

## A Synopsis - The League of Nations Refugee Organization

The document is a form with two columns of text. The left column contains personal information in French and Dutch. The right column contains a signature, a photograph, and official text in French and Dutch. A postage stamp is affixed to the left side, and several official seals are present.

**Left Column (French/Dutch):**

- Nom et prénoms du père: *Grin Jaa Isaac*
- Familienaam en voornamen van den vader: *Jilberstein Isaac Iska*
- Nom et prénoms de la mère: *Iska Iska*
- Familienaam en voornamen van de moeder: *Berchem*
- Résidence actuelle en Belgique: *Berchem*
- Huidige verblijfplaats in België: *Berchem*
- Profession: *Rekenplichtige*
- Beroep: *Rekenplichtige*
- SIGNALEMENT - PERSOONSCHRIJVING:
- Cheveux: *brun*
- Haar: *brun*
- Yeux: *brun*
- Ogen: *brun*
- Nes: *droit*
- Neus: *recht*
- Visage: *oval*
- Gelaat: *oval*
- Signes particuliers: *1,70 m.*
- Bijzondere kentekens: *1,70 m.*

**Right Column (French/Dutch):**

- Signature du titulaire: *Wilf. Grin*
- Handtekening van den titularis: *Wilf. Grin*
- Le soussigné certifie que la photo et la signature apposées ci-dessus sont bien celles du porteur du présent document.
- De ondergetekende verklaart dat bovenstaande fotografie en handtekening stellig deze zijn van den houder van dit document.
- Pour la durée de validité du présent certificat, voir le dernier visa belge apposé ci-après.
- Voor den geldigheidsduur van dit getuigschrift, zie het laatste Belgische visa hieronder aangebracht.
- En tout état de cause, le présent certificat cesse d'être valable deux ans après la date de sa délivrance.
- In ieder geval houdt dit getuigschrift op geldig te zijn twee jaar na den datum zijner aflevering.
- Délivré à: *ANTWERPEN ANVERS*
- Afgeleverd te: *Antwerpen*
- An van de Minister des Alzaken van België; Nomen des Minister des Alzaken van België.
- Le fonctionnaire délégué, *Schueren*
- De afgevaardigde, *Schueren*
- 1933

**Postage Stamp:** A 5-cent stamp featuring a figure, with the text "LIGUE DES NATIONS" and "POSTES BELGES".

**Seals:** A circular seal of the "LIGUE DES NATIONS" and a rectangular seal of the "ANTWERPEN ANVERS" office.

### PURPOSE:

This is a display class exhibit on the League of Nations and its role in supporting efforts to aid refugees following World War One and the residual hostilities that affected millions in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East.

### ORGANIZATION:

The exhibit documents the work of the League of Nations High Commission for Refugees from its inception in 1922 through its demise in 1938. Official service covers from the organization, including it's regional and affiliate offices, are presented in a chronological manner to document the activities of the organization during its existence.

### IMPORTANCE

The League of Nations is considered the first truly international civil service organization, and the first such entity to use its own postage stamps. It was born out of the ashes of WWI by those international Statesmen that, having lived through the horrors of war, were committed to form a union that would foster international cooperation. One of the greatest successes of the organization was the support it provided for the repatriation and resettlement of millions following WWI. This exhibit documents the most significant activities of the League Refugee Organization.

### KNOWLEDGE AND PERSONAL STUDY

This exhibit was first conceived in 2014 when I was fortunate to acquire some outstanding material from the estate of Richard "Dick" Powers. Dick had been a good friend and long time editor of our club publication, "The Journal of the United Nations Philatelists," and had written extensively on the subject of League and UN Refugee history. Given the acquisition of Dick's material, I began to assemble my League postal history collection in earnest, and recognized I had a significant amount of League material that could form the basis of an excellent single frame exhibit that truly could tell the story of the plight of the refugees. The exhibit represents a significant amount of personal study on the history of the League and the refugee situation in Europe and the Middle East following WWI.

**CONDITION and RARITY**

This exhibit is comprised of arguably the largest single collection of League of Nations refugee organization service mail in existence. This collector has spent nearly 40 years acquiring, studying, and documenting League of Nations postal history. As an officer in the United Nations Philatelists for several decades, I have befriended and corresponded with almost all of the influential philatelists worldwide with interest in the League of Nations. The material presented in this exhibit has been extraordinarily difficult to acquire as very few specimens of League service mail from the Refugee Offices have survived to enter the philatelic marketplace. In many cases, these covers are the only known examples recorded. Extremely scarce items are identified by a Blue Border in the exhibit.

**KEY REFERENCES**

Gaines, Arleigh "United Nations Philately," League of Nations Section. 1983-1998.  
JSTOR\_ 1 Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 203 (May, 1939).  
Misteli, Charles "Les Timbres SdN et BIT," United Nations Philatelists Monograph (Ed. D. Powers).