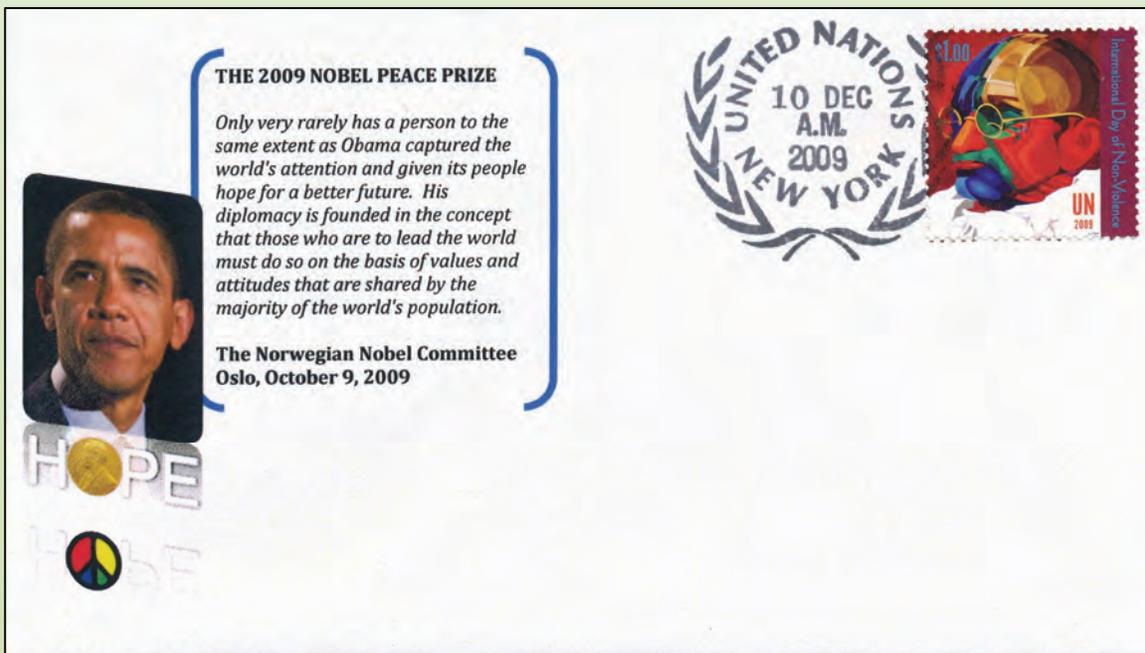
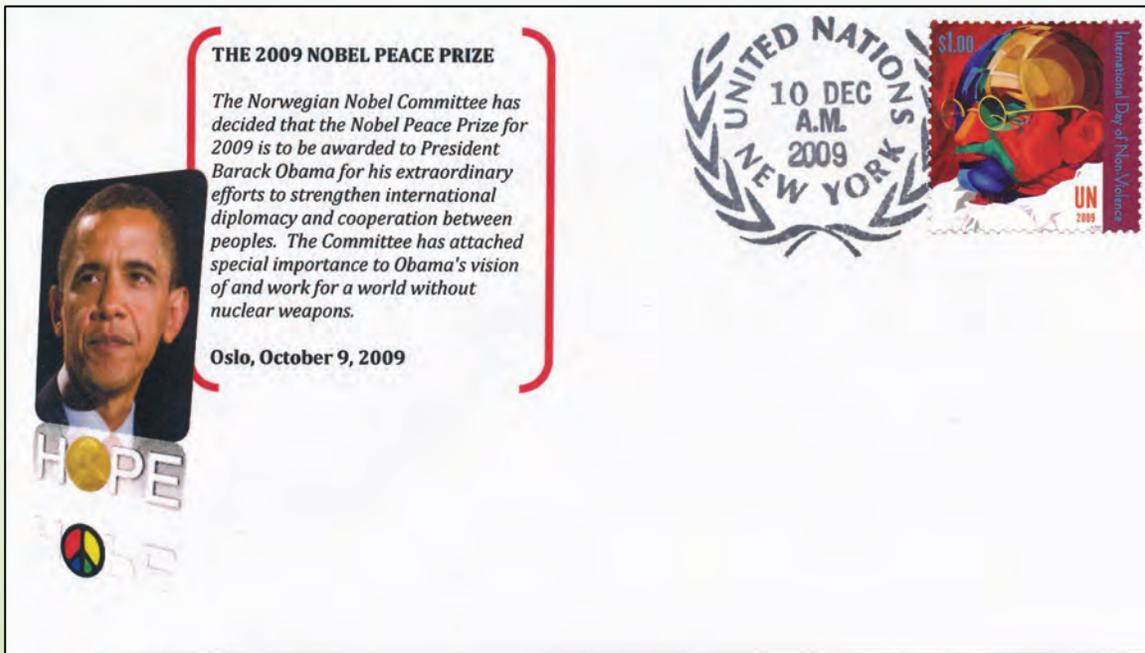




On October 2nd 2009, two years after the United Nations declared Mahatma Gandhi's birth anniversary as the International Day of Non-Violence, the UN Postal Agency in New York issued a postage stamp featuring a painting of Gandhi's portrait. On October 8th 2009, the Norwegian Nobel Committee announced that the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize would be awarded to Barack Obama, President of the United States of America.

This set of four covers commemorates the nexus of the two historic events mentioned above. The covers are franked with the \$1 stamp, cancelled with a United Nations New York date stamp on December 10th 2009 [date of the Peace Prize award ceremony in Oslo, Norway]. The cachet illustrates the following: the world's *spotlight shining* on Mr. Obama, as this Nobel Peace Prize *reflects a hope* that he'll achieve his diplomatic aspirations in search of lasting *global peace*. Texts from the Nobel Committee's announcements are presented on two covers and texts of President Obama's recent comments on Mahatma Gandhi are presented on the other two. To capture the conflicting voices that have been raised in public dialogue since the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize was announced, the graphics associated with the cachet on each cover carries a different perspective.





Ten sets of these commemorative covers were prepared by philatelist Raj V. Rajan of Victor, NY and processed at the United Nations Post Office in New York, NY. As with the Nobel centennial covers prepared at Chicagopex 2001, these 2009 commemorative covers will be shared with a select group of organizations and individuals.

Information on the design and preparation of the 2001 Nobel Centennial commemorative covers can be found at <http://gandhi.topicalphilately.com/Gandhi and the Nobel Peace Prize.pdf>. Five sets of the 2001 covers were prepared and were shared with (1) The Nobel Museum, Stockholm, Sweden, (2) Gandhi Memorial Museum, New Delhi, India, and (3) The M.K. Gandhi Institute for Non-Violence [then at Memphis TN, USA and now in Rochester NY, USA]. The 2009 commemorative covers will also be shared with the same organizations.



OBAMA ON MAHATMA GANDHI

In my life, I have always looked to Mahatma Gandhi as an inspiration, because he embodies the kind of transformational change that can be made when ordinary people come together to do extraordinary things.

I am always interested in people who are able to bring about change, not through violence, not through money, but through the force of their personality and their ethical and moral stances.



HOPE
HOPE



OBAMA ON MAHATMA GANDHI

He is somebody whom I find a lot of inspiration in. He inspired Dr King, so if it hadn't been for the non-violent movement in India, you might not have seen the same non-violent movement for civil rights here in the United States.

What was interesting was that he ended up doing so much and changing the world just by the power of his ethics, by his ability to change how people saw each other and saw themselves.



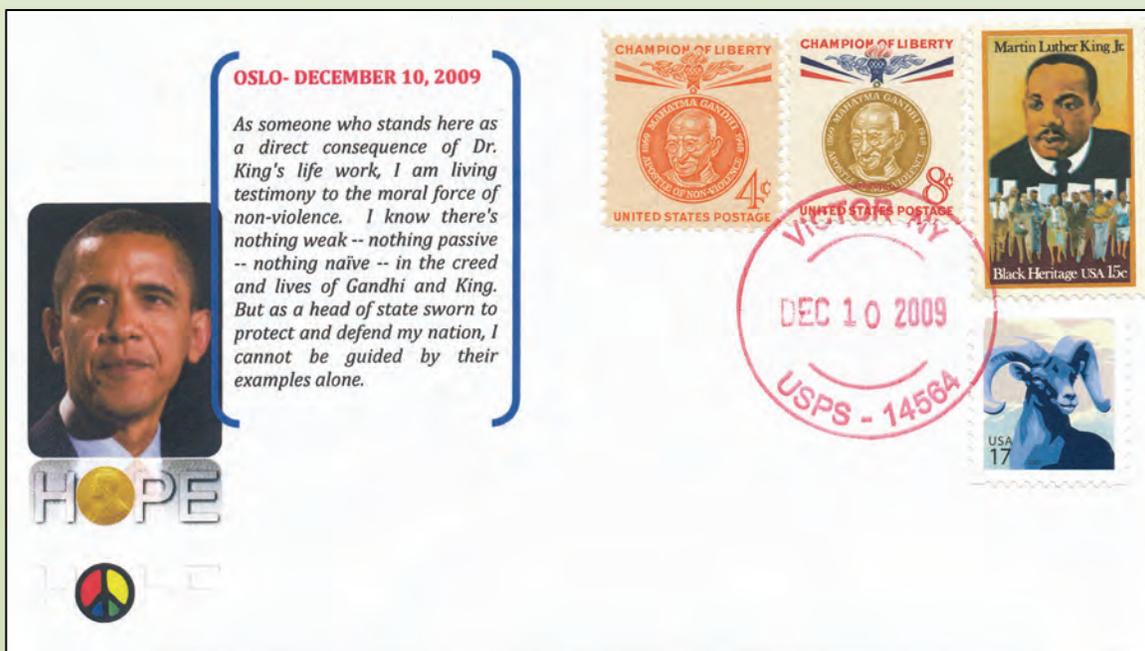
HOPE
HOPE





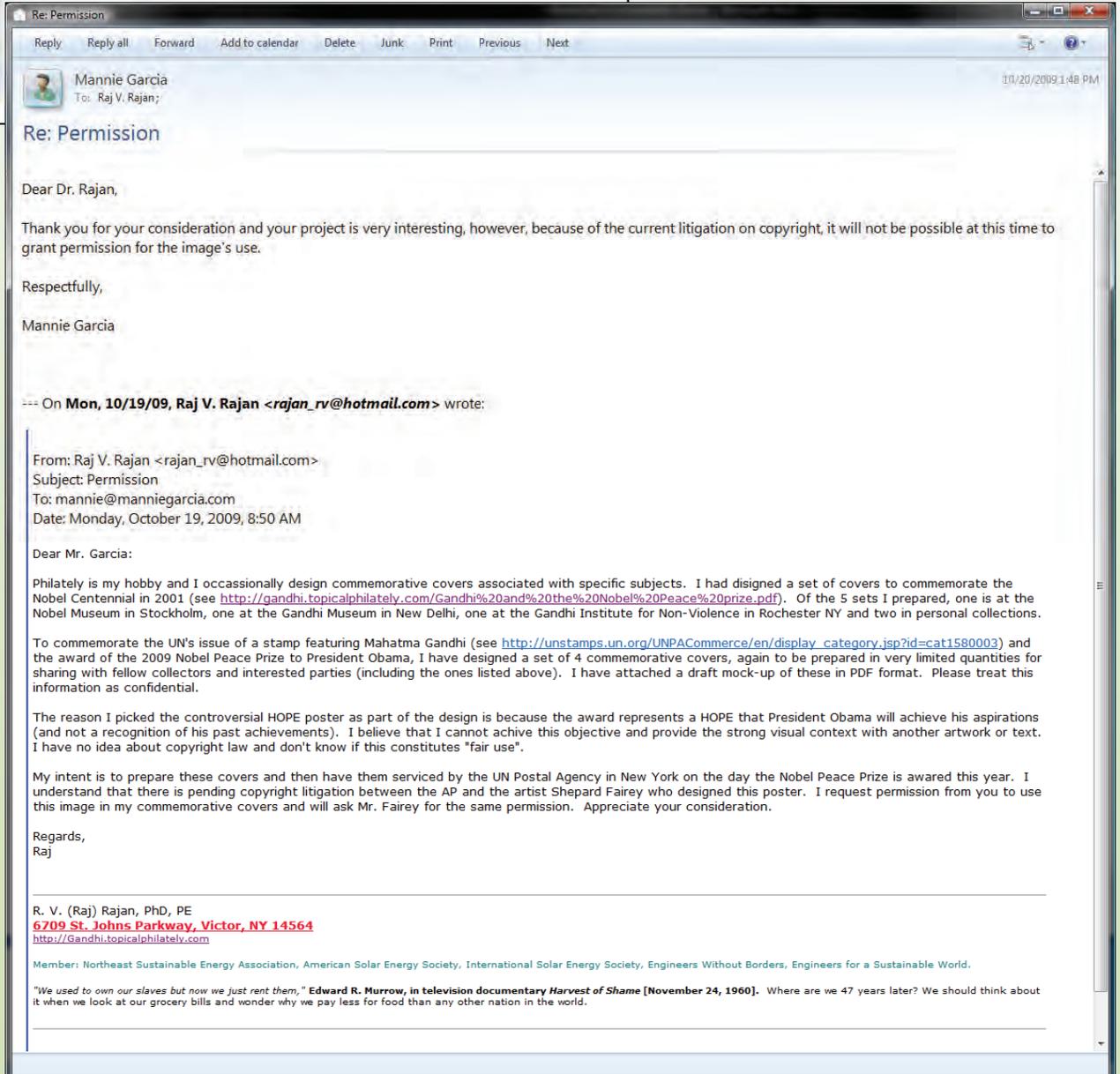
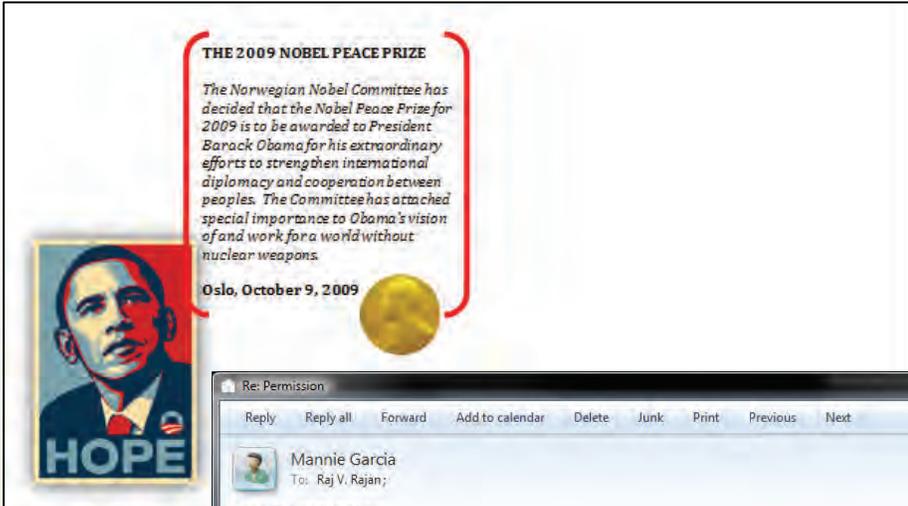
Two other related commemorative covers were prepared on December 10, 2009 [ten each]. One was a cover with the UN Gandhi stamp commemorating African and African American Nobel Peace Prize Laureates to date: Albert Luthuli, South Africa [1960], Martin Luther King Jr., United States [1964], Desmond Tutu, South Africa [1984], Nelson Mandela, South Africa [1993], Wangari Maathai, Kenya [2004], and Barack Obama [2009]. Kofi Anan of Ghana [2001] was inadvertently left out, due to an incorrect assumption that he accepted the 2001 Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of the United Nations. In fact, the 2001 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to both the United Nations and Kofi Anan "for their work for a better organized and more peaceful world".

The other commemorative cover carries a cachet with an excerpt from Barack Obama's December 10, 2009 Nobel Lecture in Oslo, Norway. In this speech, President Obama references both Martin Luther King Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi, while distancing his actions from their ideals. These covers carry the US 4c and 8c commemorative stamps of Mahatma Gandhi [1961], the US 15c commemorative stamp of Martin Luther King [1979], and a US 17c definitive stamp of Bighorn Sheep [2007] to make up the remainder of current first class postage rate [44c]. The stamps are tied to the covers with a red Victor, NY circular date stamp.





This commemorative cover project started with the idea that the interesting but controversial *Hope Poster* from Barack Obama's election campaign would be used in graphics of the cachet design. Due to the pending copyright litigation between the Associated Press and the artist Shepard Fairey who designed this poster, Raj V. Rajan solicited permission from AP photographer Mannie Garcia and artist Shepard Fairey. While there was no response from the artist Mr. Fairey, AP photographer Mr. Garcia declined permission for the image's use in this philatelic project [see image of draft design and email from Mr. Garcia below].





A copy of the letter of acceptance of the offer to provide the 2001 Nobel centennial commemorative covers, from the Senior Curator of the Nobel Museum to Raj V. Rajan, is shown below.



NOBELMUSEET
The Nobel Museum

February 12, 2002

Mr. R.V. Rajan
765 Howard Street
Chelsea, MI 48118-1015
USA

Dear Mr. Rajan,

Thank you very much for your letter of December 20, 2001, concerning Chicagopex 2001 and the specially prepared set of covers relating to Mahatma Gandhi.

The Nobel Museum is, of course, interested in obtaining a set of the covers. At the moment the museum is in temporary locations and have no space for exhibiting special acquisitions like the Gandhi covers. This will certainly change in the long run and might possibly occur quite soon.

Yours sincerely

Anders Bärány
Senior Curator

Address:
Anders Bärány
The Nobel Museum
P.O. Box 2245
SE-103 16 Stockholm
Sweden

Tel: +46-8-519 542 83
Fax: +46-8-519 542 90
E-mail:
anders.barany@nobel.se



A copy of the letter acknowledging the receipt of the 2001 Nobel centennial commemorative covers, from the Senior Curator of the Nobel Museum to Raj V. Rajan, is shown below.



NOBELMUSEET
The Nobel Museum

October 25, 2002

Mr. R.V. Rajan
765 Howard Street
Chelsea, MI 48118-1015
USA

Dear Mr. Rajan,

Thank you very much for your letter of October 12, 2002, which accompanied the four mounted sets of covers relating to Mahatma Gandhi.

The Nobel Museum thanks you for the donation of the covers. The museum is now in semipermanent locations that will expand in the near future and might actually find a space for exhibiting special acquisitions like the Gandhi covers. If and when this happens I will certainly let you know.

Again, many thanks for the nice gift!

Yours sincerely

Anders Bärány
Senior Curator

Address:
Anders Bärány
The Nobel Museum
P.O. Box 2245
SE-103 16 Stockholm
Sweden

Tel: +46-8-519 542 83
Fax: +46-8-519 542 90
E-mail:
anders.barany@nobel.se