

## PHILATELIC LAXITY

by Albert Pelsser

### DAG HAMMARSKJÖLD

Dag Hammarskjöld was the second Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN), serving from 10 April 1953 until 18 September 1961. He was born on 29 July 1905 in Jönköping in south-central Sweden and was a respected Swedish diplomat and statesman, but little known to the rest of the world when he became Secretary General of the UN.

In 1951, he joined the Swedish delegation to the United Nations. When Trygve Lie of Norway resigned as Secretary-General in 1953, Dag Hammarskjöld was elected to the position. During his two terms as Secretary-General, Mr. Hammarskjöld carried out many responsibilities for the United Nations in the course of its efforts to prevent war and serve the other aims of the UN Charter. An active international peacemaker of great moral authority and sensitivity, Dag Hammarskjöld worked to resolve the Suez

Canal crisis of 1956, and the 1958 crisis in Lebanon and Jordan. When he accepted a second five-year term in 1958, Mr. Hammarskjöld took the occasion to underscore his determination to maintain his office as an independent force and to act without political dictation from any state.

In 1960, when President Joseph Kasavubu and Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba of the Republic of Congo sent a cable on 12 July asking for the urgent dispatch of United Nations military assistance to Congo, the Secretary-General addressed the Security Council at a night meeting on 13 July and asked the Council to act on the request with utmost speed. Following Security Council actions, the

United Nations Force in Congo was established and the Secretary-General himself made four trips to Congo in connection with the United Nations operations there. Dag Hammarskjöld pursued efforts to encourage national reconciliation and to end foreign interference in the Congo.

The fourth trip to Congo began on 12 September 1961; on the night of 17 September, he boarded a flight (on the *Albertine*, a DC-6B airplane belonging to the Swedish

Transair Company) at 17:00 from Ndjili, the airport in Léopoldville (now Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of the Congo) to Ndola, Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) to meet Mr. Tshombé, the provincial president of Katanga, and seek an end to the fighting in secessionist Katanga. On its final approach, the plane crashed; Dag Hammarskjöld was killed, along with seven other UN staff members and the Swedish crew of eight. The time of the crash,

established by the stopped watches of the passengers, was between 10:00 and 10:13 PM GMT on 17 September 1961. As Rhodesia is two hours ahead of GMT, the crash was reported on 18 September local time.

The UN investigation commission reached no firm conclusion as to the cause of the crash. The Nobel Committee of Norwegian Parliament awarded the Peace Prize for 1961 posthumously to Dag Hammarskjöld.

Dag Hammarskjöld is the only Secretary-General to have died in office; the official date of the death reported in all the reference material is 18 September 1961. He has been honoured on stamps of many nations. The two sou-



Figure 1

venir sheets (see sample at Figure 1) issued by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dag Hammarskjöld's birth bear the date of death as 17 September instead of 18 September 1961. Both show the

emblems of the United Nations and some of its agencies; on the right-bottom, is the logo of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), which has had its headquarters in Montreal, Canada, since 1945.

#### CHECKLIST

DPR of Korea	MiBL88A-88B	1980 Dec 26	75th birthday of Dag Hammarskjöld, ICAO logo
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#### REFERENCES

"Dag Hammarskjöld" [Online] Internet. Available: <http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/dag/bio.htm>  
 Zacher, Mark W. *Dag Hammarskjöld's United Nations*. Columbia University Press, February 1970.

