used by the German military, and that Hitler himself ridiculed the idea.

In time a counterthesis, ironically from the field of economic history and promoted by the historian Richard Overy, held that the German economy was actually fully mobilized, citing among other indications the high percentage of females employed in the economy. Further postwar research in this and the military field – particularly from German Staff officers – showed that such a concept never existed, and that Germany's military doctrine was basically an attempt to cleverly employ new technologies in tactical surprise to outmaneuver an opponent, but that a grand strategy called "Blitzkrieg" had never actually been formulated or employed.

The misunderstood and specious concept continues to influence public perception because it was expressed so widely for so long.[62]

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[61] For a concise summary of the matter see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blitzkrieg

[62] Which reminds me of a similar concept, "Fascism", widely used and bandied about but without a succinct definition. Prof. MacGregor Knox (then at the University of Rochester) used to teach a semester long seminar on the subject just to show that it has no tangible meaning…
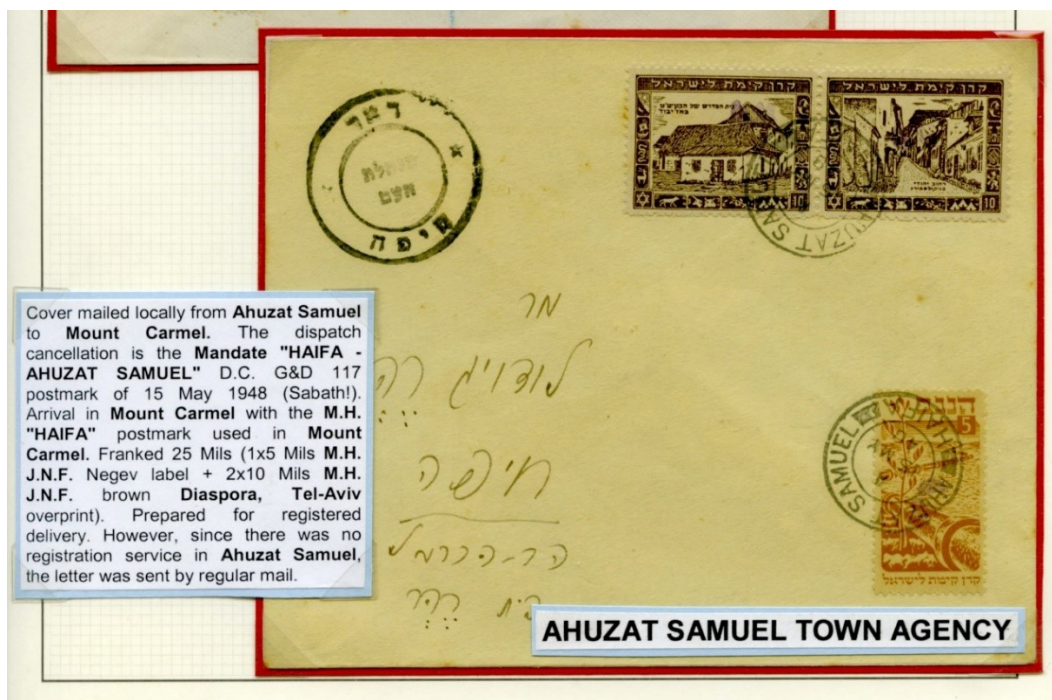
VII. ON INTERIM REGISTERED SERVICE

I set discussion of the issue the lack of registry services aside as in principle it's a generally agreed upon matter among the specialty literature and the collecting community that Ahuzat Samuel did not offer registry services during the interim period – we see that from the empirical evidence like our sample study, and so unless I have something contrary to say or reveal about it, this is not central to specifically analyzing the 15 May dated mail sample.

Nevertheless I am presenting here groundbreaking postal history that has seemingly been overlooked for almost 75 years, and to emphasize its authenticity I'm somewhat exerting myself beyond the norm to underscore this point. To emphasize that overfranked and unregistered mail posted at Ahuzat Samuel on 15 May 1948 is truly not a philatelic contrivance I set out to examine the matter of the apparent lack of registry service at this point office: was this a truly unique circumstance here, and what was the reason for it?

On one hand the 1948 interim period is a repository of fake and contrived philatelic mail spiced up by fairly poor academic scholarship on the part of researchers and even poorer levels of understanding on the part of collectors and dealers. On the other hand, 15 May dated mail has gone by surprisingly unnoticed by researchers, collectors and dealers – and even forgers or creators of philatelic contrivances have overlooked this quite remarkable corner of Israeli postal history, so whatever aspects of this type of mail we can address may better crystallize the conclusions we make about its authenticity.

If we look even at item 1 in our study, this cover originated from the famous collection of Dr. Yirmiyahu Rimon z"l, and as it was received by me with the original exhibition display I have the luxury of seeing that Dr. Rimon at best only noted the uniqueness of 15 May being a Saturday:

Cover mailed locally from **Ahuzat Samuel** to **Mount Carmel**. The dispatch cancellation is the **Mandate "HAIFA - AHUZAT SAMUEL"** D.C. G&D 117 postmark of 15 May 1948 (Sabath!). Arrival in **Mount Carmel** with the **M.H. "HAIFA"** postmark used in **Mount Carmel**. Franked 25 Mils (1x5 Mils **M.H. J.N.F.** Negev label + 2x10 Mils **M.H. J.N.F.** brown **Diaspora, Tel-Aviv** overprint). Prepared for registered delivery. However, since there was no registration service in **Ahuzat Samuel**, the letter was sent by regular mail.

AHUZAT SAMUEL TOWN AGENCY

But he's not alone: the significance of the 15 May dated Nahariya cover (referenced above) was similarly overlooked by an AIEP certified philatelic dealer who presented it for sale. And Fluri cites an instance of 15 May mail from Pardess Hanna in his census of registered covers – but makes no comment as to the significance of that date (even though we now know the mail to be philatelic), noting only "Mandate postmark on [Israeli] Doar Ivri [stamp]"[63]. So we see – astoundingly – this date does not ring any bells.

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[63] Fluri, ibid, p.62 – registered letter #1261

I think I've demonstrated thus far in this article that the Ahuzat Samuel mail is genuine, that it is the only known 15 May dated mail handled by the Israeli postal administration, and that other similar dated examples such as the Safed and Pardess Hanna mail are entirely philatelic contrivances. And yet, if we address the matter of the lack of registration services at Ahuzat Samuel we will uncover a minefield of misinformation and misunderstanding among other types of interim mail – which will actually serve to underscore the genuineness and uniqueness of the Ahuzat Samuel mail.

A. Understanding Registered Mail Service

To begin, let's go through a primer of what "registered mail" is. The service we know of today as "registered mail" began in Britain in January 1841 as a way of securing the safe custody and handling of mail while in the hands of the postal service, that the service accepted responsibility for mail in its charge until it was delivered – something contemporary sources also refer to as a "chain of custody", from dispatch to delivery. Prior to then "registration" simply referred to an internal listing or noting of each letter for which no copy or receipt was given – and for whose safety the postal service undertook no responsibility. This development built upon an earlier directive from 1838 holding the postal service liable for a limited penalty (of up to £5) for the loss or damage of mail in its care.

Here, with the initiation of registered mail service, a whole new postal position had to be created: a special area (a room) had to be set aside to act as a registration office, staffed by a registration clerk "of proven integrity", who would be responsible for accepting letters for registration from the public. That clerk would be responsible for the whole duty of registration: charging a registration fee for the service (originally in cash, later paid with postage stamps), filling out a receipt to be issued to the sender with his name and the letter's address details clearly written and stamped with the registration office's datestamp; the letter was to be struck with the office's datestamp as well and then sorted by the clerk by its destination.

A listing of the mail item also had to be entered into the department's registration book, by town and name of the addressee (the street names being omitted). This list then had to be transcribed and cut into separate lists for each town, and stamped with the datestamp. The letters for each town were to be placed into a cover inscribed "Registered Letters" and addressed to the respective postmaster of each town – and again datestamped.

Finally, the clerk was to pass the town covers to the inland postage clerks for each area, who were to sign for the receipt for each bulk-cover into the clerk's registration book. The covers were then entered on to the existing inland letter bills listing and put into mailbags for each town.

On delivery to each town, the local postmaster was to check the registered letters against the list and sign and return the letter bill. Each letter that postmaster received had to be enclosed within a large sheet of green paper, which was a preprinted delivery form: the sheet was addressed to the post office where the addressee lived, and upon the addressee signing off got the receipt of his letter, the post office was discharged of its obligation for the safety of the letter and that form was returned to the post office.

(The sheet was eventually replaced by a green silk ribbon, which was in turn replaced by a green linen tape, and then in 1870 by a green string; with the introduction of blue-cross imprinted postal stationary registration envelopes in 1878, the green string was replaced by blue crossed lines, and these have remained a standard postal marking for registered letters to the present day.[64])[65]

Incoming letters were treated the same way, with the registration clerk providing a receipt for the letters received, sorting the letters for delivery and arranging for delivery forms to be signed. The original service also allowed branch offices and receiving houses to accept registered letters, enclose them into one cover and forward them to the registration clerk for processing.

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[64] See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Registered_mail
[65] In the Israeli State era, from August 1948, the practice of marking registered letters with a blue cross of two lines was replaced by a continuous vertical blue line on both sides of the envelope; at a later stage this too was discontinued - Zvi Halperin "The Postal History of Israel During the Years 1948-1950, Part II" in Holy Land Postal History (HLPH) Bulletin #11 (Summer 1982), pg. 554

And all mail registration had to be completed half an hour before the post office closed in order prevent delays in the dispatch of the mail. In light of the sheer scope of the work – and to avoid overloading the postal system with a high volume of mail – a high registration fee was set, to represent an average working man's salary for a day's work (here, 1 Shilling).[66]

Implicit in the 1841 formulation of "registered mail" was an understanding by the postal service that such mail was 'valuable' to the sender and/or receiver – either because its contents were important or that it actually contained valuable tangible materials therein. In the years since, this has evolved to include the use of special secure storage facilities and safe boxes at key postal facilities in the mail stream.

B. Registered Mail Service in Mandatory Palestine

As we may believe that a hundred years later the exigencies on the postal system from the demands of registered mail service had changed, here we have further, sharper insights provided by the Postmaster General of Palestine in one of the lectures he delivered in 1931 (cited above in a different context) – here paraphrased:[67]

The Palestine Bulletin, 5 November 1931 **P2**

← 🗐 →

Mails are divided into two categories —letter and parcel — and these again are subdivided into direct and indirect. Direct letter mails are mails which are made up and forwarded to all towns for which the volume of correspondence is sufficiently large to justify that procedure. Where the amount of correspondence for any particular place is not sufficiently large to warrant the making up of direct despatches mails for that place are included in those for another office in a suitable position for disposing of them.

Numbered Mailbags

A point of interest in connection with foreign mails is the fact the every mailbag is numbered and that special steps are taken by all postal administrations, espcially where the volume of outward traffic is greater than inward, to ensure the return to them of their own bags.

Registered and insured packets are of course given special treatment. They are registered not only at the counter but at every stage of their treatment from the time of posting to the time of delivery.

It can, threfore, be ascertaind to within a few minutes the exact time that any registered packet has remained in the hands of every official who has dealt with it.

This information is particularly useful in tracing the exact point at which a packet may have gone astray or sustained loss.

Parcel mails are dealt with differently from letter mails, each parcel being given a number, irrespective of whether it is a registered parcel or not, but the main procedure as regards the making up of desptaches is very similar to that adopted with letters. In the case of inland mails parcels are frequently included in the same despatches as letters.

Mails are divided into two categories – 'letter' and 'parcel' – and these again are subdivided as 'direct' and 'indirect':
- ⇨ 'Direct' letter mails are mails which are made up and forwarded to all towns **for which the volume of correspondence is sufficiently large** to justify that procedure.
- ⇨ 'Indirect' letter mails: where the amount of correspondence for any particular place is **not sufficiently large to warrant the making up of direct despatches**, mails for that place are included in those for another office in a suitable position for disposing of them.

Registered and insured packets are given special treatment: they are registered **not only at the counter** but at every stage of their treatment from the time of posting to the time of delivery. It can, therefore, be **ascertained to within a few**

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[66] Originally published by Stanley Gibbons (Gibbons Stamps Monthly, Jan. 2003) as "The Birth of the Registered Letter", reproduced here: https://www.stampboards.com/viewtopic.php?t=8146

[67] The Palestine Bulletin, 5 Nov. 1931 pg2, "The Postal Union, Forerunner of the League" (part 2 of a lecture on "Post, Telephone and Telegraph" by the Postmaster General, Colonel William Hudson, at the YMCA in Jerusalem) – see in https://jerusalemstamps.com/Handbook_Holyland_Postal_History.pdf

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The task of registering mail remained a large one – eventually encompassing aspects of taxed mail, such as "compulsory registration" – so much so that even the 1948 Palestine Post Office Guide still found room to comment "The fee for registration… is charged primarily for the clerical services incidental to registration…"[68]
…And then there is the issue of what to do with registered mail if entered into a letter box rather than handed in to the clerk – procedures vary by country, creating more work.[69]

Lest we think the scope of responsibility for registered mail ends with this brief summary, note the bureaucratic directives issued to delivery-men (and other back office staff) as regards the unsuccessful delivery of registered mail:[70]

> Post Office Circular No. 675 January 8, 1941
> Instructions to Postmen
> The instructions issued with Post Office Circular No. 436 of 6th May, 1936, should be amended as follows:-
> *Insert additional para.* 6(b)
> Except in cases where a letter box is installed, correspondence should, where premises are found closed, be endorsed "Closed" (followed by the time) and returned to the office. It should not be placed under doors or thrown windows.
> *Renumber 6(b) to read 6(c)*
> 8(a) Cancel and substitute.
> Registered correspondence for Postmen's delivery should be transferred in bulk from the R.L.S., to the Head Postman against discharge. Upon receipt the Head Postman, or his assistant, should sort the correspondence into walks and then enter it up on forms P.T. 517, afterwards distributing the lists and items to each Postman who will give a discharge on the bottom copy of the list which will remain in the book. When the Postmen return from delivery they must hand in their signed lists and any undeliverable items to the Head Postman who will give a discharge for returned correspondence against the relative entries on P.T. 517 and bring them to account in his balance sheet. Except by authority of the Postmaster a Postman must not be allowed to leave the office unless he has satisfactorily accounted for all the registered items for which he is responsible.
> (b) The Head Postman will deal with the returned registered items as follows:—
> Items which are due to be taken out on a subsequent walk, if the Head Postman is not in possession of a safe or steel cupboard, will be transferred to the R.L.S. in bulk, together with those due to be transferred to the R.L.D. counter for retention there for seven days.
> Items which are definitely undeliverable must be suitably endorsed and transferred to the R.L.S. against signature.
> The Head Postmaster must maintain a proper registered letter balance which is to be checked and signed by an Overseer or other supervising officer after every delivery.
> Controlling officers should ensure that all copies in the possession of Postmen under their control are duly amended.

With this basic outline of the registered mail service we now understand that this was a serious and complex bureaucratic-logistic undertaking.

C. Identifying Registered Mail
And how would we identify registered mail? We would be looking for certain visual characteristics on a given piece of mail:
- a **registry label** (or handstamp) with a serial number unique to that label's roll and an indication of the dispatching post office (either by its own name or by an index number after the name of the city that the post office is in, assigned to that specific post office) – that's the letter's "identity number" for recording it in the postal system

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[68] As cited in Edward Proud, ibid, p.33
[69] See here for example: https://www.stampcommunity.org/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=78550
[70] As published in the "Palestine Standing Order Book #125" for Feb 1939-Jan 1942, as reproduced in the "Israel Philatelist" of June 1994 by Donald Chafetz

- ⇨ sometimes these labels are "mute" and bear either no name or number, and then these are manually added by handwriting or applied with a strike of the post office's postmark on the label
- the **correct postage** for the registry service (15 mils, in 1948)
- perhaps the **blue cross** (in crayon) on the front (and maybe the back) – but not a critical element by the 1940s
- dispatch postmarks of the registry department (or the dispatching post office) and characteristic "backstamps" on the back of the same dispatching department/post office (usually 2, sometimes just 1)
   - ⇨ the "index letter" of the postmark may be different if the cover was received for dispatch during one work shift but actually processed behind the counter at a later shift
- **Arrival postmarks** and any relevant **transit postmarks** (usually on the back side of a cover) – also called "backstamps"
   - ⇨ Regular (not registered) mail may also occasionally be marked by transit and/or arrival postmarks, and in some countries there is an established practice of backstamping a postal item's arrival even if it is not a registered item

The sender of the registered postal item would also receive in his hand a postmarked date-stamped **certificate of dispatch** confirming the date of the dispatch, the registry number and the destination address of the postal item.

Here then we can distinguish between "regular" letters (on top and middle) and "registered" letters (on 3rd and 4th row – the bottom one has a "K" dispatch index letter and an "H" index letter on the postmark tied to the registry label):
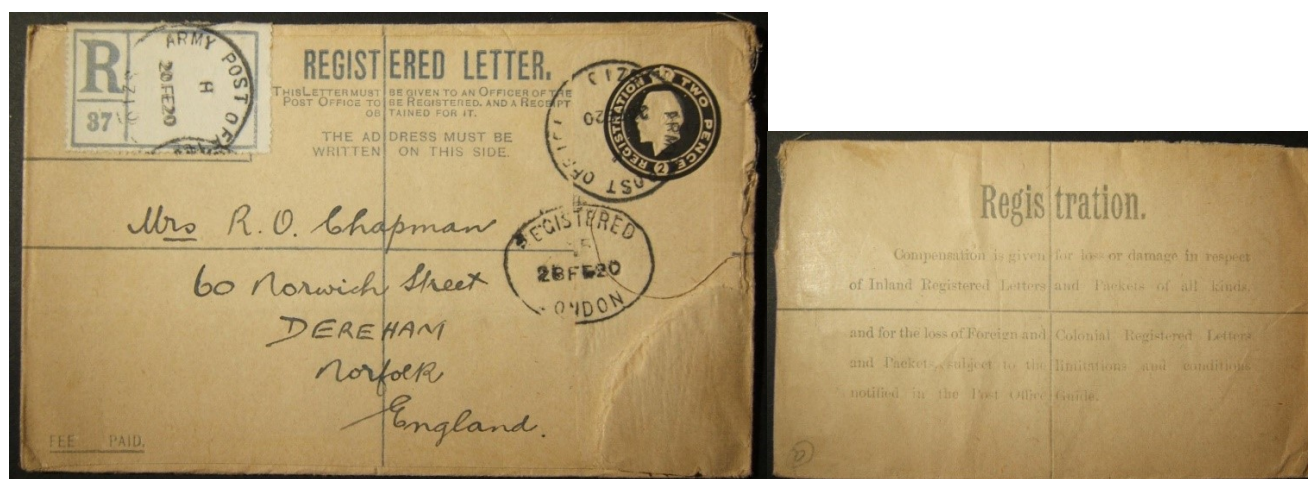
We may also see **numbers written on the face of covers**, usually in crayon but sometimes also in pencil: these are seen inconsistently and don't relate uniquely to registered mail. These may be sorting numbers, processing numbers unique to the specific post office handling the piece of mail, or even post office box numbers to forward the cover to; the number might be written just on the top-most cover in a pile based on its intended route or destination. Numbers in pencil, particularly if written small near the edge may be "lot" numbers written by auction houses for preparation in their sales.

D. Registered Mail Service in Palestine

Now that we got a sense for the visible characteristics of registered mail we need to understand what kinds of routing marks we should expect to see on registered mail in Palestine.

By way of background we should be aware that prior to the interim period the country had 4 "head post offices", being the key post offices, in each of the 4 main cities in the country – Haifa, Jaffa, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.[71]

By around January 1948 (and perhaps even earlier) only 3 of these – not Jaffa – were classified "Offices of Exchange" (OE), meaning the authorized post offices through which international mail could enter or leave Palestine; nevertheless the post office at Lydda airport was uniquely charged with receiving air mail from abroad and routing any mails addressed to the 4 major towns (or locales serviced by them) to one of the relevant 4 HPO's, and it could also direct mail to other smaller locales depending on the volume of mail involved – but the "Lydda Air Port" post office itself did not dispatch mail abroad. The archive document outlining mail processing activities in this period indicates that (surface) mail received from abroad would be received at one of the OE's and then transported on to its destination, if outside the city serviced by the OE.[72] Likely this was the same manner by which air mail and domestic mail was transmitted as well.

And while I haven't found written instructions for the specific routing of registered mail (which we're likely not to find in the archives any time soon), we do have on one hand the 1931 observations of the Postmaster General, above, which should in principle still be relevant in 1948 and on the other hand we have access to many examples of registered mail on the interest (a simple scan of search results for the thousands online at any given website). From this we can draw the following conclusions of how mail was routed:

Barring cases where a post office did not offer registered service (and I strain to think of a reason or an actual post office) – and for the sake of keeping this portion of the examination straightforward, we'll assume that all pre-interim era post offices serviced registered mail – a sender would present his registered letter/postcard to a clerk at the public counter:

a) in general the postmark used to dispatch the item (eg. cancel the stamps) would be a standard one of the public counters (eg. a double-ring type with a Maltese cross at the base or in some post offices a single circle type);

b) at certain post offices (the 11 listed below, as per the specialty literature[73]) there were dedicated "registry departments" who used their own specially entitled postmarks (eg. "REGISTERED TEL AVIV" or a similar phraseology) – in most cases at these post offices their specially entitled postmarks would be used to dispatch the registered postal item:

Gaza | Hadera | Haifa head post office | Jaffa HPO | Jerusalem HPO | Lydda Air Port | Natanya | Petah Tikva | Rehovot | Tel Aviv HPO | Tel Aviv - Allenby Road branch post office

Either way, upon dispatch the postal item would be routed to its destination via the Head Post Office registry division servicing the regions ('districts', as termed by the Postmaster General) of the transit: a letter from Tel Aviv to Safed would be routed via the Tel Aviv head post office and then via the Haifa head post office before being received at Safed – the head post office transits would be marked by their special departmental REGISTERED oval postmarks.

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[73] All ibid – Proud, Sacher, Goldstein-Dickstein & Arthur Groten "The Postmarks of Mandate Tel Aviv" (1988)
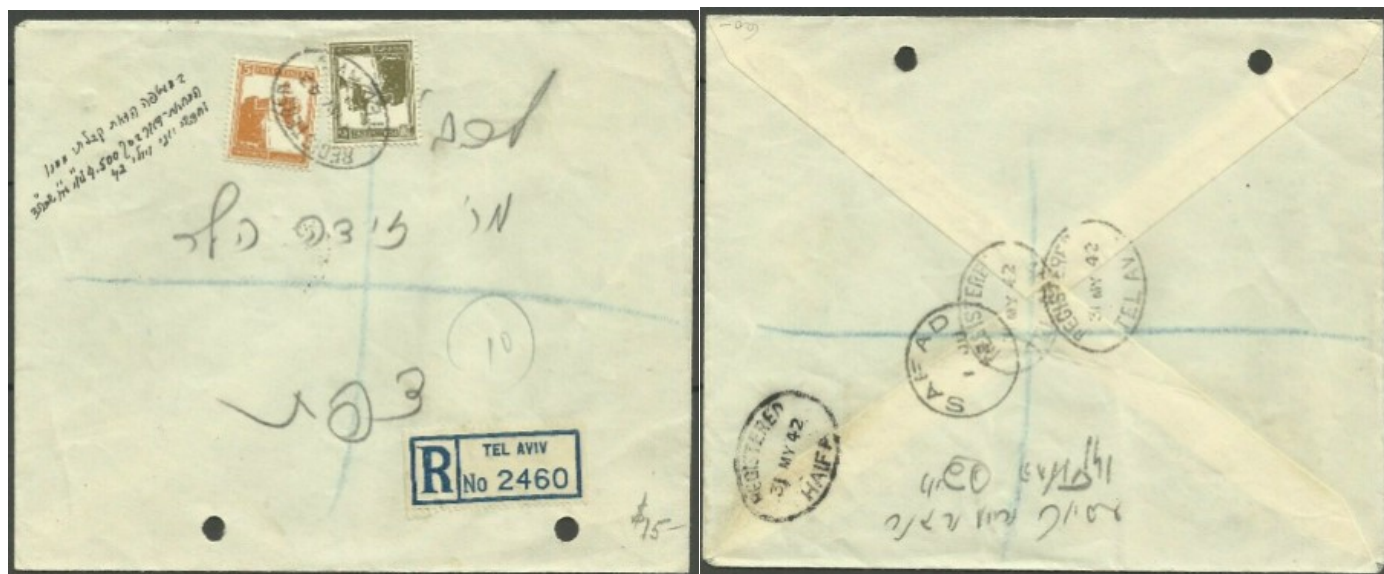
Here we have an example of 1938 mail from a small locale, Heftsibah Beit-Alfa, to Tel Aviv: it transited the Haifa registry division before being processed at the Tel Aviv counterpart – exactly in the manner outlined above.

Similarly, here is a 1940 cover from Tel Aviv to Haifa, routed to a branch office (Nazareth Street) in the city:

Likewise a letter from Jerusalem to Ramatayim or to Petach Tikva would be routed by the Tel Aviv HPO's registry division in order to reach its destination – and be transit marked by the Tel Aviv registry division's postmark.
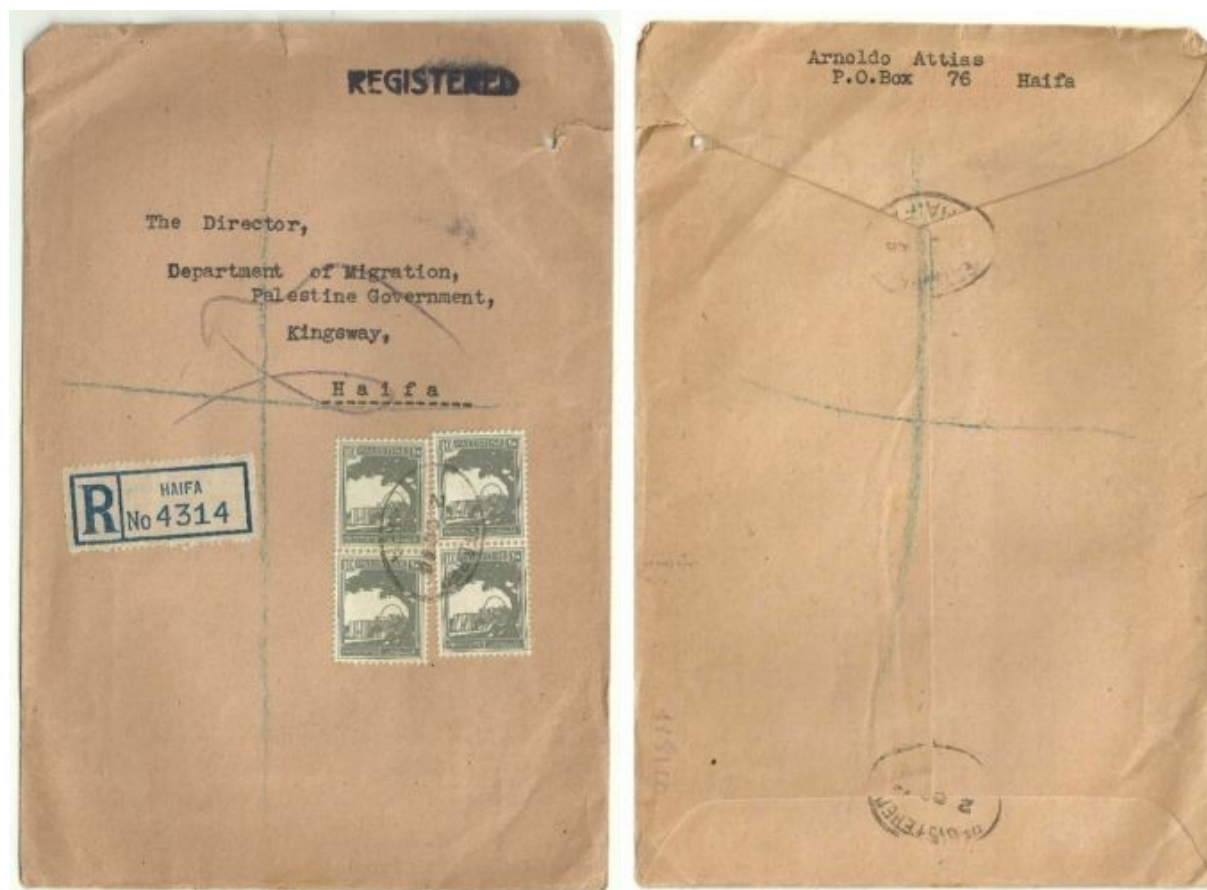

Where a letter was dispatched from the HPO's registry division to a local address serviced by that HPO (and not by a satellite post office), no further postmarks are usually seen, as on this 1946 local Tel Aviv cover:

…or this 1946 local Haifa cover:

…and if postmarked from the HPO to a neighborhood outside of the HPO's delivery area, we would see an arrival postmark of the post office handling the delivery address – here a 1945 cover sent from HAIFA-4 (income tax assessment office) at the HPO, addressed to HaYarkon street in Mount Carmel, backstamped with the Mount Carmel branch post office postmark:


Here is a 1938 example of mail from a Branch post office in Jerusalem (Mahane Yehuda) to Tel Aviv, transiting the registry divisions at the Jerusalem HPO and the Tel Aviv HPO before being found to be undeliverable and returned by the same route:

In the late Mandate era, at least from 1947, this type of routing changed in Jerusalem (likely for security reasons as domestic turmoil grew between Arabs and Jews, especially in this city), and mail sent from Branch offices is not observed transiting the Jerusalem HPO, as here – a Dec. 1947 cover sent from the Mea Shearim branch office to Tel Aviv – backstamped only by the registry division in Tel Aviv upon arrival:
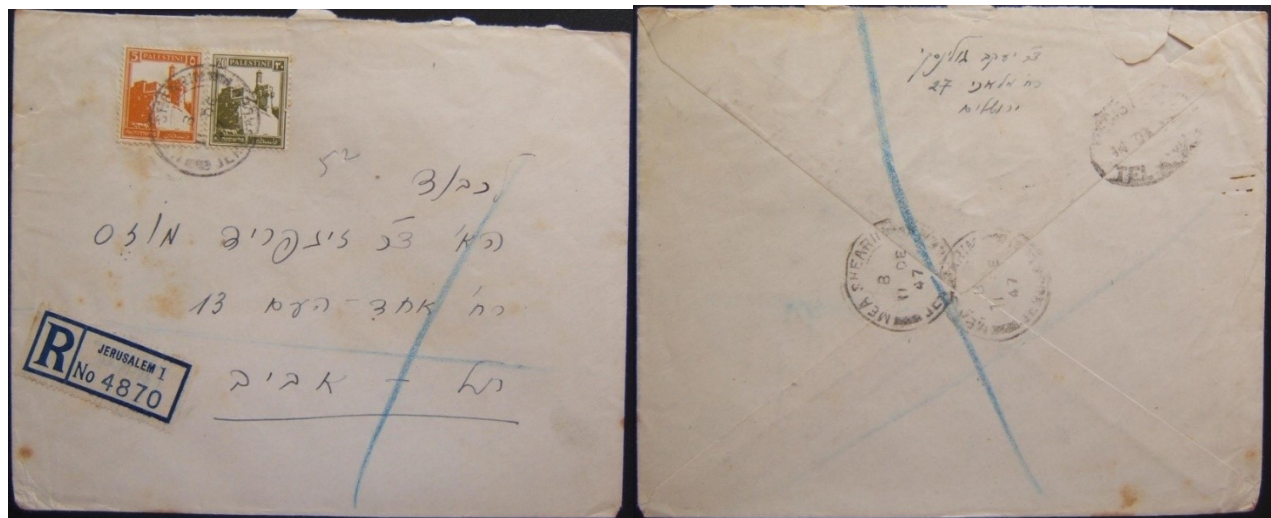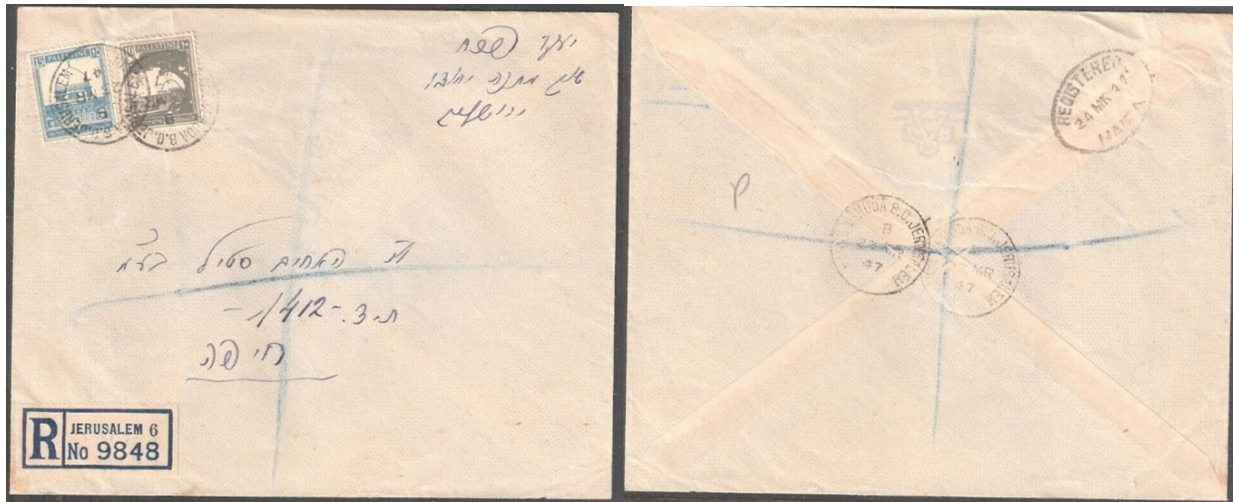

Here is an April 1947 cover sent from the Rehavia branch office in Jerusalem to France, without transit at the HPO, even though it was for overseas dispatch:

And here is a March 1947 cover from Mahane Yehuda branch office to Haifa - with only a Haifa registry transit-arrival:

…nevertheless, as late as mid-April 1948, mail **entering** Jerusalem did transit the HPO prior to delivery, as seen on this 14 April dispatched cover from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem – backstamped 16 April registry division transit-arrival (the latest dated registry arrival I've seen in Jerusalem is 21 April):


As noted with Jerusalem, postal routes were affected by the worsening security situation is Palestine as the period of its termination neared: here we have a Feb. 1946 cover from Petach Tikva to Jerusalem transiting the Tel Aviv HPO and then the Jerusalem HPO…

…whereas in Feb. 1948, the journey from Petach Tivka to Haifa did not involve a transit at Tel Aviv – and it was just processed at the Haifa registry division prior to delivery (an alternate interpretation here may be that unlike the cover above this one was dispatched at the registry desk and so obviated the need for a Tel Aviv registry transit):
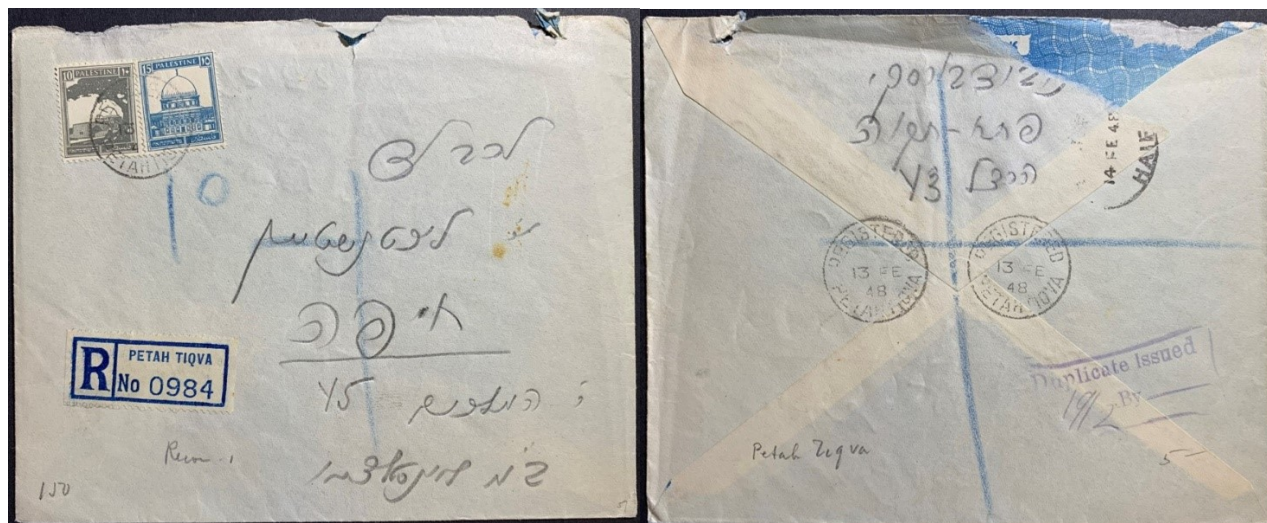
Here is an example of registered mail from an affiliated post office of a large city (a "Town Agency") transiting that city's registry department –mail from Bat Galim via the Haifa HPO registry division on its way to an army post office:
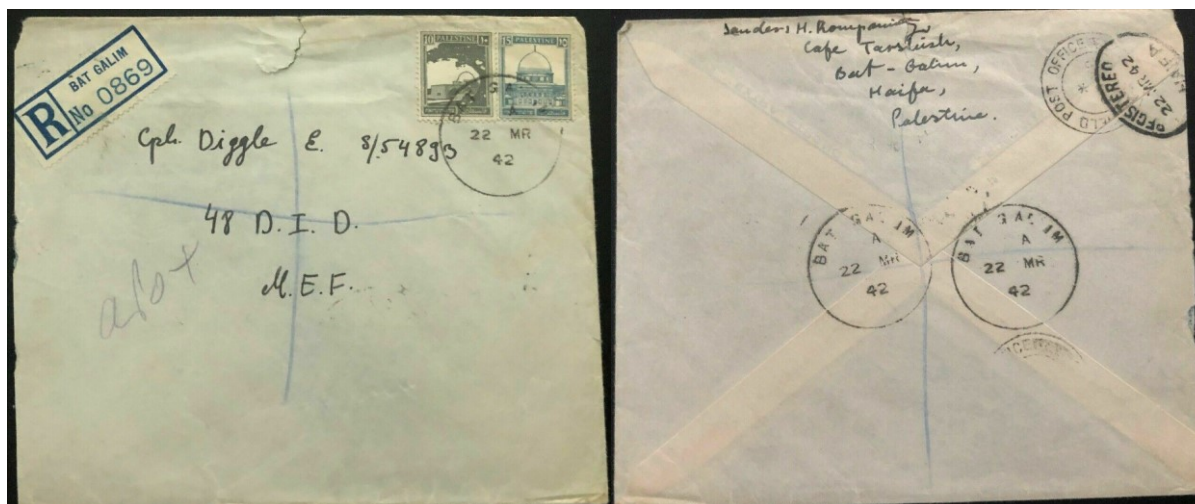
Likewise a 1944 cover also from Bat Galim to an address in Haifa, routed via the city's HPO:

From observed mail it seems the branch post offices in Haifa had to transit that city's HPO whether for domestic mail or mail abroad: here is an April 1947 cover from the Nahla branch (albeit from the collector Leo Better, which may explain the stamps used) to Yugoslavia – it transited the city's HPO on the way to overseas dispatch:

Also from Haifa is this Dec. 1947 cover sent within Haifa, from the Mount Carmel branch post office to a Government agency, likely in downtown Haifa – here it bears a transit-arrival mark of the city's HPO's registry division:

From Tel Aviv we have this is an example of inner-city mail, sent from a Branch Office (Nordau Street) via the city's HPO – here so observed routed in 1938:

By April 1946 we still see routing from Tel Aviv Branch Offices (here Nordau Street) via the city's HPO [to New York]…

…but a year later, in May 1947, it seems the city's branch offices could dispatch registered mail without transiting the city's registry division, even for mail abroad – here postmarked by the registry desk at Allenby Road to Austria:

And from later that year, Oct 1947, a cover from Nordau Street to Bulgaria without transit at the local HPO (albeit addressed to a philatelist). It may be that a registry desk was opened here too but not issued its own registry postmark:

Now in April 1948, from the Allenby Road registry desk to Switzerland – without transit at the HPO:

Nevertheless, if there was a special arrangement with the Tel Aviv branch offices, like the organization of registered mail at those branch offices themselves, the same did not exist with Jaffa, which seems to have had to continue routing its mail (abroad, albeit, to Yugoslavia) via the Tel Aviv HPO – here it was postmarked with Jaffa's own "registered" postmark:

…and it seems not all post offices with dedicated registry counters and postmarks were released from the need to transit their mail via the regional HPO – as we see here with this April 1947 cover from Hadera to Tel Aviv, transiting the Haifa HPO's registry division (this is likely a philatelic cover but until I obtain a better 'real' example I'll use it):

As per the documented information cited above regarding the post office at Lydda Air Port, here an example of mail from that post office (to an inland address) routed via the Tel Aviv HPO on the way to an address in that city:

Likewise, incoming airmail was received at the Lydda Air Port post office's registry department – but then routed to the equivalent registry department of the HPO belonging to the city/s servicing the destination address:

And here is an example of undeliverable mail, from an Arab locale (Gaza), during the early stages of the War of Independence – Feb. 1948, properly processed both on the way to Haifa and then on its journey back to the Returned Letter Office in Jerusalem, all postally documented:

1) it was dispatched from the Gaza 'Registry' department on 18 Feb. and postmarked with that department's special imprinted postmark (plus 2x on the reverse as customary on registered mail);
2) it transited the Jaffa head post office the next day and was transit-backstamped by that HPO's registry department (round postmark) – of note, Jaffa handled the routing for mail from Gaza, and not Tel Aviv
3) it was received at the Haifa head post office's registry department the following day, on the 20th and duly backstamped by its oval postmark. Here at the registry section the clerks found
    a) that the address was unknown – and both manuscript marked the cover as such and stamped the back with the returned mail instructional handstamp, where they indicated the choice "unknown"
    b) as the cover bore no return address, as per postal regulations, an approved postal clerk opened the cover in order to find within the contents an indication of a return address; while doing so that clerk noted on the back "no articles of value" and indicated some index number in the same pen on the front – likely a running count of the number of returned mail items (335) for that year (19"48")
4) the cover was re-addressed "RLO" ("Returned Letter Office") and dispatched from the registry department on the 21st (oval postmark)
5) It was received at the RLO in Jerusalem on the 27th (backstamp).

The array of postal markings in a situation like this – even from a locale in a sensitive military situation at this time, still with full Mandate postal service in effect – indicates how such a registered mail article should be handled: documented from start to finish.

(Though this exceeds the parameters of the present study, mail whose transit involved railways is sometimes observed marked with the initial dispatch postmark following by a "travelling post office" TPO transit postmark in place of or followed by a relevant HPO oval registry division postmark – depending on the destination and routing used.)

The critical element is that **Mandate-era registered mail (with the exceptions shown of late-era Tel Aviv and Jerusalem outgoing mail) – domestic or foreign – had to transit the registry division of the head post office/s servicing the regions that the mail passed through**. The registry division transit was the vital link in the transport of mails because this was the central location for assembling information on the registered mail shipments – dispatching them on as "direct" or "indirect" mail (as we learned above), and thereby establishing their ongoing routing; organizing the lists of logged registered items needing to be confirmed at further transit stops along the postal route; storing the registered mail in secured areas and even in safes, until dispatched on to their destination.[74] The registry division transit stop was the hub that organized and managed the transmission of registered mail from its point of origin to its destination.

E. Postal Operations in the Interim Period – between theory and practice
Postal operations and subsequent services in the interim period are an exercise in subtle complexity and perplexity. Ostensibly, as outwardly published to the public, postal services would "continue" functioning through the transition of the administration of the postal service, from the hands of the British Mandate to the new interim Jewish state-in-the-making.

And this in spite of a gradual collapse and shrinkage in postal services, beginning with the closure of public counters at rural postal agencies on 16 April, all other post offices (except HPO's) on Saturday 1 May, the suspension of various services at various times, from March onwards – specifically the acceptance of registered mail for dispatch, from 21 April (and the delivery of which from 1 May), the cessation of the sale of postage stamps, and finally the closure of HPO's on Thursday 6 May. See **Appendix 1** at the end of this article for the full details of the termination of Mandate postal service in "Public Notice 53"; on the next page is a truncated representation showing only the relevant points for this article.

As far as Jewish Palestine was concerned the termination of postal operations was mitigated by the Passover holiday (23 April – 1 May inclusive) which would have seen post offices in religious areas closed throughout, or otherwise operating on a shortened holiday period schedule.

Disingenuously, formally, the Mandate postal administration was responsible for postal services in Palestine until the termination of the Mandate itself, at midnight between Friday 14 May and Saturday 15 May; the Mandate administration

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[74] This 2017 audit of the United States Postal Service gives some insight into the significance of secure storage facilities for registered mail: https://www.uspsoig.gov/sites/default/files/document-library-files/2017/FT-AR-17-008.pdf

was also a member of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) with all the conventions and arrangements that her membership entailed – nevertheless, concomitantly, that administration began to dismantle the postal services so that the process was effectively completed well before midnight 14-15 May.

DEPARTMENT OF POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS

PUBLIC NOTICE N6.53 OF 1948.

Termination of the Mandate.

Suspension of Post Office Services

In the absence of any communication from the United Nations Commission for Palestine providing for acceptance of responsibility for the continuance of Post Office services the Postmaster General hereby announces that, in addition to the suspension of services already notified it is now necessary to suspend the following public services with effect from the close of public business on the dates shewn below :-

A. INLAND SERVICES

PUBLIC COUNTERS

Rural Postal Agencies.	15th April.
Rural Post Offices except Lydda Airport.	30th April.
Branch Post Offices and Town Postal Agencies in the Urban areas of Haifa, Jaffa, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.	30th April.
Head Post Offices (Haifa, Jaffa Jerusalem and Tel Aviv).	5th May.
Lydda Airport Post Office.	5th May.

NOTE:- Although public counters in the offices listed above will close for general business on the dates stated, it is hoped to keep certain of them open for acceptance of telegrams and air mail correspondence.

INLAND MAILS

(Posted in Palestine for delivery in Palestine)

(iv) Registered Letters.

Final date for posting.	20th April.
Final date for delivery.	30th April.

B. INTERNATIONAL SERVICES

REGISTERED LETTERS

Latest date for posting.	20th April.
Latest date for delivery.	30th April.

2. It is emphasized that the dates quoted above are entirely contingent on several factors; e.g. freedom from local disturbances, which interfere with the movement of transport, passage of mails and the collection and delivery arrangements; ability of staff readily to proceed from their homes to their places of duty and to continue to carry out their duties at the appointed places.

3. All of the above services are being continued to the very latest practicable date and any disturbing factor may cause the service to have to be discontinued at a date earlier than that shewn. It is stressed that in many cases the final dates are later than is desirable, but in order not to deprive the public of postal services earlier than is absolutely necessary it has been decided to continue to the dates shewn. With effect from 15th April, however, all telegrams, and postal articles will be accepted at the sender's risk only.

GENERAL POST OFFICE
JERUSALEM.
13th April, 1948.
MH   DHM/FB/JS

The pre-interim era government, the National Council ("Vaad HaLeumi"), had been planning for this period for a number of months prior, and the State Archives show a broad range of plans and accounts made by the officials in charge to plan for

the period of transition, addressing surface and air foreign mail as well as domestic mail.[75] And although the press heralded the establishment of the "Hebrew Mail" service[76], beginning Sunday 2 May, the scope of the services – and as we will see, also the operations – was severely limited. But the limitations were invisible to the untrained eye.

Postal Services In Jewish Area

Because of the complete collapse of the Palestine postal system, a provisional Jewish postal service has been instituted for the period between May 1 and May 15, the Haganah announced yesterday in Tel Aviv.

The service is being operated in the area of the Jewish State, where all Post Offices will be open for business as usual. Special stamps are being issued.

Four categories of mail will be handled:

Ordinary mail (inland and foreign);
registered mail (inland);
parcel post (inland); and
telegrames (inland and foreign).

As our examination focuses on registered mail, we see immediately that this service was restricted to **domestic** mail: this is not surprising because the new interim administration and subsequent State of Israel administration were now not members of the UPU; postal relations were formally suspended by all foreign countries and the renewal of services like registered mail were separately agreed-to bilateral arrangements beyond the obvious renewal/establishment of any postal relations, and these new administrations would have to establish new postal connections and services with each country individually. The notice gives no indication as to the form of the foreign mail (because this was being improvised on an almost daily basis); parcel post was limited to inland service. **There is no reference to supplementary services such as insured mail, advice of receipt or even express mail.**

Here we have a visual illustration of how seriously observed and enforced was the segmentation of bilaterally agreed postal services: a Feb. 1949 postmarked registered air mail cover from Britain to Israel – both countries renewed formal air mail service on 29 July 1948, but a registered mail service agreement between them only entered force on 23 March 1949. As such, the following cover was rejected for ongoing transmission, handstamped "No Registered Service" and returned to its sender, while still in Britain, in spite of postal relations existing between the countries; as ordinary air mail this cover would have been accepted and delivered.[77]

A review of the last published update about the interim services, Circular #1 of 26 April[78], reveals in hindsight what our study is now confirming for the first time – a real limitation in the postal operations of the interim period, even beyond what was published. The original Circular in Hebrew displayed in **Appendix 2** of this article; below is the translation:[79]

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[75] The following files for example: https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/276544, https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/298877, https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/276172, https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/419932

[76] See various press reports for the period April-May 1948 here: https://jerusalemstamps.com/Handbook_Holyland_Postal_History.pdf

[77] Daryl Kibble "The Arab-Israeli Conflict: No Service, Returned and Captured Mail" (2014), p.73

[78] Proud, ibid, p.22-23

[79] Aloni, ibid, p.497-98

DEPARTMENT OF POSTS, TELEGRAPHS, AND TELEPHONES

Circular Letter No. 1

1. The Department of Posts and Telegraphs of the Mandate Government is to be suspended and terminated in the near future. Details in regard to this were published in "Public Notice" No. 53 of 1948 (April 13, 1948), according to which public service of the Post Offices in the settlements must be closed from the close of public business on April 30, 1948, and the Head Post Offices in Jerusalem, Haifa, and Tel Aviv from the close of public business on May 5th 1948. In the same announcement other dates are also given for the step-by-step suspension of all services until the date of the termination of the Mandate on May 15, 1948.

2. After the cessation of the Mandate on May 16, 1948, the Hebrew Post will fully commence operations; however, during the transition period between the 1st and 15th of May, every service which is interrupted by the present Department of Posts and which it is possible to continue immediately by the Hebrew Post, is to be continued.

3. The following instructions are hereby given for the interim period between May 1st and 15th of the current year:

4. All employees and workers of the various Departments are to remain at their posts.

5. The Post Office will remain open to the public for the same office hours as at present.

6. The working hours of the workers and the schedule of work in all the offices shall remain unchanged.

7. Until new instructions are issued, the following services of the Hebrew Post will be carried on:

    a   Ordinary local and foreign mail.
    b. Local registered mail.
    c. Local parcel post.
    d. Telegrams and cables.
    e. Telephone Service according to the lines available.

8. There will be no changes in the rates.

9. The manner of forwarding the mail between the Post Offices of the settlements and the Head Post Offices shall remain unchanged.

10. The present forms and receipts remain in use; however, they are also to be filled in Hebrew.

11. Stamps of the K.K.L. (Keren Kayemet L'Yisra'el) or of the Kofer Hayishuv (Community Tax) and provisional postmarks of the Minhelet Ha'am (People's Administration) will be supplied to the Post Offices, and they are to be put into use as follows:
    Post Offices in settlements and in villages from May 1st to 15th, 1948.
    Post Offices in towns from May 6th to 15th, 1948.

12. Letters, etc., on which the Hebrew stamps are affixed are to be cancelled with provisional postmarks in the outgoing office, sent to their destinations, and delivered to the addressees.

13. Letters to foreign countries carrying stamps of the present postal administration are not to be cancelled with a provisional postmark. Such letters are to be sent uncancelled to the Head Post Offices in Tel Aviv or Haifa.

14. To this circular letter are attached the following lists:
    a   Details in regard to the transportation of letters and their handling.
    b   Details in regard to the receipt of telegrams and their handling.
    c   Details in regard to the accounting.

15. All officers and workers of the Department of Posts are required to cooperate fully in order to uphold to the fullest extent the postal services which are essential for our community.

Tel Aviv
Telephone
16 Nisan 5708
25 April 1948

Department of Posts, Telegraph, and

Signed: M. GRABOVSKY

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80 Cited in the original Hebrew in Aloni, ibid, p.499

While the circular is outwardly a documentary source for "confirmed" instructions, we see that it's a mixture of erroneous, inaccurate and even overly-optimistic information: after summarizing the dates of the termination of services by the outgoing Mandate administration, the Circular declares that "After the cessation of the Mandate on May 16 1948(sic), the Hebrew Post will fully commence operations; however, during the transition period between the 1st and 15th May, every service which is interrupted by the present Department of Posts and **which it is possible to continue immediately** by Hebrew Post is to be continued" [emphasis mine]. The otherwise detailed Circular does not spell out which services will continue, as if this will be determined in light of circumstances when the time comes.

The Circular calls on all employees and workers of the various departments of the postal service to remain at their posts; that the existing times of operation of the post offices and indeed that the working hours and schedule or work will remain unchanged. It directs that "there will be no changes in the [postage] rates" and that "the manner of forwarding the mail between the Post Offices of the settlements and the head post offices shall remain unchanged", and that the "present forms and receipts [will] remain in use [but] are to be filled in in Hebrew".

The accompanying annex of "Details Concerning the Forwarding of Letters & their Handling"[80], specifically on the point (C) regarding registered mail, notes "Registered inland letters will be accepted and forwarded as per the same manner as now. That is to say, the same books of certificates of dispatch, [registration] numbers and so on. All the forms are to be filled in Hebrew, to stamp them with the 'Minhelet Haam' handstamp and to add below the handstamp the date…" The annex is reproduced in full in **Appendix 3** of this article.

The following point "D" addresses the continuing use of letter boxes at the existing schedule, and that such mail contained therein properly pre-paid bearing the postage stamps of the period [interim or Mandate] should be accepted without penalty, cancelled with the interim postmark and forwarded to its destination. On

this point alone I wrote a large article about the Haifa head post office in April-May 1948 and demonstrated that there (as in other locales, like Jerusalem – and likely not just), these letter boxes were not actually emptied at all and that most of that mail was subsequently taxed for using by-then demonetized invalid franks.[81]

The various available documents pertaining to the interim postal administration, including these cited above, are a classic example of theory versus practice. Among the subtleties not covered in these documents is that:

a) Jerusalem was cut off from the rest of the country in a siege/semi-siege circumstance, and that postal services there would have to be created locally.[82]

b) The interim postal administration only applied to those areas under Jewish control, and not to all of Palestine as during the Mandate – here then for instance, Jaffa, even though recently conquered by Jewish forces at the end of April, was not part of the interim postal administration (and no mail service for that city is known prior to 16 May 1948).

c) As a consequence of these circumstances Jewish Palestine in the interim era, for the purposes of postal service, was divided into a Northern region handled by the Haifa head post office, and a Southern region serviced by the Tel Aviv HPO.[83]

Naturally territorial changes would have a consequent effect on aspects of logistics and transportation, such as mail routes.

The "Handbook of Holy Land Postal History" cited in this article is replete with press reports of theft, loss and damage to postal infrastructure in this period but what severely impaired the service approaching the interim era was staffing shortages: 75% of the manpower was Arab, in a period of an Arab-Israeli conflict. The 13 May 1948 survey highlighting this problem notes that the Arab employees were largely employed in transportation and workshops, and that in other cases such as the engineering department they represented over half of the staff.[84] Indeed, as seen in the compiled press reports of the Handbook, a practical outcome of the Arab-Israeli conflict in this period was that in post offices such as the Jerusalem and Haifa HPO there were conflicts between the employees of each group and in some cases they even worked deliberately on separate floors. Indeed well before this period, already from mid Dec. 1947 there were press reports that the isolated Haifa neighborhood of Bat Galim had not received postal and sanitation services for 10 days because the Arab postmen and workmen refused to enter the locale.[85]

What is also noteworthy, particularly for our study, is that as noted earlier in this article the directives establishing and maintaining the interim postal service did not decommission the Mandate-era postmarks and postal marks – that occurred with the end of the interim administration at the close of work on Friday, 14 May. See **Appendix 4** for the full directive.

Here then, if we rely solely on what was published to the public and to the postal service, we should expect to see – outwardly – the same manner of postal handling of registered mail that we observed during the Mandate period. Or do we?

F. Stock-check: Understanding What We Know

In order to address the issue of registered mail service during the interim period and especially at Ahuzat Samuel, we need to take a moment to understand the ecosystem of our knowledge: how do know whatever it is that we know about mail in the interim period and especially registered mail?

As we will momentarily be flooded by the information whose quality we are going to examine, we should keep in mind that set against whatever we are about to confront, there were certain postal procedures and protocols which were most likely still in force through the interim and early Israeli postal administrations, taken from the Mandate's "Standing Order Book #125". The rules (from 1939 and 1941) make it clear that the involvement of postal clerks in the contrivance of mail was a serious offense, and so I believe we also need to assess mail from the interim period through the prism of the enforcement of procedure, and as in this study appreciate the adherence to proper postal procedure when seen on mail:[86]

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[81] JerusalemStamps Bulletin #1 pg. 24-53 "Legalized Taxi Mail & the Hidden History of the Haifa Head Post Office in April-May 1948", Alex Ben-Arieh - https://jerusalemstamps.com/JerusalemStampsBulletin001.pdf

[82] See report on pages 102-103 of this file: https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/137298

[83] Dorfman, ibid, p.10; Aloni, ibid, p.144-45

[84] See pg.12 of this document: https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/419932

[85] See entries for 18 Dec 1947 in the Handbook

[86] Taken from "Palestine Standing Order Book #125" for Feb 1939-Jan 1942, reproduced in the "Israel Philatelist" of Apr & Oct 1994 by Donald Chafetz

H. DATE STAMPING CORRESPONDENCE

Post Office Circular No. 595 May 24, 1939

Applications for Date-Stamp Impressions

It has been brought to notice that requests by members of the public for impressions of date-stamps are being irregularly complied with. Counter officers are, therefore, reminded that they must refuse all such requests.

Post Office Circular No. 595 May 24, 1939

Date Stamping Correspondence

The following notice which appeared in Post Office Circular 478 of the 24th February, 1937, is reproduced for the attention of all officers concerned.

"It is again brought to notice that date-stamp impressions throughout the country and particularly those borne by correspondence posted at Head Offices are far from clear and the notice appearing in Post Office Circular No. 272 of March 15th, 1933 is repeated for the benefit of all concerned:—

"There is room for considerable improvement in the stamping of letters. Date-stamps should be so used as not only to deface the postage stamps but also to indicate particular of the date and place of posting.

"Supervising officers should check correspondence and, if it is found that bad stamping is occurring at other offices, should report the matter on form P.T. 504. If bad stamping is occurring at their own offices, a supervising officer must warn the officer in fault or, if it continues on the part of the same officer, take more serious notice."

Post Office Circular No. 713 October 15, 1941

Stamps — Irregular Sale or Selection

There is reason to believe that it is the practice at certain Post Offices in Palestine to allow members of the Public to select stamps from the stock on hand instead of handing over the next due for sale.

2. Members of the staff are accordingly again warned that it is absolutely forbidden:—

(a) to allow members of the public to examine stamp stocks or to select postage stamps for purchase or

(b) to assist by examining or selecting stamps for them.

3. If any infringement of the instructions comes to notice, the officer responsible will be liable to summary dismissal.

From here we now need to be aware of a problematic facet of our postal history knowledge base, namely that until archival information (eg. from the press and State Archives) began being made available online in the last couple of years, almost all of the information we had about the post offices and their function, and postal developments in the interim era was second-hand – the product of information gathered (and in some cases even made up) by a series of philatelists, or submitted by individuals with a degree of first-hand involvement in those affairs, from the 1940s into the early 2000s.

Some of these individuals were good natured and interested in developing scholarship in this field but many were opportunistic, with a vested interest in promoting postal items (or philatelic subjects) which they contrived and subsequently sold on the market. In some instances it seems that actual participants in postal related events subsequently became philatelists (collectors/dealers) and this in turn influenced what they later recounted from their personal experience, tainting its accuracy or blurring their interpretation of postal procedures. A gradual slippery slope from being a detached professional observer reporting events to an active 'creator' and evaluator of events, making money from it as well; from being totally unconnected to philately to requesting 'cancelled-to-order' covers, then making 'philately inspired' mail and then concocting outright fakes and forgeries; from being a collector who acquired philatelically inspired mail to becoming a "philatelist" who wrote about and tried to make Kosher such mail, to a dealer who subsequently tried to sell it.

Many people were involved, across the country and beyond, feeding off and supporting one another in their assessment of events and evaluation of mail. One example is the "Haifa Study Circle" of philatelists and people affiliated with it, including Edwin Bowman, Max/Mordechai Brisker, Dr. Zipser/Chipser (of "Govt. Tohu WaBohu" stamp fame), Dr. Werner Hoexter and Shmuel Lachman and many others (Zrubavel Shaltieli, Leo Better, Hans Zirker, etc) whose self-addressed mail continues to flood the market. There was also a constellation of postal officials (like Dr. Werner Eichwald of Petach Tikva) and stamp dealers (like Avraham Shneor/"Globus" of Tel Aviv) and other speculators involved in creating philatelic and even criminal fraudulent items (like Mendel Shapira). The immense gray area of "philatelic" interim era material runs the gamut from favor cancels and cancel-to-order materials, to outright counterfeits and fraudulent creations using even stolen or misappropriated postal materials.

These are individuals who invested super-human effort creating what has subsequently been seen on the market as industrial sized quantities of self-addressed or totally contrived pieces of mail. Admittedly there is a case to be made for philatelic mail representing the "only known" examples of certain postmarks or postage rates etc. observed on mail – and yet the sheer size and **brazen distortion of adherence to proper postal procedures** makes the vast amount of this mail, in my opinion, harmful to philatelic study and so worthless to the market.[87]

A byproduct of this situation is that individuals – both in Palestine/Israel and abroad (eg. Stanley Shure and others in the US) – who had connections with the postal services in this era were able to obtain certain favors in the matter of creating or processing articles of mail; these individuals also managed to obtain information on postal matters, such as services available (or suspended), transportation methods, postal markings and more. **Many of these favors, while perhaps not violating postal procedures, <u>perverted them</u> in some way and created tangible postal history items whose <u>circumstances were not actually in line with the implemented procedures</u> as they really were.** In time these same individuals both traded in these materials – buying and selling them – and also wrote the articles which in time became the bedrock for our present specialist literature, early examples of whom are Werner Hoexter and Shmuel Lachman.

In some cases these individuals also established philatelic societies and served as the editors and board members of their journals, essentially controlling the development and dissemination of scholarship in this field – in short, a closed and tight-knit network of vested interests and biased perspectives on postal matters had almost complete control over the subject of interim era mail. Their academic quality varied based on the professionalism of their staff, and their editorial standards.

Academically the core problem this ecosystem created was a body of knowledge with no tangible foundation, which rarely revealed the sources of its information, rarely attributing assertions to specific events or postal regulations: whole books consisting of declarations of 'fact' were written without footnotes; comments, judgements, statements – allegedly of fact[88], even dates and events[89], were printed without attribution to their source. Here for instance I think of the four pink books of the influential series "The Postal History of the Transition Period in Israel, 1948", published by the Society of the Postal History of Eretz Israel and the Israeli Philatelic Federation – co-written by dealers (Marvin Siegel and Zvi Aloni) and collectors, much of whose displayed materials subsequently made their way to auctions (handled for example by the same Siegel and Aloni), and devoid of footnotes or attributions for assertions made.

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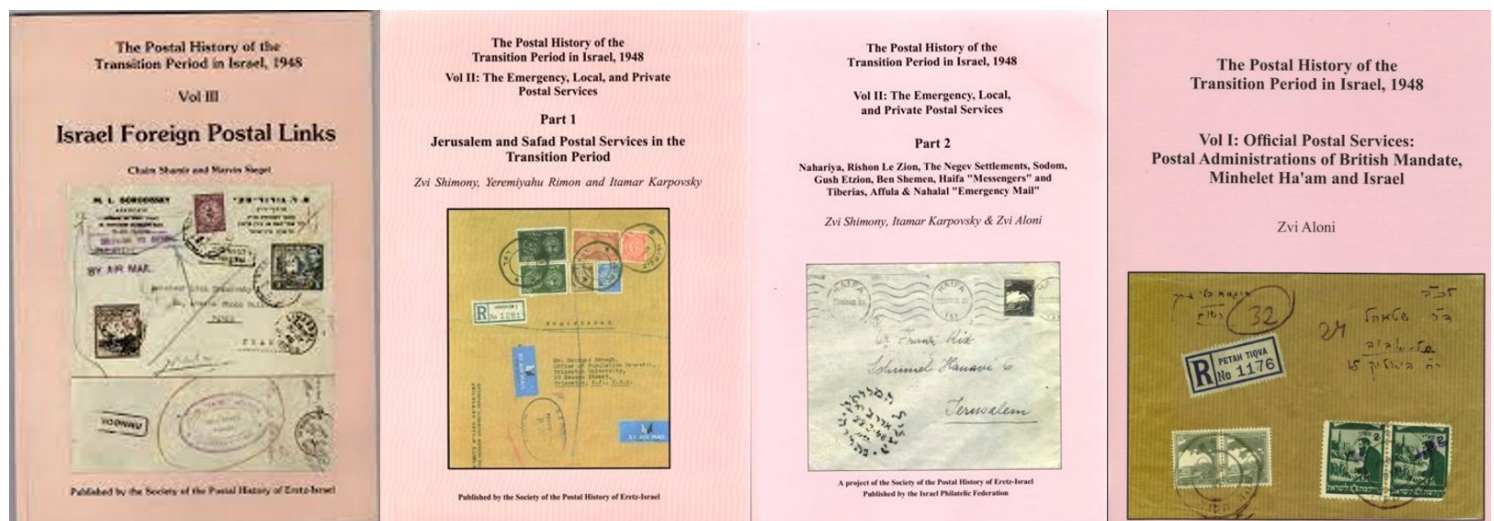
[87] For those with an eye, it's sufficient to search in Hebrew "Minhelet Haam" at an Israeli auction site like this one to be confronted by the scale of this problem: https://il.bidspirit.com/ui/search/PAST.relevance.all.all.%D7%9E%D7%A0%D7%94%D7%9C%D7%AA%20%D7%94%D7%A2%D7%9D?lang=he

[88] A random simple example: Marvin Siegel and Chaim Shamir write that the ship SS Kedma became the only vessel to carry Israel's outgoing sea mail from 16 June 1948 until 1952 ("Israel's Foreign Postal Links" p.25-26) – how do they know that? According to the 1st annual report by the Israeli postal service, published in Sept. 1949, inbound and outbound sea mail was being carried by 3 named companies (not individual ships) "plus other vessels" (see p.29 of this file: https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/2461961).

[89] For example on the much debated matter of flown mail to/from Jerusalem in 1948, JSPS writes that from 18 June until 2 Aug 1948 mail to and from Jerusalem was flown (ibid, p.136/138) – how do they know that? The community's various journals are rife with opinions on this matter over the years.

The cornerstone of our knowledge and literature was a cobbling together of examined postal items, second-hand reports, and inputs from individuals who had first hand exposure to certain events – and yet, in the absence of reference to actual source documentation, much of this information, altruistic and well intentioned as it may be, does not conform to the historical record. The first-hand accounts in particular are rife with inaccuracies, underscoring how much historiography is merely a product of how someone experiences and remembers an event.[90]

Ulterior motives aside, the source of the problem was (and still is) **laziness**: most researchers did not take the time to literally get their hands 'dirty' going to archives and digging for information – or doing fieldwork to confirm matters that had been orally communicated to them; as we see glancing through any of the philatelic journals, most relied on material they hand in hand plus personal accounts, stories, second hand reports – with a dose of conjecture – and this formed the basis of the published specialist literature. Theories were hatched and conclusions were reached without properly researching a subject from start to finish (and tying loose ends along the way) – and certainly not as regards postal procedures. As one philatelist relied on the other, and these unfounded, unattributed statements got bandied about, after a while this vast body of conjecture crystalized itself into 'fact' and so the present bedrock of our knowledge base. The publication of an idea gives it credence and stature.

By the same token much of our literature is a compilation of articles based on or simply showcasing materials in the writer's collection, oftentimes with sensationalist titles: without any external inputs of information (barring recycled 'facts' from secondary resources) a writer presents his postal items and describes what everyone can see for himself; whatever is complex or not understood is discreetly skirted and by the time he's finished writing he has an "article" (warts and all) – and it too becomes an eventual point of reference for unsuspecting collectors and researchers. (In many cases these 'showcase' articles serve to slyly promote and foster interest in postal items that subsequently go on to appear for sale in auctions.)

Our specialist literature is a repository of writing addressing the "what" and avoiding the "why". I invite the reader to glance over for example, later-dated issues of the HLPH journal and see how many of the objects showcased in articles there found their way into the auction market and how many of the unfounded / unattributed ideas developed on those pages made their way wholesale into our specialist literature.[91] The net effect of this development was the outward impression it left, which was that certain people (the authors) were "in the know", and those who were unfamiliar with their assertions were simply not-in-the-know and lacking knowledge – not sufficiently 'qualified' to question the assertions published.[92] "Who controls the present controls the past" (1984).

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[90] I'm thinking for instance of Israel Amikam first-hand account of his "Haifa Messengers" delivery service which supposedly couriered more mail than the entire PEDI transatlantic mail service with the US and earned in a month more than the average annual salary in Palestine, or the philatelist Shaul Finzi's apparent non-involvement in the Nahariya emergency mail service (see Ben-Arieh, ibid in JerusalemStamps Bulletin #1, p. 30-31, 49).
     The serviceman A. S. Baum writing about the Bat Galim post office in the interim period ("Bat Galim – A Postal Curiosity" in BAPIP #99, p.18), comments that it was closed because the neighborhood was in an "enclave of British forces… and therefore out of bounds to the Jewish population", some of whose homes were "requisitioned" – yet the press and State archives don't bear his information out, and he shows a locally posted cover dated 19 May 48 while British forces were still in the process of being evacuated.
[91] Peruse issues from here: http://israelphilately.org.il/info_e.asp?item=32
[92] See for instance the acrimonious reaction by the dealer-researcher Marvin Siegel and Chaim Shamir to a presentation made by Barbara and Seymour Banchick on the subject of interim era/early Israel postal links in Holy Land Postal History (HLPH) bulletins #26-28 (1986), rumbling on into snarling comments in issue #29-30 – a disagreement of ideas that could have been expressed in a more mature way rather than as a turf war

Table of 80 post offices under Jewish operation during the Interim Period			
1. Affula (PO)	עפולה	41. Maoz Hayim (PA)	מעוז חיים
2. Afikim (PA)	אפיקים	42. Meir Shefeyah (PA)	מאיר שפיה
3. Alonim (PA)	אלונים	43. Merhavia (PA)	מרחביה
4. Ashdot Ya'aqov (PA)	אשדות יעקב	44. Meshek Ayelet Hashahar (PA)	משק אילת השחר
5. Atlit (PO)	עתלית	45. Meshek Ein Harod (PA)	משק עין חרוד
6. Bat Yam (PA)	בת ים	46. Meshek Yajur (PA)	משק יגור
7. Beer Tuviya (PA)	באר טוביה	47. Metulla (PA)	מתולה
8. Beit Hashitta (PA)	בית השיטה	48. Miqdal (PA)	מגדל
9. Benei Beraq (PO)	בני ברק	49. Mishmar Haemek (PA)	משמר העמק
10. Ben Shemen (PA)	בן שמן	50. Mizra (PA)	מזרע
11. Binyamina (PO)	בנימינה	51. Naan (PA)	נען
12. Ein Hashofet (PA)	עין השופט	52. Nahalal (PO)	נהלל
13. Evan Yehuda (PA)	אבן יהודה	53. Nahalat Yehuda (PA)	נחלת יהודה
14. Gedera (PA)	גדרה	54. Nahariya (PO)	נהריה
15. Gevat (PA)	גבת	55. Nathanya (PO)	נתניה
16. Givatayim (PO)	גבעתיים	56. Nes Tsiyona (PO)	נס ציונה
17. Givat Brenner (PA)	גבעת ברנר	57. Pardess Hanna (PO)	פרדס חנה
18. Givat Hayim (PA)	גבעת חיים	58. Petah Tiqva (PO)	פתח תקוה
19. Hadera (PO)	חדרה	59. Qiryat Amal (PA)	קרית עמל
20. Haifa (PO)	חיפה	60. Qiryat Hayim (PO)	קרית חיים
21. Heftsibah. Beit Alfa (PA)	חפציבה בה בית אלפא	61. Qiryat Motzkin (PO)	קרית מוצקין
22. Herzliya (PO)	הרצליה	62. Raanana (PO)	רעננה
23. Holon (PO)	חולון	63. Ramatayim (PA)	רמתים
24. Jerusalem (PO)	ירושלים	64. Ramat Gan (PO)	רמת גן
25. Karkur (PO)	כרכור	65. Ramat Hakovesh (PA)	רמת הכובש
26. Kefar Ata (PO)	כפר עטה	66. Ramat Hasharon (PA)	רמת השרון
27. Kefar Behadraga (PA)	כפר בהדרגה	67. Rehovot (PO)	רחובות
28. Kefar Barouch (PA)	כפר ברוך	68. Rishon le Tsiyon (PO)	ראשון לציון
29. Kefar Hassidim (PA)	כפר חסידים	69. Rosh Pinna (PO)	ראש פנה
30. Kefar Sava (PO)	כפר סבא	70. Safad (PO)	צפת
31. Kefar Shemaryahu (PA)	כפר שמריהו	71. Sde Nahum (PA)	שדה נחום
32. Kefar Sirkin (PA)	כפר סירקין	72. Sde Yaaqov (PA)	שדה יעקב
33. Kefar Tabor (PA)	כפר תבור	73. Tel Aviv (PO)	תל אביב
34. Kefar Vitkin (PO)	כפר ויתקין	74. Tel Mond (PO)	תל מונד
35. Kefar Yedidya (PA)	כפר ידידיה	75. Tiberias (PO)	טבריה
36. Kefar Yehezkel (PA)	כפר יחזקאל	76. Tirat Tsevi (PA)	טירת צבי
37. Kefar Yehoshua (PA)	כפר יהושע	77. Yaqur Nesher (PO)	יגור נשר
38. Kefar Yona (PA)	כפר יונה	78. Yavneel (PA)	יבנאל
39. Kinneret (PO)	כנרת	79. Yokneam (PA)	יקנעם
40. Ma'abarot (PA)	מעברות	80. Zikhron Ya'aqov (PO)	זכרון יעקב

Take for example cornerstone information like the widely published list of 80 post offices which allegedly operated during the interim period, a pertinent matter for this article[93]: I cannot find a single attribution in any source as to where that information comes from; we rely that information daily yet it goes unconfirmed. There is for instance an unattributed assertion that the Haifa post office in Bat Galim was closed in this period[94]; another assertion states that the Kiryat Amal post office was "overlooked" on the preparation lists for the interim period, yet operated in that time[95]; and our own object of study, the Ahuzat Samuel post office, is nowhere to be found on these lists – without any explanation provided. From rehashing the same information across so many publications over so many years without independently confirming it, authors have overlooked the simple fact that branch post offices operated at the main 3 cities, meaning that as many as 90 post offices may have operated in the interim period (provided that the authenticity of their mail can be confirmed).[96]

Against a collecting community of impressionable collectors this left the burden of proof – perversely – on them, to question and investigate if everything that was written was in fact true. The net result was, in the absence of an active willingness to undertake lengthy research on their own (something that could only have been spurred by a latent suspicion that the information was questionable; something requiring a high degree of alertness and 'a priori' knowledge) the collecting community unquestionably settled for whatever was published.

This in turn reinforced the primacy of the [rootless] knowledge base, giving it initial credence and then further legitimacy over time as it continued to be relied upon and cited as proof of various facts and events, and influenced future generations of philatelists, dealers and researchers to continue relying on the existing scholarship – even to the point of ignoring empirical evidence or forcing it to conform to existing theories and narratives[97]; bending, twisting and deforming all fundamental tenets of postal procedure and documented history.[98]

An innocent reader may be shocked to read this but similar self-interested markets and communities exist all around us: the self-promoting diamond industry with their sycophantic self-serving guides to evaluating diamonds and rings; the higher-education industry at one and the same time trying to justify itself while also giving its institutes rankings[99] (which are assuredly gamed or paid-for, being a graduate of such an institute myself), and so on.

Technically there is nothing unusual about the conflicts of interest in the philatelic community and its subsequent effect on the quality of our scholarship and knowledge base – but that does not of course legitimize it. Here we should keep in mind a

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[93] The displayed list below is shown in Bruno Forsher "The Interim Period Postage Stamps of Israel" (1969), p.20 – it appears to be a facsimile of a page from the 1948 Post Office Guide.

[94] Aloni, ibid, p.215

[95] Aloni (ibid, p.51), in writing about the supply of interim postmarks, implies that these were produced for the post offices in accordance with the list of post offices published in the April 1948 Post Office Guide, and writes that Kiryat Amal was missing from that list. Nevertheless according to postal service archives that post office was listed in the Guide (on page 216 – see p.214 of https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/2461970). By contrast, Ahuzat Samuel was not shown on the Guide's list, so even for this oft-cited cornerstone of information we don't have a reliable source to confirm which post offices actually operated in the interim period.

[96] See below for a footnote about my impression regarding the authenticity of the interim period postal operation at Kiryat Amal, for example.

[97] A classic examine in my mind is Baruch Hurwich's theory that all APO 5 provisional (rubber) postmarks dated in July need to be backdated a full month, based on an unsubstantiated belief that the provisional postmark was decommissioned prior to June 18th and backed up by a single incomplete postmark (ref: HLPH #35 p.844-47). Beyond merely entertaining the idea that a post office could have more than one postmark, or that postal procedure would not have permitted an erroneous postmark to be used continuously, I also have a proving cover to disprove his theory.

[98] An excellent counter-example, of superb postal history research and reliance of documentary evidence is Daryl Kibble's majesterial work "The Arab-Israeli Conflict: No Service, Returned and Captured Mail" (2014) – this is the standard of postal history research we should be striving for.

[99] See for instance: https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/sep/16/columbia-whistleblower-us-news-rankings-michael-thaddeus

motivating factor, that in this post-WWII era, philately in early Israel was a huge investment and money-making market, even supplanting the stock market.[100]

As a lead-in to this chapter, consider the following disingenuous article[101] – typical and classic of our Palestine-Israel philatelic community – written by Max Brisker with (unfortunately) the famed Ernst Fluri, in which Brisker promotes a self-addressed cover (to his wife Zehava, but nevertheless – which he doesn't reveal to the non-Hebrew reading audience) as an important, nay "interesting", piece of postal history.

Slyly using the rule-of-thumb method of determining the estimated usage period based on the number of the registry labels recorded he helps 'Kasher' the following cover, in effect instilling in our minds that this cover is entirely legitimate and rare.

Left unaddressed is the question of where he got the very specific information about the posting dates for the registry numbers he used to calculate the estimated rate of usage: from my familiarity with his 'work' this was undoubtedly from self-addressed mail he created for himself and possessed – and indeed a quick internet search quickly finds one of his self-addressed covers used as the point of reference for his article (one of a series he posted sequentially to himself; he'd been working hard behind the scenes well before the interim period).

The fact that no transit or arrival postmark is mentioned leaves the question unanswered of whether this cover was actually posted or treated as real registered mail – a critical subject we will address further down.
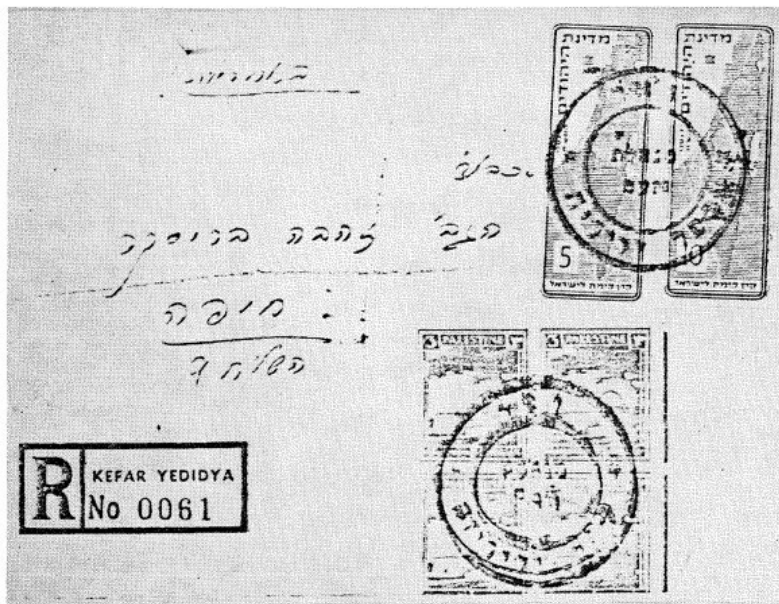
An Interesting Minhelet Ha'am Cover

M. Brisker and E. Fluri

Registered letter of May 14, 1948 from KFAR YEDIDYA.

The numbers on the R-labels on registered M-H covers furnish important clues in two respects:

1) A comparison with genuine specimens and the compilation of **possible** registry label numbers in the Minhelet Ha'am Handbook will show their legitimate or illegitimate use.

2) Further points of reference concerning the rarity value or frequency of such registered covers may be obtained from a computation of the numbers used. If several dates for the time of use of the same roll of R-labels are known — as for instance in this example — one can draw the most interesting conclusions.

KFAR YEDIDYA — a small agricultural co-operative, about 10 miles east of Natanya — serviced during 1948 on the average 15-20 registered letters per month. This is evident from the fact that on February 18, 1948 the #0002, and on September 23, 1948 the #0113 was used. The total of 111 R-letters in seven months averages out as 15 letters per month. However, the #0061 on the above example from the middle of May leads to the conclusion, that the average was higher at the end of the mandate period, then during the War of Independence and the following months. Therefore, frequency for the two-week M-H period is at the most 10 registered letters — probably even less.

(Translation by Charles Tuteur)

> **But that's not all that disturbs me with this opaque 'academic' activity: the frequent – as we will see – philatelic use of rarely seen post offices, postal services or postage rates gives rise to my suspicion whether the matter in question was available to the public at all.**[102]

G. Examining the Empirical Evidence of "Registered Mail": Ahuzat Samuel versus Post Offices with 'handmade' R Labels

The cited specialist literature in this article (and other sources) writes that Ahuzat Samuel post office did not offer registered mail services because it wasn't issued registry labels[103], yet – by way of critical thinking – this is not the reason this post office did not offer registry services: the post office had been processing registered mail using its own name-imprinted labels as late as 18 April 1948 (as we saw above); the same sources also list other post offices (Kiryat Amal, Rehovot, Safed and Yokneam) which during the interim period wrote the registry number by hand on mail, and accepted registered mail – **thereby apparently providing that service**:

- At Kiryat Amal we're told that "hand-made registration labels, or manuscript notation on the covers, was used", and that "about 35 registered letters were sent during this period, numbered 1-37"[104] (it's actually at least 1-40).
- At Yokneam we're similarly told that "handmade registration labels with Hebrew manuscript were used" and that "very few" registered letters were sent during the interim period, numbering 368-373.[105]
- At Rehovot we're informed "It has been said that for patriotic reasons post office staff in Rehovot avoided mandatory registration labels and preferred to write the registration mark, including the number, on the front of covers", and that some 500 registered letters are known sent during the interim period (numbered 51-598).[106]
- And at Safed we read that "registration numbers were written in manuscript on the covers [numbers 4-108] and later regular Mandate type registration labels were used [#2339-2415].[107]

(I must say in light of the sheer difficulty I/we have of obtaining original information on post offices and postal procedures it really is a miracle – albeit man-made – that a secondary source was able to assemble the exact registry numbers used during the interim period at the most obscure and unheard-of places. As we will see in the course of this investigation these numbers were assiduously assembled by collectors and speculators, who made sure to note down exactly which registry numbers had been issued – to themselves.)

Now, casting a glance at the situation in Ahuzat Samuel, we saw above a 24 July 1945 cover with registry number 0501; I have on file another one dated 6 Aug 1945 with registry 0550 and we've seen another above dated 18 April 1948 with registry number 9811 – based on their print style I believe these are all from the same roll.

⇨ Between the first and last dates, inclusive, are exactly 1000 days; 9310 registry numbers presumably were used, yielding an average of c.9 labels a day (admittedly including Saturdays but this error is constant throughout our measure) – and this is the same average if we start from 6 Aug at number #0550.

⇨ If no registration services were available from 21 April until the interim period, and then from 2 May to 14 May inclusive, this means that between 18-20 April inclusive (double counting the 18th out of conservatism) – 3 days – another circa. 27 labels would have been used:

    ⇨ If a roll of registry labels should go up to number 9999, this would mean that by the resumption of registered mail on 2 May, of 9310 + 27 labels used, about 662 labels from this roll should have been left over: had registry services been available at Ahuzat Samuel, at the rate of about 9 registered mail articles a day the leftover roll would have lasted throughout the interim period, for another 74 days – but none are recorded.

⇨ Moreover I see from a cover postmarked on 24 May 1948, ten days into the Israeli postal administration, another type of Ahuzat Samuel imprinted Mandate issued roll registry label in use, here with small imprint – documented by Sacher at around #7700 being in use during the Mandate), so clearly there were additional stocks on hand; thereafter into 1949 I continue to see the same type of label in use.[108] [109]


These weren't used between 2-14 May – not because labels were lacking but rather because there must have been an instruction to suspend the acceptance of registered mail at the post office… but only at this single post office? And why?

Although the literature does not explicitly say that the 4 post offices with handmade registrations, even Safed, were not issued registry labels, by virtue of resorting to manuscript markings (except at Rehovot, ostensibly for patriotic reasons), we understand from this that the necessary postal material was lacking – or made to be lacking.

And yet, apparently, these post offices continued to offer registered mail services: **here we encounter a silent (and hitherto unquestioned) 'revolution' in our understanding of the pre-State postal services** – **continuous use** of manuscript generated registry numbers, whether directly on the mail or on labels affixed to the mail. **And this in contravention to Circular #1 which we read from above, spelling out exactly how to process registered mail.**

This is an **unprecedented** postal practice unseen both in the Mandate and the Israeli postal administration eras: in the Mandate period, Michael Sacher records the odd instance of a manuscript written registry number on mail – **but as an actual ongoing procedure, this is unheard of**. Nevertheless the idea 'stuck' and has remained part of our interim period postal history knowledge base since such mail was first… 'observed'.

Here, let's consider the case of Kiryat Amal: Sacher documents mute registry labels for this settlement for late 1947, which coincides with that post office's date of opening on 1 Oct.[110] We understand from this that in principle, as with Ahuzat Samuel, the service was available. We also see that the serial number is quite low (i.e. there remained many more numbers to use, up to some round ending series-number like 0199 or 0999, or even 9999 if a full roll had been supplied).

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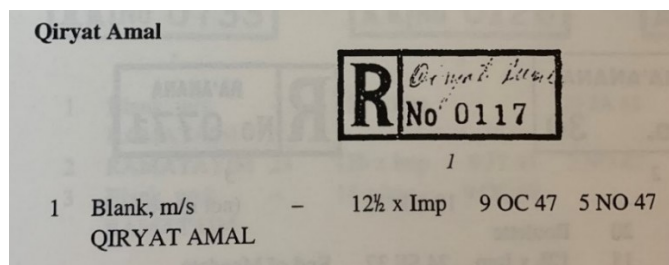
[108] Of note, here we see that mail routing had changed in the Israeli postal administration: addressed to a street in **Hadar HaCarmel** the cover was sent straight there to HAIFA 2 (Hadar HaCarmel branch office), now without previously observed pattern of transit at Mount Carmel (the HAIFA 3 postmark).
[109] Another cover postmarked 25 June 1948 bears registry label # 1128, a month and c.100 numbers later - now an average of 3 registered letters a day.
[110] Sacher, ibid, p.445; Aloni, ibid, p.334

As regards examples of registered mail in the interim period, here is what a cursory search reveals – miraculously, plenty on the market for us to observe:

Registry#	Addressee	Postage Paid	Comments
2	Zehava Brisker (philatelic address)	22 mils for registered postcard (7+15m)	Uprated Mandate postal card with all-Mandate franks (3x + imprinted stamp) no reported transit or arrival postmarks; message refers to philatelic mail[111]
16	Dr. Hoexter (philatelic address)	25 mils for registered letter (10+15m)	Mixed Mandate/interim franking, Haifa overprints, 5 stamps; no transit or arrival postmarks[112]
20	S. Lebensold (philatelic address)	26 mils for registered letter (10+15m)	Mixed Mandate/interim franking, Haifa overprints, 5 stamps; no reported transit or arrival postmarks[113]
27	S. Lebensold (philatelic address)	25 mils for registered letter (10+15m)	Mixed Mandate/interim franking, Haifa & Tel Aviv overprints, 3 stamps; no transit or arrival postmarks[114]
31	Mordechai Brisker (philatelic address)	25 mils for registered letter (10+15m)	All interim franking, Tel Aviv overprints + red overprint; 3 stamps; no transit or arrival postmarks
34	Naomi Loveh at Ganey Tal	62 mils for registered express letter (10+15 + 40m) – here shortpaid 3m and untaxed	All interim franking, Tel Aviv overprints, 5 stamps; Ramatayim single circle Mandate arrival postmark dated 18 May 48 (i.e. a reintroduced Mandate device used now during the Israeli postal administration era)[115]
36	Artur Loveh at Ganey Tal	25 mils for registered letter (10+15m)	All interim franking, tete-beche pair, Haifa overprints, 3 stamps; no reported transit or arrival postmarks[116]
38	Olga Loveh at Ganey Tal	25 mils for registered letter (10+15m)	All interim franking, Haifa & Tel Aviv overprints including red Tel Aviv overprint, 3 stamps; reported manuscript dispatch date 14 May + Ramatayim Mandate arrival postmark dated 18 May 48 (reverse not shown)[117]
40	Artur Loveh at Ganey Tal	25 mils for registered letter (10+15m)	16 May 1948 (Israel era); all interim franking, all Tel Aviv overprints including red overprints, 3 stamps; reported Israeli trilingual Haifa 18 May transit & Tel Aviv 20 May transit + Ramatayim arrival Mandate postmark 21 May 48 (reverse not shown)[118]

[111] TAS 23-1101
[112] Doron Waide 33-149
[113] Aloni p.333
[114] TAS 45-115
[115] TAS 47-254
[116] Aloni p.333
[117] TAS 40-338
[118] TAS 40-339

S. LEBENSOLD
HAIFA
TEL - HAY2

As per the numbering system used at Kiryat Amal, about 40 pieces of mail were sent registered of which 9 are displayed above: 5 are known philatelic addresses and 4 are addressed to someone unknown to my database of suspect addresses. Of those latter 4, one is short paid and untaxed (highly unusual), and in general the combination of the stamps used have philatelic qualities, such as the rare red overprints, the Haifa overprints in general and the tete-beche pair.

There is also something unusual about the latter 4 pieces of mail in a row being sent apparently by the same person, as per the handwriting, to different names of the same family at the same address, particularly as registered mail from this settlement is very rare, so its frequent use by the same senders or addressed to the same addressees is suspect.

Of critical concern is the lack of transit and arrival marks on much of the mail sample – as being registered mail it was supposed to be written down on registers of letters and its route tracked with these postal markings. That's the whole point of sending mail registered – we learned about this in detail above. It's hard to tell from the images supplied by the sources if the covers were opened but in some cases I don't see any signs that the envelope was opened.

As a general principle, if we see that a Mandate issued registry label roll was supplied to this settlement – and in general I don't see many or any instances of its use prior to the interim period – why should the roll have been substituted with makeshift labels and manuscript numbering? And why does the manuscript written numbering system not adhere to the sequence on the officially issued printed labels?

My suspicion is that by not using the issued official labels these covers were prepared "illegally" off-the-books, under-the-table as it were. Undocumented on official forms. The few that have backstamps are all marked on the same dates and processed by the Israeli, not interim, postal administration where only the final cover #40 adheres perfectly to a properly handled registered cover with both transit and arrival postmarks.

From among this examined sample we also have the benefit of seeing something from behind the scenes which we don't ordinarily see, in a natural course of events – the dispatch slip issued to the sender of cover #16… except that I handled the cover with that slip included inside. In practice that slip should have been in Kiryat Amal, where it was issued, in the hands of the sender while the cover (and presumed contents therein) would be miles away in Haifa in the hands of Dr. Werner Hoexter. As Ben-Gurion said, "in Israel, in order to be a realist you must believe in miracles".[119]
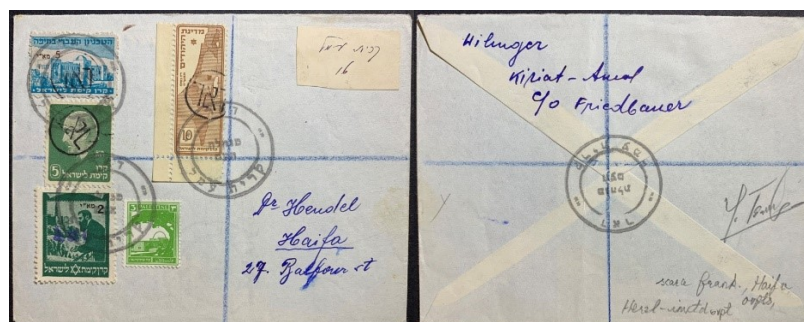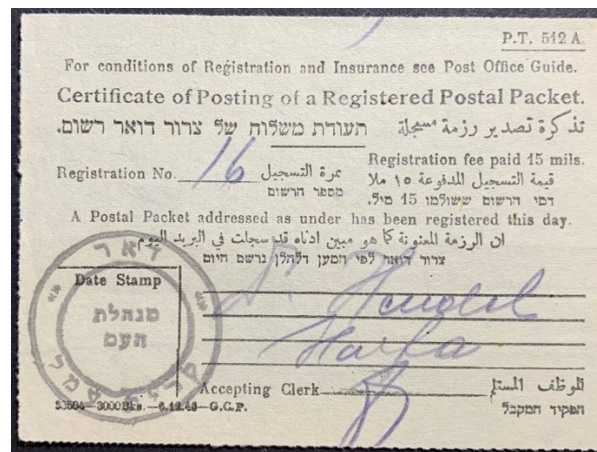
[119] From Interview on CBS, 5 October 1956 - https://libquotes.com/david-ben-gurion/quote/lbh3b8k

And what a miracle – would you believe it – now by way of ebay I found exactly the same for Mordechai Brisker's #31 cover:
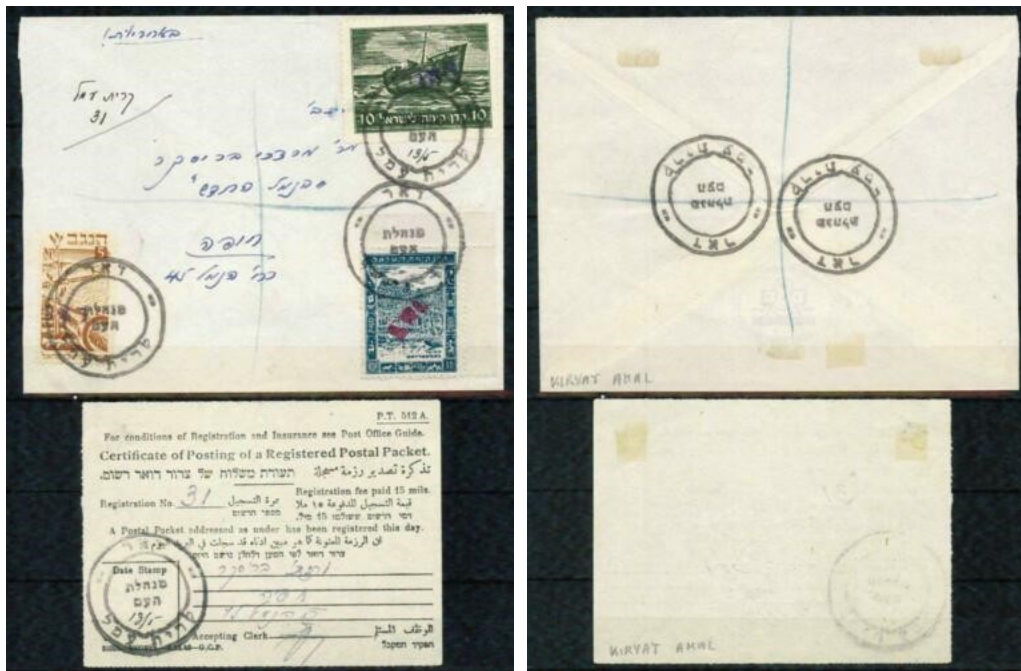
So how were the two items miraculously "reunited" as one complete postal lot? Aloni shows us a documentary example of how this would be done:[120] collectors (and speculators) would send self-addressed stamped covers (or money) to postal agencies with a request to have the covers sent back (or prepared by them and sent back). In the documented instance below, dated 13 May 1948, the clerk at the Kfar Shmaryahu post office (M. Kopelman) has replied to the collector Shlomo Platzker of Haifa "I am sending you here the 4 letters and I will try to send the others with the new stamps of our state."
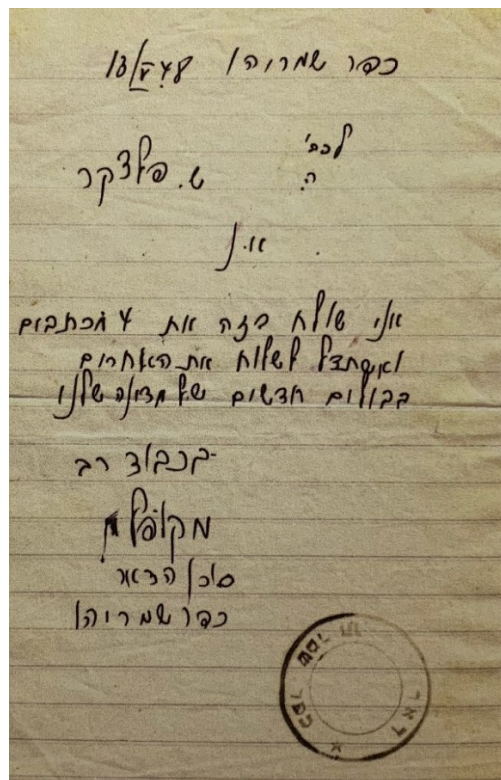
So here, likely cover #16 (as #31) and the issued deposit slip were all sent together, by his request, to Dr. Hoexter. And why would this registered cover and others from Kiryat Amal be lacking transit marks?

120 Aloni, ibid, p.146

> **I opine, because these covers were sent by <u>regular</u> mail, not registered mail – because (drumroll), registered service was not really available from that locale during the interim period, necessitating the use of handmade registry labels to imitate real registered mail.[121]**

Here then is one reason why in spite of much original postal information not being available to us we do miraculously have an exact accounting of the registry numbers used during the interim period at various small post offices. A contrived miracle of philatelic making.

Now let's examine the situation at Yokneam: here too Michael Sacher has recorded the issuance of a registry label roll to this post office; his earliest known date of use is Dec. 1947 and he apparently didn't encounter additional mail items with later dated registry labels.[122] The label is imprinted with the settlement's name and its number (0211) reasonably advanced.
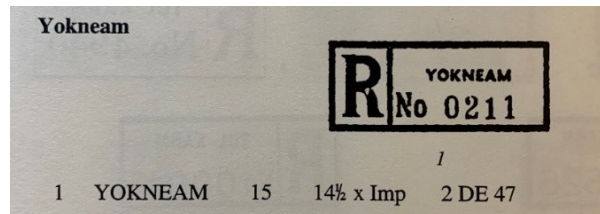
Doing a cursory search for examples of interim registered mail from this locale I found just this one[123] (out of the estimated 6 known to exist) – and I think this sums up exactly where I'm going in this section of the article:

Addressed no less to Mordechai Brisker, here at his work address on 45 HaNamal street at the "New Port" Cooperative in Haifa; adopting a combination of "registered printed matter" as the mail type and rate – paid with Mandate stamps (scarce, as these were not sold over the counter during the interim period)… and no transit or arrival markings whatsoever in spite of this being "registered" mail. Here there is an improvement over the approach adopted at Kiryat Amal, as it looks like the handmade registry labels do adhere to the serial sequence on the official issued role – but no illegitimate use has been made of the official labels to make this cover…

…so that by the same token we should be wondering why in the period of 2-14 May handmade registry labels were needed, whereas barely 2 weeks later (27 May) we see mail using the Mandate issued labels again:[124]

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[121] As a result of closely examining mail from Kiryat Amal and in general testing the reliability of our specialty literature, in light of the 'unusual' circumstances of Kiryat Amal having been "overlooked" by the interim postal service when it planned its operations (Aloni, ibid, p.51, 332-334, 459) necessitating the need to have a special postmark produced for it – <u>of a design said to **not** have been placed in use at other locales</u>, **I want to raise the possibility that the whole postal operation at this locale was <u>fake</u>**, and that this post office may not have been intended to operate in the interim period (as is written for example - oddly without proof - about the post office at Bat Galim). This matter will be researched further in the near future.

In the meantime I've found that Kiryat Amal was indeed listed in the 1948 Post Office Guide, on p.216, per Weekly Post Office Bulletin #16 of 27 April 1949 (p.214 of https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/2461970) thus casting doubt on the foundations for that published theory.

[122] Sacher, ibid, p.470
[123] Aloni, ibid, p.408
[124] TAS 42-89

Here, as per the original lot description this cover is backstamped – 27 May 1948 Tel Aviv arrival, and in any case we also see the "National Loan" handstamp applied on the front by the sorting office in Tel Aviv, so we know this cover definitely went through the mails.

Next. I have much to say about interim mail at the **Rehovot post office** (the suspicious quantities of "bank" mail sent being only the tip of the iceberg), but with 550 registered pieces of mail sent during the interim period, to keep this examination short and focused I would simply ask: if the Rehovot post office did not use Mandate issued registry labels during the interim period, out of patriotic considerations as claimed, why then did it resort to using them again already on the 1st official day of the Israeli postal administration, on 16 May 1948?[125]

Closing out this observation of the 4 post offices which used manuscript/handmade registry labels is the Safed post office, which on account of its semi-siege circumstance in this period has earned it a separate chapter in the annals of Israel's postal history. The period of 4 May (when the post office was reopened) to 24 June is considered the town's own interim period on account of its self-made postmark and stamps – but in the period of our examination, the actual interim period between the Mandate and Israel (2-14 May), **there were no registered letters sent from this post office**; the earliest registered cover, numbered #0004, was posted on **20 May** – and is philatelic, nevertheless, here during period of the Israeli postal administration it is transit (24 May Tiberias) and arrival marked (next day in Tel Aviv)… though whether these backstamps are philatelically applied (eg. 'favor handling') or otherwise even prove that the cover was fully handled as registered mail is a subject of investigation further below (for instance there is no Haifa transit as we would expect to see on mail transported from the north):

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[125] Further down in this article I address the issue of interim franks being (or not) used on Israel-era registered mail, and that these are not observed used on genuine (non-philatelic) mail – a suspicious characteristic of the displayed cover above, whose reverse side was not shown nor described by the auction house. Indeed the matter of widely seen and philatelically franked "bank mail" is addressed further down as well.

H. Examining the Empirical Evidence of "Registered Mail": unusually changes in patterns or absent postal markings

We're beginning to see a pattern: from the 5 observed post offices so far, during the interim period (strictly between 2-14 May), either registered mail service is non-existent/unavailable as at Ahuzat Samuel and Safed, or when such mail seems to exist it lacks the essential elements of transit and arrival postmarks: specifically it lacks **interim-era transit and arrival postmarks**, or it is posted towards the very end of the interim period and bears transit/arrival marks from the Israeli postal administration… and practically all the observed sample of registered mail is philatelic.

I broadened the scope of my observation and decided to take a look at a random sample of other post offices (not the HPOs): my intention had been to compare the average daily amount of registered mail generated during the 13 day interim period to an estimate of the daily amount during the Mandate period. This should have been possible by finding at least 1 instance of registered mail usage close to the interim era, anytime from 1947 up to 20 April (when Mandate registered mail ended): the last Mandate era used registry number would be the earliest recorded for the interim minus 1… the assembled information totally ruined this plan, as it turned out, from the randomly selected cases – almost none adhered to the types or number sequences of registry labels from the Mandate era in the interim era, and this speaks for itself:

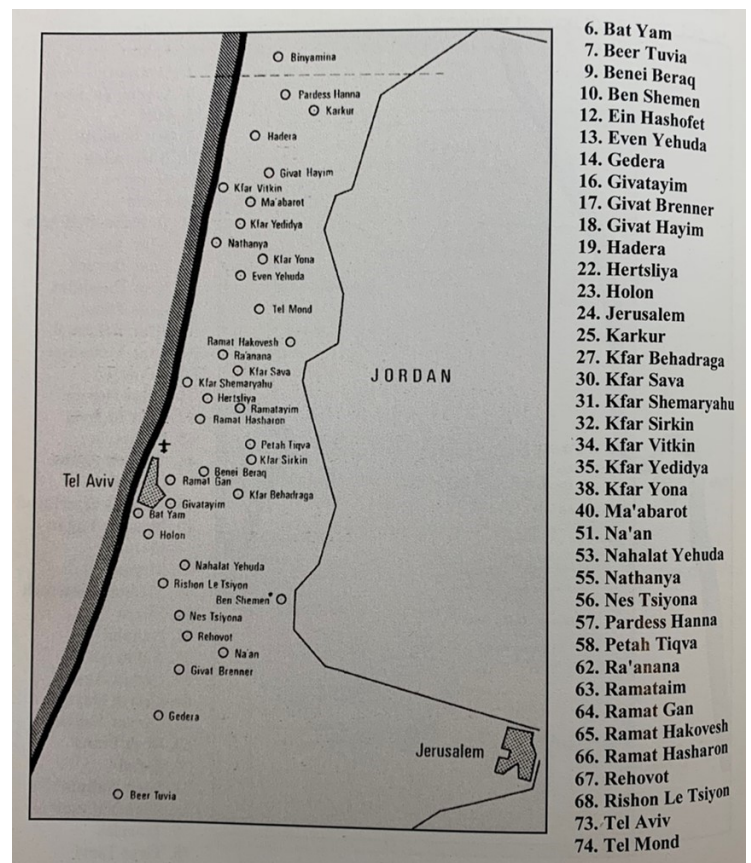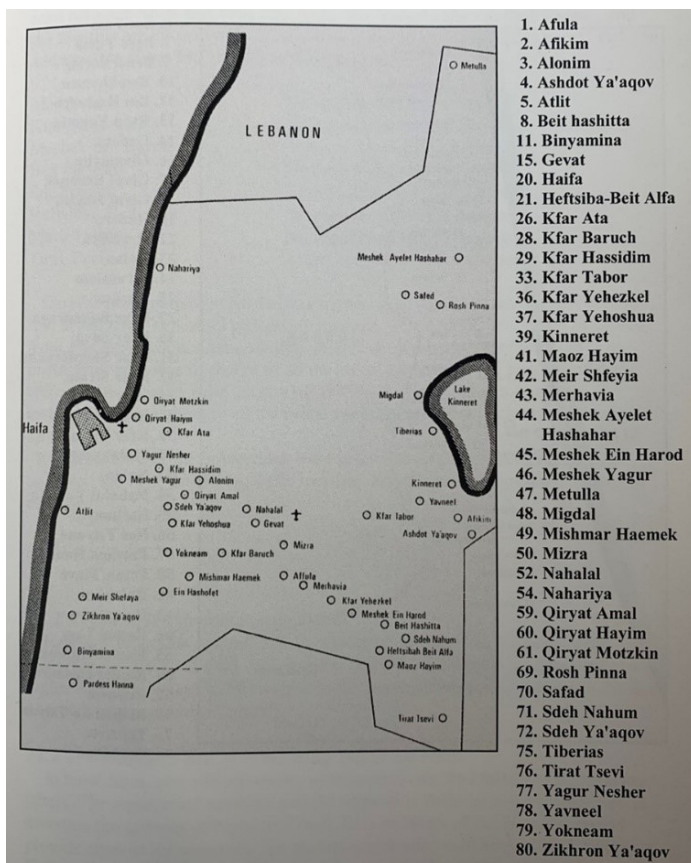| Locale	Latest seen mandate reg#	Posting date	Earliest reg# in interim period	# reg items recorded in interim period	Daily average	Comments	Source
Ben shemen	0890 (small digits, imprinted name small caps)	22-May-47	None known at ben shemen		0	no registered mail in interim period	T41-563
Ben Shemen	0146 (small digits, imprinted name small caps)	25-Sep-48	None known at ben shemen		0		T41-563
Gevat	0537 (Large numbers, manuscript HE in pen)	03-Mar-47	0001-0004 (small numbers, imprinted locale + manuscript name in Hebrew); 0003 was dated 14 May per illustration in Aloni p.197	4	0	different registry rolls; at least 2 covers posted on final day of interim period	T39-312
Kfar behadraga	0018 (large digits, manuscript name EN pencil cursive)	01-Dec-44	0504-0521 (large digits, manuscript name HE pencil cursive)	18	1		T48-183
Kfar hassidim	0320 (large digits, imprinted name)	04-Aug-47	0503-0519 (large digits, imprinted name)	17	1	interim reg numbers out of sequence	T48-183
Kfar shmaryahu	0276 (large digits, imprinted name)	Jun-47	0719-0773 (large digits, imprinted name)	55	4		T48-183
Kfar vitkin	0524 (large digits, imprinted name)	19-Oct-47	0206-0212 + 0293-0318 (large digits, imprinted name)	33	3	interim reg numbers out of sequence	T48-183
Kfar yedidya	1000 (large digits, manuscript name all caps)	18-Feb-48	0055-0061 (small digits, imprinted name)	7	0.5	different registry labels & serial numbers	T46-139
Kfar yona	0810 (large digits, manuscript name HE pen cursive)	02-Mar-47	0443-0464 (large digits, manuscript name HE pen cursive)	22	2	interim reg numbers out of sequence	T48-183
Maabarot	0286 (small digits, imprinted name)	02-Mar-47	0228-0249 (small digits, imprinted name)	22	2	interim reg numbers out of sequence	T49-141
Maoz hayim	0001 (small digits, imprinted name)	07-Oct-47	None known at maoz hayim		0	no registered mail in interim period	T48-183
Meir shfeya	1026 (large digits, manuscript name EN pencil cursive)	19-Sep-45	1821-1823 (large digits, manuscript name HE pen cursive)	3	0	a big jump in the reg numbers in interim period	T48-183
Meir shfeya	1783 (large digits, manuscript name HE pencil cursive)	23-Feb-48	1821-1823 (large digits, manuscript name HE pen cursive)	3	0	a big jump in the reg numbers in interim period	T48-183
Merhavia	0965 (large digits, typed name EN)	22-Sep-47	None known at merhavia		0	no registered mail in interim period	T48-183
Nesher yagur	1705 (large digits, imprinted name)	04-Mar-48	1217-1483 (large digits, imprinted name)	267	21	interim reg numbers out of sequence	T46-139
Netanya	4412 (Large numbers, imprinted locale)	16-May-48	2183-2877 (large digits, imprinted locale)	695	53	big jump from #2877 on c.14 May to 4412 on the 16th -?	T40-368
Pardes hanna	1113 (Large numbers, imprinted locale, serifed "1"s)	16-May-48	0922-1081 (large digits, imprinted locale, serifed "1"s)	160	12	big jump from #1081 on c.14 May to 1113 on the 16th -?	T39-99
Petah Tikva	0984 (Large numbers, imprinted locale)	13-Feb-48	0374-2119 (large digits, imprinted locale)	1746	134	interim registry roll likely different to that of Feb 1948; but big jump from #2119 on c.14 May to 3267 on the 16th -?	SKU 143903
Petah Tikva	3267 (Large numbers, imprinted locale)	16-May-48	0374-2119 (large digits, imprinted locale)	1746	134		T40-367
Rehovot	2621 (Large numbers, imprinted locale)	21-Jun-48	51-598 (manuscript on mail)	548	42	different registry labels & serial numbers	T41-80
Rishon le zion	0293 (Large numbers, imprinted locale)	18-Sep-47	0011-0590 (large digits, imprinted locale)	580	45	interim reg numbers out of sequence	T39-52
Rishon le zion	2690 (Large numbers, imprinted locale)	31-Mar-48	0011-0590 (large digits, imprinted locale)	580	45		T39-53
Rosh pinna	2738 (large digits, imprinted name)	29-Jan-48	0002-0032 (large digits, imprinted name)	31	2	interim reg numbers out of sequence	T49-134
Tirat zvi	0002 (small digits, imprinted name)	22-Mar-48	0033-0036 (small digits, imprinted name)	4	0	a big jump in the reg numbers in interim period	T49-141

With the exception of Kfar BeHadraga and Kfar Shmaryahu, where the interim label serial numbers (and design) appear to be consistent over time with recorded instances from the Mandate era, what we see overwhelmingly is a lack of consistency in the registry labels used in the interim period at most of the locales – or no registered mail recorded at all. And from this sample the overwhelming amount of observed interim (and even Mandate) mail samples are to philatelic addresses. And as regards Kfar Shmaryahu, in spite of the consistence in the use of the registry roll, we have first-hand evidence (shown and cited above) that the postmaster there was involved servicing philatelic requests.

This observation begs the question, why the lack of consistency? Why should anything have changed in the physical preparation of registered mail specifically during the interim period, especially in light of the postal service's directives essentially instructing that all processing continue as was done during the Mandate period?

According to the cited literature, of the [90] post offices listed as having operated in the interim era, 8 including Ahuzat Samuel do not have registered mail items recorded for them; with Safed the total comes to 9. Expressed differently, at least 2 post offices are "documented" as not offering registered mail service during the interim period – and possibly 7 more post offices too. In light of what we learned above about the operation of registered mail, **it's difficult to fathom how registered mail service can exist if only some of the post offices service it while others, apparently, don't**.
But beyond the mere dry statistic of which post offices don't have examples of registered mail recorded for them, what I also see, more disturbingly, is a total lack of transit and/or arrival postmarks – specifically of the HPO registry departments – during the period 2-14 May, on the examples of registered mail from post offices which did offer the service.

Aloni's book published two lists of post offices with accompanying maps – each list relates to a postal region, north (down to the Binyamina post office) or south (up to the Pardess Hanna post office), presumably the division of the post offices in the interim region, though he doesn't cite his sources.[126] Whether or not the allocation is accurate is not so important for us here: the critical element is, we should expect to see registered mail from the interim period transiting the HPO relevant to the dispatching and destination post offices, ideally as per the regional allocations shown below:

1. Afula
2. Afikim
3. Alonim
4. Ashdot Ya'aqov
5. Atlit
8. Beit hashitta
11. Binyamina
15. Gevat
20. Haifa
21. Heftsiba-Beit Alfa
26. Kfar Ata
28. Kfar Baruch
29. Kfar Hassidim
33. Kfar Tabor
36. Kfar Yehezkel
37. Kfar Yehoshua
39. Kinneret
41. Maoz Hayim
42. Meir Shfeyia
43. Merhavia
44. Meshek Ayelet Hashahar
45. Meshek Ein Harod
46. Meshek Yagur
47. Metulla
48. Migdal
49. Mishmar Haemek
50. Mizra
52. Nahalal
54. Nahariya
59. Qiryat Amal
60. Qiryat Hayim
61. Qiryat Motzkin
69. Rosh Pinna
70. Safad
71. Sdeh Nahum
72. Sdeh Ya'aqov
75. Tiberias
76. Tirat Tsevi
77. Yagur Nesher
78. Yavneel
79. Yokneam
80. Zikhron Ya'aqov

6. Bat Yam
7. Beer Tuvia
9. Benei Beraq
10. Ben Shemen
12. Ein Hashofet
13. Even Yehuda
14. Gedera
16. Givatayim
17. Givat Brenner
18. Givat Hayim
19. Hadera
22. Hertsliya
23. Holon
24. Jerusalem
25. Karkur
27. Kfar Behadraga
30. Kfar Sava
31. Kfar Shemaryahu
32. Kfar Sirkin
34. Kfar Vitkin
35. Kfar Yedidya
38. Kfar Yona
40. Ma'abarot
51. Na'an
53. Nahalat Yehuda
55. Nathanya
56. Nes Tsiyona
57. Pardess Hanna
58. Petah Tiqva
62. Ra'anana
63. Ramataim
64. Ramat Gan
65. Ramat Hakovesh
66. Ramat Hasharon
67. Rehovot
68. Rishon Le Tsiyon
73. Tel Aviv
74. Tel Mond

…but we don't see these transits (or any transits). Consider some examples taken from a reputable philatelic source:

126 Aloni, ibid, p.147-48; identical to those shown in Fluri (p.42-43) who doesn't cite any attribution.

Kfar Hassidim:
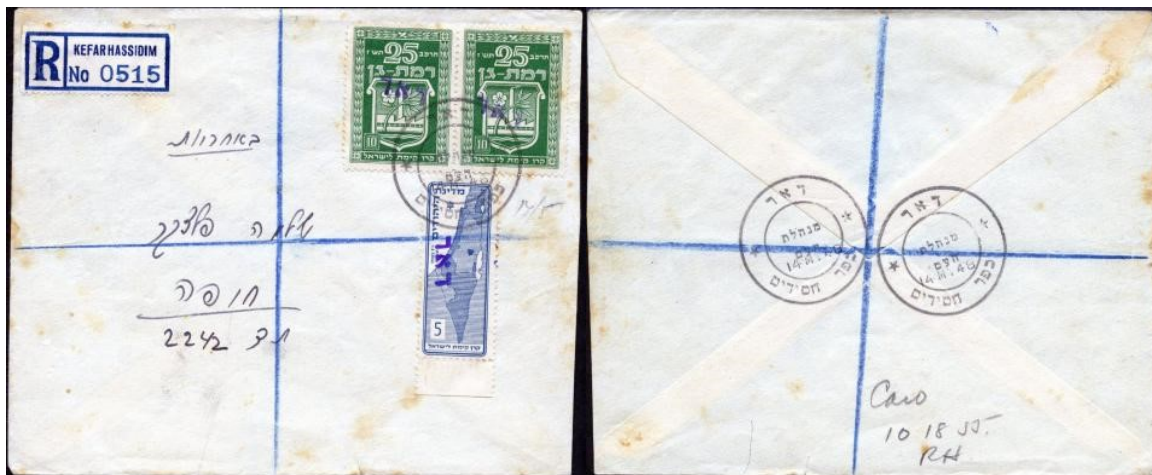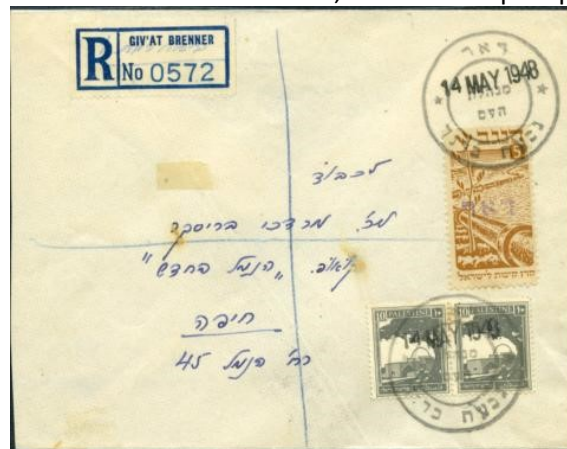

Meshek Yagur:

Nahalat Yehuda – no reverse, no backstamps reported:

Givat Brenner – no reverse, no backstamps reported:

Nahalal:

This investigation began incidentally as a study of mail by chance from the periphery, from small obscure locales where registered postal history is rare and highly prized - and from where specific aspects of the creation and handling of that mail raised questions: except for the sample group from Ahuzat Samuel – unregistered because the post office supposedly was not issued labels, mail specimens from the other post offices bore no backstamps and generally exhibited philatelic characteristics (in addition to being addressed exclusively to philatelic addresses), raising questions about their postal authenticity.

I. Examining the Empirical Evidence of "Registered Mail": observing mail from the main cities
From here we broaden the geographic scope of our investigation and now look at mail from larger locales and the big cities: whereas with the smallest settlements, observation of philatelically-inspired mail was unavoidable, here our methodology is to pinpoint genuine specimens of registered mail in order to neutralize the potential presence of philatelically-inspired postal treatment – specifically 'favor handling' such as the deliberate application of backstamps or even the premature removal of a cover from the mail stream (like standard cancelled-to-order mail) in contravention to the normal implemented procedure at that time.

For the curious – how would 'favor handling' express itself and how nefarious might it be to postal history research? Consider this cover addressed no less to Zehava Brisker (i.e. Max Brisker), correctly franked 25 mils – but using invalid Mandate stamps during the Israeli postal administration, on 18 May – 4 days after these were demonetized on the 15th: the cover was postmarked at Migdal, where the [overworked] clerk 'miraculously' didn't notice the invalid postage and tax the cover for postage dues; it transited Tiberias where there too, magically it wasn't spotted and marked for tax; and arrived in Haifa – where there too it went 'unnoticed' and untaxed. It "passed 3 post offices untaxed". All this in a very specific period where as I've demonstrated in an earlier article, the Haifa HPO taxed **absolutely everything**…[127]

Once we know what true genuinely requested registered mail looks like – even if lacking backstamps – we will better be able to evaluate other covers of known or suspected philatelic origin, or of contradictory postal appearance, some of which do bear additional postmarks.

The intention is to establish a research basis sterilized/neutralized of distracting and misleading philatelic influence so we can then draw definitive conclusions regarding the presence or absence of transit or arrival postmarks. This is vital because there will be cases where the expected requisite postmarks will appear - but for very genuine reasons we will see that these do not and cannot indicate registered mail processing.

This is a complex area of study compounded by the sheer volume of philatelic mail whose manufacture often conflicted with actual proper (or instituted) postal procedure. Once we neutralize that harmful influence we will be in a clear position to draw definitive conclusions: the work is actually easy but requires focus and close attention to detail.

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[127] TAS-47 lot 253 – only the front is displayed, the reverse is described; cited in Alex Ben-Arieh, ibid, in JerusalemStamps Bulletin #1.

Here it's worth keeping in mind what the quantity of registered mail was during the interim period, the time-frame of our observation. It might come as a surprise to the reader but obtaining information – even a high level annual total – of registered mail usage in the Mandate period (a documented and closely tracked type of mail) is virtually impossible: except for the last annual report of the Mandate postal service, for 1947, no other document or report gives any indication how much registered mail was processed by the Mandate postal service. The sole reference, from the 1947 report, is vague: "about two million inland and three million foreign registered articles, outgoing and incoming, were dealt with during the year."[128] As the interim period supposedly offered just domestic registered mail service we would be interested in comparing the daily average of the 2 million domestic registered items for 1947 to the daily average of the total for the 13 day interim period (by tallying the numbers listed in Aloni[129]) – which comes out roughly to 50,000 postal items. That means, with Saturdays included to keep the relations equal, about **5480** domestic registered items were sent daily in 1947 versus about **3846** for the interim period.

We can refine this statistic a little further: archival documents on the planned establishment of the Israeli postal service helpfully calculated estimated postal revenue in 1948-49 for the Mandate postal service, both for "Palestine" as a whole and for the "Jewish State" ('JS' in the documents – the territory defined by the UN partition of Palestine in 1947, and largely the territory controlled by the interim postal service); from this, the estimated revenue from the "Jewish State" comes to **72%** of the total.[130] As such, for the statistic of daily average domestic registered mail, the reasonably extrapolated Jewish proportion of the 5480 items would come to **3944** – very close to our rough estimate of **3846** for the interim period…

…ONLY that in the interim era a high proportion of that registered mail is known to be (or observed to be) philatelic, leaving the genuinely requested and posted proportion significantly small – a hint of what this research will shortly uncover. We can better appreciate this phenomenon by searching for examples of Mandate registered mail from 1948: the overwhelming quantity of interim period registered mail dwarfs the visible examples of such mail from the Mandate era.

This phenomena is not unique in this period: the 'famous' philatelically embellished Rishon Le Zion 'emergency' armored car mail service, which operated parallel to the less reliable Mandate postal service in that city, is estimated to have produced 12,000 stamps and carried about 2000 letters… of which, according to researchers, only 10 are deemed genuine commercial pieces of mail.[131] Put bluntly, **the mere availability of a service does not guarantee its genuine usage**… and if that service is not all that it seems, like the registered mail we are investigating, it shouldn't surprise us that the bulk of the mail which used it was not genuinely created for purposeful use of that service.

Tel Aviv – the common appearance of an inner-city registered mail item: properly franked 25 mils, addressed to a lawyer (and return addressed), and postmarked on the front by the dispatching office and backstamped (once or twice) by the same office. As per the registry label and violet ink the letter was posted from the head post office (eg sometime between 6-14 May), but there are no transit or arrival markings – and chiefly no indication of its passage through the registry department. The sending and return addresses are all within the area serviced by the HPO.

[128] See pg.9-10 of this file: https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/215496
[129] Aloni, ibid, p.162-164
[130] See page 113 of this file: https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/298877
[131] Shimony/Karpovsky/Aloni, ibid, p.103

Tel Aviv – a similar example to the above, also sent from the head post office. Here it differs only in that it is overfranked at 30 mils (unless the postage is short paid 1 mil for 6m extra weight); returned addressed with a handstamped post office box address, and possibly slit open at the top:


Tel Aviv – attractive franking (multiple 2 mils stamps + red overprinted 10 mils) is not necessarily a sign of philatelic origin, and the addressee is unknown to me as a philatelic address. The postage paid is 30 mils, which may be a convenience underpaid extra weight registered letter (10m base letter postage + 15m registry fee + 6m extra weight here paid as 5m). Yes, there is no return address written but this is a common phenomenon in the late-Mandate and interim period, not necessarily grounds to declare a postal item as philatelic or fake. If anything the fact that there is no overt sign of the cover being opened is grounds to suspect its origins – but outwardly the cover was handled exactly as the examples above, also from the head post office:

Ramat Gan – a properly franked registered cover to Tel Aviv, only bearing dispatch postmarks, cut open along the left side:
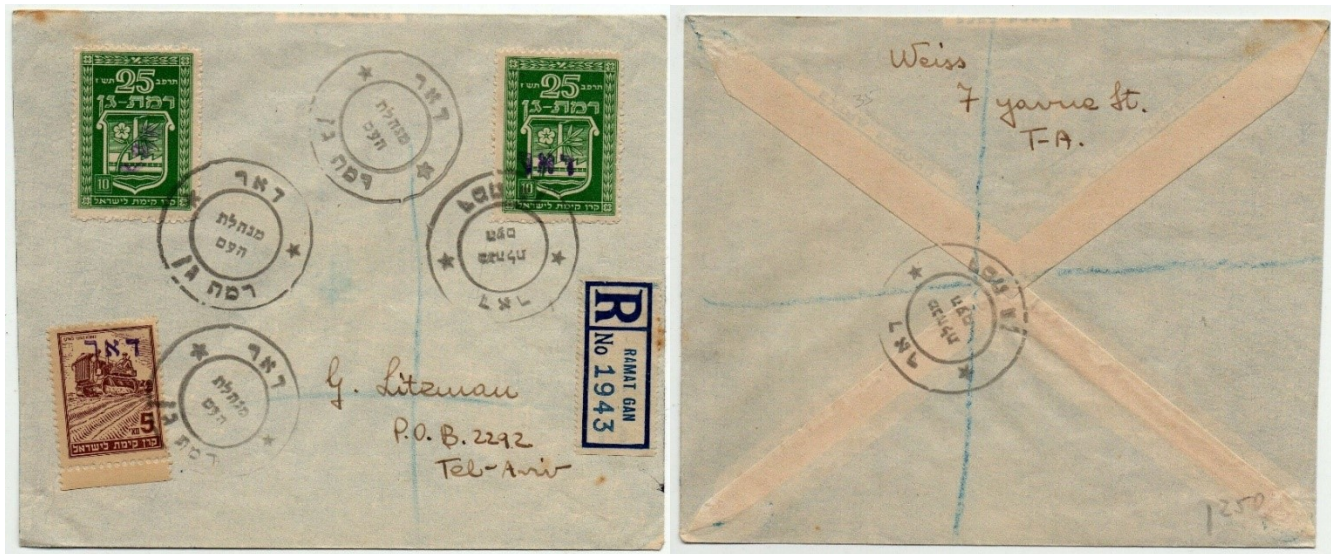
Haifa – Hadar HaCarmel branch post office: here we have an instance of an authentic commercial cover returned to the sender (one of a well-known type of correspondence to Arab addressees who were no longer at their addresses). Not only as registered mail is it lacking transit and arrival postmarks – chiefly transit at the HPO's registry department, even in the process of being returned there is no indication that it passed through a registration point.

Jerusalem – Mahane Yehuda branch post office: Jerusalem's postal service was established separately from the interim service in the rest of the country owing to the city being cut off by a land siege, starting around 20 April. I myself treat the definition of "siege" here with some skepticism in light of press reports from this period but in any case the city was "cut off" and the interim period postal service established later than in the rest of the country, with standard generic interim "Jerusalem" dateless postmarks in use, but with local type stamps used for postage rather than the "DOAR" counterstamped types used in (most) of the rest of the country.

The Mandate era General Post Office building (the Jerusalem 'Head Post Office') indeed ceased Mandate operations on 5 May but was not physically under the control of the Jewish administration until captured by Jewish forces on 14 May (and then the HPO, in a new location, only opened to the public on 28 June). In this time there were 3 functioning branch post offices (at Mea Shearim, Mahane Yehuda and Rehavia) and a sorting room. Mail addressed outside the city could not be dispatched owing to the siege and piled up in the sorting office until 2 convoys from Tel Aviv arrived on 18 and 21 June to transport the mail.

As we observed above a sort of "interim period" at Safed which existed beyond the interim period in Israel, here too, a local interim period existed until mid-June, when national Doar Ivri postage stamps were received, and July-August when the Israeli trilingual postmarks entered local use.

Nevertheless – here we have a 10 May local Jerusalem registered cover (addressed to #43 King George street, near the Rehavia neighborhood) bearing only dispatch postmarks and no indication of any registry service. **We will return to the subject of Jerusalem further below because this is a more intricate case than the rest of the country.**

J. A Policy of Postal Obfuscation:

What we begin to see, starting from the periphery and moving inwards to larger towns and major cities, is that during the interim period registered mail did not pass through any kind of registry division – and largely, bears neither transit nor arrival postmarks, as we would expect to see on registered mail.

Indeed, if anything, we see outward signs of obfuscation: the interim postmarks bore no dates, and generally, the interim era post offices did not mark mail with datestamps – this may have been intentional. If we pause to think about this for a moment, the interim postal service inherited the [remaining] supplies and infrastructure of the Mandate postal service – including date-headed **cancelling machines**, yet except at the Haifa head post office where this was used from 6-10 May we don't see these practical implements used at the several post offices where these existed, begging the question "why"?

The widespread, systematic use of dateless postmarking devices on mail is unheard of, but there is a **limited precedent** for this practice from the Mandate era: domestic holiday period printed matter mail and bulk printed matter was often postmarked (stamps obliterated / cancelled) by a dateless triangular handstamp bearing the initials of the city of dispatch (in lieu of a datestamp), the idea that being to diminish the appearance of delays in transit times owing to heavy mail volume, such mail would be postmarked without a date – and would arrive whenever it did without revealing outwardly how long it took to arrive. But this postmarking method was limited to "second class" mail, and to inland use only (as these postmarks were not UPU compliant for overseas mail).
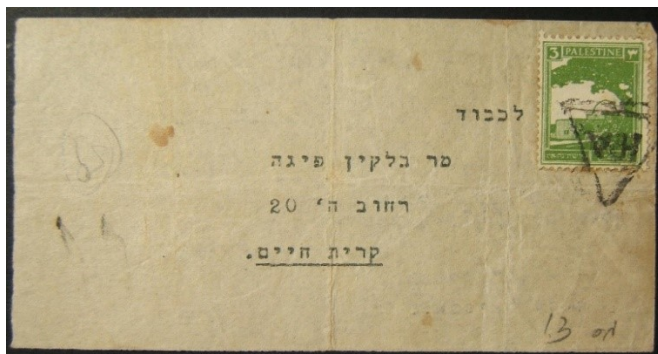
Here then in the interim era we have a revised application of this approach whereby **all classes of mail**, except (at least on paper, as per the regulations) overseas-bound mail, **were to be postmarked with these dateless devices** – and in the case of registered mail, neither the dispatch nor arrival (rarely marked) or even the certificate of dispatch bore an official fully-dated postmark; a neutered postal service. I am doubtful that cost was a factor in deciding to equip the post offices with dateless postmarks so contrary to postal practice – this decision must have been influenced by something else, such as a desire to minimize public awareness of delays in the mail.

The following may not be a genuine specimen owing to its pristine, un-deformed appearance from use, but nevertheless it gives us a rough idea what these postmarks looked like – here from Jerusalem:

K. Understanding the Significance of Datestamps in the Interim period:
What adds a degree of complexity and confusion to our study is the appearance, albeit infrequent, of dating devices on mail – specifically the oval postmark of the registry divisions. We will make sense of this now:

From the substantial quantities of interim mail I've observed, only in Jerusalem was a dating device permanently used as an accompanying datestamp to the dateless interim postmark – it was an office dater: variously through to July 1948 we see it in use at all 3 of the branch post offices which functioned in the interim period, as well as in the sorting office (which used a variant of the interim postmark, with 'rosette' emblems on each side rather than five-pointed stars). This is an ironic practice given that specifically at Jerusalem outbound mail was delayed from at least 28 April until 17 June, and an obfuscation of its posting date and delay in delivery would have been desirable to mitigate the outward appearance of unreliable postal service.[132]

In the rest of the post offices run by the interim administration I see sporadic and inconsistent cases of datestamps (office dating devices or Mandate postmarks) or manuscript docketing dates applied to mail; in some cases these markings appear on registered mail, though in others these also appear on regular standard mail. Similarly, while we observed above a complete absence of transit or arrival postmarks on interim registered mail, there are a few post offices which habitually arrival-marked mail. A study of these cases, while useful and interesting, is beyond the scope of this article and would not confirm anything regarding the proper handling of registered mail, because it is the employment of the postmarks of that division which matters so much to our investigation. With that, in light of what this article will reveal, interim registered mail needs to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with close attention paid to the postal handling used at the level of the post offices involved, because as we will see here there was no uniformity in the application of markings like date stamps.

Here we see two ordinary letters to Bnei Brak – on the left, from Ramat Gan with a Bnei Brak arrival using a Mandate postmark; on the right a cover from Haifa without a Bnei Brak arrival mark:

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132 The outbound dispatch of mail from Jerusalem (to Haifa) observed by me is from 27 April 1948.

Here we have a classic example of philatelic /"philatelically inspired" mail addressed to the dealer Ephraim Yissacharof, sent from Herzliya to Tel Aviv – and received there with 2x backstamps of a single circle back-office postmark (possibly frozen-dated), intending to mimmick the appearance of an arrival marked registered cover – this type is backstamping is not according to any observed postal procedure and certainly not evidence of handling at the registry department:

L. Understanding Frozen-Dated & Registry Datestamps in the Interim period:

As such, the most confusing postmark we see in this period is the Mandate oval registry division postmark itself, of the Tel Aviv and Haifa head post offices (in Jerusalem the public counters closed around 26 April; Jaffa around this exact time was under siege by Jewish forces and its postal activities likely suspended until the city was captured on 13 May): the critical element to remember is, the head post offices were under Mandate administration until 5 May inclusive, and the Mandate had suspended the acceptance of registered mail as of 21 April.

Before we address the registry postmark we should take a moment to address a unique aspect of date-marked mail, specifically in Tel Aviv (though I've also observed this at Ramatayim and it may exist elsewhere), namely what the literature calls "frozen date" postmarked mail: the reference is to mail which may date from 5-14 May 1948, but dated with a Mandate postmark whose dateline is "frozen" to '5 May 48', eg. the very last day of the Mandate postal service (in Ramatayim I observe this as datestamps set one month to "April" back regardless of the date itself – but applied infrequently to mail there). The purpose of these frozen dated postmarks is not clear, and Aloni opines that it served both as a datestamp and also as "evidence of registered mail" – but on both counts how this is possible is not clear to me, particularly as his illustrations don't show registry postmarks.[133]

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[133] Aloni, ibid, p.57-58: the only possible utility I could see is to postmark [ordinary] overseas mail using a UPU compliant Mandate device, and "fool" the foreign postal services into thinking it was dispatched still during the Mandate period by using a backdated device. All in all an absurdity as virtually

On the left, an ordinary domestic letter sent locally in Tel Aviv – with a Mandate single circle postmark serving as a dating device (possibly 'frozen dated' to 5 May); on the right, a similar occurrence from Ramatayim – using a month-backdated Mandate postmark:

For our study we can dismiss this issue primarily because the postmarks in question are overwhelmingly of the public counter or back-office/sorting-office devices, and not the registry ovals; these are in any case observed infrequently, and even in the single possible instance that I have seen where an oval registry postmark may be frozen dated (illustrated further down), this would simply defy the purpose of transit-marking the registered mail, as the incorrect date would not actually prove anything for the purpose of tracking the mail. Moreover these datestamps – frozen and otherwise – I see mostly on mail which is philatelic and therefore by and large I doubt their postal significance. As such, both due to its infrequence observation and lack of postal purpose, the matter of frozen-dated registry postmarks is not relevant to our study and would not impact its findings.


Above, for example, we have a proving postal item (if genuine), with a message dated 7 May but postmarked to the Marshall Islands 2 days earlier, on the 5th using a frozen dated postmark. Nevertheless, as I mentioned just above much of this mail strikes me as philatelic and here even this postcard proves my point: correctly postmarked with a UPU-compliant Mandate datestamp, but partially franked with an UPU-invalid interim stamp. The required surface postage was 13 mils, all the sender had to do was muster another Mandate stamp for correct UPU (and interim postal service regulation) compliant franking…

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every foreign country had suspended postal service with Palestine by this point, so there was no need to hoodwink anyone. For domestic mail I strain to see a reason for a frozen dated device – this defeats its purpose as a datestamp.

The side-matter of frozen dated mail aside, here we have a piece of mail confirming that registry services indeed were no longer available: endorsed "registered" by the sender but postmarked 26 April with only 10 mils franking as a regular letter – the sender evidently was supposed to send it by registered mail to the addressee but couldn't, so he added an explanation on the bottom left "No Registered Mail Accepted":
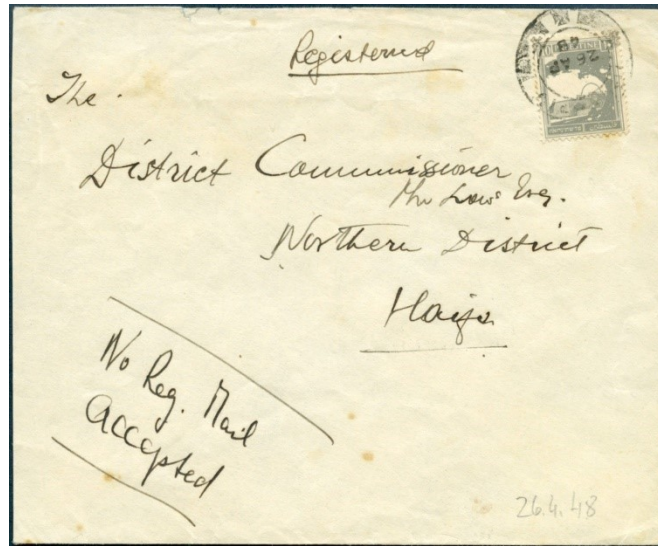

As such, even when we see these oval postmarks, in the period of 2-5 May (from the start of the interim administration on 2 May until the final day of the Mandate administration of the HPOs on 5 May), these markings cannot serve as proof of registration of the mail. My assessment is that the postmarks were applied as a matter of course and habit but not as an indication that registered services had suddenly resumed under Mandate auspices – and then also on an inconsistent basis.

The observance of the oval postmarks at Tel Aviv and Haifa requires alertness: the oval postmarks are seen infrequently on mail transiting Tel Aviv or transported within it, from 2-6 May 1948 – thereafter we don't see these markings on mail at all.

By contrast, in Haifa, we see instances of these oval postmarks being used AFTER 5 May, the earliest instance I've seen being 9 May. Specifically at Haifa there is reason to believe that these oval postmarks were transferred out from the head post office and allocated to the branch post offices – and in some cases the appearance of these postmarks may be entirely philatelic (and this may also be the case in Tel Aviv).

Tel Aviv – here we have a 2 May 1948 dated REGISTERED TEL AVIV oval postmark serving as a transit mark on a registered letter from Petach Tivka to Herzliya. In principle this looks like a proper registered cover as we studied above – but here in a period where the HPO (still under Mandate administration), whose registry division stamped this cover, did not service registered mail:
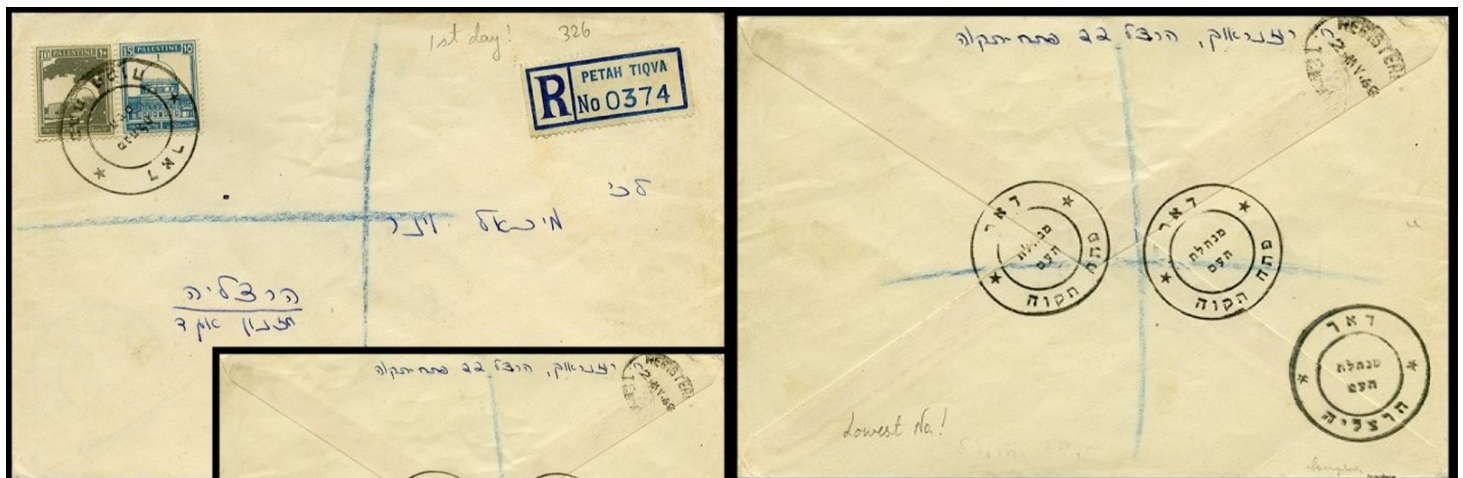
Tel Aviv – here we have a 5 May 1948 dated REGISTERED TEL AVIV oval postmark serving as a transit mark on a registered commercial cover from Tel Aviv to Ramat Gan, with an interim Ramat Gan arrival postmark.

Here is the sole example I have seen of a possibly frozen-dated 5 May registry postmark, applied as a transit mark on a commercial cover from Tel Aviv to Ramat Gan (plus a Ramat Gan arrival postmark as I have seen from this post office on both registered and ordinary mail): what may indicate that this is a frozen-dated postmark is the un-index-numbered TEL AVIV registry label, which I have observed in the interim period and Israeli period as being used at the Head Post Office (and is also observed used there in a 14 April Mandate example #4187 shown above).

According to Aloni (who doesn't cite a source for this statement), the Tel Aviv head post office received interim stamps prior to the transfer of the HPO to the interim administration (6 May), and used them prior to the transfer of the administration – hence, by that logic, we [theoretically] have a case where the HPO still under Mandate administration dispatched mail with both interim stamps, and even interim postmarks.[134] I propose that this idea is without foundation, **a postal-legal impossibility**: while under **Mandate** administration the HPO cannot possibly have used any **interim** era postal markings or stamps (unless this type of activity was done illegally).[135]

As such, the only reasonable evaluation I can offer is that this is a frozen-dated registry division postmark – and all it shows is that this cover was outwardly handled like registered mail, but given its uniqueness it does not serve as proof that consistent registered mail service existed in the interim period. Indeed, if its handling had conformed to that of the Mandate era, it should have been postmarked by the oval registry postmarks in the first place.


The arrival backstamping of the cover at the Ramat Gan post office is something habitual that I've observed on both registered and regular letters arriving at this post office in the interim period, and here on the left is a Ramat Gan arrival-marked regular letter (to the "Elite" chocolate factory), just to confirm the phenomenon; on the right is a 16 May 1948 postmarked cover with the same hyphenated TEL-AVIV registry label as observed above, postmarked with a 'dot' unnumbered Israeli trilingual postmark of the head post office, just confirming that this label was indeed used there:

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[134] Aloni, ibid, p.387. By the same token I'm equally skeptical of the explanation put forth on p.43 that in March-April 1948 "Kofer HaYishuv" tax stamps were accepted at various [Mandate] post offices for valid postage, albeit "against regulations, for patriotic reasons". I haven't yet seen an example of mail so franked where its handling convinces me that it is not a philatelic contrivance. Even in the final weeks of the Mandate the postal service was not an anarchic free-for-all.

     The only genuine 'patriotic' postal activity I know of is an operation between 3 Nov. 1947 and 14 March 1948, by the 'Lechi' ("Stern Group") underground organization to have postal clerks change street addresses on mail from their foreign names to Hebrew ones – and I have not yet seen an example of such mail. See the Handbook (ibid.) listing for 3 Nov. 1947 citing a display at the "Yair" Lechi museum in Tel Aviv.

[135] If Baruch Hurwich's theory (cited above) about backdating the APO 5 provisional postmark was a case of forcing empirical evidence to suit a theory – and thereby distort proper postal procedure, here this is a similar attempt to force empirical evidence to conform to a theory even though it too distorts proper postal and legal procedure.
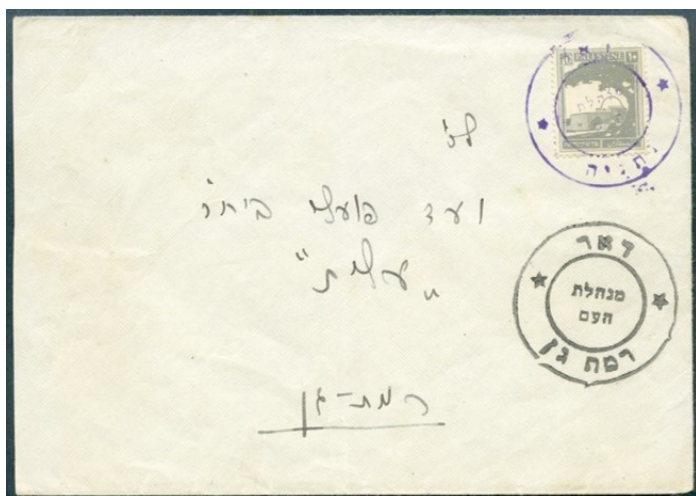
And while we observe the Tel Aviv oval registry postmark in the period of 2-6 May, it does not appear consistently: here we have a 'sister' cover of the one shown above, sent from the same company – Migdal Insurance – now to Haifa, and with a lower registry number; sent from the HPO, but here without the registry division transit postmark:

The oval registry postmark also appears in this period on incoming overseas registered mail, but as noted above, the delivery of registered mail by the Mandate postal service ended on 30 April inclusive, so that by 1 May (or really Sunday 2 May, as the first working day of the Jewish week), no registered service was actually provided for any registered mail received through the mail stream. As such the presence of the registry division postmark by the Mandate administered registry division was just a matter of course and has no actual meaning beyond being a mere transit date marking.

Here we see it applied as a transit-arrival postmark dated 5 May 1948 on airmail from Czechoslovakia; arrival marked 6 May in Herzliya – another of the post offices observed in this period habitually arrival-stamping mail, here using a Mandate postmark device and not the interim device.

Below is the latest dated instance I have seen of the registry division postmark in use, here on 6 May as a transit-arrival postmark, with the Affula interim postmark used as an arrival mark:

On 6 May the administration of the head post offices transferred over to the interim administration. Above we saw the last observed date of the registry division postmark, albeit on the first day of the interim administration, but nevertheless as we learned above, the Mandate postmarks were not decommissioned neither at the start of the interim administration on 2 May nor with the assumption of its charge over the HPO's on 6 May. Rather, Mandate postmark devices were decommissioned at the end of work on 14 May (albeit "reintroduced" on 16 May at all post offices which did not get issued the new Israeli trilingual postmark that day – essentially most of the post offices in the country).

And yet, even during the interim period the oval Tel Aviv postmark disappeared from use after 6 May: here we have a registered letter from Holland to the neighborhood of Zichron Meir "near Tel Aviv", though really a part of the city of Bnei Brak – it was transit-arrival and arrival marked on 13 May, all in Bnei Brak using a combination of 2 different Mandate postmark devices plus the interim postmark (in one of those instances the Mandate postmark probably served as a dating device to support the more patriotic use of the interim non-UPU compliant interim postmark): there is no sign of transit at Tel Aviv and not of the registry division in particular. Recall that Tel Aviv was one of 3 "Offices of Exchange", such that any mail entering Palestine / interim Israel still ought to have been received and processed at one of those post offices and not anywhere else.

AT HAIFA the observed use of the oval registry postmark is inverse to its use in Tel Aviv – we see it used much later in the interim period, but we also see it employed (or not) in circumstances so bizarre that it's not possible to summarize its use according to any reasonable pattern.

The earliest instance of its interim use that I've seen is 9 May, on a cover displayed in Aloni's book[136]: an intended registered express airmail cover from Austria to Tiberias, which according to the description, was couriered to Palestine and posted locally there – the letter postage was then cancelled (uniquely and unusually) by both the interim Haifa postmark as well as the registry division oval postmark dated 9 May, and arrival stamped in Tiberias (12 May) using its interim postmark accompanied by a Hebrew office dater (as observed used consistently at this post office in the interim period):
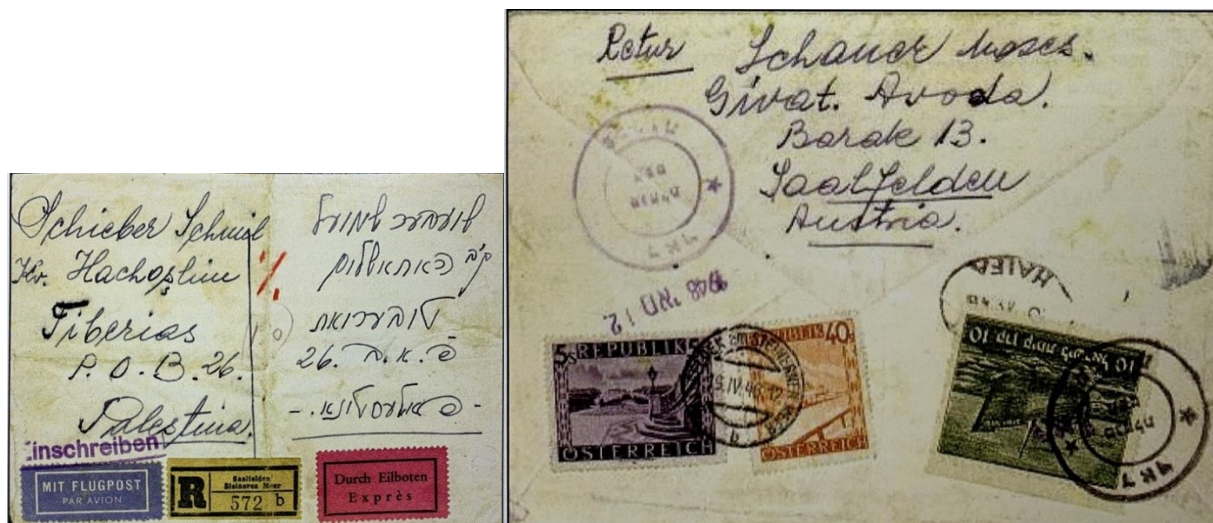
Here, at least in theory, with the head post office – indeed the entire postal service – under interim control, the registered mail service could have operated, though as we've seen till now it's highly unlikely mail was handled as registered mail in certain cases and in certain locations, but not in others.

According to the specialist literature, of which I am far from being beholden, the generic interim postmark seen on the cover above was not issued to the head post office in Haifa as it was to other post offices in the city – that HPO was issued, belatedly on 10 May, a device with "split ovals" on the left and right sides. This is a matter I have to investigate further. Nevertheless, according to what we see on the cover above, it was postmarked apparently by one of the other post offices

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[136] Aloni, ibid, p.29; I have seen a 3 May dated oval on incoming Romanian sea mail, illustrated in IFPL (ibid), p.28 – but this of course dates to the HPO's Mandate era.

in the city and then transited the registry division before being transported to Tiberias. In effect this is an example of a **domestic** letter with a Haifa registry division transit during the interim administration of the registry division.

Now, here we have 'postal salad' (which sold for a tidy sum at auction) – an **overseas** bound registered letter, to New York, whose appearance underscores the unusual and inconsistent handling of mail in the interim period, particularly at Haifa (as laid out in my article in Bulletin #1):

a) It's ostensibly a registered surface mail cover – but recall (as we learned above) that according to official announcements, interim era registry service was limited to domestic mail only, such that registration here on a cover addressed abroad would be invalid;

b) Further, the United States had suspended surface mail to Palestine on 27 March 1948 and registered mail on 26 April, such that no mail from the US could be sent as registered mail and obviously no mail from Palestine to the US would be recorded as registered mail;[137]

c) from the "split ovals" postmarks tying the stamps we see this was posted at the head post office in Haifa, to New York – yet, as per the regulations we reviewed earlier, mail abroad had to be posted with UPU compliant stamps and postmarked with UPU compliant postmarks. Here, while adorned with interim stamps, the cover is correctly franked with Mandate stamps – but these are cancelled by a non UPU compliant interim postmark; it's visually "registered mail" but bears no registry division markings – even for the sake of appearance, though we see it subsequently passed the registry division in New York likely in the same manner that the Mandate-run HPO's backstamped interim era domestic registered mail, a matter of habit.

To the reader who wonders how it was possible for interim Israel (still legally Palestine) to send mail to a country without whom she has postal relations, the philatelist Zvi Halperin notes that this was a habit of the early Israeli (and apparently interim) postal service, to continue dispatching mail to such countries – until in Sept. 1948 the Israeli postal service put a stop to this practice, ironically in regard to registered mail to countries without which there was a formal agreement; in Dec. 1948 this restriction was extended to ordinary letters as well – and these were returned to their senders marked "no service".[138]

Halperin's impression is that this practice stemmed from a lack of awareness by the postal staff, who didn't pay attention with which countries there were (or not) postal relations. Contrast this postal handling to the 1949 dated Britain-Israel registered air mail cover we observed above, where on account of a lack of registry service agreement between the countries – in spite of existing air mail service – the cover was rejected already in Britain and returned to the sender.

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[137] Daryl Kibble "The Arab-Israeli Conflict: No Service, Returned and Captured Mail" (2014), pg. 79; both services were renewed on 19 May 1948.
[138] Zvi Halperin "The Postal History of Israel During the Years 1948-1950, Part II" in Holy Land Postal History (HLPH) Bulletin #11 (Summer 1982), pg. 554 – here he cites Postal Circular dated 8 Sept. 1948 and another for Dec. 1948 (which I hope to locate and see for myself soon).

The cover could serve as a symbol of inconsistency in the interim period, specifically as per the postmarking, because below we have another cover (non-registered), posted abroad from the same HPO on 9 May – but here correctly using a UPU compliant Mandate postmark to cancel the UPU compliant Mandate frank – and it too is backstamped, having arrived:


From other samples of mail we see the registry division postmarks were still in use up to 12 May, here observed on an inland cover sent from Tel Aviv to Rosh Pinna, transiting Haifa at the registry division – though again, in a period where the overwhelming amount of observed registered mail bears neither a registry department transit nor any other transit and arrival postmarks as should normally appear on registered mail:

Specifically at Haifa I want to raise the possibility that these registry division postmarks were not in use at the head post office during the late Mandate / interim period but rather at the branch post offices. Consider the Ahuzat Samuel registered cover we observed earlier in this article: postmarked 18 April, this is one of the latest dated registered pieces of mail prior to the suspension of the service on 21 April; it was posted from Ahuzat Samuel and addressed to Tel Mane street in Ahuzat Samuel – but routed via the Mount Carmel post office in a manner we learned about above, as Mount Carmel handled the delivery of the mail for the Ahuzat Samuel post office in this period. Mount Carmel processed the cover on 20 April…
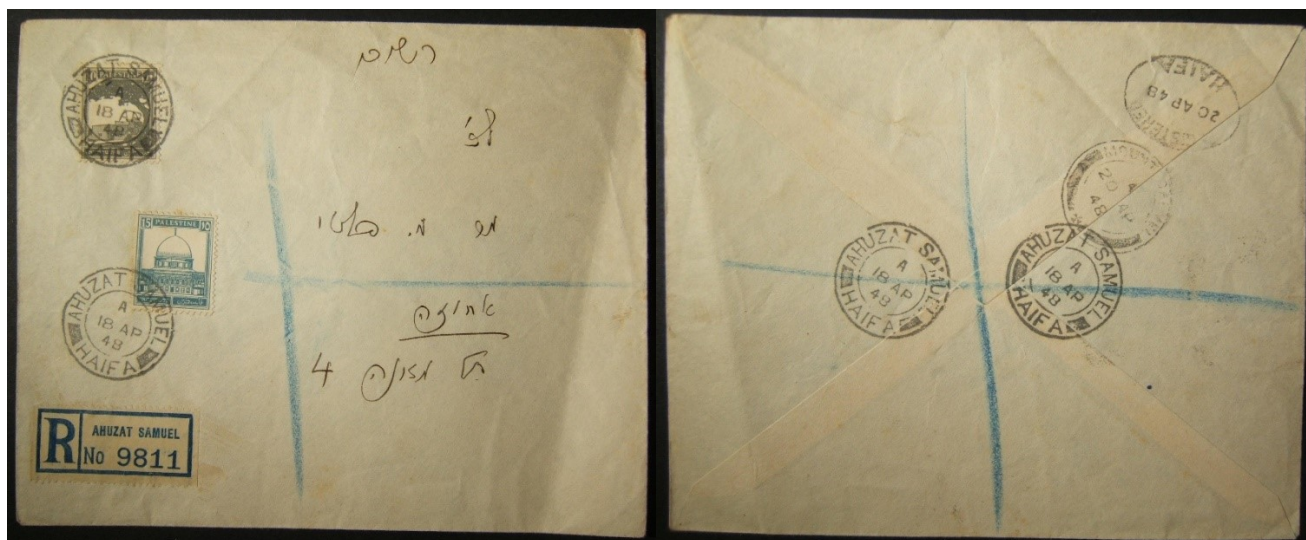
…yet, we see that on the same day the cover was stamped with a registry division postmark: those postmarks are known to the specialist literature as belonging to the head post office, yet in this period such same-day routing would be both incredulous and impossible. The head post office was 2.5km away, downtown near the port area; precisely on this day the downtown area was a patchwork of military zones, pitched battles between Jewish and Arab forces, a staging area for the British withdrawal (announced 18 April) and the eve of the Jewish military operation ('Hametz') to conquer the city, taking place the next day (until 22 April). In the case of this cover specifically I suspect the registry postmark (with the text close to the edges) was being used at Mount Carmel, having been transferred there sometime earlier.[139]

Below we have a cover that has the outward appearance of being philatelic: overfranked many-fold at 100 mils, it was addressed to the Nesher Hotel on 53 Herzl street – on postal stationary with that hotel's own return address, 53 Herzl St.(!); it was posted at the Nahla branch post office on #5 Gilad street, maybe 200 meters away… and backstamped with the registry division postmark (on 13 May) – under the circumstances here and in this study overall, highly unlikely applied at the HPO located a kilometer away. The registry postmark here has clearer lettering spaced slightly further from the edges, distinguishing it from the one observed above at Mount Carmel – and apparently from the other illustrated cases above (which also look like the Mount Carmel oval postmark).

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[139] This is a critical point in my article on the Haifa head post office in the period April-May 1948 as published in the Bulletin: there I shared an investigation of the HPO's apparently limited postal activities by way of observing mail which did not go through its sorting office. To underscore this I showed a piece of mail bearing the latest known dated use of the sorting office's postmark, being 15 April 1948 – and proceeded to show how much mail was subsequently transported to Tel Aviv for processing. Here in our present study the apparent re-allocation of the registry division postmarks to branch post offices seems to be part and parcel of the same process of devolution of postal activities from the main post office to its (or other) supporting branches.

With the conclusion I believe we can safely draw from the location of the registry postmark above, at Nahla, we can better assess where the following cover from Nahalal was transited – also at Nahla (and not at the HPO), also on 13 May:


Here then we have a summary of the observed instances of interim period use of the oval registry division postmark: it's inconsistently used; in Tel Aviv we observed it up to 6 May (i.e. 1 day into the interim period of the head post offices); in Haifa we observe it much later, from 9 May, in very inconsistent and unusual circumstances – and almost assuredly not in use at the head post office itself.

M. Understanding Registry Datestamps in the period of the Mandate's Termination:
As we learned above, the last day for dispatch of registered mail under Mandate postal service was 20 April, and the last day for the delivery of inland and incoming registered mail by the Mandate postal service was 30 April. The Head Post Offices, the critical link for the processing of registered mail, remained under Mandate control until 5 May inclusive. With all this information we can now better assess the following examples of mail and make sense of their existence:

This is a 26 April 1948 postmarked registered cover sent from the Mahane Yehuda branch post office in Jerusalem to Haifa (oddly, return-addressed to Haifa + the unnecessary "Palestine" in the address… whatever): this is the latest known dispatch dated registered mail from the Mandate – but unlikely to have been registered at Mahane Yehuda as the service had terminated 5 days earlier; it was received in Haifa on the 27th – still within the period for the Mandate processing and delivery of registered mail, so it was very likely logged on the registry books in Haifa.
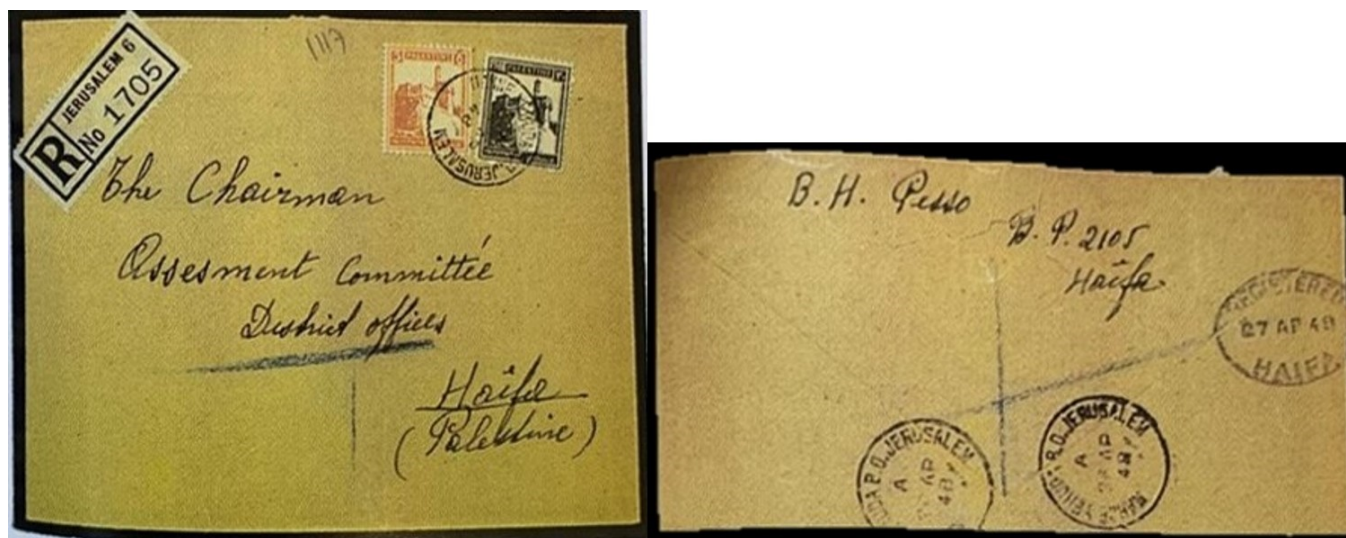
In a more decided instance, here is a 21 April registered cover from the Nahla branch office in Haifa, addressed to Rishon Le Zion (the Dr. Rudolf Rosner correspondence, albeit from Shlomo Platzker): the cover was posted a day after registered mail service ended in Palestine, but it was accepted at the post office and even passed the city's registry division – on the 26th, likely owing to a combination of the Passover weekend and the recently ended Jewish military operation to liberate Haifa. Nevertheless, having been dispatched after the termination of registered mail service, the cover was not marked neither by the Tel Aviv registry division nor even arrival stamped at Rishon Le Zion – so it was not fully handled as a registered letter:

This Jerusalem registered cover by contrast was postmarked on 19 April, still in the period when registered mail could be accepted for delivery – but it was delivered at Ramat Gan on 2 May (as per the auction catalogue description – no reverse image was shown), and was not processed at the Tel Aviv registry division, likely because the delivery was after 30 April. Again, as we observed above, even though the oval postmark is seen albeit infrequently at Tel Aviv during the interim period, the application of the registry postmarks both in Tel Aviv and in Haifa was not consistent:
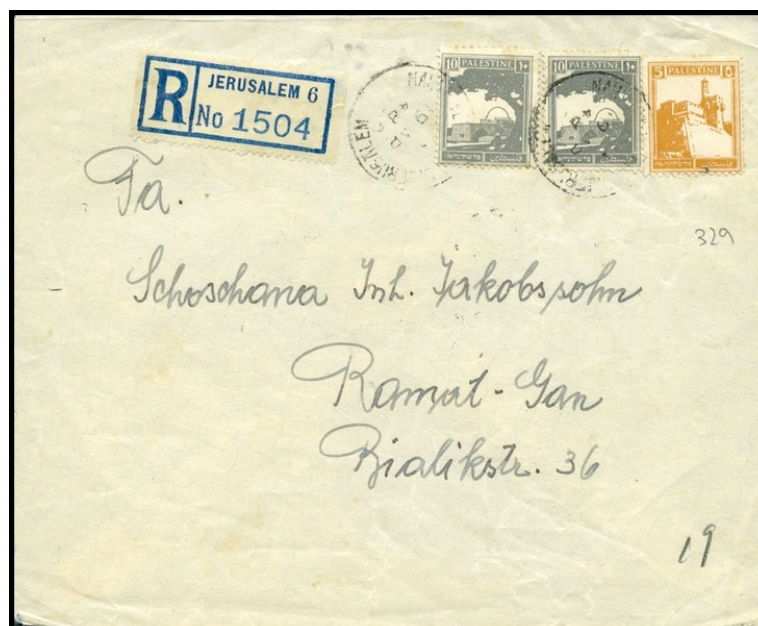
Here we have a Lebanese air mail cover, posted in early April 1948 – before she suspended postal service with Palestine later that month: though delayed in overseas dispatch it was finally received in Haifa (to which Lebanese 'Middle East Airlines' continued to fly) on 28 April and handled by the registry division which would still have logged the registry number in its records as the delivery time was within the published schedule, up to 30 April inclusive.

N. Drawing Conclusions about Registered Mail in the Interim Period:

With the conceptual framework we established above, of observing the handling of registered mail during the interim period and the overlapping Mandate administration of the head post offices for at least a short portion of that time – and with regard to the dates of registry service suspension, postal routing and enforced postal procedures, we have established a method for analyzing the mail and its exceptions, and reaching the conclusion that there was no 'real' registered service in the interim period. Specifically we learned that:

⇨ The presence of the registry division oval postmarks on registered mail in the period 2-5 May of the interim postal administration, while the registry departments at the head post offices were still under Mandate administration – which suspended registered service on 21 April, is a negative proof that these postmarks don't confirm registered mail handling, only a habitual processing of registered-looking mail.

⇨ Mandate postmarks were only decommissioned at the end of the interim period, at the end of work on 14 May 1948: once the HPOs came under interim administration the registry department postmarks could have continued to be used, as transit via those departments was a core element of the routing of registered mail – but these disappear from sight on observed mail almost from the moment the HPOs came under interim control on 6 May. Furthermore, almost all transit and arrival postmarks disappear from sight on interim mail, whether from 2 May or 6 May until the end of the interim period… and how do we explain this disappearance of postal markings when from 16 May they reappear in full on mail processed by the Israeli postal administration?

Essentially, there was no registered mail service in Palestine-interim Israel from the moment of its Mandate termination on 21 April. What existed – when genuinely requested by customers – was the outward appearance of registered mail, whereby an enclosure was marked with a blue cross, issued a registry number, accepted for dispatch as per the required postage rate, a certificate of posting was issued to the sender… and the article was sent as regular mail, without the bureaucratic process of registration and handling – of making up lists, checking/comparing those lists, storing mail in safety deposit boxes or transit-tracking along the way.[140]

We could say that of the postal history that exists, there are two types of interim registered mail: "ostensible" registered mail – the "soft fake" but good-natured, genuinely requested and outwardly processing type, mostly of the larger towns and cities; and then "fraudulent" registered mail – the totally contrived "deep fake" type, mostly from the smaller settlements, intended to defraud collectors (and mislead researchers). Here we see from the published lists in the specialist literature, not all small post offices lent a hand to that latter activity, and so "no registered mail is known" from those locales.

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[140] In practice had a sender simply wished to receive proof of postal dispatch, for less money at 5 mils rather than 15m, he could have used the "certificate of posting – unregistered correspondence" service as outlined in the Post Office Guide of April 1948 (cited in Proud, ibid, p.9) – here this was not an "official receipt" issued by the post office but rather a prefranked slip of paper produced by the sender, adhering to certain regulations as outlined, and postmarked by the postal clerk.

And if we now tie in the original sample of Ahuzat Samuel mail from 15 May processed at Mount Carmel, what we see is merely a procedurally correct extension of the period's postal treatment of mail – the outward appearance of registered mail handling: of the 5 observed covers, 3 were franked for registered mail and backstamped at Mount Carmel as if they were really registered letters; another air letter transited Ahuzat Samuel on the 15th to have its Mandate frank properly cancelled with a UPU compliant date stamp (so is not relevant to this matter), and the final cover was franked as ordinary mail and so not backstamped at Mount Carmel even though it likely transited that facility for delivery.

Here by way of example we have a unique proving cover to support that last point: a family correspondence letter sent from an A. Tzamari in Meshek Ein Harod to a relative, Shlomo Tzamari, in the Kerem HaTeimanim (Yemenite Quarter) of Tel Aviv[141]; the sender endorsed the cover "registered" and emphasized it with a double red border; he managed to frank it 23 mils for the 25m rate and apply a blue cross on the front – then somewhere here he must have been informed that there was no assurance the cover would reach its destination, because the letter would be processed as regular mail as no real registered mail service existed. The sender was not philatelist: the stamps he used are low catalogue value Haifa overprints without any irregularities, and he didn't request (or pay for) a philatelic 'favor' such as applying a registry label to the cover: the sender left the franking as it was, the cover was postmarked (without backstamps) and dispatched as an overpaid regular letter. This is a unique occurrence in the interim period: I have not seen another cover so thoroughly endorsed and marked for registered mail – and then not sent such, by the sender's volition, particularly from a small locale.

The sender saved himself 2 mils in wasted additional postage (or 4 mils postage dues tax for his correspondent) for non-existent registered service, and the cover was not issued a registry label (which, by catalogue value standards, would have sent its "value" soaring from $400 to $4000 per Aloni, as only 2 are known – but we now know these are 'fake', with one of the two being created by Max Brisker himself, so essentially worthless as 'registered' postal history).[142]

O. Why was there no Registered Mail Service in the Interim Period:
Apparently [domestic] "registered mail" was 'formally' available in the interim period, as observed by numerous public announcements to this affect: but we have seen from this study that the service didn't 'actually' exist because a) the interim postmarks used in this period for dispatch mostly lack dates to confirm when the mail entered the mail stream, and b) in virtually all observed cases, the mail is lacking the requisite registry division/HPO transits, additional transits, and arrival postmarks – and where those marking do exist, they are inconsistent in their use and their dates may not be real. The image that arises is of two tin cans connected with a string, being called a "telephone" (like in kindergarten).

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141 The surname sounds authentically ethnic – but as per name change listings in the Palestine Gazette (#1348 of 27 July 1944), for example, 3 family members who adopted this as their Hebraicized surname came from the "Kantorowicz" family, in Magdiel. See p.16 of this file https://www.nevo.co.il/law_html/law21/pg-e-1348.pdf.
142 Aloni, Ibid, p.282-3 & 163

This investigation began as a digression of a study of mail from Ahuzat Samuel, where the literature had noted that here uniquely no registered mail service was available (due to it allegedly not being supplied registry labels) – this was a "Class A Town Agency".

By way of a parallel comparison we were able to study "registered" mail from 4 other post offices which had employed their own handmade registry labels and manuscript markings (ostensibly to overcome such a shortage in label supply), contrary to postal regulations or any documented shortage of official registry labels – Kiryat Amal, Rehovot, Safed and Yokneam: Safed (classed as a "Post Office") processed no registered mail during the interim period of 2-14 May; the abundance of philatelic/contrived mail at Kiryat Amal (classed as a "Class B Town Agency") and the suspicious circumstance of its unique postmark leaves me with a developing theory that its entire interim era postal operation is fake; and of the remaining 2 observed post offices (Rehovot – "Post Office", and Yokneam – "Class C Town Agency") there are serious question marks as to the nature of their handmade registry labels. Beyond these, we noted that 7 other post offices – all Class B or C Town Agencies – are listed in the specialist literature as not having processes registered mail in the interim period (Beit HaShitta, Ben Shemen, Heftsiba Beit-Alfa, Kfar Baruch, Kfar Yehezkel, Maoz Hayim, Merhavia).

What we see just from this limited sampling, is that registered service is either unknown at post offices of any of the 3 types of 'Town Agencies' or is definitively unknown at the level of the 'Post Office'.[143] And from the inferences we can derive from the examples of mail we have seen above, even when ostensibly available, the service wasn't carried out in full behind the scenes at any of the post offices, including the head post offices; instances of the registered postmark on foreign mail – as we know from published regulations for the interim period – was just a matter of protocol because registered service was not available for overseas mail by that administration (and virtually every country in the world had suspended postal service with Palestine, including registered mail, rending such a service void of treatment).

The significance of this is, it's not just that registered mail didn't 'actually' exist, this absence wasn't limited to any geographic region or class of post office – it affected all post offices whether registered mail from them is documented or not. In any case, had the plan of the interim administration been to offer the service only at selected post offices or geographic regions it would have created chaos within the postal system, between offices which would log registered mail on a route – and others on the same route which would not; the mere idea that a postal item could be only partially tracked along its route and not necessarily either at the start or the end, defies the purpose of offering registered mail.

At this juncture we can better appreciate bombshell information in Aloni's book, which at first glance may be easy to overlook or rationalize, but in the context of this stage of our study this is critical supplementary source information to our developing discovery. Aloni notes that in preparing the material for his chapter covering the individual post offices during the interim period, it was found that no registered mail was known from a number of settlements (as we learned above); specifically 5 of these were in the Jezreel Valley, and although registered mail is known from a few other settlements in that area (Meshek Ein Harod, Sde Nahum and Tirat Zvi) – those mail items are addressed either to Max Brisker or Shlomo Platzker, and on the final 2 days of the interim period. The bombshell revelation comes from notes compiled by Brisker in regards to the post office at Kfar Yehezkel, one of the locales where no interim registered mail is known, where he jotted, "**Postmaster Cahim, according to instructions from postmaster Roseman accepted no registered mail**" (Roseman was the postmaster of the Afula post office, responsible for all the postal agencies in the area).[144]

Here then we have first-hand evidence that there was an explicit directive to not accept registered mail, and indeed no registered mail is known from that locale – but at others, particularly small settlements with an overabundance of philatelic mail, we can reasonably suspect that money may have changed hands to facilitate their creation. Aloni opines that perhaps due to the affected post offices being classed as Category B and C facilities, or due to transportation problems along the transport line some of the post offices in the valley could not be serviced, but a) this does not explain the successful transport of ordinary mail from those post offices, and b) we have already seen that registered mail is not known from other post offices in other regions - and that these post offices represent a number of different classes of post office.

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143 For listings and classifications: for all 3 types of Town Agencies listed in English, see pages 424-427 of this document: https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/2305020; and for all post offices, particularly non-Town Agencies, but listed disorganizedly in Hebrew, see pages 46-48 of this document: https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/2461961.
144 Aloni, ibid, p.149

We now have concrete evidence that there was **a directive to restrict the acceptance** of registered mail at at least one post office (and likely not just); we also have evidence of no registered mail known from other postal facilities of **various classes** plus the long-standing comment, serving as a precedent, that "uniquely" at Ahuzat Samuel registered mail was not accepted – and all this **despite the observed super-human efforts of speculators to custom-order registered covers**. We also see that **across the board** registered mail of this period was **not postally marked or handled** as it normally was in the Mandate era. From this we might be able to conclude that a) **registered mail service did not 'actually' exist**; b) wherever it was ostensibly offered, <u>likely only at the branch offices of the main cities, 'post office' class facilities close to those cities and at the HPO's when under interim control</u>, **the service only existed outwardly**, towards the sender who received a certificate of dispatch; c) **at all other facilities** – all 3 classes of the "town agencies", secondary and distant "post office" classed facilities (like Safed and Rehovot), **the service was not offered at all and <u>actually restricted by order</u>**.

P. No Service – Between Plan and Actuality; Public Announcement versus Internal Awareness:
The best way we can explain the extraordinary chasm between what was published and what was actual is to recall, as per Circular Letter #1 of 25 April 1948 (cited above and displayed in full in the appendices below), that "during the transition period of the 1st and 15th of May, every service which is interrupted by the present Department of Posts <u>and which it is possible to continue</u> immediately by the Hebrew Post, is to be continued."

By this directive, regardless of what was published to the public, the postal service's commitment to provide any kind of service remained conditional and opaque. There was on one hand an inherent hesitance to commit to the continuation of specific services, only that they be continued where *possible*, and on the other hand the subtle matter of that possibility's actualization, of its feasibility. The various archival files cited in this article are replete with plans and ideas for the interim and then Israeli postal services, as well as for Jerusalem – many concrete ideas that because of various limitations and subsequent changes to the military-economic environment could not be implemented as planned.

We have to remember that by the time the interim postal administration began to operate, on 2 May, the War of Independence, rumbling since Dec. 1947, had disrupted and damaged postal services and additionally the Mandate department of posts and telegraphs terminated almost all of its services, and remained alive only by virtue of still overseeing the physical premises of the head post offices; the incoming interim administration was tasked with beginning the reactivation of an entire postal and communication system against the backdrop of an ongoing existential war.

Feasibility in this period was a function of many factors, such as territorial integrity of the nascent Jewish state – for example the question of Jerusalem and other isolated or besieged locales, where in Jerusalem specifically (but not just) a special 'interim' postal service had to be created and run during the period that it was cut off from the rest of Israel; logistics – to isolated and besieged locales as well as the integrity of transportation arteries (and their availability) within the territory held by the emerging Jewish state; resources – the availability of transportation (by land or air) and gas to support it plus the availability and integrity of any postal tools or machines needed to support certain functions.

And then chiefly, the matter of manpower – that there be sufficient staff to support the ongoing operation of the postal service: already at this time, in May 1948, it was reported that over 75% of the Mandate postal service's employees were Arab and much of the upper management was British, with entire functions and departments, like transport and warehouses, staffed and overseen by them, and whose subsequent absence from the organization was virtually assured.[145] In general, contemporary Israeli reports cite that only 20-22% of the Mandate civil service was staffed by Jews (whose contribution to the Mandate's budget was 75% of the taxes), and by comparison, the railway service which numbered 7000 employees prior to Israel's independence, on the eve of independence counted only 480 Jewish staffers.[146]

Specifically in Jerusalem, well after the interim period, as of 30 May 1948 we learn from a report that each of the 3 branch post offices is staffed with 3 employees, that the sorting and registry office numbers 10 staffers, and that there are half the number of deliverymen as during the Mandate era – 12 (albeit another source quoted next provides a much different

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[145] See 'HaTzofe' newspaper of 14 May, p.2 and Alex Ben-Arieh on the situation at the Haifa head post office in this period in JerusalemStamps Bulletin #1 pg. 24-53: https://jerusalemstamps.com/JerusalemStampsBulletin001.pdf).
[146] Page 2 of this file from 13 May 1948 outlining the soon to be established Israeli postal service: https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/419932; page 6 cites the statistic of 75% Arab employees and the effect on various postal departments.

number of Mandate era deliverymen).[147] To get a sense of the scale of the interim postal enterprise we need to compare Renan's 31 employees at 3 branch offices and the sorting office to the core total for Jerusalem in 1948 under the Mandate (4 branch offices and a town agency) – 220 staff (and another 64 for the telephone exchange) plus another 60 letter carriers, 25 porters and 39 couriers; 344 postal personnel in total. At such a parity in scale, clearly Renan did not have the staff to undertake much of the postal work handled by the Mandate postal service in Jerusalem.[148]
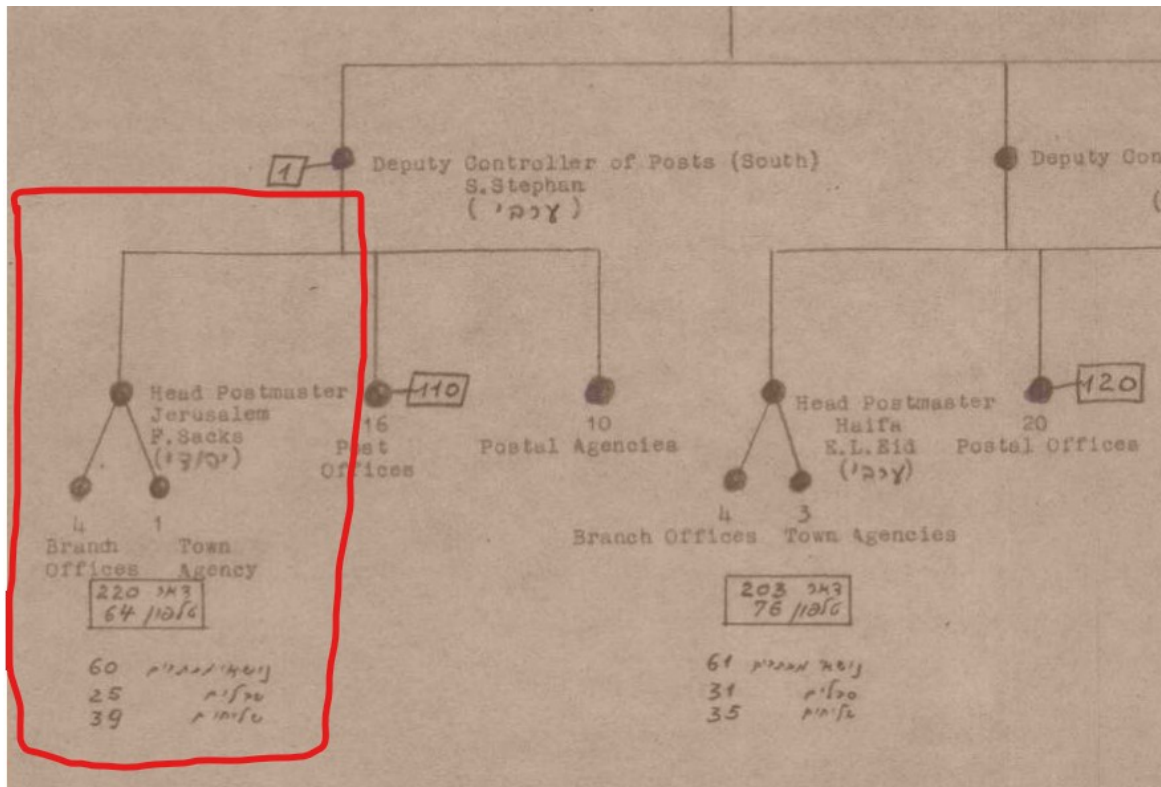
The war also took its toll as remaining Jewish employees were drafted into the army and fresh trainees called in to fill their places. As late as Sept. 1949, with the publication of the 1st annual report of the Israeli postal service, citing statistics for May 1949 (i.e. a year after the interim period we are examining), we see staffing levels at 45% of the Mandate level for the professional staff, and 62% of the overall headcount.

If the 1st annual report serves as a metaphor, it's an exercise in trying to portray a positive image on a bleak situation, with statistical comparisons made creatively in various subjects between 'small' Israel and 'large' Palestine, or comparing mail volume by undefined measures of "bags" and "crates" rather than by pieces of mail as done in the Mandate era; graphical measures using May 1948 as a zero-mark and displaying skyrocketing improvements from there, etc.[149]

As such we should not be surprised to read the report's author, Postmaster General Zvi Prihar (Friedburg), reporting emphatically to his superior, the minister in charge, Minister of Communications David Remez, that in the interim period "NO postal services were stopped, and no post offices were closed even for a day. The offices remained open even after the planned date for their closure, and sold the public Jewish National Fund stamps in place of the Mandate stamps… in the period 1 to 15 May 1948…" – his emphasis.[150]

The manager of the Jerusalem postal service, in his report cited above, was more circumspect: "In the first days [of the city's postal service] people stood in long lines to buy the new stamps which we prepared in accordance to your directives, and to send ordinary and registered letters to all places in the country. But very quickly it became known among the public that the

[147] A report by Avraham Renan to Zvi Prihar, on page 102 of this file https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/137298
[148] A file of Spring 1948 era documents used in preparation for the establishment of the Israeli postal service – page 20 in this file (https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/276544) and page 134 in this larger file of documents from Dec. 1947 to April 1948 (https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/298877)
[149] See for example pages 19, 34, 80 https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/2461961
[150] See section #1 on page 8 (27) of the report: https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/2461961

letters are lying in the sorting office and are not being dispatched to their destinations. Now there is no line at the post offices and the income from the sale of stamps does not exceed 2 Israeli Pounds a day - the disappointment among the public is great. Nevertheless we continue with the service in the hope that one of these days there will be a plane which will deliver letters from Israel and perhaps also from abroad, and will take a bag or two [from us] to distribute by you [in Tel Aviv]. There are about 10 full bags of letters waiting for dispatch on the first [available] convoy [about 30,000 letters]."[151] Of note, the lack of mail dispatch from the city was not information volunteered by the postal service, which continued to operate as if everything was normal; had the public not been curious and suspicious the matter would not have been disclosed at all.

Likely for reasons of national morale no mention was publicly made, no letter to the editor published, or document found in the archives to confirm the curtailment of services (or closing of post offices, as documented in the literature). I would chalk that up to classic "Isra-bluff", to give the outward impression of 'business as usual' even if things are not quite as desired.

The discreet and unpublished semi-availability/non-availability of registered mail service is likely the reason why we see properly franked mail at Ahuzat Samuel oddly not handled as registered mail – the public didn't know the service was not available, and this wasn't publicized.

This notion is not detached from reality: at the time of this writing I came across the following post office document of 10 Oct. 1948 on the subject of "express mail" through the Army postal service: "We hereby announce that in the Army postal service there is no 'express' mail for civilians to soldiers in the Israel Defense Forces. Letters which are endorsed 'express' and bear the postage for the 'express' rate receive the same handling as ordinary letters. You are to make the public aware of this <u>in the event a question arises</u>" – my emphasis.[152] In other words, as long as nobody asks, the matter need not be raised by the postal service – civilians can continue to overpay for a non-existent service.
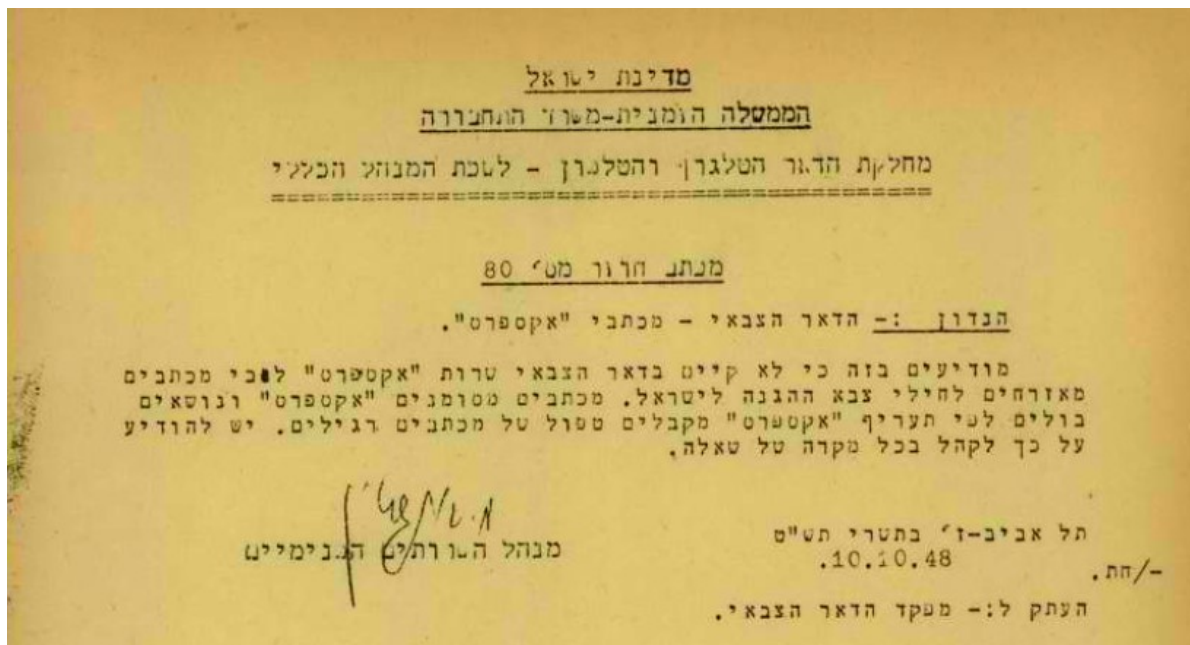
In effect this appears to have been the policy of the interim Jerusalem post office, in May 1948, which accepted express letters while the city was besieged (since 20 April by most accounts) – and it was clear these did not have any chance of being dispatched faster than any of the other mail Renan described above as piling up in the sorting office, and nevertheless it does not appear that the public was informed to save their money and not pay for the supposed service. In the end these letters like all other outbound mail from Jerusalem, was carried on the 2 convoys of 18 and 21 June to Tel Aviv, so that the 11 May postmarked express cover below, addressed to Haifa, was transported out 5 weeks later – "express"…

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[151] The number of letters per bag is based on an estimate of 3000 letters per mail bag provided by Avraham Renan, likely to Zeev Sherf, the secretary of the Emergency Committee, in a proposal for the establishment of postal service in Jerusalem, dated 5 May 1948 – replicated in JSPS, ibid, p.299-300.
[152] Circular Letter #80 of 10 Oct. 1948 on page 126 of this file of Circular Letters for 1948: https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/2461993

Q. When did Registered Mail Service Resume? Establishing initial methodologies:

NOW, in light of our findings we may be tempted to ask, when did registered mail service resume? Although the various archives available online don't contain a document which addresses either a suspension, limitation or resumption of the service, we can draw very accurate inferences and from this arrive at an answer/s.

What is a guaranteed certainty, as we learned above, as regards the need for Israel as a non-UPU member to renew each individual postal service bilaterally in formal arrangements (and as a candidate for UPU membership in her own right), is that overseas registered mail existed from the earliest date that it was renewed with a foreign country - here 19 May 1948, with the United States.[153] From the moment registered mail handling and processes were in place for one foreign country, it follows that the same processes and procedures would be available for subsequent countries.

Barring philatelic oddities such as the interim Haifa head post office registered cover to the US displayed further up, this 25 May 1948 cover from Tel Aviv to New York is one of the earliest instances of registered mail to the US: postmarked from the Tel Nordau branch office using the reintroduced Mandate postmark and backstamped with it as well. Although the reverse was not shown it is described as being transit-stamped the next day by the Israeli Tel Aviv trilingual postmark (assuredly the type with a dot – of the head post office), and arrival marked on 12 June by a number of New York postmarks (assuredly including that of the "Registry Division") – the cover was carried by the 9 June 1st Air France flight from Israel (Haifa), transiting Paris on the way to New York.

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[153] Kibble, ibid, p.79 – as per Uri Shalit's 1976 Catalogue of Israel Philatelic Items and Post Office Circulars; Kibble is aware of possible inaccuracies in the information (p.68), and when I have a chance I will try to independently reconfirm the dates.

For our study the critical element of the example cover above is the Tel Aviv HPO transit mark (an example of one is shown above): in the early era of the Israeli postal administration, circa, May-June, the head post offices in Tel Aviv and Haifa were issued unnumbered trilingual postmarks with a 'dot' in place of a number at their base (in Jerusalem, issued these trilinguals later, in July-August, head post office departmental postmarks were distinguished by a number at their base); later in the year their departments were assigned numbered postmarks.

For our period of study, specifically May-June, from research I conducted and published in JerusalemStamps Bulletin #1 (cited in this article), there were a number of identical devices issued, for example at Haifa, and we can only establish a working methodology to determine which one/s belongs specifically to the registry department by looking for tell-tale differences in the design of the metal template between such postmarks as they appear – consistently – on registered mail versus those postmarks which appear on ordinary mail. Nevertheless for our present study, observing registered mail in accordance to a bilateral treaty, we can trust that an HPO postmark or transit mark will suffice as evidence of proper registered mail handling.

R. When did DOMESTIC Registered Mail Service Resume? Uncovering a pre-service domestic franking policy:
…And what can we derive about the renewal of domestic registered mail service? From an observation of mail from this period using the approach defined above, **apparently it did not resume on 16 May 1948**, on the first working day of the Israeli postal administration, but rather about a month later – and that is separate from the subject of postal service in Jerusalem.

While the following example of a 1st day Israel registered cover may be to a philatelic address (Yosef Mintz, possibly a relative of the noted philatelist Hans Georg Muenz), the postal handling we see is sufficient to demonstrate the point: it was sent on 16 May from Nes Ziona to Rishon Le Zion, and while it is arrival marked the next day it lacks an HPO/registry division transit at Tel Aviv – similar to the observed phenomenon from the just-ended interim period:

What we also observe in the immediate period of the start of Israel's postal service is that **[non-Jerusalem] interim franks were not used on "registered" mail**: this is a perplexing byproduct of this research, that ordinary mail can be observed franked with interim stamps and postmarked by either the new Israeli trilingual postmark or a reintroduced Mandate postmark (at post offices which were not yet issued the new trilinguals) – in the period 16 May to 22 May when interim stamps were still valid for postage – but **it is impossible to find a genuine "registered" cover so interim-franked and postmarked**. The only examples I have seen are a series of philatelic covers posted at Petach Tikva, addressed to "Fidelity Ltd." in Tel Aviv, as below – and unsurprisingly without an HPO transit (nor even an arrival mark):

Here I believe there was an interesting if contradictory postal policy: although domestic registered mail service was not yet fully functioning the post office took a far reaching step limiting the use of interim stamps on registered mail. Interim stamps, as we learned further above, were invalid for overseas mail as these were not UPU compliant and very few ordinary mail items addressed abroad can be found with interim stamps. Nevertheless, in light of service limitations with the Israeli post office, as alluded to above, it likely did not want to waste its meager resources sorting and inspecting each registered mail article abroad, to prevent their use of invalid franks – and so prohibited them from being used on registered mail altogether, though I have not yet found a postal document to confirm this. Only at Jerusalem do we see the city's interim 'local' stamps used on local inner-city registered mail, and this is justified as the city only received the Israeli Doar Ivri stamps late, on 20 June – but here too, I have not seen overseas registered mail franked with local interim stamps during the Israeli postal administration period.[154]

Just to underscore this point, consider these two 'sister' covers both prepared as registered 'printed matter' mail, both similarly philatelic with partial franking using an unoverprinted postage dues 3 mils stamps, and both posted on 8 June: both bear the "National Loan" handstamp applied by the sorting office in Tel Aviv, so we know these went through the

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[154] JSPS, ibid, p.414 illustrates a mixed Doar Ivri / interim-franked registered airmail cover to the US, postmarked by the Rehavia branch office's interim device; the interim franking and postmarks are against regulation although the cover is reportedly arrival backstamped but not illustrated.

mails; while reverse images were not displayed the one at left is described as being backstamped with a next day Tel Aviv arrival postmark (though for our purposes this does not prove the cover was actually fully handled as registered mail).[155] The sister cover shown above with interim franking was not tied by the "National Loan" handstamp, in use since 16 May – and from here we understand that it definitely did not pass through the mails (it also being unsealed notwithstanding):

The cover below is a close example of interim franked registered mail abroad, from Jerusalem in July 1948 – but here the interim franks are 'patriotic' and superseded by the use of valid Doar Ivri stamps for the 65 mils overseas postage + 15 mils registry fee. Ironically it was postmarked against regulations by the Mea Shearim interim postmark – it should have been left unpostmarked at the branch office and cancelled with a UPU compliant Israeli trilingual as issued to the head post office. In the event, as per the description (because a reverse image was not shown), the cover was backstamped 4 July transit in Tel Aviv (the HPO) and 10 July arrival in New York (multiple postmarks):

Here we have two more examples:

- a registered printed matter cover on the left with mixed local Jerusalem and Doar Ivri franking addressed to Ramat Gan and endorsed as "registered" – but issued no registry label and not marked with a blue cross; it's postmarked from Jerusalem-4 (likely the head post office) with a dateless postmark observed used around 14-15 July. The auction house did not display the reverse side or describe any additional postmarks, so it was likely sent as overpaid ordinary printed matter.[156]

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[155] TAS #42 lot 15 & TAS #51 lot 321
[156] TAS #40 lot 41

- The cover on the right also bears mixed local interim, national interim (with 'rare' red counterstamp; these DOAR handstamped interim stamps were not supplied to or sold in Jerusalem) and tabbed Doar Ivri franking, addressed to a known philatelic address in Rehovot (Dr. Chananya Feinstein) and posted on 22 June with interim provisional postmarking: here the cover was backstamped, at Tel Aviv and in Rehovot – but its handling is most likely 'favor handling' and not the result of true registered mail processing with interim franks.[157]

S. When did DOMESTIC Registered Mail Service Resume? Establishing a methodology:

To try and determine when registered mail service was fully in force, at least outside of Jerusalem, we would be looking for mail sent between secondary cities, where as we saw from the Mandate era, there would have to be a transit at the HPO/registry division – but ideally

a) non-philatelic mail in order to filter out the possibility of any 'favor' postal handling or postmarks, and also
b) not mail from or to the Haifa and Tel Aviv, because all we would see are their dispatch/arrival postmarks but no concrete indication of transit at an HPO (because as noted above, in the absence of a methodology to identify which generic trilingual postmark served specifically the registry department, we can't otherwise know which department postmarked/received the mail in question – any backstamp may simply be an arrival mark but not an indication of registration).

Tellingly, unlike the quantity of registered mail from the interim period, it's much harder to find an example of this specific refined type of mail from the Israeli era, and there is instead a London-sewer fatberg-sized glut of ostensible "bank mail" with hallmarks of being philatelic, making the observation of an example of real, genuine, neutral mail almost impossible.

Also telling, of the relatively few examples of registered mail from the early Israeli period very little is between secondary cities or with connections to smaller locales, with the bulk of the examples being of inner-city mail or mail between Tel Aviv and Haifa; it's even easier to find registered mail sent abroad than domestic mail of the type we seek for this study – as if for registered service there was some kind of limitation on the mails' [domestic] latitude for transit, but this is presently beyond the scope of our research (but a nagging suspicion all the same).

By the same token it's equally hard/impossible to find a properly handled registered cover postmarked from a locale using the reintroduced Mandate postmark devices – an observation that hints that full registered service may only have entered force after the Israeli trilingual entered use at all post offices, roughly in July (though a few post offices received it only in early August). This is ironic as most post offices did not receive the trilingual on 16 May but several weeks, individual months afterwards.

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[157] TAS #43 lot 338

Our ideal is to see a fully transit- and arrival-marked registered mail item, on the earliest possible date during the Israeli postal administration, like this 17 May 1950 cover from Shave Tzion to Tel Aviv – with transits at Nahariya and Haifa (both 18 May), and Tel Aviv arrival (on the same day): there is a chance that this specific cover is philatelic (although the addressee is not in by database of suspect addresses) but it does illustrate the routing we would expect to see on a properly handled registered letter, from start to finish. More specifically we want to see consistent transits at the head post offices – here HAIFA-17 for registered mail there and TEL AVIV-3 for transit-arrival there, apparently postmarks of their registry divisions.

Going back to our time period, here is a philatelic cover from Yokneam to Haifa, posted on 15 June 1948 – without even a Haifa arrival postmark: having spent the money for such pretty tabbed stamps, the addressee assuredly would have wanted full registered mail treatment, to add prestige to the cover, but apparently as of this date the full service was not yet available, even upon arrival:

Here we have a 16 June cover posted from Tiberias (in the north) and addressed to Givat Shmuel "Tel Aviv" (in the south-center): in this case, the cover was arrival marked the next day and also bears the "National Loan" handstamp of the city's sorting office – but where is the expected Haifa HPO transit? (Although the locale borders Ramat Gan and Petach Tikva, the cover is addressed to its post office box in Tel Aviv, which handled mail for this town.)[158]

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[158] See 16 Mar. 1949 list of locales serviced by the Tel Aviv head post office (by their post office box at the HPO) – source: Weekly Post Office Bulletin #10, p.164/166 of this file https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/2461970

By the same token, this cover being "bank mail" notwithstanding, here we have an inverse example of mail from Tel Aviv to Zichron Yaakov (northwards, approaching Haifa), posted on 17 June and arriving the following day – but without the expected Haifa HPO transit:

As observed in the late Mandate era, inner-city Tel Aviv mail delivered within the zone of the dispatching post office did not transit the HPO: here we have an example of such a cover, posted on 2 June from the Tel Nordau branch office (in the vicinity of Frishman and Dov Hoz streets in north-central Tel Aviv); addressed to 29 Frug street (about one avenue and a street away); the front is tied by a "National Loan" handstamp normally described as being applied by the sorting office in the city but given the variety of types these may have been applied at the Branch Offices themselves:
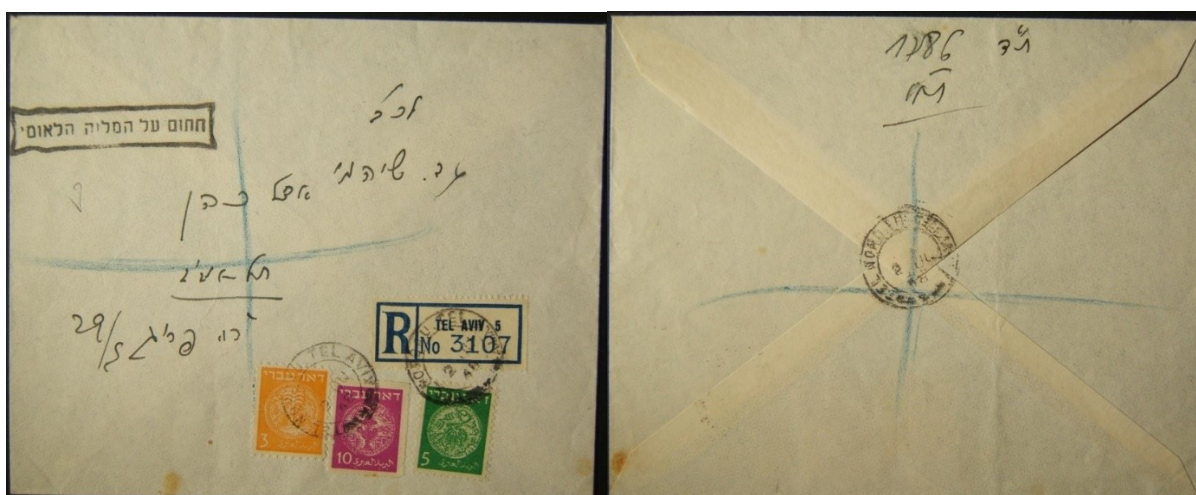
Here we have a cover sent on 10 June 1948 by the Municipality from TEL-AVIV 1, the Allenby Road branch office (on the corner of Allenby and Bialik streets in south Tel Aviv), and addressed to someone at #46 Basel Street, in the northern part of the city, approaching Nordau Avenue. This cover should have been delivered by Tel Nordau branch office, as the closest post office to the address in this period: it likely was, but was not backstamped to confirm its route and registry tracking:

By contrast here is a 16 July cover from the Kirya government complex, arrival marked 18 July at TEL AVIV-3 – by this date, from the mail I've observed in the July-August period, this is the postmark of the city's registry division. Here this is not just arrival marked mail but also fully handled registered mail:


But with a lack of non-philatelic examples, it's hard to pinpoint a starting date for full domestic registered mail service; there are many inconsistencies in this period of May-June.

For instance below we have a 25 May postmarked cover, sent from Tel Aviv to Kiryat Haim – but as "express" registered mail, I can't say at present if the transit markings are the result of it being registered or express: although the reverse was not shown it's described as being backstamped 27 May Haifa transit (most likely at the HPO) and arrival marked 28 May.[159] This may be one of the earliest examples of fully handled registered mail – but again, later dated registered mail (without express service) don't bear all the transits and arrival markings, so here this may only be the result of the cover being sent "express":

[159] TAS #42 lot 88

Here, we may have a proving cover of the earliest observed fully handled registered mail that I have seen, postmarked 19 May from Hadera to Zichron Yaakov and with a transit mark – but at Tel Aviv: both the sending and receiving locales are in the north and should logically have transited Haifa instead; there is no reason why the cover should instead have passed through Tel Aviv in this period…
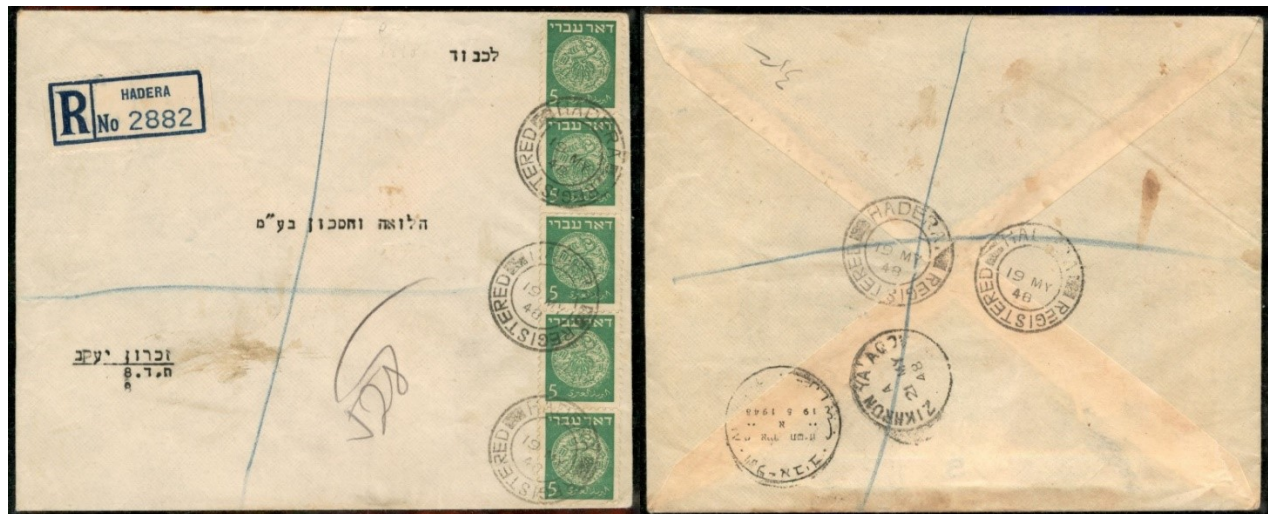

…it's also generically addressed "bank mail" to no one in particular, which as I mentioned above is an industrial-sized entity of philatelic contrivances since the 1940s well into the 1950s.[160] With such mail, unless it adheres to an existing independently confirmed pattern, we can't rely on it alone to establish the pattern – and as we see it indeed is not consistent with the handling of other mail in this section of our study.

How industrial sized is this problem, you may ask? Observe this photomontage of randomly observed "bank mail" bearing all manners of philatelic franking, consisting of gutter-blocks, plate blocks, rare paper types, cut-outs, rare Doar Ivri perforations, rare tabs and so on. The phenomenon would seem to confirm a long-held suspicion by many of us that bank clerks indeed have nothing better to do. This is mail which should have been mass prepared at a bank and machine-cancelled as bulk mail. The affected covers include Hadera plus other cities, and involve a number of banks – chiefly Malve u Hisachon as above, Bank HaPoalim (which eventually incorporated it), and Barclays bank…

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[160] This practice of generic addresses recalls an example of interim "official" registered mail from Nahalat Yehuda (#0104, illustrated in Aloni, ibid, p.301) addressed to "Minhelet Haam, Tel Aviv", which is akin to sending a letter to "The American Government, Washington DC". Do me a favor…
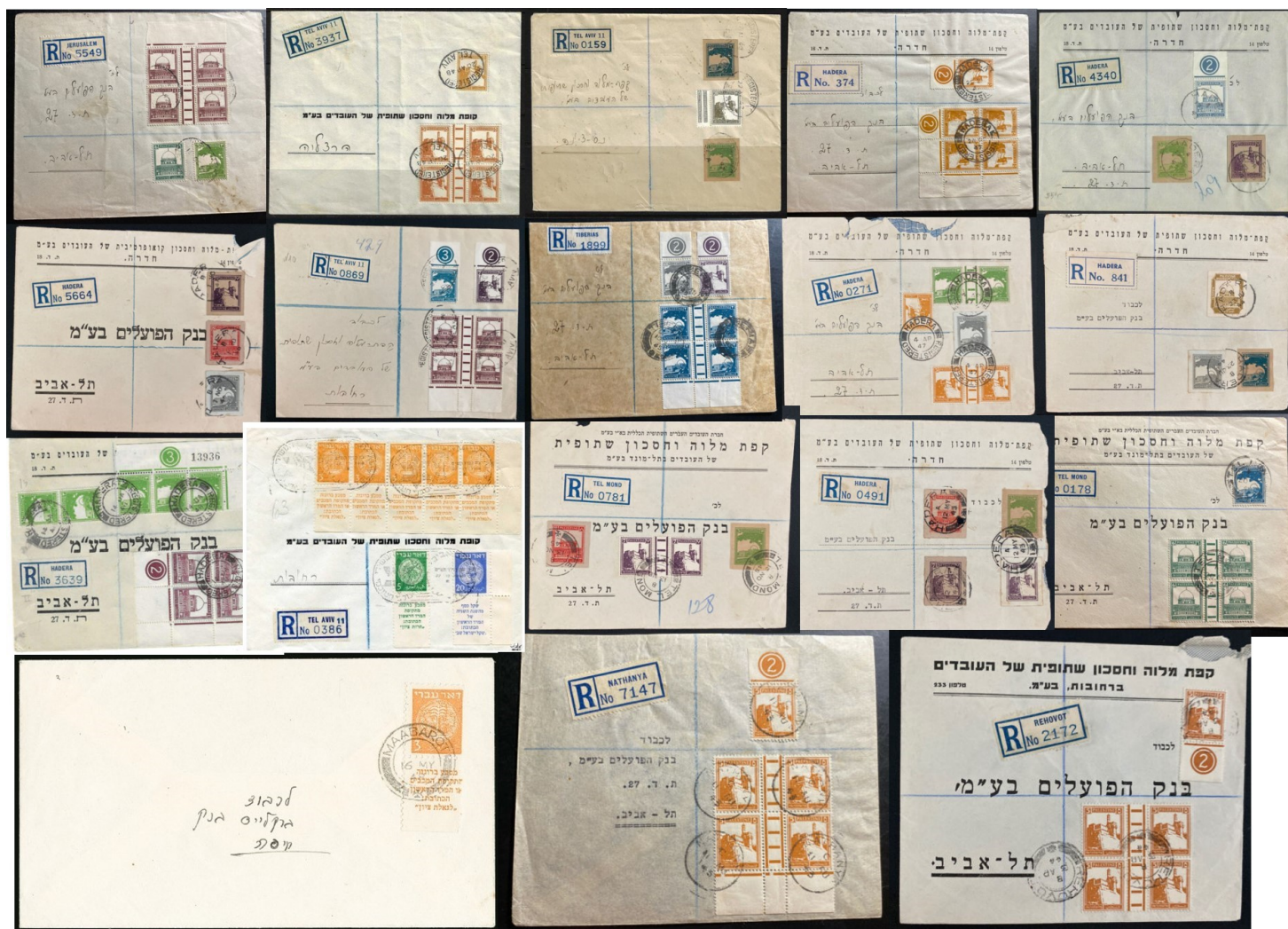
Presumably the idea was to make philatelic mail look like "commercial mail" by using bank postal stationary, but its creator overdid it. Likely the contrived covers' registry numbers were passed on to whoever received the mail at the address and those indicated covers were set aside for their collector. A clue as to what this phenomenon might be is provided by way of this interim period looking cover described by the philatelist Yaakov Tsachor as a fake, based on the incorrect serial of the registry label whose number was not within the sequence used in the interim period; he calls this an "archive fake made later in Tel Aviv"[161] In other words, official-looking commercial postal stationary is not immune from philatelic contrivances.

[161] Yaakov Tsachor "Holy Land and Israel, Fakes and Forgeries" in HLPH journal #109-110, p.326 (http://israelphilately.org.il/images/350601.pdf)

A SIDE-POINT ON 'FAVOR HANDLING'

The trouble with this type of mail is we can't filter out the possible influence of 'favor handling', like applying transit markings where they may not (yet) have been applied, or routings diverging from the standard procedure at that time.

Here it helps to have a degree of awareness of the various 'pedigrees' of philatelic mail that abound. Among the names we'll encounter – and this is absolutely the tip of the proverbial iceberg (as well as the rock bottom of the philatelic barrel) – are Dr. Ernst Bowman/Bauman, Shlomo Platzker and Max Brisker - all from Haifa, and A. Shneor of Tel Aviv.

It seems among contrivers of mail there were various degrees of 'professionalism': some were able to get their covers fully marked with transit and arrival postmarks (Bowman), while others – whether due to the cost of the favor or the awareness of its need to obtain an authentic-looking cover – settled for the absolute minimum (Platzker and Shneor).

Bowman's covers are prolific and postally marked as best as they could be: he was well known to the staffers of the Haifa head post office, being a former wartime employee at the censor office there; a member of the philatelic "Haifa Study Circle" he was friendly another member, Max Brisker, who worked as a dispatcher at the firm "Steel Brothers & Co." – government agents for transport and foodstuffs. As such we see much of Dr. Bowman's mail referencing this company's name or at least its post office box (1412) as a return address.[162]

As a result it's no surprise that contrary to our findings above, about when proper registry transit marks began to appear on mail, we see incredibly on interim registered mail from Ramat HaSharon, a numbered (not HPO) transit/arrival mark - a 17 May 1948 HAIFA-3 postmark:

The cover also nicely bears a 13 May Herzliya transit but tellingly the prized HAIFA-3 postmark was not the registry division's but rather that of the Mount Carmel branch office, in the neighborhood where Bowman lived – further evidence that regardless of his connections, a real registry division transit was not yet available to be applied to his custom ordered cover.

We won't see such partial or fully transit-marked registered mail sent to or by an average sender of this period nor even from most of the philatelic personalities we have on file; Bowman's mail bucks the trend – but it is by no means a standard for measure because his mails, almost uniquely, received full favor handling on the way. I don't include here examples of mail for Platzker or Shneor, for example, because the reverse sides of their mail are almost never displayed – there's nothing to see, and nothing described. **In a future issue of this bulletin I will compile a visual guide to philatelic addresses to help collectors and researchers better identify mail which may not be sufficiently authentic.**


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[162] My thanks to Ed Kroft, Tobias Zywietz and Jean-Paul Danon for the cited personal information.

Although there is a dearth of genuine domestic registered mail in this period for us to study, there may be a working methodology to help us at least separate 'genuine' handled registered mail from the sea of philatelic contrivances in the market – and this is to rely upon the postal service's routing procedures:

From the State Archives we can piece together an accurate-enough picture to give us a working methodology. The "Emergency Committee" ('Vaadat haMatzav')[163], established in October 1947 to help plan for the establishment of the Jewish state, outlined some time in 1948 the following skeletal structure of the planned postal service with an emphasis on rationalizing manpower and establishing a reduced bureaucracy as evidenced by further comments on the referenced page:

In place of the existing 3 regional managers there would be two, each responsible for postal operations in their locales – one in the north covering the region **from the Syrian border up to Netanya**, and the other in the south covering the area **from south of Netanya to the Egyptian border** (and when the Negev settlements would grow that southern region would be split further); the postmasters of the head post offices in each region (Haifa and Tel Aviv) would work alongside these regional managers – and all 4 would be answerable to the management of the postal service. [The regional allocation of the post offices differs from the interim era lists cited above, quoted from Aloni, where the division between North and South was at **Binyamina** (north) and **Pardess Hanna** (South).]

The planned structure took into account the present separation of Jerusalem from the rest of the country and also the limited manpower, which it stated, would have to be enlarged in time – but that the structure proposed could service the country in its initial months.[164] The original document is shown in **Appendix 5** at the end of this article.
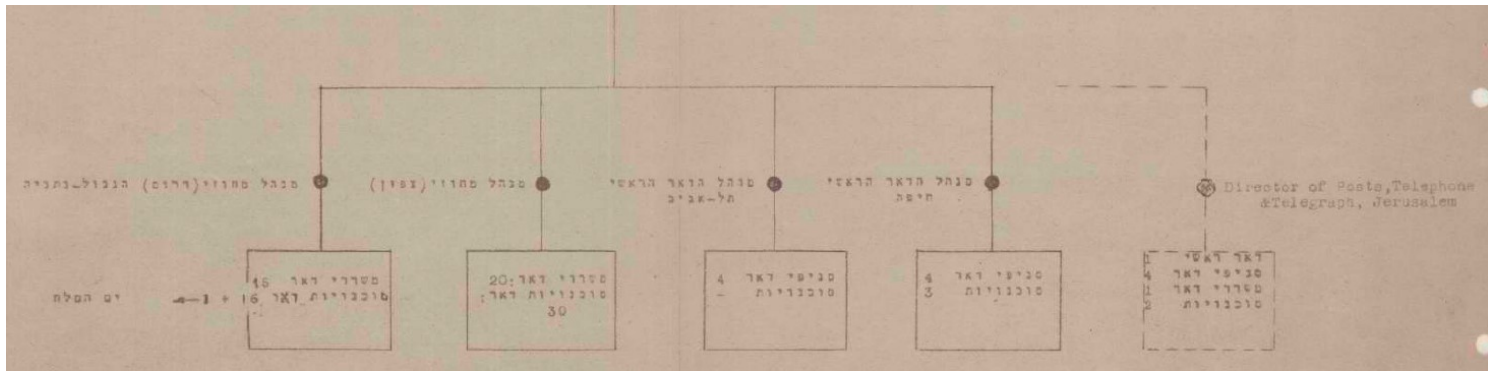
In a public announcement on 13 May (likely delivered by Meir Grabovsky, the head of the postal service in this period) about the impending launch of the Israeli postal service, the day before the declaration of independence, the issue of Jerusalem's status as an integral part of the future state or an area under international control was raised – and if the Jewish area of the city would indeed be part of the Jewish state, the postal services already established there would be integrated into the national postal service:[165]
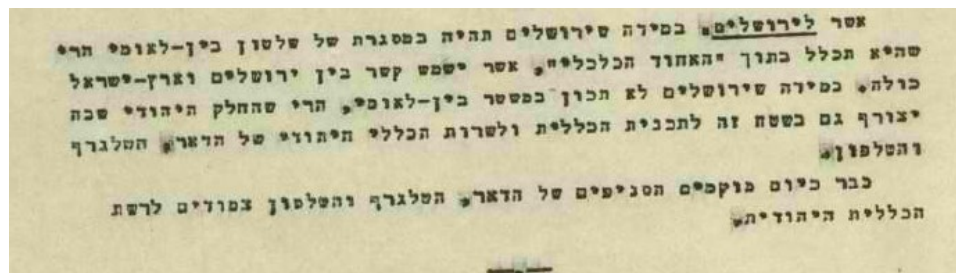
Thus, based on the geographical boundaries of the postal regions established above along with the assignment of post offices to each region given below, we have a working method for determining through which HPO mail to or from any

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163 Entry in Hebrew: https://he.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D7%95%D7%A2%D7%93%D7%AA_%D7%94%D7%9E%D7%A6%D7%91

164 The unnamed author, identifying himself in the text as having been in charge of postal operations in Italy in WWII, may be Meir Grabovsky, who was tasked with establishing the postal service in interim Israel; see pages 4 & 14 of "Emergency Committee" file https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/276544

165 Page 20 of this file https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/419932

interim/early-Israel post office should have transited: the document below in Hebrew, likely from April-May 1948, lists the post offices for both regions whose territories were held (or envisioned to be) by the Jews,[166] and another below it in English also lists post offices associated with the Jerusalem HPO in the "southern region" (the only post office listed there and also on the Hebrew document is "Dead Sea", where the initial Israeli postal service envisioned it serviced by Tel Aviv).[167]

משרדי דואר

מחוז הצפון

מחל-אביב

סוכניות דרום (80)

חפצי בה – בית אלפא
כפר חסידים
כפר יחזקאל
כפר יהושע
משק עין-חרוד
קרית עמל
שמע –קמר
יבניאל
אפיקים
קלוניא
אשדות יעקב
בית השיטה
עין השומר
גבת
כפר ברוך
כפר תבור
מעבריות
מעוז חיים
מעיני שפיה
מרחביה
משק אילת השחר
משק יעבור
מגדל
משמר העמק
כדרך
אבו-רמה
שדה נחום
שדה יעקב
שירת צבי
יקבעם

מחוז הדרום

סוכניות דואר (17)

בת-ים
כפר סובית
גדרה
גבעת ברנר
נחלת יהודה
רמת השרון
בן שמן
אבן יהודה
גבעת חיים
כפר בהדרגה
כפר סירקין
כפר שמריהו
כפר ידידיה
כפר יובה
נעמה
רמת הכובש
ים המלח

משרדי דאר (20)

עפולה
עפלית
בית שאן
בנימיבה
חדרה
כפר עטה
כפר ויטקין
כברת
מטולה
נהלל
פרדס חנה
קרית חיים
קרית מוצקין
ראש פינה
צפת
צמח
טבריה
יעגור, גשר
זכרון יעקב
נתניה

משרדי דאר (15)

בני ברק
גבעתים
הרצליה
חולון
כרכור
כפר-סבא
בת צרובה
ראשון לציון
פתח-תקוה
רעננה
רמלים
רמת-גן
רחובות
תל-מונד
לוד-אוירודרום

בחיפה

סביפים: –
הדר הכרמל
רחוב הרצלית
הר הכרמל
נחלה

סוכניות: –
אחוזה
בת גלים
רחוב חג'אזד

סניפים: –
רחוב אלנבי
"   דיזנגוף
"   הרצל
"   פריסהן

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[166] Page 130 of file https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/298877
[167] Page 16 of file https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/276544

NORTHERN DISTRICT

HAIFA – branches:
Hadar HaCarmel
Herzliya Street
Mount Carmel
Nahla

HAIFA – agencies:
Ahuza (i.e. Ahuzat Herbert Samuel)
Bat Galim
Hidjaz Street

NORTHERN REGION – Post Offices (20):
Afula
Atlit
Beit Shean
Binyamina
Hadera
Kfar Ata
Kfar Vitkin
Kinneret
Metulla
Nahalal
Pardess Hanna
Qiryat Haim
Qiryat Motzkin
Rosh Pinna
Safed
Tzemach
Tiberias
Yagur-Nesher
Zichron Yaakov
Netanya

NORTHERN REGION – Postal Agencies (30):
Hefzibah-Beit Alfa
Kfar Hassidim
Kfar Yehezkel
Kfar Yehoshua
Meshek Ein Harod
Qiryat Amal
Shefa Amr
Yavneel
Afikim
Alonim
Ashdot Yaakov
Beit HaShitta
Ein HaShofet
Gevat
Kfar Baruch
Kfar Tavor
Maabarot
Maoz Hayim
Meir Shfeya
Merhavia
Meshek Ayelet HaShahar
Meshek Yagur
Migdal
Mishmar HaEmek
Mizra
Er Rama
Sde Nahum
Sde Yaakov
Tirat Zvi
Yokneam

SOUTHERN DISTRICT

TEL AVIV – branches:
Allenby Road
Dizengoff Street
Herzl Street
Frishman Street (i.e. Tel Nordau)

SOUTHERN REGION – Post Offices (15):
Bnei Brak
Givatayim
Herzliya
Holon
Karkur
Kfar Sava
Ness Ziona
Rishon LeZion
Petah Tikva
Raanana
Ramatayim
Ramat Gan
Rehovot
Tel Mond
Lydda-Aerodrome

SOUTHERN REGION – Postal Agencies (17):
Bat Yam
Beer Tuvia
Gedera
Givat Brenner
Nahlat Yehuda
Ramat HaSharon
Ben Shemen
Even Yehuda
Givat Haim
Kfar BeHadraga
Kfar Sirkin
Kfar Shmaryahu
Kfar Yedidya
Kfar Yona
???
Ramat HaKovesh
Dead Sea

SOUTHERN DISTRICT

HEAD POST OFFICE

Jerusalem

Jerusalem Radio Station

BRANCH POST OFFICES

Citadel
Mahne Yehouda
Mea Shearim
Rehavia

TOWN POSTAL AGENCIES
CATEGORY 'A'

Greek Colony

POST OFFICES

Beersheba
Bethlehem
Faluja
Gaza
Hebron
Jericho
Khan Yunis
Lydda
Lydda Airport
El Majdal
Nablus
Qalqilya
Ramallah
Er Ramle
Er Ramle (Telephone Exchange)
Sarafand
Tulkarm

POSTAL AGENCIES
Category 'C'

Beit Jala

POSTAL AGENCIES
CATEGORY 'C'

Beit Hakerem
Beit Jubni
Beit Zeit
'Ein Karim
El Masmiya Al Kabira
Qiriyat Anavim
Salfit
The Dead Sea
Isdud

The above methodology gives us a useful tool to evaluate the observed routing on mail, and from this to attempt and determine when full registered mail entered effect in Israel.

Below we have a possible example of properly handled registered mail, albeit it's "bank mail" with a 'special stamp' (mis-cut at top): a cover from Haifa to Kfar Sava, posted from HAIFA-1 (the Hadar HaCarmel branch office) on 26 June 1948; it did not go through the city's HPO in transit, but that might be a similar short-cut of the kind effected in Tel Aviv in the late Mandate era, where mail from the branch offices could be dispatched out of the city without transiting its HPO. In any case here it did transit the Tel Aviv HPO the next day before arriving on the 30th.

By contrast though this 29 June cover from Tel Aviv to Zichron Yaakov bears the latter's arrival mark and even the "National Loan" handstamp of the Tel Aviv sorting office – but it lacks a transit mark in Haifa, suggesting that it may still not have been fully handled as registered mail: where we see improperly handled mail in a certain time period on one cover, because of the sensitive logistical-bureaucratic nature of registered mail, we cannot take a more properly handled example of mail from the same period as forming the basis to prove that full registered mail service indeed existed at this time:

Below, if we set aside for a moment that this is "bank mail", its link from Netanya to Tel Aviv is a curious test-case for us: posted on 21 June at the registry desk at Netanya it is backstamped arriving in Tel Aviv (HPO) on the 23rd; although the backflap is missing and may have been further transit-marked, it's possible that by virtue of being dispatched from Netanya's own registry division, it did not have to go northward through the Haifa HPO on the way [southward] to Tel Aviv and could be sent directly instead… nevertheless, it is "bank mail" with a rarely seen use of the Mandate oval postmark during the Israeli postal administration period, so it's hard to draw definitive conclusions from it alone…[168]


Where there appears to be a marked change in postal handling to proper registered mail processing is in the period of July 1948: recall that we observed further above a cover sent from the Kirya government complex in Tel Aviv to a local address on 16 July, and that the cover was arrival marked 18 July at TEL AVIV-3, suggesting with its very specific postmarks that this was a fully handled registered mail item. As a general observation it seems the TEL AVIV 3 trilingual postmark serviced registered mail / the registry division, as a transit and arrival mark; it entered use on the first day of the Israeli postal administration (16 May 1948), but is seen used on mail mostly from July onwards.[169]

[168] Netanya received the Israeli trilingual postmark on 1 July; no other departmental postmark was issued to that post office leaving it unclear if such a registry division existed in May-June (and thereafter) – see Nachtigal & Fixler's "Regular Postmarks of Israeli Post – Part 1" (1990), p.55
[169] Device #564/24 in Fixler & Nachtigal, p.72

Now below, we have a cover from post-siege Jerusalem to Herzliya, sent on one of the last days in June (the postmark is unclear), with TEL AVIV-3 transit on 1 July and Herzliya arrival on 2 July – by all appearances properly handled registered mail even though the auction house describes it as being of "philatelic origin" (but doesn't indicate why); evidentally slit open at the bottom:[170]
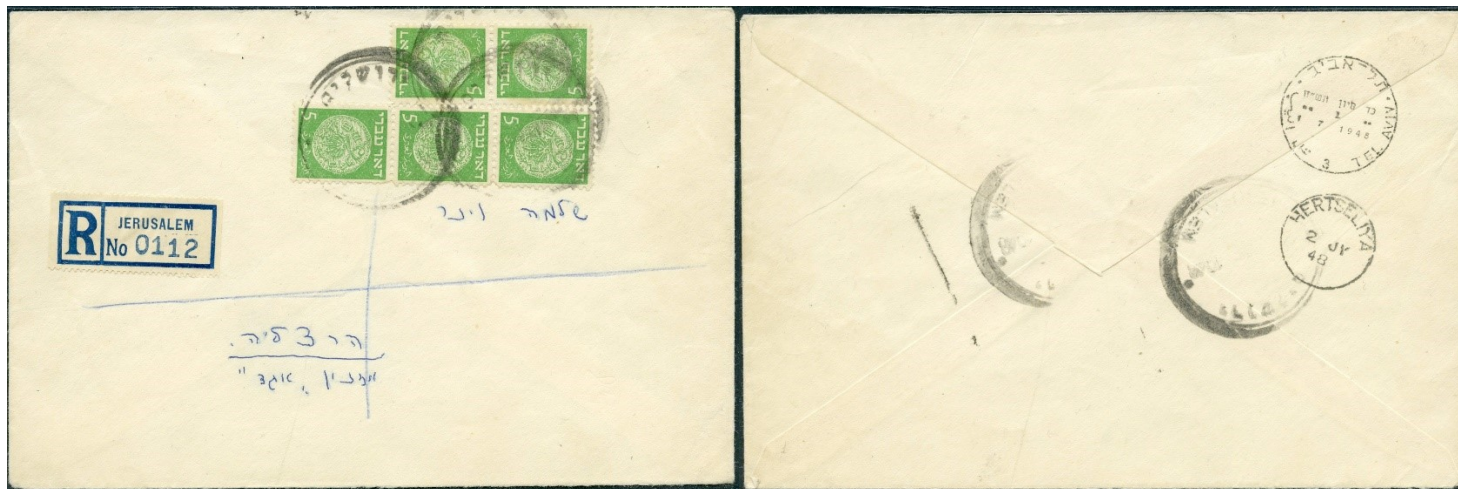

A similarly well documented cover is shown below: notable for the date slug missing, it was sent around 13 Aug from Jerusalem to Bat Yam; it is backstamped 13 Aug transit in Tel Aviv (the postmark index number isn't visible but likely "3") and arrival marked on the 15th – by all appearances fully handled registered mail:

Up to this point one indication that registered mail service had for some time been only partially executed can be gleaned from the following Circular Letter of 30 July 1948, in which the Manager of Internal Postal Operations writes that it has come to his attention that post offices are not totaling up the number of registered letters and are not indicating the number of registrations accompanying their consignments on the dispatch sheets; he underscores that this lack of critical information often causes problems for the monitoring of shipments, and that the clerks of the receiving post offices don't notice missing or conflicting information between the letters they receive and the list of registered letters on the dispatch sheet that accompanies them. Dispatching postal offices are ordered to indicate on their dispatch sheets: the number of mail bags, the total number of registered letters, and the list of registry numbers of the registered mail in the dispatch.[171]

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[170] TAS #49 lot 160
[171] Postal Circular #31 of 30 July 1948; see p.60 and also 70/62 of this file https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/2461993
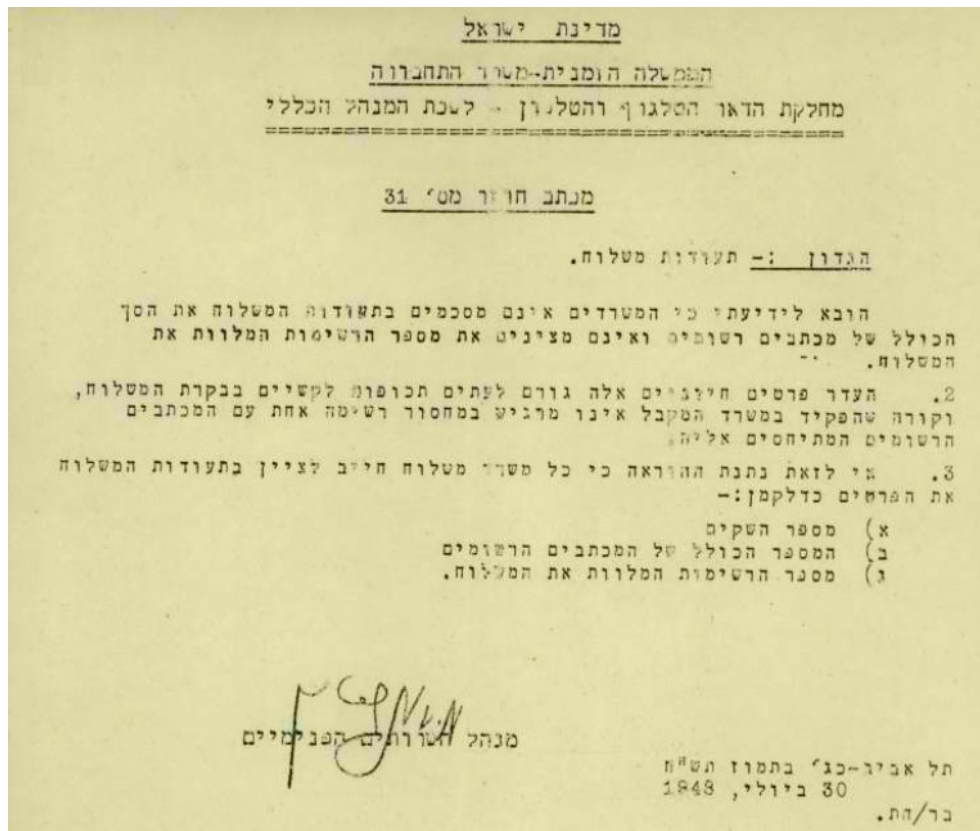
In the following Circular Letter, #32 of 3 Aug., the Manager also complained that post offices were not using orderly sequential numbers in the filing of their dispatch notices, and requested that they do so; and in a separate Circular Letter, #36 of 16 Aug., the Manager complained that post offices have not been filling in the sending date on the dispatch form, and that this must be accompanied by a clear strike of the office's postmark. All in all, fundamental work procedures which should have been common-knowledge and observed – had registered mail service been properly handled since May…

As 1948 progressed we see more instances of well documented registered mail: the next two examples are albeit to a philatelic address but one where I have also seen no transit or arrival marks, so here I take their appearance to indicate that these were properly handled in the mail – 2 Dec. 1948 postmarked mail from Merhavia (in the north) to Haifa with Afula transit and Haifa-16 arrival; and 27 Feb. 1949 mail from Kfar Sava to Haifa with Tel Aviv-3 transit and Haifa-16 arrival:

Here is a 7 Dec. 1948 cover from Acco to Jaffo with Haifa-17 transit and Tel Aviv-3 arrival (the Jaffa post office opened later, in 1949):

Here is tatty but genuine, not philatelically inspired, cover sent on 25 Feb. 1949 from Kfar Sava to Jerusalem, with Tel Aviv transit and Jerusalem-3 arrival:
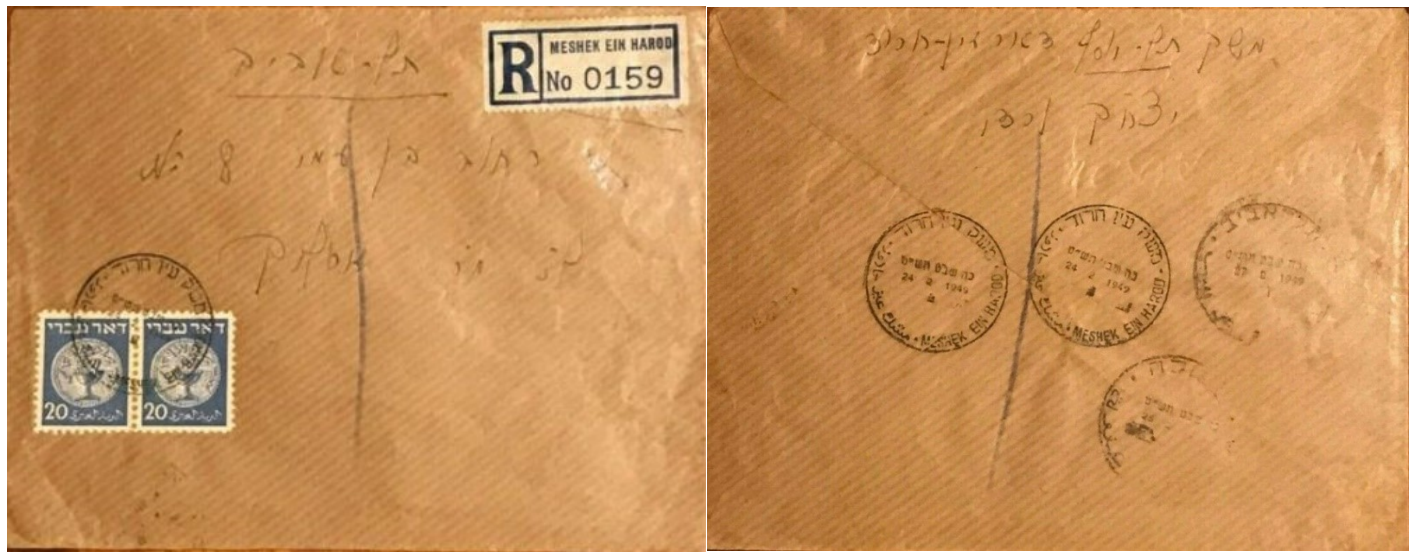
From exactly this period we also see signs of greater efficiency in the routing of mail – not all mail had to transit an HPO to cross regional postal lines, it was sufficient to pass through a district 'Post Office' class facility: here we see a 24 Feb. 1949 postmarked cover from Meshek Ein Harod to Tel Aviv – with an Afula transit and Tel Aviv arrival.

T. The Resumption of Domestic Registered Mail Service in Jerusalem:

Earlier in our study we touched on the subject of Jerusalem; this is a more intricate case than the period mail in the rest of the country and its in-depth examination earlier on would have led us off course. As noted then the city was cut off from the rest of the country from around 20 April, still during the Mandate era, until mid-June (the dates vary according to how we determine the end of the siege period – the convoys or the completion of the 'Burma Road' overpass – but "mid June" is roughly the correct time frame). Avraham Renan was charged by the Israeli Postmaster General (Zvi Prihar) with establishing the city's [interim] postal service and this entered effect on 9 May; by the 30th, as we read earlier from his report, Renan had opened 3 branch offices each staffed by 3 workers, a sorting and registry office numbering 10 employees, and 12 deliverymen.

From observing many examples of mail from Jerusalem in the interim period of 9-14 May, two patterns emerge regarding registered mail:
  a) Mail addressed outside of the city could be sent as registered mail, but owing to the siege this mail was delayed and piled up at the sorting office until it was transported out on either of two convoys which carried the first mails out of the city, on 18 and 21 June
  b) Mail addressed within the city is observed sent as registered mail – but here a very subtle pattern emerges: in the period 9-14 May, and even beyond into June, the overwhelming amount of observed examples are addressed to locations within the delivery area of the dispatching post office, either within the neighborhood of the dispatching post office or another one adjacent to it. I see very little registered mail addressed to locations where it would need to transit different neighborhoods and post office zones within the city.[172]

Also, as noted earlier, the Jerusalem postal service – during the national interim period and also during the following local interim period (while the city was under siege until 20 June, with its formal integration into the Israeli postal service) until the distribution of the Israeli trilingual postmarks in early July – uniquely marked most of its mail with dates, using office dater handstamps. Here I notice a specific consistency of registered mail being marked by dating devices, whereas there are more instances of ordinary and printed matter mail dispatched without necessarily being stamped by a dater.

Here we have a standard example of registered mail, addressed outside of the city, to Haifa, posted at Jerusalem during the siege period, on 11 May, at JERUSALEM-6 (the Mahane Yehuda branch office); as we know it could not be dispatched out of the city at this time due to the siege. Based on its posting date of 11 May we know from research that this was carried by the 1st convoy of 18 June and indeed it is backstamped with an 18 June Haifa arrival:

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[172] This is not to say that such a pattern may not exist in Tel Aviv or Haifa with identical implications, only that in Jerusalem it seems overt.

Most convoyed registered mail is backstamped in Tel Aviv, but regardless, owing to the sheer quantity of mail that accumulated in Jerusalem and was suddenly delivered to Tel Aviv and Haifa, it's a reasonable working assumption to believe that this mail was not fully handled as registered mail – as noted above in Jerusalem postmaster Avraham Renan's report to Postmaster General Zvi Prihar, already by 30 May there were 10 bags (30,000 letters) awaiting transport out of the city: the thousands of accumulated registered mail items were backlogged as much as 2 months, and the volume would have overloaded the registry divisions which in any case, as we observed above in regards to the rest of the country, were not yet in June fully processing registered mail.

As Jerusalem was cut off [postally] from the rest of the country, nominally until the convoys (although the 'Burma Road' land route opened around the 10th), even mail addressed outside the city posted after 14 May, after the interim period in Israel and now during the Israeli postal administration, shared the same fate as the rest of the outbound mail which had accumulated in the city.

In the example below we have a 16 May 1948 '1st day' mail item sent from Mahane Yehuda and addressed to the settlement of Kibbutz Dafna in the north: it was held up in the city until carried on the 2nd convoy of 21 June, whereupon it was transit marked in Tel Aviv before transiting Tiberias and Rosh Pina. As proposed above, although postally well documented with postmarks, being already delayed over a month for dispatch and being part of a flood of mail suddenly arriving at the HPO, it's unlikely that its registry number was logged on a dispatch sheet and forwarded to the next post offices in the transit.

As I suggested earlier in this study, starting with the interim period there appears to have been a chasm between what the postal service planned to do and what it was actually capable of doing. If the situation in Jerusalem serves as a microcosm for the rest of the country, consider the proposal for "minimal postal service" outlined by Avraham Renan on 5 May 1948 compared to what we read in his report of 30 May:[173]

- recognizing that the situation in the city at the time of writing was unusual, he estimated that in "normal times" the daily volume of mail handled in Jerusalem came to 118 mail bags entering the city (354,000 letters) and 32 mail bags exiting the city (96,000 letters) – about 450,000 letters a day of which 20% was related to the Arab sector; interestingly his estimate doesn't include local mail **within** the city;
- he estimated that the 3 branch post offices in Jewish west Jerusalem would be needed, each with a staff of 3, plus a general post office whose detailed staffing numbered 42 – 17 clerks, including 2 for registered mail, and 25 deliverymen;
- he recommended servicing registered mail in light of the various legal and governmental offices which would need it, and he even suggested not servicing printed matter mail;
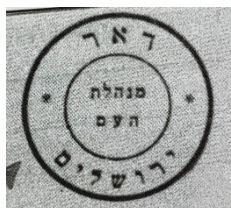
 By his report of the 30th, his general post office numbered only 22 of whom 12 were deliverymen; by all appearances there was no limitation on the acceptance of printed matter mail. Also of note is that Jerusalem uniquely had its own locally-made interim era 'rosette' postmark for the sorting office – but no such marking was prepared (or seen) on registered mail, implying that even with this special provision for the postal service, local initiative did not extend to the registry department's work.

Of note too is a complaint sent by the interim administration in the city on behalf of the local post service to Zvi Prihar the postmaster general, in which **the administration complains that <u>air service</u> for mail has not been provided "as promised"** in a referenced letter from the PMG on 5 May, and that this "significantly harms" the postal service enterprise in the city; the complaint requests that the matter be rectified with the relevant aviation authorities – an extraordinary request as we know that no regular air mail serviced the city, and inbound/outbound mail was held up until the convoys of 18/21 June.[174]

The Palestine Post, 20 June 1948 P2

Arranging Israel's Postal Services

The Minister of Communications, Mr. D. Remez, and the Postmaster General, Mr. Zvi Friedberg, have left for France in connection with Israel telecommunications services.

Postal communications between Jerusalem and Israel have been renewed.

For the present, regular and registered mail and newspapers will be accepted in Jerusalem.

We see therefore enormous parities between plans and reality. Likewise with the city's registered mail we see ample instances of mail addressed outside the city accepted at the post office – but this was a neutered postal service as the mail was delayed for up to 2 months before being dispatched.

With this impression we are indirectly aided by the following press report from 20 June, following the 1st convoy of mail out of Jerusalem (to Tel Aviv) on the 18th – postal relations between Jerusalem and the rest of the country have been renewed, including registered service (though surprisingly "newspapers" are mentioned but "printed matter" is not): as we will see below though it seems a restoration of full registered mail service took a few more weeks to enter force.

By contrast, locally, there may have been a clever initiative to offer registered service, provided that the delivery area was within the limits serviced by the dispatching post office as observed on the overwhelming amount of local mail. It may therefore be, that registered mail in Jerusalem was formally available, but within certain logistical limits – and yet, without the use of arrival marks, such that if registered service really was available in the post office's area it did not include the full service of handling from posting to delivery. I observe this phenomenon into June. Consider these examples, all of which were obtained without difficulty – keep in mind that 'patriotic franking' (overfranking, using an entire set of 3 stamps of issue #1 or #2) is common on much of the city's mail in this period:

This is an undated cover sent from Jerusalem-6 (Mahane Yehuda branch office) and addressed to someone in the Romema neighborhood, right next to the Mahane Yehuda area:

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[173] The letter by Renan, likely to Zeev Sherf (based on the 6 questions posed at the end), the secretary of the Emergency Committee, is reproduced in JSPS, ibid, p.299-300, and displayed below in **Appendix 6**.
[174] Letter from Hanna Even-Tov to Zvi Prihar, reproduced in in JSPS, ibid, p.301, and displayed below in **Appendix 7**.

Here we have a 12 May interim period cover sent from Jerusalem-18 (the Rehavia branch office) to an address on Gaza Street in the neighborhood:

And here we have an undated cover also sent from the Rehavia post office, addressed to Even Ezra street in the neighborhood: the lack of a date-stamp is suspect, but even if this is a philatelic letter the location of the address adheres to the general pattern described in this section.

Here we have a 1st day Israel Post (16 May 1948) cover sent from the Mea Shearim branch office and addressed to Zfania street nearby:

This is a 21 June 1948 postmarked cover sent from the 'Technical Department' of the Jewish Agency, posted at Jerusalem-18 (the Rehavia branch office) and address to Gaza Street in the neighborhood:

Taking a moment to address anomalies, there are a few instances where I observe mail addressed to streets which should be serviced by another post office – and this would contradict the general pattern I've described above, that registered service, however limited in scope, was confined to addresses within the proximity of the dispatching post office. I see these anomalies primarily at dealers who have a lot of questionable philatelic material on display.

In principle I have no vested interest in proposing any theory to support the surprise existence of partially 'real' interim registered mail, and it would be much easier based on the mere appearance of Jerusalem mail to conclude that its registered mail was as much ostensible and imaginary as it was elsewhere in the country at this time. But for the purpose of accuracy, philatelic methodology and meaning in this research, I do think the observed pattern of Jerusalem registered mail addressed to locations within delivery of the dispatching post office is sound: on closer inspection it seems that these anomalies are largely philatelic covers and below is one method to make this determination.

Here for example is this 1st day Israel Post (16 May 1948) postmarked cover, addressed to #15 David Yellin street – and sent from the Rehavia branch post office…

… the 'problem' is, David Yellin street is well away from Rehavia and much closer to Mea Shearim and even Mahane Yehuda post offices (Mea Shearim does not appear in the map below but is adjacent to Geula):
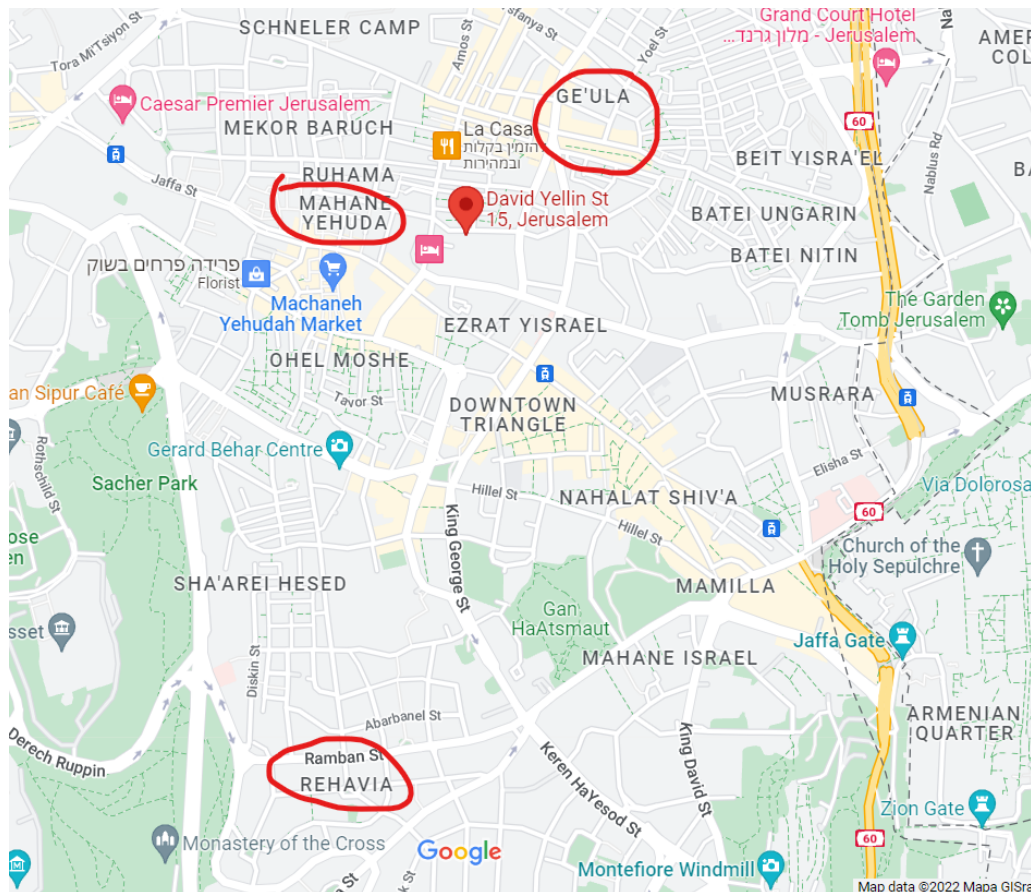
How might we understand the circumstance of the observed letter? Might it really have been sent as registered mail to David Yellin – and without any additional markings from a subsequent post office? One clue we have to assess this cover is its registry serial number and date of posting. From other period registered mail sent from Rehavia we have the following pattern of registry numbers by date:

0282 on 12 May – shown just above
0516 on 13 May – seen in aloni p.232
0571 on 16 May – seen in JSPS p.121
0824 on 20 June – seen in JSPS p.245
0873 on 21 June – shown just above
0874 on 21 June – seen in JSPS p.122
0958 on 27 June – seen in JSPS p.95

This information was easy to find and assemble, and the distribution of registry numbers across a series of dates looks consistent and intuitive. Therefore, if this odd cover is postmarked on 16 May but bears a registry number of 0361, which is more appropriate for 12 May, then clearly something fundamental about this cover is out of synch. Even if we don't recognize the address as philatelic, something about the cover is sufficiently inconsistent that I would not rely on it to overturn the validity of my proposed theory about local Jerusalem registered mail.

Here we have a counter-example addressed to the same person, Dr. Mark Lifschitz on #15 David Yellin street, but here – more realistically – dispatched from the Mahane Yehuda post office (and with exact 25 mils postage paid):[175]


There are other anomalous covers I see and my supposition is, given that the vast majority of mail is addressed within the delivery area of the dispatching post office, these covers were handled as ordinary mail in spite of the postage paid for registration (which is any case is mostly 'patriotically overfranked', and the senders may also have been so informed): here we have an overfranked 13 May postmarked letter sent from Rehavia but addressed to the 'far away' Kiryat Moshe neighborhood a few kilometers away; it's return-addressed to the equally distant Beit HaKerem neighborhood which is adjacent to Kiryat Moshe (see map below).


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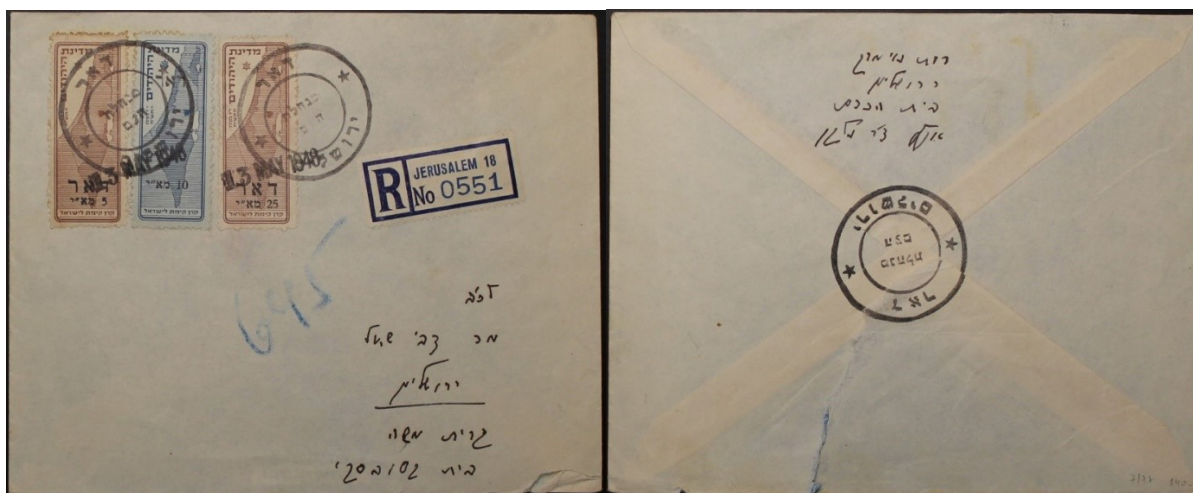
[175] Aloni, ibid, p.225

The registry number is consistent the assembled information above for the date of posting, so here this may be an entirely legitimate cover but my assessment is, if there was such a thing as local-area registered mail, it was likely handled as ordinary mail.
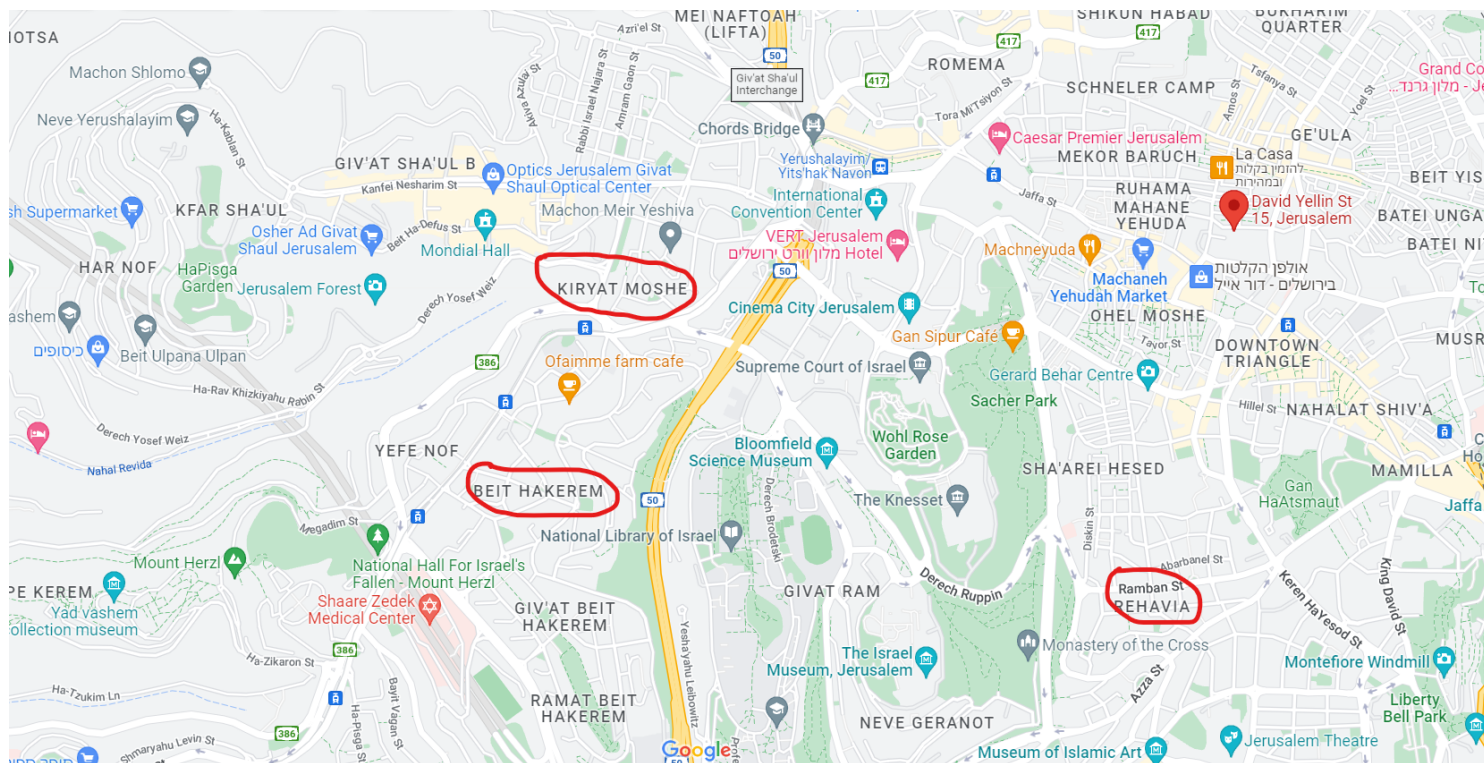
In the period immediately after the siege on Jerusalem and after the convoys, up to the end of June, we continue to see registered mail postally marked as before with dispatch postmarks at the point of origin and an arrival mark at the head post office of whatever city the mail is addressed to – but the postmarks don't indicate any special handling of the mail as registered mail. Here we have a late June/early July cover sent from the Jerusalem head post office: the date is unclear but the postmark was in use until 4 July; the cover was arrival marked in Haifa at its HPO on the 7th – but there are no markings to indicate that the letter passed a special registry department:[176]


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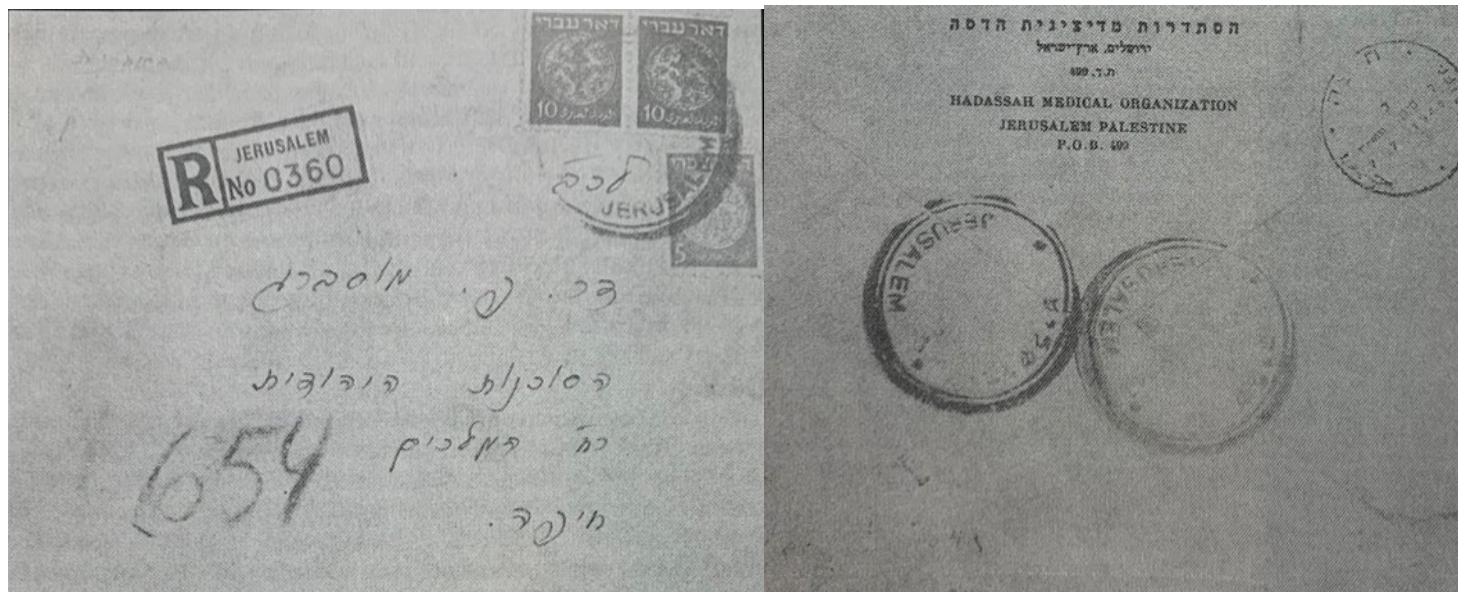
[176] Illustrated in JSPS, ibid, p.256. Contrary to JSPS and other specialized literature, as per press reports the Jerusalem head post office opened to the public on 28 June, not 21 June. See the Handbook (ibid) for the report.

To pinpoint the likely start of full registered service in Jerusalem or with the city, whether local mail or inbound/outbound, we'd be looking for any sign that a piece of mail passed through a transit point, ideally one with a departmental number to make the marking more distinct than a generic unnumbered postmark. As a general observation, mail from Jerusalem in this period until about August 1948, is surprisingly scarce.

At the moment the earliest likely date is 4 July 1948, when the postmark JERUSALEM-3 starts to be observed as a frequent transit mark on the city's registered mail:[177] here we have an incoming cover from Hadera posted on 1 July, transiting TEL AVIV-3 the next day and being received in transit on the 4th at JERUSALEM-3. The letter is addressed to David Yellin street so the destination neighborhood as per the branch offices at that time should be either Mahane Yehuda or Mea Shearim.
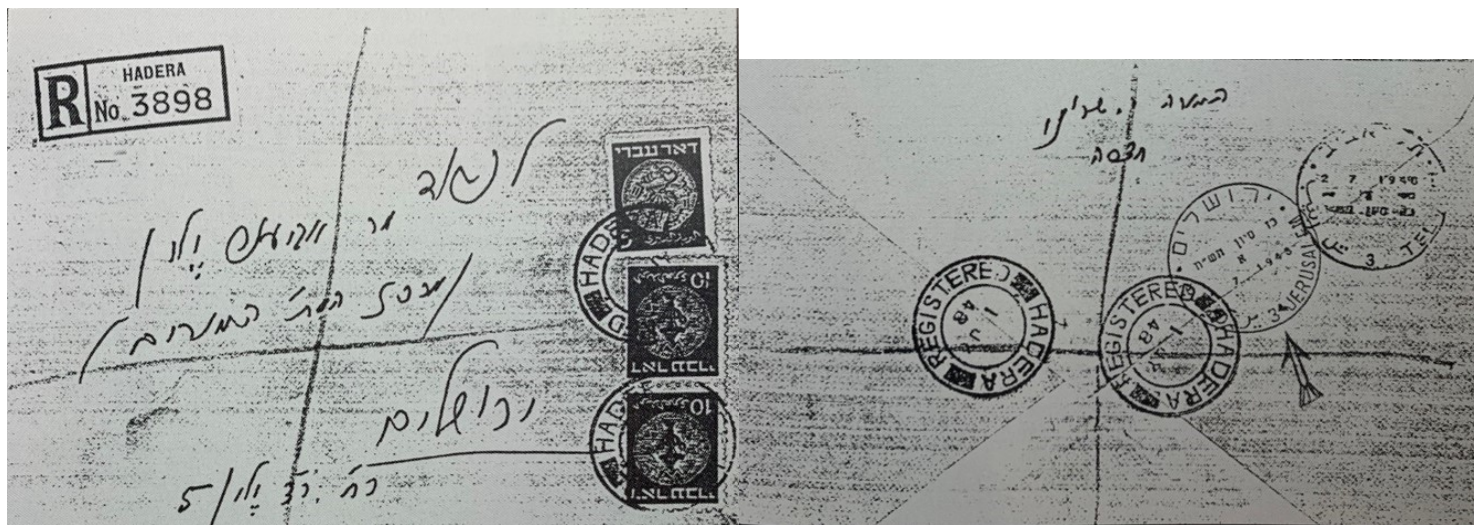
Here we have a rare example of mail sent abroad from Jerusalem in this period, air mail to the US: it was postmarked on 5 July at JERUSALEM-2 and transited TEL AVIV-3 likely on the same date; if was processed in the US by the registry division there prior to delivery. Glassman assigned the #2 index to the sorting department (p.49), but it may be that this index was used at the registration counter of the public counters at the HPO (even if only for overseas-bound mail) – as such it did not require further transit in Jerusalem and was transferred on to Tel Aviv where its registry department (#3) processed the letter prior to dispatch:[178]


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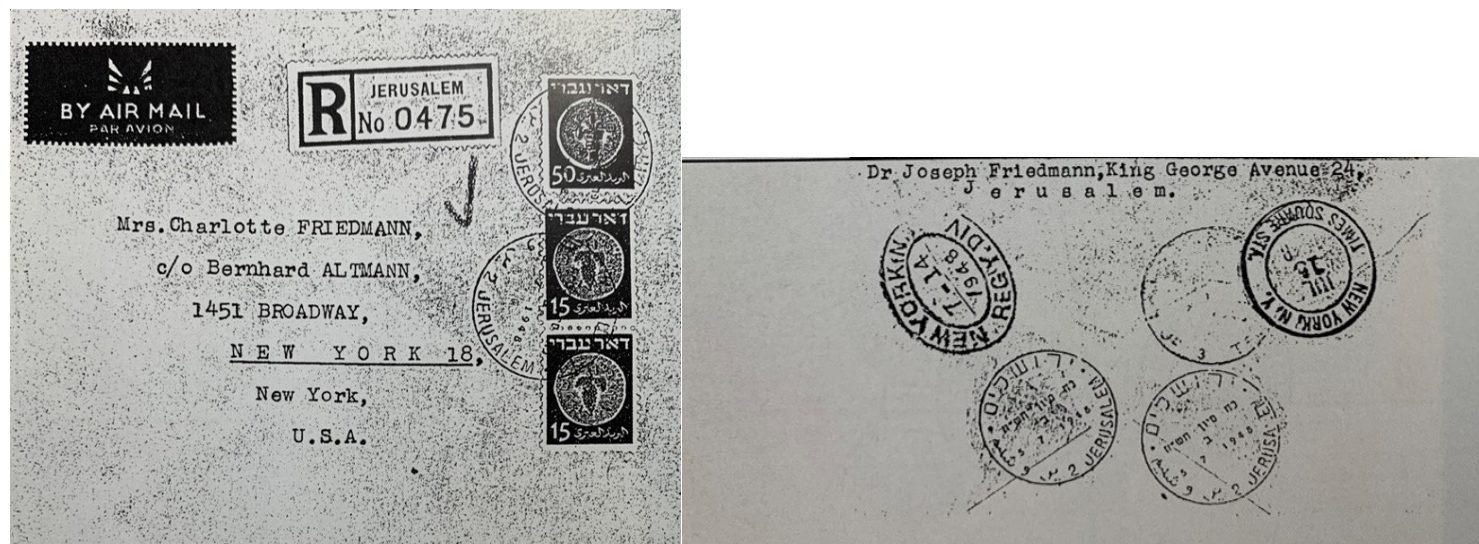
[177] Emanuel Glassman ("The Postal History of Jerusalem from 1948", 1978 ed) assigns the #3 index to the "sorting office" for "small lots of mail" (p.57) but on account of its growing frequency on registered mail in 1948 I believe this may have been assigned specifically to the registry department at the head post office; Glassman actually does say this separately on page 49 but seems to contradict himself later on page 57 in his actual assignments of each index number. This would also be a corresponding assignment to the observed #3 index used in Tel Aviv on registered mail.
[178] Illustrated in JSPS, ibid, p.268

Here we have an example of outbound domestic mail, sent from Mahane Yehuda branch office to the town of Bat Yam: the addressee is likely philatelic as her husband "Harry Seal" stars on a number of iffy covers in this period (and here this one lacks the standard dispatch date applied with an office dater), but nevertheless it looks properly handled – posted using the interim era postmark as observed used in this period (prior to the issuance of the new Israeli trilingual); it was processed on 11 July at JERUSALEM-3, then at TEL AVIV-3 on the 13th prior to arriving on the 14th:[179]
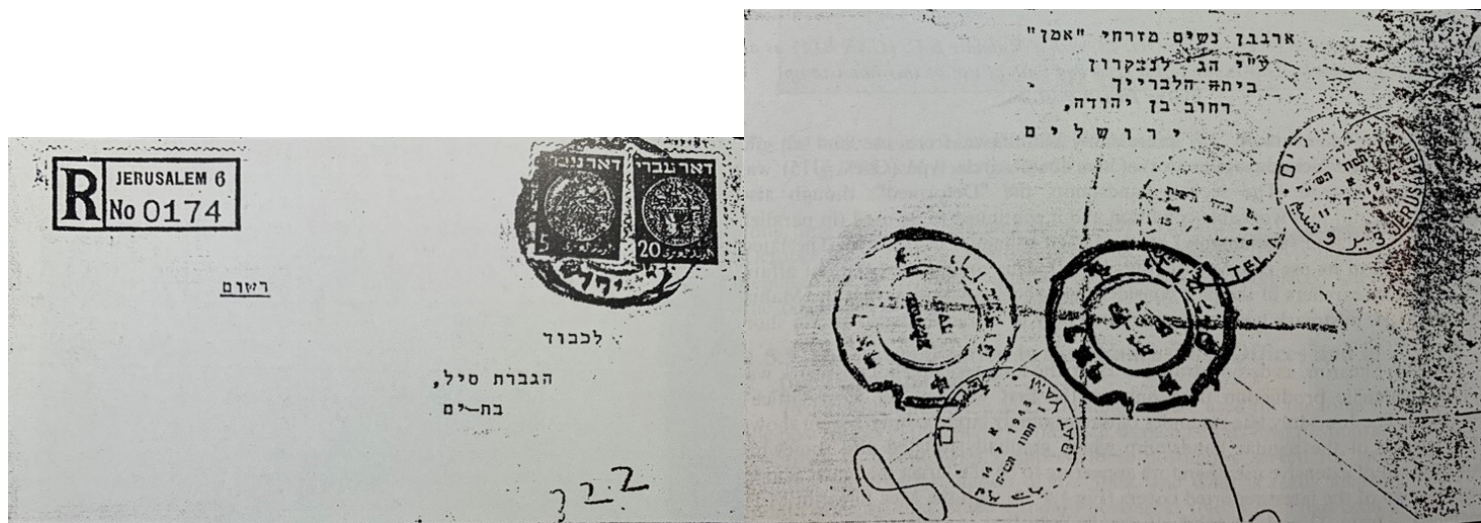
And here we have a surprisingly rare example of inner-city mail of this period: sent from the Income Tax Office (issued the JERUSALEM-2 institutional registry label series) and postmarked on 16 July from Mahane Yehuda branch office[180]; addressed to #42 Tzfania Street not far from either the Mahane Yehuda or Mea Shearim branch offices, here this letter was routed on the 18th via JERUSALEM-3 at the head post office, for delivery:

[179] Illustrated in JSPS, ibid, p.274
[180] I demonstrated that this postmark and another used at JERUSALEM-6 were both in use at Mahane Yehuda – see Alex Ben-Arieh, "On the Jerusalem Interim & Rosette Postmarks" in JerusalemStamps Bulletin #1 (May 2022), p.55-59.
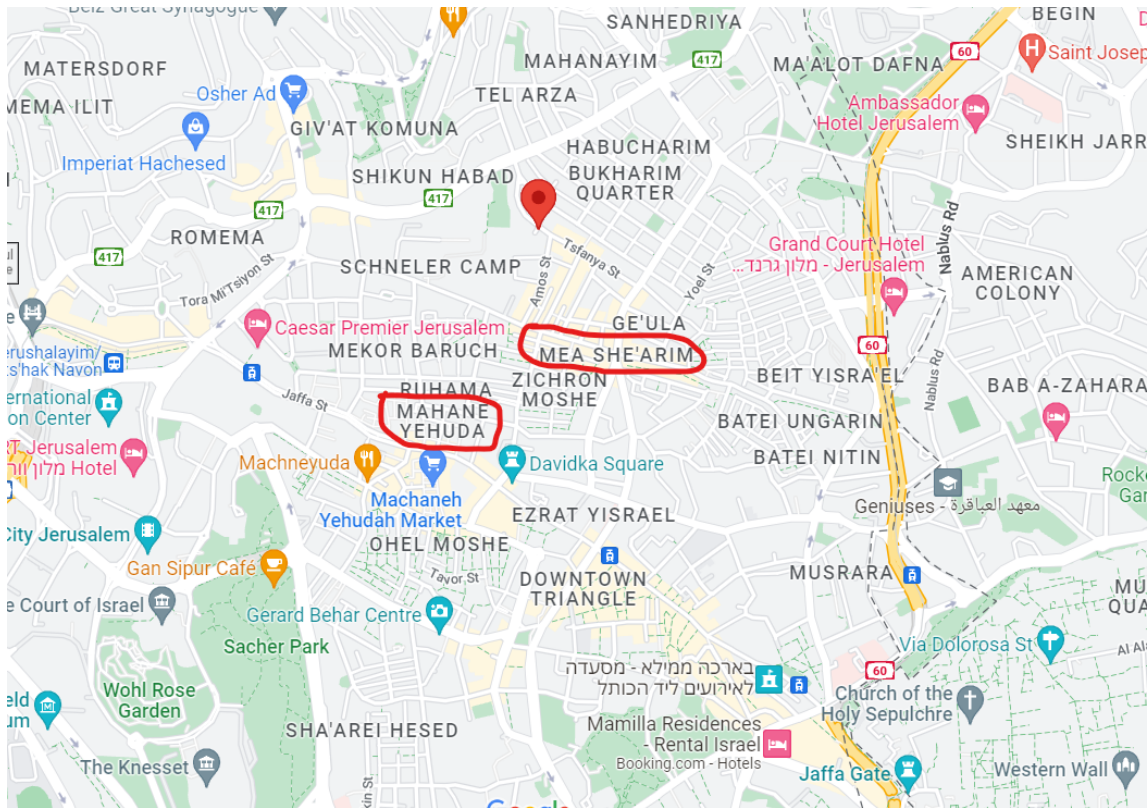
The following may be a similar example of "local Jerusalem" mail but it is also "bank mail" and bears postal markings which shouldn't be there: this is a cover sent from JERUSALEM-6 (Mahane Yehuda) to the settlement of Kiryat Anavim outside Jerusalem. It was posted on 30 July but postmarked unusually with the Mandate era postmark rather than the interim device we saw in use in the example just above; it transited Mea Shearim on 2 August for no apparent reason (a long transit time between two close post offices), and here too postmarked unusually with the Mandate device rather than the interim postmark, before finally transiting JERUSALEM-3 on the same day.[181] However philatelic the cover may be it at least passed the registry department on the way to its destination, lending it the outward appearance of being properly processed.
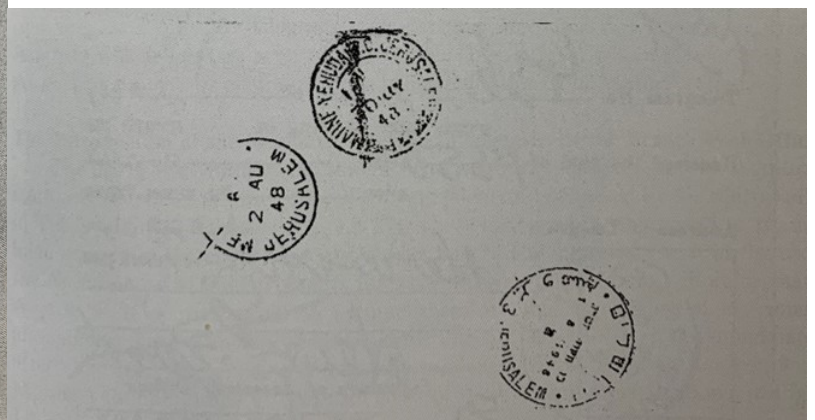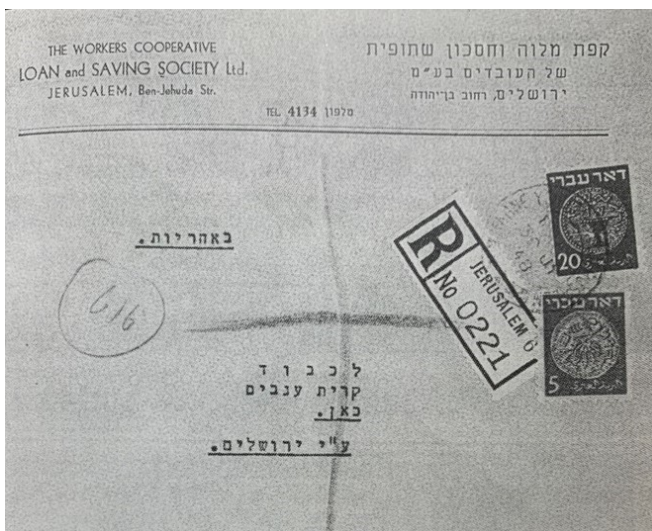
From observed mail and comments by Glassman on Jerusalem postmarks (p.49), we see that the JERUSALEM-5 postmark also serviced the registered mail counter (possibly for domestic mail only, as opposed to JERUSALEM-2 as seen above): here we have a 30 July postmarked cover sent from the head post office (recently reopened on 28 June at its location on #23 Jaffo Street), and addressed to someone also at Jaffo street – but in the Ruhama neighborhood, about a kilometer away, adjacent to the Mahane Yehuda wholesale market. In this case the cover was received at JERUSALEM-5, which served as the

[181] Illustrated in JSPS, ibid, p.277

registry point for the letter's transmission – and no further transit marks were applied, suggesting that the head post office delivered the letter directly without it sending it through the Mahane Yehuda post office.

U. Summing Up:

Here then we have a fairly good idea both of how fully resumed registered mail in Jerusalem looked, as well as in the rest of the country:

- From our study thus far, we examined and learned that the acceptance of registered mail for domestic and overseas-bound mail ended on 21 April, while the delivery of such mail remained in place until 30 April;
    - ⇨ We observed numerous examples of Mandate-era registered mail to gain an understanding of how this mail was postally marked, and in light of published procedures for its handling, why we would see certain transit and arrival marks such as those of registry divisions; we also looked specifically at such mail from the late period of the Mandate, to account for rationalizations which were likely the result of military necessities arising from the turmoil in the country.
- Based on our study of postal markings (or lack thereof) we saw no evidence that 'real' registered service was renewed during the interim period of 2-14 May, albeit in Jerusalem there is a slight possibility that something akin to local registered mail existed provided that the mailing address was within the district served by the dispatching post office – though without arrival marks, and so an inconclusive notion.
    - ⇨ Only domestic registered mail was publicly announced as available (as overseas postal links were all formally suspended), but we don't see any signs that its handling adhered to anything resembling registered mail – such as dispatching, transiting or arrival at dedicated registry departments – and we also learned that the interim postal service in total was heavily understaffed (by as much as 75% of its workforce) and short of resources; we also saw empirical evidence of no such service being available at certain post offices and factored in documented information that postmasters were being told not to accept such mail – all leading to the conclusion that this service was not really fully available (certificates of dispatch were issued but mail was not truly being processed according to a 'chain of custody' within the postal system).
        - ▪ We separately became aware of such philatelic constructs as genuine 'ostensible' registered mail as used by those truly seeking to receive that service even if it wasn't fully rendered behind the scenes, as opposed to 'fake' registered mail mocked up by speculators with the involvement of postal clerks at various post offices, mostly in the small settlements.
    - ⇨ As a byproduct of this section of the study we observed mail which bore Mandate era [oval] postmarks of the registry divisions, but we learnt to dismiss their significance because the head post offices applied those markings, and these were under Mandate administration (which had suspended the service on 21 April) until 6 May when the interim administration took over – and then these markings seemingly disappeared from mail (or appeared very inconsistently and rarely on it). Likewise where we saw transit and arrival marks on interim registered mail these were mostly from mail posted on the last days of the interim

administration and subsequently processed by the Israeli administration – but not symbolizing proof of proper handling as registered mail.

- The resumption of registered service with the establishment of the State of Israel (from 15 May onwards) seems to have been in two stages:
  - ⇨ Mail dispatched abroad as per bilateral agreements had to necessarily be 'full' registered service, so we can date its beginning to the very earliest such agreement which here was with the United States on 19 May 1948.
  - ⇨ Domestically, the picture is more intricate, with registered mail more consistently bearing arrival postmarks (which were mostly lacking in the interim period), but lacking transit marks or bearing transit marks that did not correspond to the allocation of post offices to geographic regions and their respective head post office registry divisions. Outside of Jerusalem we begin to see an organized process for the full handling of registered mail from around the start of July 1948, whereas in Jerusalem this appears to have begun a few days or a week later – in both instances this was accompanied by the use of specific index-numbered postmarks of the Israeli trilingual series, and not from the reintroduction of the old Mandate devices.

V. Effects of Supplementary Postal Services:

Having concluded that there was no real registered mail service in the interim and early Israel period we can now better appreciate the apparent lack of observed supplementary services such as "Advice of Delivery" ('Avis de Reception' – AR).

Advice of Delivery is service whereby the sender of a registered mail item can request to receive signed confirmation of delivery of his dispatched postal item: the sender fills out an AR form, providing his own name and address as well as that of his addressee and the date of posting; the form serves as a self-addressed return-reply document whereby the sender fills out his address to receive the signed document back and affixed postage stamps to it in the sum of the cost of the service, here 15 mils. The addressee (or someone on his behalf) would sign the AR form which the deliveryman would then return to the post office for dispatch back to the sender.

In the year 2000 an interim AR form was displayed in the 'Holy Land Postal History' journal by the late dealer Marvin Siegel;[182] in 2003 in the same Journal another philatelist (channeling his inner Indiana Jones) illustrated that form along with a "recently discovered" June 1948 dated cover stamped 'AR'.[183] Subsequently with the publication of Aloni's book on the interim period it transpired that this illustrated form is the only one known – and it's even accompanied by the letter for which the confirmation was requested.[184]

As I mentioned much earlier, instances of postal documents which should be in the hands of different people in different places being "found" together is a highly suspicious circumstance. That was my initial feeling when I reviewed this subject until I found the following (laughable) issue: the AR form was never signed by the addressee nor were details of the actual delivery ever filled out. In other words, the form is a mock up. The cover's address is "crossed off" but there are no official markings to indicate why, and in any case the reason for non-delivery should have been filled in on the form.

[182] Marvin Siegel "Some More Philatelic Tidbits from the Transition Period" in Holy Land Postal History journal (HLPH) #81-82, p.82-83 (http://israelphilately.org.il/images/HLPH%2081-82.pdf)
[183] Itamar Karpovsky "Minhelet Ha'am 'Advice of Delivery' (AR) Letters" in HLPH #93-94, p.533-535 (http://israelphilately.org.il/images/HLPH%2093-94.pdf)
[184] Aloni, ibid, p.76-77

But as far as the scholarship goes, the work is misleading, for while we are separately afforded a look at the accompanying letter – which was reason enough for me to be suspicious – the AR form as illustrated in that subsequent publication is displayed cropped, without the empty portion for the delivery, giving the erroneous impression that the form was properly filled in and processed:
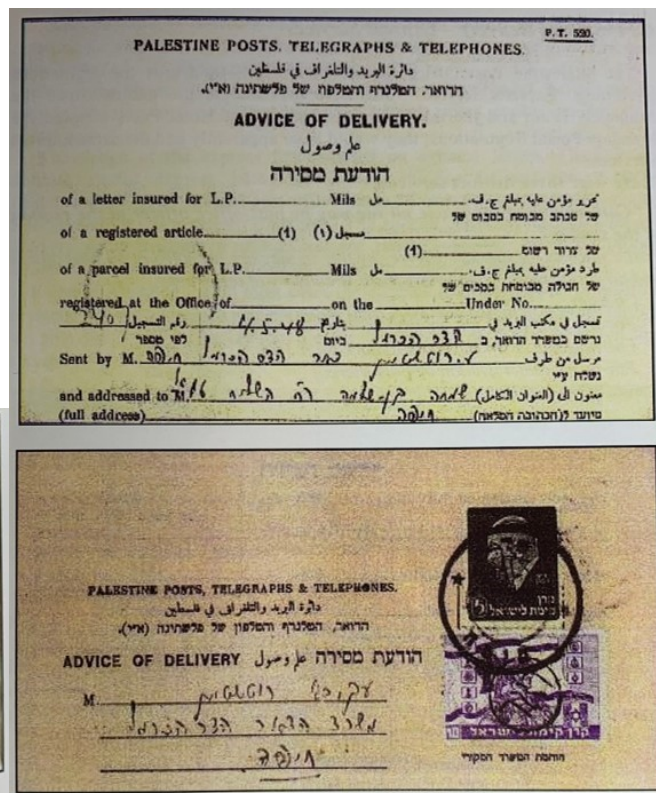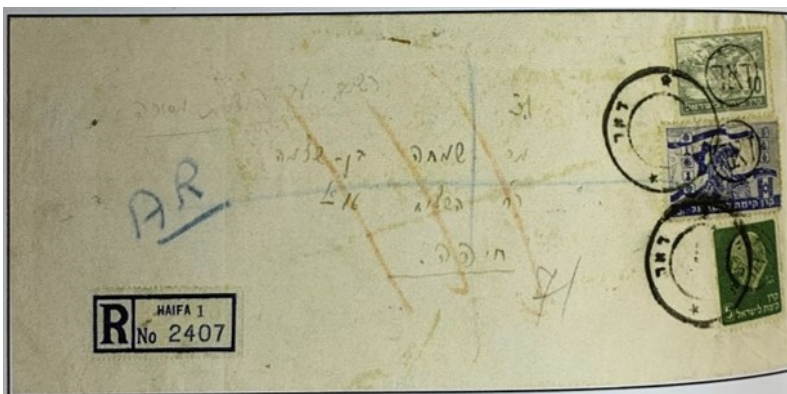
And the "discovered" AR cover from June 1948 is addressed to Leo Better, a well known star of philatelically inspired mail – meaning it cannot serve as proof that AR service existed already in June.[185]
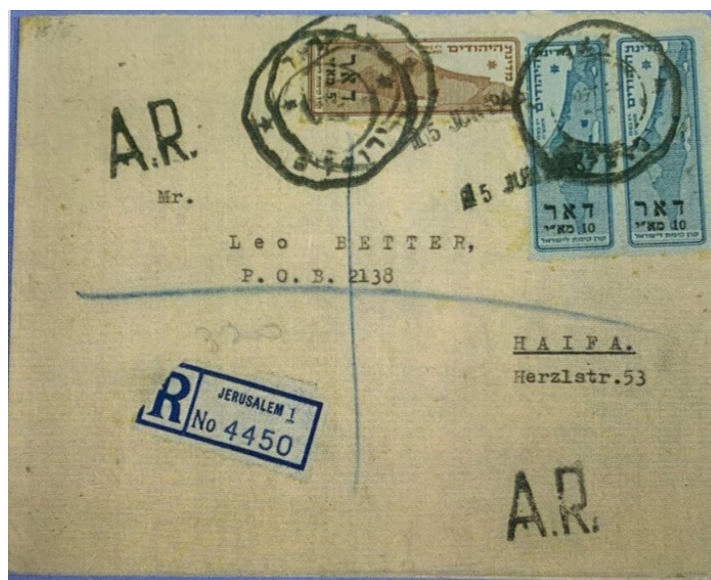
In any case, if we concluded just above that full domestic registered service began in July 1948 then obviously Advice of Receipt service could not have pre-existed it.

_____

[185] This illustration is taken from JSPS, ibid, p.414

This article has run well beyond what I originally planned, but to leave the reader with the awareness that there is more yet to uncover in this period of existent/non-existent postal service, I'll close with this suggestive find regarding **express mail**:

This is an example of 1937 Mandate era express mail from Haifa to Jerusalem – note the transit and arrival marks:

This is an example of 1950 Israeli express mail, from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv – note the arrival mark:

And this is an example of interim period express mail, from Jerusalem to Haifa – **note there is no arrival mark**:

EPILOGUE

Since publishing this article a few after-thoughts occurred to me: might indications of attempted delivery serve to show whether registered mail service truly existed?

On one hand there are instances of mail where we see manuscript notations or postal markings indicating **attempted delivery of mail**; on the other hand in the period of May-June there are a number of cases where unclaimed mail is [manuscript] **marked "PR" (Poste Restante)** by the postal clerk, meaning that the mail item should be held at the post office until the addressee comes to claim it (a service which nominally would cost 10 mils if used within the same city of dispatch, but a charge I have not seen applied if it was the post office itself which resorted to employing the service to retain the mail item rather than returning the letter) – likely a necessity for addressees drafted into the army.

Are either of these indications that a registered mail item was fully handled as 'true' registered mail, for instance that some extra effort may have been made to deliver the mail item? And might this shed light on the research shown above?

A survey of relevant mail items shows that both standard and registered mail bear signs of attempted delivery, where the only difference is that unclaimed registered items in the Mandate era were rubber-stamped with a hand-dated instructional marking that a "duplicate" or "triplicate" notice (in addition to the first, original) had been issued to the addressee to come and collect his article:

Here is a 1934 regular letter from the Jerusalem Municipality to a local address: in faint ink on the back is the 'ladder' handstamp of the postman's walk indicating where and when he attempted to deliver the letter. In the end it was sent to the Returned Letter Office (RLO).
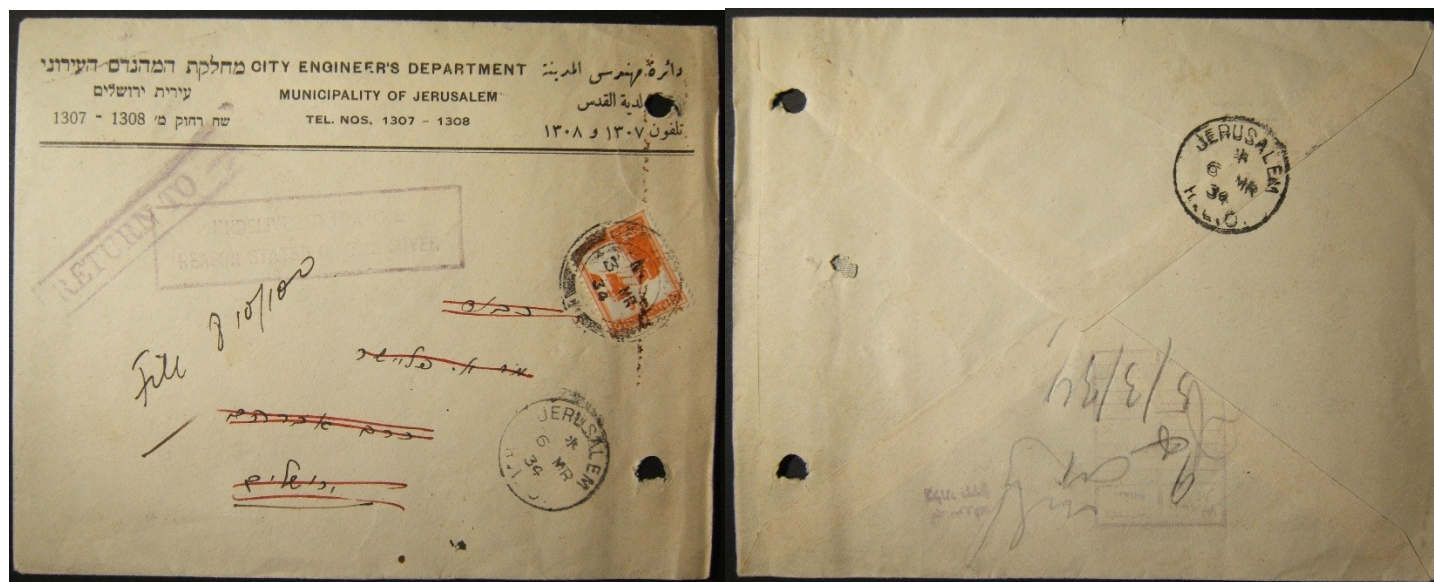
Here is an 11 Oct. 1940 postmarked local Jerusalem registered postcard: the addressee didn't come to claim it and was issued a 2nd "duplicate" notice on the 15th; having not come to collect the postcard he was subsequently issued a 3rd "triplicate" and final notice on 19th, whereupon it was sent back to the sender being marked "unclaimed" with a bilingual Arabic/Hebrew instructional marking.
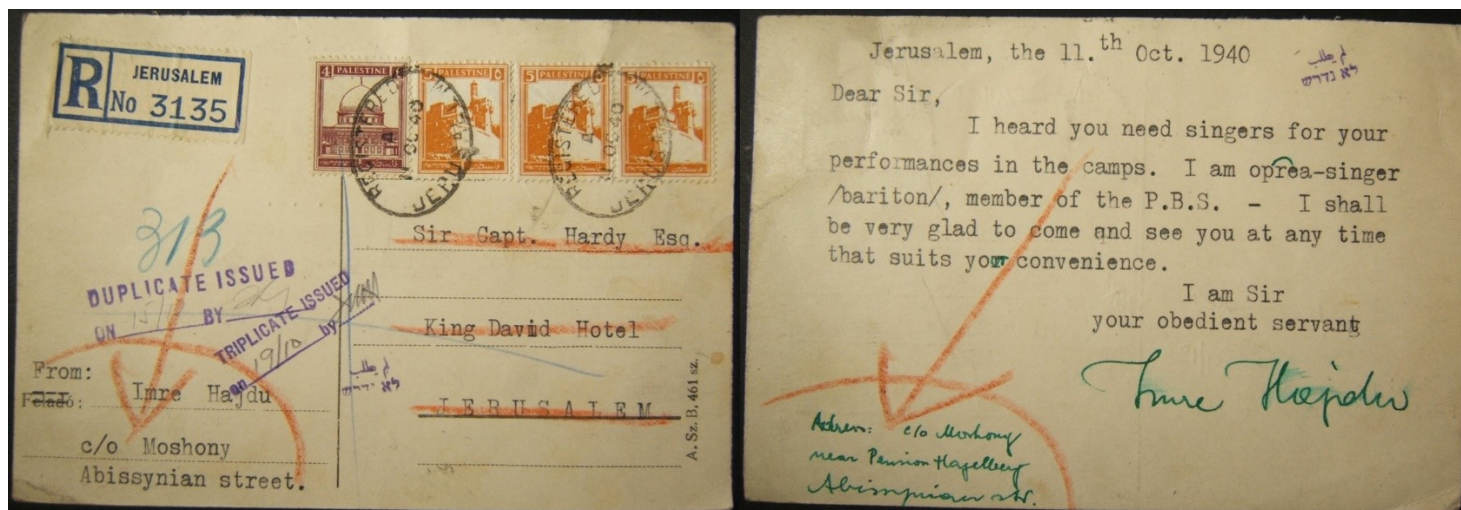
This is an interim period 9 May 1948 postmarked regular letter from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv (carried by convoy in June) whose address was amended in pencil by the postal clerk "at [family name]" to re-route it to some nearby address:

Below we have 2x examples of registered mail from Lebanon reaching Haifa during the last weeks of the Mandate: both were unclaimed but here for example we don't see markings that 2nd or 3rd notices were issued – just pencil notations to that effect jotted on the back.

The top example is postmarked 25 March 1948 (before Lebanon suspended postal service to Palestine on 6 April) and received at the Haifa registry division on 10 April; registered mail service for dispatch (in Palestine) ended on 21 April but on incoming mail it was accepted until 30 April inclusive: although the backflap is missing, we do see part of the standard rectangular instructional marking to indicate the reason for non-delivery; on the front is a crayon notation, "unclaimed"; and on the back a pencil date "2/6" to indicate an attempted delivery on 2 June.
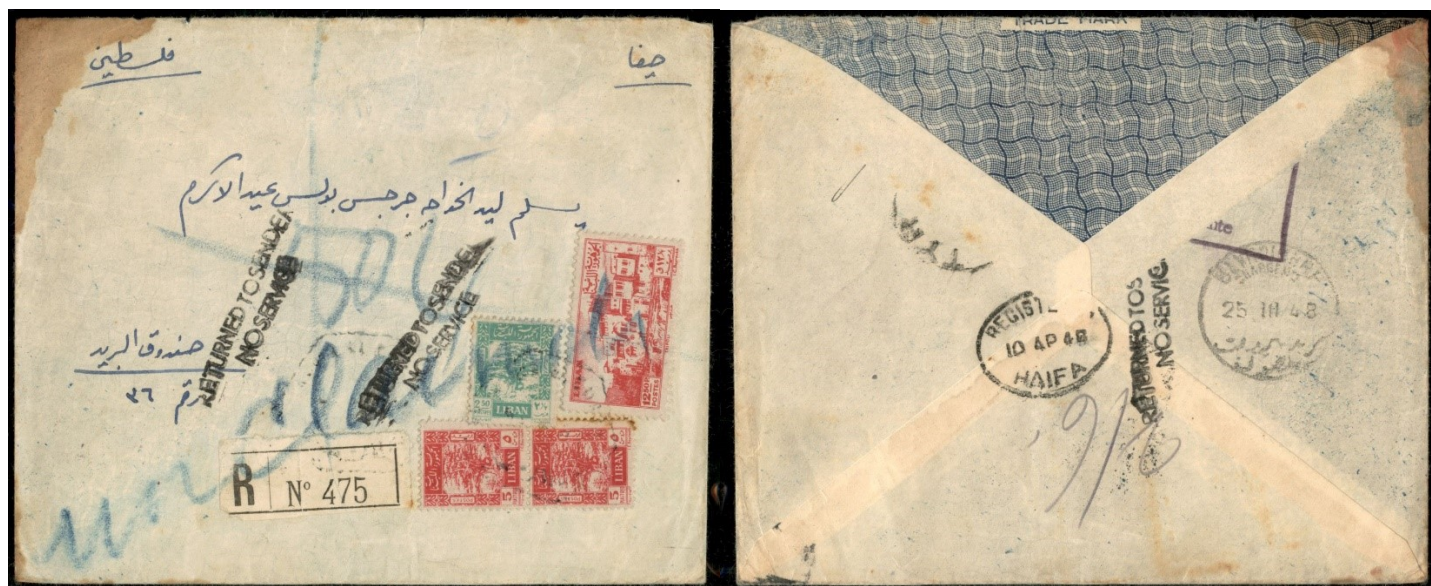
To illustrate that the approach to the postal markings above is not one-off, the accompanying example below posted in early April and received in Haifa on the 28th (registered mail service on incoming mail was still accepted until 30 April inclusive) is more clearly marked as above – "unclaimed" in crayon on the front, with the instructional marking on the back + 2x attempted delivery dates, on 13 May and 2 June. No handstamps for "duplicate" or "triplicate" notices being issued although we see clearly these two attempted deliveries by way of their date.

And from Tel Aviv we have two examples from late 1947 and early 1948 – each with a different approach to indicate the same outcome:

The first example is a 23 Nov. 1947 postmarked local Tel Aviv registered cover. Only a "duplicate" notice appears to have been issued, on the 30th (for claiming up to 5 Dec.), whereupon the cover was stamped on the front in Hebrew, "Unclaimed at Returned Letter Duty" and then returned to the sender with the additional endorsement in English "Unclaimed":
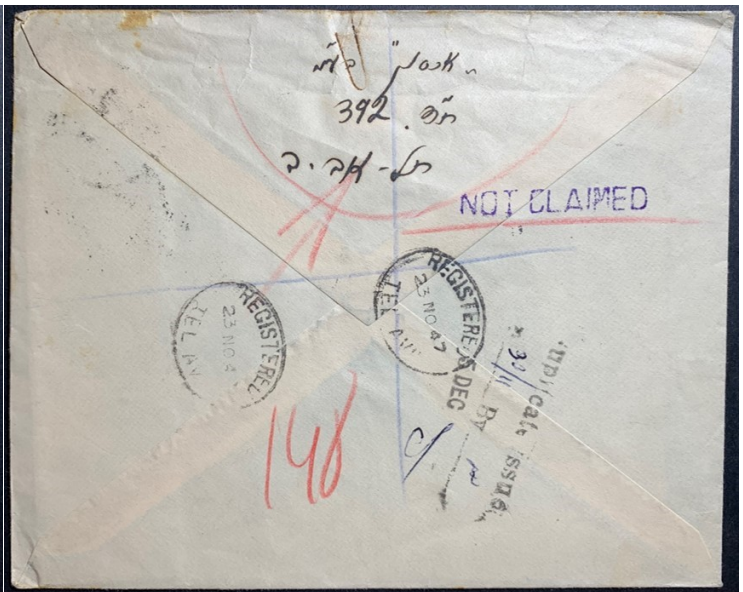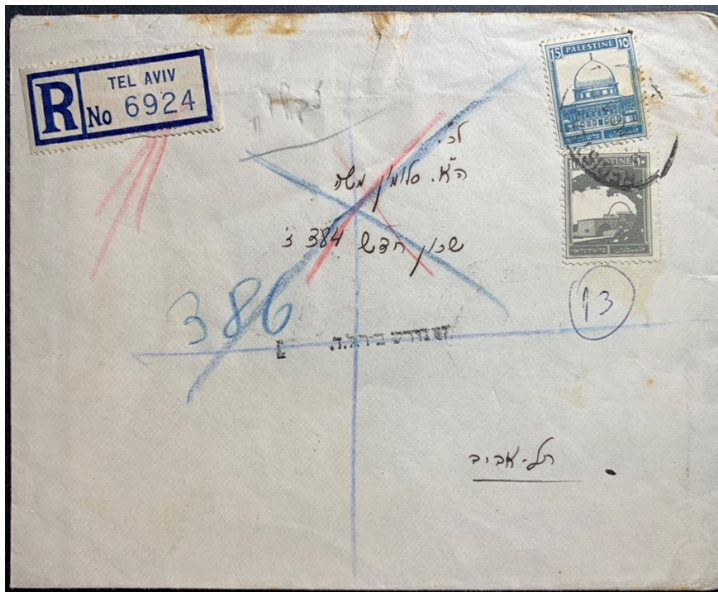
Another local Tel Aviv registered letter is shown below, postmarked on 15 Feb. 1948: with the address being near the hazardous border area with Jaffa at this time the deliveryman marked on the back "Danger Zone 16/2"; the cover apparently remained unclaimed as it was later marked as above "Unclaimed at Returned Letter Duty" (Hebrew handstamp on front). And then highlighted for return to the sender with the accompanying instructional handstamp to indicate the reason for non-delivery (not filled in) – but there are no markings of a "duplicate" or "triplicate" notice being issued:
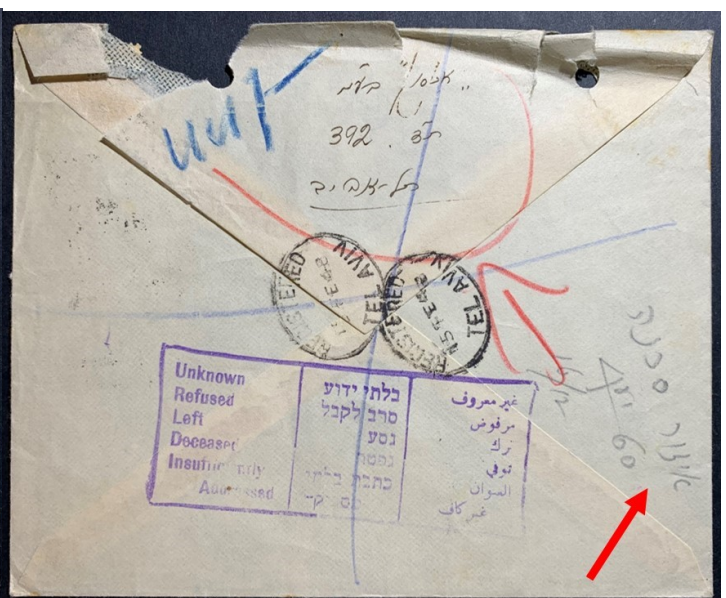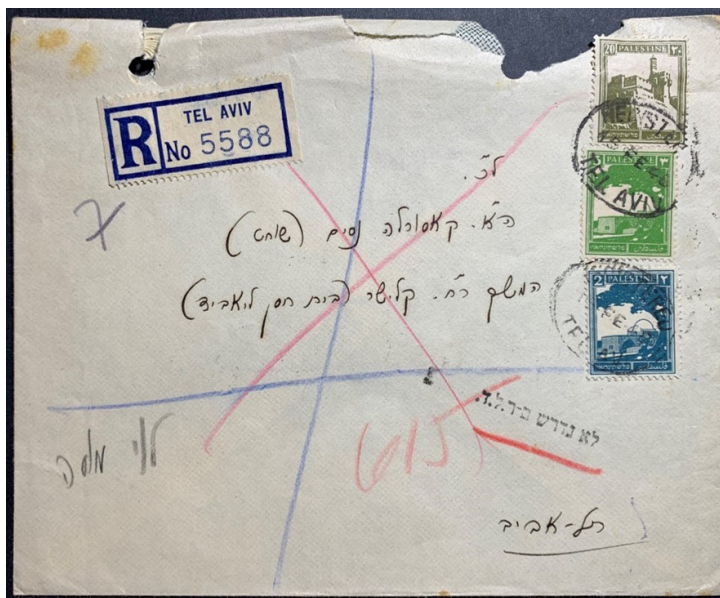
With the above examples in hand we can now better evaluate the only example of interim period registered mail that I've seen with the "duplicate" handstamp – likely posted on 5 May 1948 at the TEL AVIV-1 post office (Allenby Road branch office) as per the pencil manuscript date on the lower back, and addressed to a local post office box. It transited the registry division of the head post office still the same day, as per the oval postmark on the back – the HPO's last day under Mandate administration (i.e. not servicing registered mail as the Mandate service had terminated it on April 21st). A duplicate notice was issued on the 10th with the deadline for claiming being the 16th – but evidently the addressee did not come to claim the letter and it was marked "Unclaimed at Returned Letter Duty" (Hebrew handstamp on front) then highlighted for return to sender on the back with the additional "Unclaimed" English handstamp:

I haven't yet seen "duplicate"/"triplicate" handstamped interim mail from Jerusalem, where I have a working theory that registered mail there may have been available within the delivery zone of the dispatching post office. Nevertheless, from the examples we've seen above there is no clear-cut indication that registered mail had to be so handstamped, and we've also seen examples of regular mail replete with markings to show attempted delivery. So from this perspective we can't conclude that postal markings for "attempted delivery" prove any special service over and above what any regular piece of mail was entitled to; in our period of study it does not prove that a registered postal item was fully handled as registered mail.

On the matter of "poste restante" mail handling, the claiming of mail by an addressee at the post office where the mail is to be held for him, we see numerous examples of mail both standard and registered in this period where it is the post office itself imposing the service – either because the addressee is temporarily absent (i.e. drafted to the army) and it's more economical for the mail to be held for him rather than re-routed or returned, or the mail cannot be delivered due to extenuating circumstances such as the War making delivery to certain areas dangerous for the postmen. Such mail is manuscript marked (usually in pencil) "PR" in English and/or "פר" in Hebrew.

ha-Mashḳif - המשקיף, 2 March 1948

Here we have a documented instance of poste restante being 'activated' by the post office as a matter of policy:

in the period of this press report, March 1948, Jaffa was a mostly Arab locale intended to be part of the future Palestinian State to be established alongside the Jewish State; in this period there was much military tension along the border between the Arab city of Jaffa and the Jewish city of Tel Aviv.

This press report is a letter to the editor submitted by a postal official in the name of the Postmaster General, and it reads:

"In regards to the notice which appeared in your newspaper of 17 February 1948 under the title 'The Mailmen Have Stopped Distributing Mail in the Florentine Neighborhood', I wish to point out that an investigation which arose as a result of this report found that mail to the Florentine neighborhood is being distributed as usual by the mailmen, except for the area of Salameh Street on the border of Jaffo. **For residents in this area we enable them to receive their mail at "Poste Restante" at the Tel Aviv post office.** There is no basis to the notice that the mailmen have stopped delivering mail to the Florentine neighborhood by order of the Tel Aviv post office manager."

The most common cases I have seen of "PR" imposed mail are those of postage dues taxed covers – presumably because the addressee was not just unavailable to receive and pay for his mail, but also because the post office had a keen interest in getting paid owed money. Here is an example of ordinary mail from the interim period – no indications of attempted delivery (which as we saw above were not uniformly or consistently applied), but evidentally there had been an attempt/s to deliver the mail before it was held at the post office as 'poste restante' (pencil manuscript endorsement on front):

Here is another instance from the Israeli postal administration, also a postage dues taxed ordinary mail cover:

Here we have a 'poste restante' imposed registered cover from June 1948 during the Israeli postal administration, where as per the manuscript markings there were a number of attempts to deliver the mail (pencil manuscript on back that the premises was "closed" as per the dates cited) before it was held as poste restante – and then finally returned to the sender:

In conclusion, we see that both attempted delivery markings as well as imposed poste restante mail handling applied equally if inconsistently (in their markings) to both ordinary and registered mail, and that as such we cannot derive from these markings or postal handling any indication of registered mail service being fully provided as such in the period where our research found by other characteristics that registered mail service was not being fully provided (if at all).

ADDRESSING FAKES & FORGERIES

We were inevitably going to reach this subject, although I hadn't seen such material at the original time of writing. Here below is a recently observed 15 May cover 'from' Ahuzat Samuel: what we have is a cover prepared on business postal stationary of the Shemen Oil company (imprint return-addressed Haifa).

It is correctly franked 10 mils - here using a <u>Haifa overprinted</u> interim stamp, which is something I frequently see on philatelic covers but this isn't grounds to dismiss the authenticity of this cover; and it is postmarked from the Mount Carmel post office – we know that based on the study in the article of the strike-imprints, where the hallmark for this post office is the slight waviness along the outer ring, seen below just below the bottom of the frank.

Until now, no problem – except: why is there an Ahuzat Samuel 'transit' postmark in the field, and especially so if the address is Arlozorov Street in the Hadar HaCarmel neighborhood? In other words, the letter was posted at Mount Carmel and then travelled further away from the intended address rather than towards it. The locations are virtually a single linear path with this cover going "the wrong way" as it were.

As we learned in the article Ahuzat Samuel was not a delivery office at this time and depended on Mount Carmel for delivery service, so even the notion of Ahuzat Samuel as a transit office is not realistic.

This is a more technical-scientific matter but the Ahuzat Samuel postmark strike itself is somewhat unclear/not crisp and had brown foxing specifically around itself (not visible on the interim postmark strike). This may be an artificial application of a strike from some other source. Compare it to the strike from the first cover in our study, addressed to Ludwig Rehr:

The ink of the strike on the Rehr letter appears to be absorbed into the paper and the strike is sharp; on the examined cover above the ink seems 'applied' to the paper but not stamped and absorbed into it, and it exhibits a grainy blurry appearance. This isn't a new phenomenon and I myself have seen similar cases on interim mail using the Ramatayim Mandate postmark; Shapira forgeries exhibit similar characteristics. Overall this is visually a similar concept to the forgery of numismatics using 'casting' versus 'striking'…

Likely what we have here is an originally genuinely prepared and posted cover which was subsequently used to add a fake postmark to it. Essentially a genuine cover but forged owing to the spurious (and not genuinely applied) Ahuzat Samuel postmark.

DEPARTMENT OF POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS

PUBLIC NOTICE NO.53 OF 1948.

Termination of the Mandate.

Suspension of Post Office Services

In the absence of any communication from the United Nations Commission for Palestine providing for acceptance of responsibility for the continuance of Post Office services the Postmaster General hereby announces that, in addition to the suspension of services already notified it is now necessary to suspend the following public services with effect from the close of public business on the dates shewn below :-

A. **INLAND SERVICES**

PUBLIC COUNTERS

Rural Postal Agencies.	15th April.
Rural Post Offices except Lydda Airport.	30th April.
Branch Post Offices and Town Postal Agencies in the Urban areas of Haifa, Jaffa, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.	30th April.
Head Post Offices (Haifa, Jaffa Jerusalem and Tel Aviv).	5th May.
Lydda Airport Post Office.	5th May.

NOTE:- Although public counters in the offices listed above will close for general business on the dates stated, it is hoped to keep certain of them open for acceptance of telegrams and air mail correspondence.

INLAND MAILS

(Posted in Palestine for delivery in Palestine)

(i) Parcels.

Final date for posting.	15th April.
Final date for delivery.	30th April.

(ii) Letters.

Final date for posting.)	To as late a date
Final date for delivery.)	as possible.

(iii) Printed Papers.

Final date for posting.	25th April.
Final date for delivery.	30th April.

(iv) Registered Letters.

Final date for posting.	20th April.
Final date for delivery.	30th April.

2/

OTHER INLAND SERVICES

Telephone Trunk Calls (Inland).

Final date for acceptance (provided
physically possible).   15th May.

DISPOSAL OF UNDELIVERED POSTAL ARTICLES ON HAND BY RETURNING TO SENDER

Final date.   5th May.
If possible articles coming to hand later
than 5th May will be dealt with in same
way.

POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK

Final date for acceptance of deposits.   14th April.

Withdrawal on demand.   To continue as long as
                                         practicable, provided
                                         Post Office is open.

Applications for ordinary withdrawals.
Latest date for acceptance.   15th April.

PALESTINE POSTAL ORDERS

Final dates for issue and payment.   Same as final dates for
                                         public counters.

INLAND MONEY ORDERS

(Issued and paid in Palestine)

Final date for issue and payment.   Same as final dates for
                                         public counters.

B. INTERNATIONAL SERVICES
    ===========================

SURFACE MAILS

(i)   Parcels (Posted).

       Final date for posting :-

       (a) Head Post Offices (and
            Parcel Offices).   30th April.

       (b) All other offices and
            Agencies.   15th April.

(ii)   Parcels (Delivery).

       Final date for delivery :-

       (a) Head Post Offices.   30th April.

       (b) All other offices.   15th April.

(iii) Letters, Printed Papers by surface route (Posted).

       Latest date for posting :-

       (a) Head Post Offices.   30th April.

       (b) All other Post Offices.   15th April.

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(iv) <u>Letters, Printed Papers by surface route.</u>

     Latest date for delivery.   30th April.

<div align="center">REGISTERED LETTERS</div>

   Latest date for posting.   20th April.

   Latest date for delivery.   30th April.

<div align="center">AIR MAILS (Posted)</div>

  Latest date for posting :-

     Head Offices.   10th May.

     Lydda Airport Post Office.   10th May.

     All other offices.   5th May.

<div align="center">AIR MAILS (Delivered)</div>

  Latest date for delivery :-

     Head Offices.   ) To as late a
     Lydda Airport,   ) date as
     All other offices.   ) possible.

<div align="center">OTHER INTERNATIONAL SERVICES</div>

(i)   International Telephone Trunk Calls :-

     Latest date for outgoing calls.   5th May.

     Latest date for incoming calls.   As late a date as possible.

(ii) <u>Radio-telegraph to and from Ships at sea.</u>

     Latest date.   15th May.

(iii) <u>Reception of wireless press emissions.</u>

     Latest date.   15th May.

(iv) <u>International telegrams incoming and outgoing.</u>

     DLT, NLT, GLT, EFM, reduced
       rate categories.   25th April.

     Other classes.   As late a date as possible.

2.   It is emphasized that the dates quoted above are entirely contingent on several factors; e.g. freedom from local disturbances, which interfere with the movement of transport, passage of mails and the collection and delivery arrangements; ability of staff readily to proceed from their homes to their places of duty and to continue to carry out their duties at the appointed places.

3.   All of the above services are being continued to the very latest practicable date and any disturbing factor may cause the service to have to be discontinued at a date earlier than that shewn. It is stressed that in many cases the final dates are later than is desirable, but in order not to deprive the public of postal services earlier than is absolutely necessary it has been decided to continue to the dates shewn. With effect from 15th April, however, all telegrams, and postal articles will be accepted at the sender's risk only.

GENERAL POST OFFICE
   JERUSALEM.
13th April, 1948.
MH   DHM/FB/JS

הסוכנות היהודית לארץ ישראל
הועד הלאומי לכנסת ישראל.
מחלקת הדאר הטלגרף והטלפון.

חוזר מס' 1

מחלקת הדאר, הטלפון והטלגרף של ממשלת המנדט עומדת לבני
סגירה וחיסול ביסים הקרובים. פרסים על כך פורסמו ב"הודעה לקהל"
מס' 53 מיום 13.4.1948 ולפיה צריכים להסגר מסרדי הדאר לקהל
במוסבות אחרי גמר העבודה ביום 30.4.1948, ומשרדי הדאר הקאשיים
בירושלים, חיפה ותל אביב אחרי גמר העבודה ביום 5.5.48. באותה
הודעה נתנים גם תאריכים אחרים לחסול הדרגתי של כל הסרותים
עד תאריך סיום המנדט ביום 15.5.1948.

2. לאחר סיום המנדט ב-16.5.1948 יופעל הדאר העברי במלואו,
אולם אין לחשביח את הסרותים גם לתקופת המעבר שבין ה-1 וה-15
במאי ס.ז. וכל שרות הנפסק על ידי מחלקת הדאר הנוכחית שאפסר
להפעילו סיד על ידי הדאר העברי, יש לעשות זאת.

3. ההוראות דלקמן נתנות לתקופת המעבר שבין ה-1 וה-15
במאי ס.ז.

4. כל פקידי ועובדי המחלקות נשארים בתפקידם.

5. מסרדי הדאר יהיו פתוחים לקהל בסעות הנהוגות עתה.

6. סדות העבודה של העובדים וסדורי העבודה בכל המסדרים נשארים
ללא סנוי.

7. עד הוראות חדשות יקוימו שרותי הדאר העברי כדלקמן:-

א. דאר רגיל בארץ ולהוץ לארץ.
ב. דאר רשום בארץ.
ג. חבילות בארץ.
ד. מברקים בארץ ולחוץ לארץ.
ה. שרותי טלפון לפי הקוים והאמצרויות שיהיו.

8. אין סנוי בתעריפים.

9. אוסן מסלוח הדאר בין המסדרים במוסבות ומסרדי הדאר הראשיים
נשארים ללא סנוי.

10. הסומפים והקבלות הנוכחיים יסארו בינתיים בסמוש, אולם יש
לסלאותם בספה העברית.

11. בולי הקרן הקימת או כופר הישוב וחותמות זמניות של מנהלת העם
יסומקו למסדרים ויש להכניסם בסמוש כדלקמן:-

מסרדי הדאר במוסבות – ובכסרים – 1.5.48 עד 15.5.48.
מסרדי הדאר בערים – 6.5.48 עד 15.5.48.

12. המכתבים וכו' סעליהם הודבקו הבולים העבדיים צריכים להחתם
בחותמת הזמנית כמסרד המסלוח, להסלח לתעודתם ולהמסר לבעלי הכתובות.

13. אין להחתים בחותמת הזמנית מכתבים לחוץ לארץ הנוסאים בולים של
מחלקת הדאר הנוכחית. מכתבים כאלח צריכים להסלח למסרד הדאר הראס'
בתל אביב או חיפה בלתי חתומים.

14. לחחזר זה מצורפות רסימות כדלקמן:-

א. פרסים ביחם למסלוח מכתבים והסמול בהם.
ב. פרסים ביחס לקבלת מברקים והסמול בהם.
ג. פרסים ביחס לסדור חשבונות.

15. כל פקידי ועובדי מחלקת הדאר נתבעים לסתוף פעולה מלא בכדי
לקיים במלוא היעילות את שרותי הדאר שהנם חיוניים לישובנו.

תל אביב   ס"ז' ניסן תש"ח
               25 באפריל 1948.

מחלקת הדאר הטלגרף והטלפון.

אס/חת.

א. ליטווין

מ. גרנובסקי.

הסוכנות היהודית לארץ ישראל

הועד הלאומי לכנסת ישראל.

מחלקת הדאר הטלגרף והטלפון.

פרטים ביחס למשלוח מכתבים וטפרלם

(מצורף לחוזר מס' 1 מיום 25.4.1948)

א. מכתבים הנשלחים בכל משרדי הדאר מלבד ירושלים,תל אביב וחיפה בין ה-1וה-5 במאי ש.ז., יש להדביק עליהם בולים כדלקמן:-

1. מכתבים לכנים הארץ – בולים עברים בתעריף הנוכחי

2. מכתבים לחוץ לארץ – בולים של מחלקת הדאר הנוכחית.

ב. המכתבים בפנים הארץ יש להחתים בחותמת הזמנית, לסלוח למקום היעוד כפי הנהוג עתה.
המכתבים לחוץ לארץ יש לשלוח בלתי חתומים לטשרד הדאר הראשי בתל אביב.

ג. מכתבים רשומים בפנים הארץ יתקבלו וישלחו בשטה הקימת עתה. כלומר אותם ספרי תעודות המשלוח, המספרים ועוד.. את כל הסוכסים למלא בעברית, להחתים בחותמת "מנהלת העם" ולהוסיף מתחת לחותמת את התאריך. מכתבים רשומים לחוץ לארץ לא יתקבלו לפי סעה.

ד. תיבות המכתבים בערים במדעבות ובכפרים נשארות פתוחות לקהל ויש להריקן בשעות הנהוגות עתה. מכתבים שימצאו בתיבות המכתבים עם בולי הדאר הנוכחי יש לסלחם לתעודתם בלי תשלומי קנס אם שולם עבורם תעריף מלא. מכתבים כאלה המיועדים לפנים הארץ יש להחתימם בחותמת הזמנית.

ה. חבילות בפנים הארץ יתקבלו וישלחו לתעודתן לפי השטה הקימת וכצורף הטופסים הקימים. על תעודות המשלוח יש להדביק בולים עבריים לפי התעריף הנוכחי ויש להחתימן בחותמת הזמנית.

ו. משרדי הדאר ישלחו ויקבלו דאר בהתאם לרסימה המצורפת.

ז. מטרון מכתבים. מכתבים וחבילות ימסרו לתעודתם בהתאם לשטה הקימת כלומר מכתבים יהולקו על ידי דורים ותיבות הדאר, חבילות במטרדי הדאר לפי הנוהג הנוכחי ז.א. חתימה על תעודת המשלוח.

ח. מכתבים שלא שולם בעדם דמי דאר לפי התעריף ימסרו כנגד תשלומי קנס לפי השטה הקימת. על מכתבים כאלה יש לרטום באדום "לשלם.......מיל". לפני מטירתם לנוטאי המכתבים. הקנס המגיע יגבה על ידי הדבקת בולים עבריים רגילים בסכום הדרוש. את הבולים יש להחתים בחותמת הזמנית.

ט. הוראות נוטנות תנתנה ביחס למטלוח מכתבים לחוץ לארץ אחרי ה-5 במאי.

הערה:- המונה מכתבים כולל מכתבים,גלויות, דברי דפוס וכו' הנשלחים בדאר המכתבים (Letter Post) המונח חבילות מכרון רק לחבילות דאר הנשלחים בדאר חבילות (Parcel Post).

HASOKHNUT HAY'HUDIT L'ERETS YISRA'EL
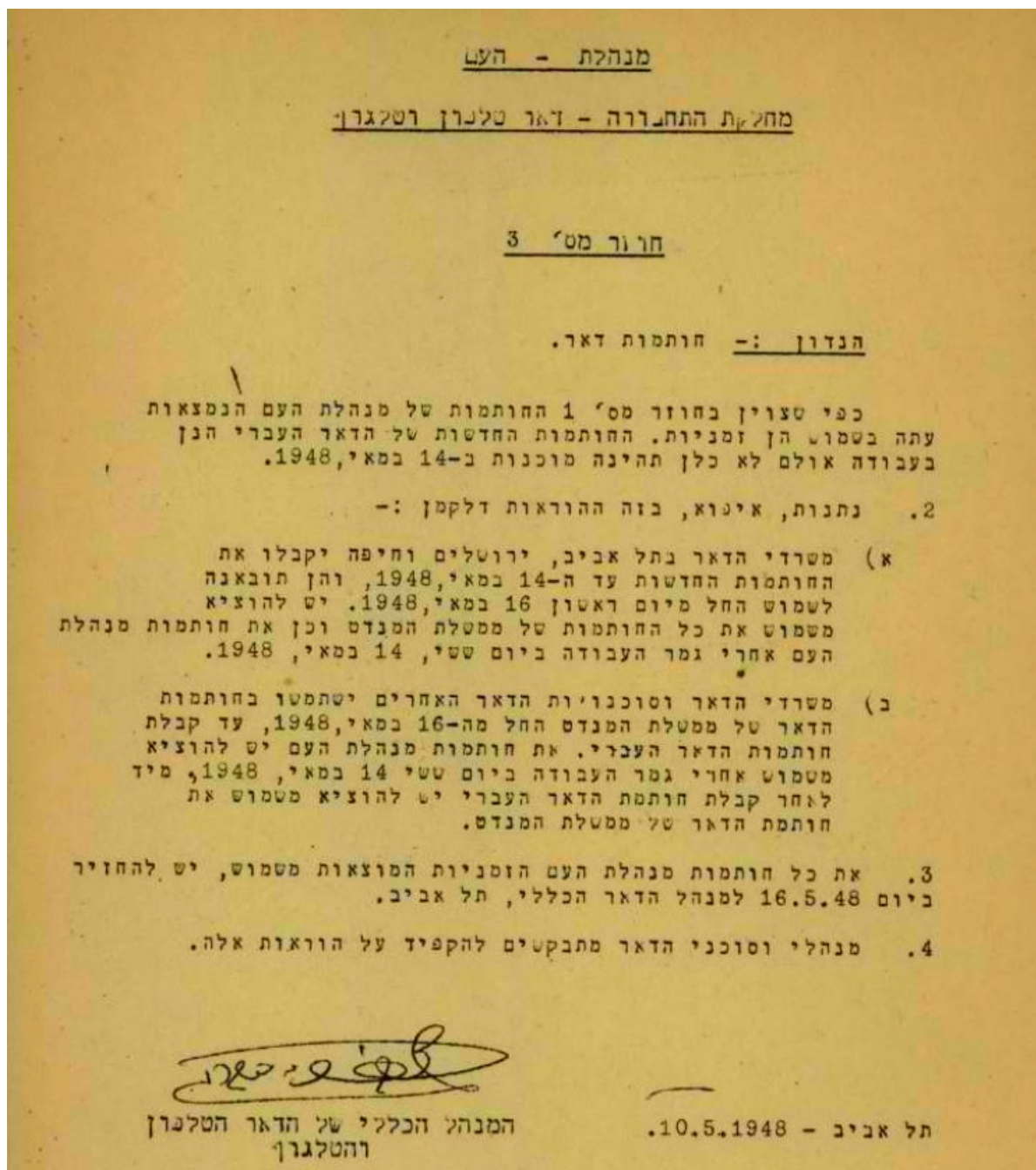#### (The Jewish Agency for Palestine)

HAVA'AD HAL'UMI LIKENESET YISRA'EL
(The National Council for the Community of Israel)

DEPARTMENT OF POSTS, TELEGRAPHS, AND TELEPHONES
REGULATIONS FOR DESPATCH OF LETTERS AND THEIR HANDLING
(Annex to Circular No. 1 of 25. 4. 1948)

A. Mail dispatched from all Post offices, except Jerusalem, Tel-Aviv and Haifa, in the period from 1st to 5th May 1948, should be franked as follows:

   1. Inland Mail — Hebrew stamps at present rates.

   2. Foreign mail - stamps of the present Dept. of Posts.

B.   The Inland Mail is to be cancelled by the provisional hand stamps and dispatched to destination

   as per present usage. The Foreign Mail should be dispatched uncancelled to the H. P. O. Tel-Aviv.

C. Registered Inland Mail will be accepted and dispatched in the manner as presently used, that is the same Dispatch Notes, Numbers etc. All the forms should be filled out in Hebrew, stamped by the "MINHELET HAAM" hand stamp, adding below the date. For the moment Registered Foreign Mail will not be accepted.

D. The Mailboxes in towns, settlements and villages will remain open for the public, and they should be emptied at the usual hours. Letters found in boxes franked by Mandatory stamps are to be forwarded to destination without tax, as if they were fully franked.   So   franked   inland letters should be cancelled by the provisional hand stamp.

E. Inland parcels will be accepted and forwarded in the present manner and accompanied by present forms. On Dispatch Cards Hebrew stamps should be affixed as per present tariff and they should be can celled by the provisional hand stamp.

F. Post Offices will dispatch and accept mail as per attached List.

G. DELIVERY OF MAIL. Letters and parcels will be delivered to address sees in the present manner, i. e. letters will be delivered by postmen and via postboxes, parcels via post offices as now practiced, i. e. against signatures on Dispatch Cards.

H. Letters on which postage was not paid as per tariff will be delivered against payment of tax as per present regulations. Such letters should be marked in red "TO PAY…. MIL" before they are handed over to postmen. The due tax will be collected by the affixing of Hebrew stamps for the necessary amount. The stamps should be cancelled by the provisional hand stamp.

I. Additional instructions will be given after 5th of May for the dispatch of letters to foreign countries.

REMARK: The term "letters" includes letters, postcards, printed matter etc., dispatched by Letter Post, the term "parcels" applies to parcels only, dispatched by Parcel Post

מנהלת - העם

מחלקת התחבורה - דאר טלפון וטלגרן

חוזר מס׳ 3

הנדון -: חותמות דאר.

כפי שצוין בחוזר מס׳ 1 החותמות של מנהלת העם הנמצאות
עתה בשמוש הן זמניות. החותמות החדשות של הדאר העברי הנן
בעבודה אולם לא כלן תהיינה מוכנות ב-14 במאי,1948.

2. נתנות, איגוא, בזה ההוראות דלקמן -:

א) משרדי הדאר בתל אביב, ירושלים וחיפה יקבלו את
החותמות החדשות עד ה-14 במאי,1948, והן תובאנה
לשמוש החל מיום ראשון 16 במאי,1948. יש להוציא
משמוש את כל החותמות של ממשלת המנדט וכן את חותמות מנהלת
העם אחרי גמר העבודה ביום שי, 14 במאי, 1948.

ב) משרדי הדאר וסוכנויות הדאר האחרים ישתמשו בחותמות
הדאר של ממשלת המנדט החל מה-16 במאי,1948, עד קבלת
חותמות הדאר העברי. את חותמות מנהלת העם יש להוציא
משמוש אחרי גמר העבודה ביום שי 14 במאי, 1948, מיד
לאחר קבלת חותמת הדאר העברי יש להוציא משמוש את
חותמת הדאר של ממשלת המנדט.

3. את כל חותמות מנהלת העם הזמניות המוצאות משמוש, יש להחזיר
ביום 16.5.48 למנהל הדאר הכללי, תל אביב.

4. מנהלי וסוכני הדאר מתבקשים להקפיד על הוראות אלה.

המנהל הכללי של הדאר הטלפון   תל אביב - 10.5.1948.
והטלגרף

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[189] Page 12 of this file https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/2461993; translation displayed in Aloni, ibid, p.60

MINHELET HA'AM
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT -
POST, TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH
CIRCULAR No. 3

Subject: POSTAL HANDSTAMPS.

1. As stated in Circular No. 1, the handstarnps of the Minhelet Ha'am, now in use, are provisional. The new handstamps of Doar Ivri are in production but not all will be ready by 14th May, 1948,

2. For the above reasons, the following instructions are given:-

   a) The post offices of Tel-Aviv, Jerusalem and Haifa will receive the new handstamps by 14th May 1948 and they will be put into use as of Sunday 16 May 1948. All handstamps of the Mandate and also the Minhelet-Ha'am handstamps must be withdrawn upon termination of work on Friday, 14th May, 1948.

   b) Other post offices and postal agencies will use the handstamps of the Mandate Government as of 16th May 1948 until they obtain the Doar-Ivri handstamps. The Minhelet-Ha'am handstamps must be withdrawn upon termination of work on Friday 14th May 1948. Immediately upon receipt of the Doar-Ivri handstamp, the handstamp of the Mandate Government must be withdrawn.

3. All provisional handstamps of the Minhelet Ha'am, withdrawn from use. are to be returned to the Director General of Post, Tel-Aviv, on 16.5.48.

4. Postmasters and postal agents are requested to follow these instructions strictly.

Tel-Aviv, 10, 5. 1948.

Signed: Zvi Friedberg
Director General of Post, Telephone and Telegraph

ה ע ר ו ת

המבנה המוצע של הנהלת הדואר במדינה העברית שנה מהמבנה הנוכחי
בנקודות הבאות:

א. המשרות כדלקמן מתבטלות:-

1. משנה למנהל הדואר הכללי – אין לו תפקיד פירוד והמשרה אינה
הכרחית.

2. סגן מנהל הדואר הכללי לעניני פקידות – אין צורך בשני
פקידים גבוהים לעיצוב בשאלת הפקידות. המשרות הנוכחיות
נוצרו לפני זמן קצר.

3. *Telephone supt* – אין צורך בשני עוזרים מחפקידות
הגבוהה.

4. שני סגנים למנהל המחבורות הראשי – המשרות אינן דרושות.
מנהל מחבורות ראשי וסגן מספיקים.

5. *Public Relation officer* – המשרה אינה דרושה. נוצרה לפני
כשנה.

ב. במקום   בא מזכיר כללי. זהו בעצם תפקידו
של ה-

ג. סגן מזכיר הכללי יטפל בבעיות הפקידות.

ד. במקום שלשה מנהלי מחוז יבואו שני מנהלי מחוז. הם יהיו אחראיים
על פעולות בתי הדואר במושבות, האחד מגבול סוריה עד נתניה
מאחרי נתניה עד הגבול המצרי. כשהישובים בנגב ירבו, יהיה צורך
לחלק את המחוז השני.

ה. מנהלי הדואר הראשי של תל-אביב וחיפה יהיו כפופים ישר לסגן
מנהל הדואר הכללי (לעניני דואר) ולא למנהלי המחוזות כבמבנה
הנוכחי. הנסיון הוכיח שאת הבעיות המתעוררות בתל-אביב וחיפה
יש להעביר בין כה וכה להנהלה הראשית, ומנהל המחוז מטמט רק
בבור. התוצאה היא שמנהלי המחוזות פקידיהם חלק גדול מזמנם
מזמן פקידיהם על דברים שלמעשה מחוץ לטפולם. רק מאחרים את
פתרון הבעיה. אגב מטובנע מבטיטובי בתור מנהל הדואר הכללי
בטובבות האיטלקיות בזמן. המלחמה שהשיטה הטובה ביותר במבנה לא
גדול כמדינה העברית שמנהלי הדואר הראשי יהיו קשורים ישר עם
ההנהלה הראשית.

ו. בישלבי המוצע הובא בחשבון מצום העבודה כתוצאה מהעברת השטח
הערבי וירושלים. הישלבי התאם לפקידות היהודית הגבוהה הקיימת
עתה. במרוצת הזמן יהיה צורך להגדיל את המבנה ולחלק יותר את
העבודה, אבל המבנה המוצע יהיה בר בצוע בחדשים הראשונים של
קיום המדינה.

8271   5. 5. 1948

הצעה לשרות דאר בירושלים

כבסיס לחשבון כמות העבודה בקשר עם קבלת דאר, משלח דאר וחלוקתו
בירושלים הוא מספר המכתבים הנכנסים ויוצאים ביום בזמנים נורמליים.

נכנס: כ-40 שקים ביום מארץ ישראל.
כ-8 שקים " דאר אויר מחוץ לארץ.
כ-70 שקים " מכתבים ודברי דפוס דאר רגיל מחוץ לארץ.

יוצא: כ-15 שקים ביום לארץ ישראל מכתבים
כ-15 שקים ביום לארץ ישראל דברי דפוס ועתונים
כ-2 שקים ביום דאר אויר לחוץ לארץ.

כל שק מכיל כ-3000 מכתבים; כ-20% מהדאר שייך לאוכלוסיה הערבית.

הכרחי להקים שרות שרות פנימי ז.א. חלוקת מכתבים הנכנסים ומשלח מכתבים
בלבד (לא דברי דפוס) מירושלים ליתר המקומות בארץ ישראל. כן יש לקחת בחשבון
קבלת משלח מכתבים רשומים היות חברה משרדים אצל כגון: עויד וכו' מסתפסים
מתוך חברת בשרות זה. האחריות על כל מכתב רשום הוא 2,500 לא"י.

כל שרות דאר בירושלים רק כדאי, אם הרי נשם המשלה לתל-אביב, ומשם הלא
לכל המקומות בארץ ו-בתאריך יותר מאוחר - לחוץ לארץ.

הארגון: יש לפתח משרד דאר מרכזי, שבו מתקבלהדאר מחוץ לירושלים
למיון ולחלוקה ובו מכינים את משלח הדאר מ"ד"שלים לחוץ לעיר. באותו
משרד אשלם תשב גם הפקידות הקטנה הדרושה להנהלת חדואר המקומי. כן ימכרו
באותו המשרד בולים ויתקבלו מכתבים רשומים. ההצעה היא לשכר לצורך זה
את קפה אירופה ברחוב מלך ג'ורג' או בנין דומה לזה במרכז הספח היהודי.

נוסף לזה יש לפתח את 3 סניפי הדאר הקיימים ברחביה, מזה
סערים ומחנה יהודה, אף הם לשם מכירת בולים וקבלת מכתבים רשומים. לא
חיינו מציעים למכור בולים גם במספר גדול של סוכניות בעיר, כדי לא
להקשות על הנהלת הענינים הכספיים.

כל המשרדים יהיו פתוחים 8 שעות ביום. נהג עם כ"צנית יאסוף את
המכתבים מהסניטים ומתבות הדאר פעמיים ביום ויביא אותם למשרד המרכזי.

בולים: יש כמה פתרונות לשאלה הזאת:-
1. המדינה היהודית תדפיס בולים ואנחנו מסתפסים באותם
הבולים, אולי עם הדפסה נוספת מיוחדת.
2. שמוש של בולי קק"ל באופן עראי, גם כן עם הדפקה מיוחדת.
3. הדפסת בולים מיוחדים בשביל ירושלים. אין ספק שבולים
אלה היו יכולים להיות מקור לה כנסה, היות ומילטליסטים
בכל העולם היו מעונינים ביותר בהשגת בולים אלה.

מחיר משלח. מחיר המשלה צריך לתית נמוך ואסור סיעלת בהרבת על
מחיר הקיים של 10 מיל, בתנאי שמכתבים נשלחים בהדכלה בדרכים.
יש לק בע תוספת למכתבים נשלחים דרך האויר.

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[191] As reproduced in JSPS, ibid, p.299-300; appears to be addressed to Zeev Sherf, the secretary of the Emergency Committee (Vaadat HaMatzav) based on the last 6 questions, as I've seen that snippet in the State Archives addressed specifically to Sherf.

		המנגנון:
130.- לא"י לחד?		המשרד המרכזי: מנהל ו-2 עוזרים (מפקחים)
80.- " "		מנהל חשבונות ועוזרו
250.- " "		6 פקידים להכנת משלח מכתבים
84.- " "		2 פקידים למכירת בולים
60.- " "		2 סבלים
84.- " "		2 פקידים לקבלת מכתבים רשומים
875.- " "		25 דוורים
130.- " "		3 פקידים לשלת הסניפים
1693.- " "		

יש להוסיף להוצאות השותפות עוד החזקת מכונית שבה אוספים את
המכתבים מתבות הדואר, וכן הוצאות שכר דירה למשרד המרכזי והסניפים.

אין עדיין XXX ידוע איזה אינבנטר יהיה נחוץ לקנות ולבנות.
נעשים מאמצים לשמור על הרהוט שישנו בסניפים וגם עוד להעביר אי-אלה
דברים מהמחסנים המרכזיים לסניפים.

לשם ברור המצב שלחנו מכתב לתל-אביב עם שאלות כדלקמן:

1. מה הם הסידורים להעברת דואר XXXXXXXXXXXX מירושלים לתל-אבי
ומשם הלאה לשטח המדינה ולחוץ לארץ ?

2. מה הם הסידורים להעברת דואר מן הארץ ומחוץ לארץ לירושלים?

3. האם מדפיסים במדינה בולים, שאפשר יהיה להשתמש בהם גם
בירושלים (אולי עם הדפסה נוספת מיוחדת), או עלינו לדאוג
להדפסת בולים? מה המחיר למשלוח מכתבים בארץ ?

4. האם נקבעו סידורים ביחס למכתבים רשומים?

5. האם יוקם קשר טלגרף לשימוש הצבור בין ירושלים והמדינה בקרוב.

6. מה עמדתה של שירות דואר מקומי בירושלים בתוך רשת הדואר
במדינה. נא להמציא לנו בקשר עם שאלה זו את החומר שהוכן
לשם הקמת רשת הדואר.

ח' אייר תש"ח
14.5.48

לכבוד
ה' צבי תרידברג
מנהל הדאר הכללי
ת ל - א ב י ב .

א.נ.

בזה העתקים מקורספונדנציה אשר התנהלה על-ידינו
בקשר להפעלת הדאר העברי בירושלים. אנו מניחים כי יהיה ענין
לשמור חומר זה בארכיב של מרכז הדאר בתל-אביב.

העדר חסדר מצדכם ביחס לקבלת הדאר מירושלים האוירונים,
כפי שהובטח בהוראותיכם מה-5.6.48, מובל במפעל הזה באותן ניכר.
הקהל אשר קהל בהתלהבוו את בשורה חידוש הקשרים עם שאר חלקי הארץ
יתאכזב מדה כאשר יודע לו דבר כמולוננו זה. מובן מאליו כי אנו
נטתירים את העובדה שעד חיום לא נלקח אף שק דאר אחד מירושלים.
אולם ברור שדבר כזה אי-אחשר להסתיר הרבה זמן. ומח גם מהדאר
המובטח על ידכם מת"א גם הוא אינו בא.

אנו מבקשים מכם לעשות את כל חסידלויים אצל הרשויות
האוראיות בעד שירוון האוירונים כדי להתחיל בהעברת חדושל. אנא
הודיעונו מיד מה הסיכויים, ואילו יוטים נקבעו עבור קבלת ומסירת
המכתבים.

בכבוד רב

ח. אבן-טוב
מזכירות מנחלת העם בירושלים

[192] As reproduced in JSPS, ibid, p.301 – sent by Hanna Even-Tov, archivist and secretary of the Minhelet Haam in Jerusalem, to Postmaster General Zvi Prihar in Tel Aviv

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