

The Story Behind the Stamp: Balian 176/177, December 20, 1956, and January 30, 1957



The original stamp was issued while British and French troops were still in Port Said. The picture purports to show the French ship *Jean Bart* sinking and Egyptian troops and civilian resistance devastating the paratroops of Britain and France. Perhaps a little poetic licence has been used, as the *Jean Bart* received no damage during the conflict. Fierce resistance was put up initially against the invasion, but mainly by the regular Egyptian forces. Perhaps for these stamps the information given on the philatelic handout best describes them:

The struggle of Port-Said against Aggressors. December 20th 1956

Britain and France failed in their attempt at internationalising the Suez canal and at compelling Egypt to go back on its decree of nationalisation. This was considered to be a sign that Anglo-French imperialism was coming to an end. On Oct. 29, 1956 Britain, France used force against Egypt by allowing the Israeli forces to invade Egyptian territory under the protection of their forces. They sent an ultimatum to Egypt which was flatly rejected and then began the flagrant intervention against Egyptian territory. The Anglo-French forces bombarded the targets in the big cities of Egypt and Port-Said was invaded by air, sea and land. But valiant and glorious Port-Said struggled against the invaders with crisp determination and caused them great fatal losses.

The Postal Administration has spared no efforts to make immortal the struggles of the courageous people of Port-Said so that every freedom-loving man cherish this memory.

Date of evacuation from the valiant city of Port-Said, January 14 1957

The Anglo-French-Israeli aggression was condemned by all the world and U.N.O. approved a resolution by an overwhelming majority of 65 votes calling for the immediate withdrawal of the invading troops from Egyptian territory.

The 3 aggressor countries refused to withdraw from Egypt but world public opinion and especially the British man in the street, the Russian ultimatum and the heroic bravery shown by the struggling people of Egypt; all these factors were effective in compelling Britain and France to withdraw their forces from Port-Said on Dec 22, 1956. Israel withdrew later from the Sinai Peninsula.

The United Nations recommended, with the consent of Egypt, the formation of an United Nations Emergency Force which was sent to Egypt. This force was stationed in the canal zone until complete evacuation of British and French troops from Port-Said. Later the U.N.E.F, moved into the Gaza and the Sinai peninsula facing the Israeli withdrawal. The U.N.E.F. is now stationed on the Egyptian-Israeli Armistice lines.



France returned this cover partly franked with the overprinted stamp, stating that it contravened the UPU regulations on propaganda.