

THE MAIL ON THE WAYS OF EVIL

by Franco Trentini

An anonymous stone was found in Auschwitz, where with a nail an unknown person left the inscription: "who will ever know what happened to me here? ". I think of that man or woman who wrote, I think we know nothing about him or her, we only know about his pain of believing he suffered without being able to tell anyone. This is the great tragedy: the risk of amnesia. Time can make everything dull. Instead, that stone prompts us to remember the extermination of millions of people guilty of being Jews, gypsies, civilian and military deportees. It leads us to a memory that is even unspeakable in its enormity but risks, in its banality of evil, being repeated for new racial hatreds and even justified.

With this collection, through the reconstruction of postal services with original documents of the time, I too want to bring here a small contribution so as not to forget, to recall once again Primo Levi's admonition: "**take care that this was**", let's meditate so that this doesn't happen again.

Collection plan :

BRIEF HISTORICAL POSTAL NEWS

SHIPMENTS OF MONEY

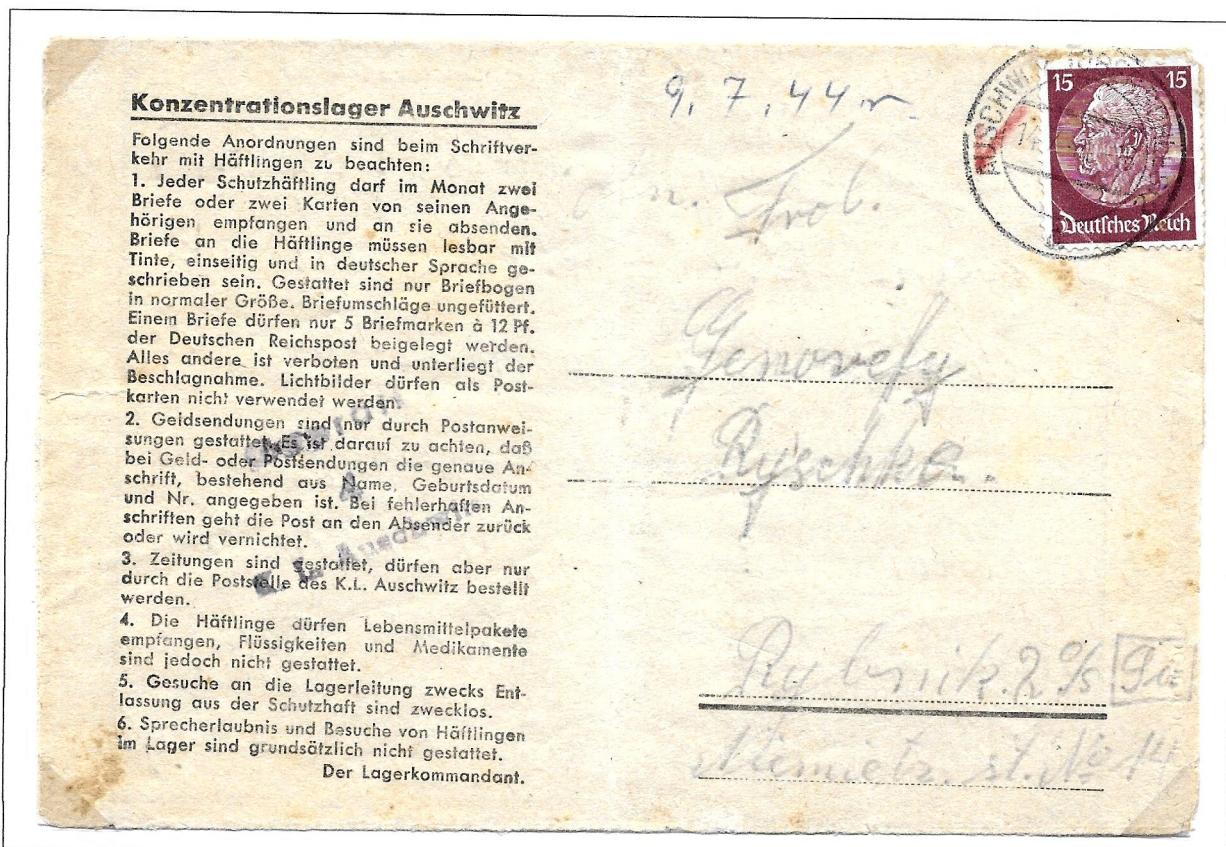
THE RECEIPT OF PARCELS

THE CENSORSHIP

POSTAL DOCUMENTS from concentration/extermination camps: AUSCHWITZ - BIRKENAU ↔ MAUTHAUSEN-GUSEN ↔ SACHSENHAUSEN- ORANIENBURG - NEUENGAMME ↔ DACHAU ↔ BUCHENWALD ↔ RAVENSBRÜCK ↔ GROSS-ROSEN ↔ FLOSSENBURG ↔ MAJDANEK ↔ SANGHERHAUSEN ↔ STUTTHOF

POSTAL DOCUMENTS from Italian concentration/transit camps FOSSOLI e BOLZANO

BRIEF HISTORICAL POSTAL NEWS



Auschwitz 4.14.1944 – Postal ticket pre-printed with the extract from the CAMP REGULATIONS

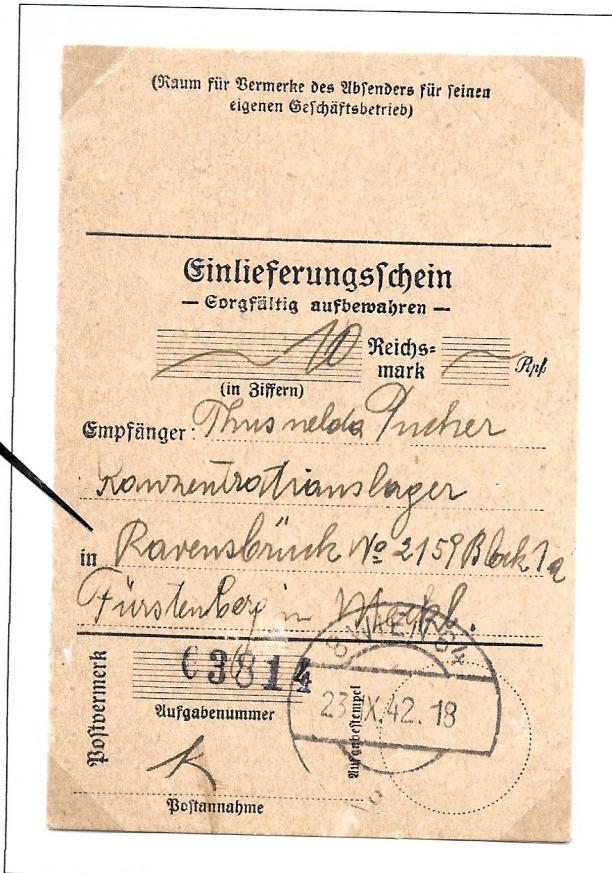
Postal traffic took place on the basis of precise provisions which were collected in the so-called extract from the regulations of the field printed on the various postal models (postcards, envelopes, letter paper). The regulation, with the following provisions, entered into full force in 1938 and was applied, with the exception of the regulation concerning parcels, until the end of the war.

Each prisoner can receive two letters a month from his family members and send the same number. Letters must be written legibly in German in ink and may contain only 15 lines on a single page. Only normal size sheets are authorised. Envelopes cannot be padded. Only 5 12pfennig stamps may be attached to each letter. Everything else is prohibited and will be confiscated. Postcards have 10 lines. Photographs cannot be used as postcards. Money transfers are not permitted. Newspapers are authorized but can only be ordered from the Camp Post Office. Parcels cannot be sent, as prisoners can buy everything inside the camp. Requests for release addressed to the camp management are useless. Visits and interviews or visits to camp inmates are not, in principle, authorized. All correspondence that goes beyond this regulation will be destroyed.

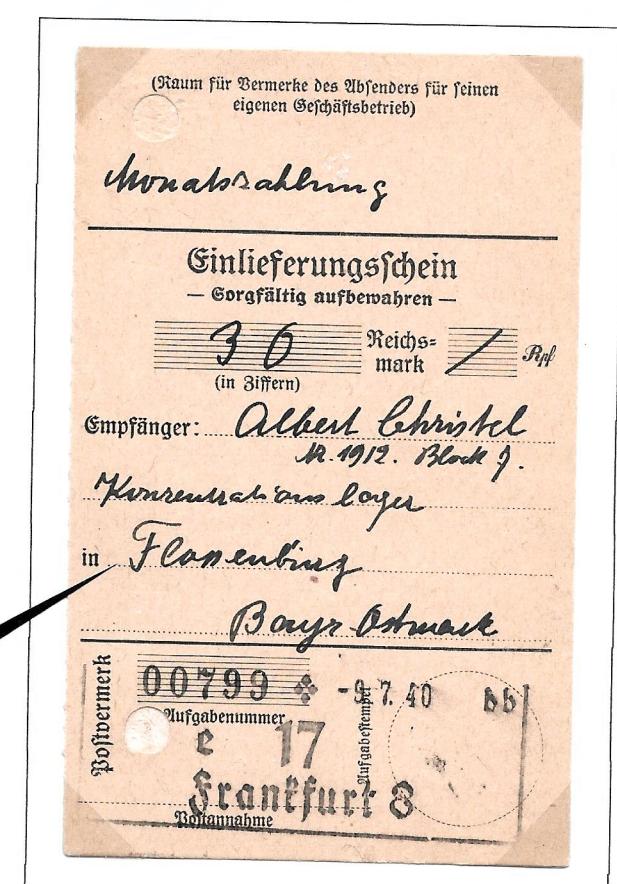
After the transfer of the prisoner to the camp, a "correspondence folder" was prepared with the annotation of the addresses of the closest family members and only with these could there be correspondence. The day of writing was Sunday. Prisoners could only keep the last letter they received. Printed matter was provided free of charge.

SHIPMENTS OF MONEY

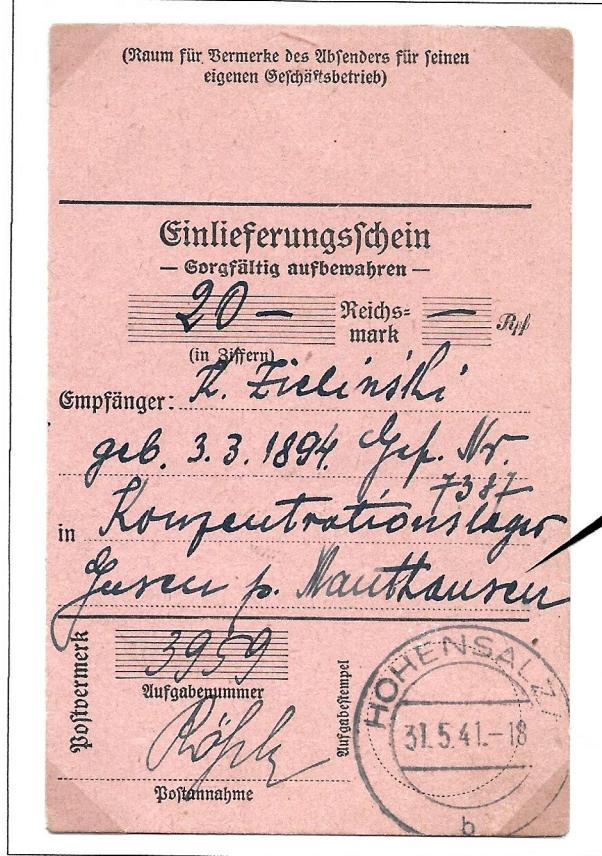
In the beginning, it was possible to receive money in the concentration camps. This concession can be found on some versions of the extract from the camp rules. It seems that the SS initially had difficulty managing the growing volume of money shipments, which increased after the large deportations to concentration camps, especially Jews. While prisoners could receive money in any amount, they were only paid small monthly sums. The rest remained on the account of the prisoner in the camp. Shipments were only permitted once every four weeks. Only postal money orders were allowed. and these had to be sent so that they reached the fields on the first or fifteenth day of the month.



23.9.1942 for Ravensbrück



9.7.1940 for Flossenbürg



31.5.1941 for Mauthausen



16.9.1942 for Buchenwald

THE RECEIPT OF PARCELS

As we have already seen, the version of the regulation contains the sentence: "Packages cannot be sent, as prisoners can buy everything inside the camp". On 10/23/1942 Himmler issued a decree authorizing the receipt of parcels and ordered: Prisoners can receive food parcels from their family members. The number of parcels is unlimited. However, the content must be consumed by the prisoner on the day of receipt of the package or the following day. If not, the contents of the package must be divided among the other prisoners. The provision is valid for all prisoners. SS members are subject to the death penalty for tampering with parcels intended for prisoners. Prisoners who misuse expeditions to smuggle coded communications, tools, or other prohibited items into the camp are also subject to the death penalty. In this case, the entire blockade will be banned from receiving parcels for three months. At the same time new pre-prints were issued where the regulation relating to parcels was: "Packets can be sent in a contained manner". From that moment, the International Red Cross and other humanitarian organizations began to send large quantities of parcels.



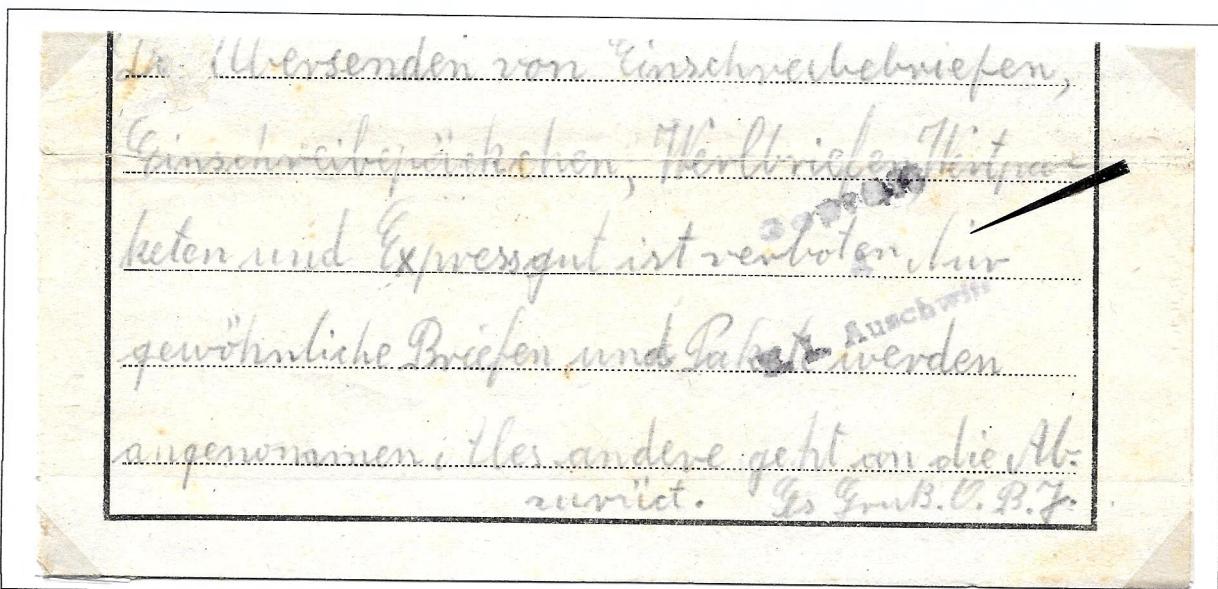
15.3.1944 receipt of shipment of a 4 kg package from Badkowo (Poland), for the Mauthausen camp.



23.6.1944 – receipt for shipment of a parcel of 4.6 kg. from Dabrowa, (Poland German Governorate), for the Dachau camp.

THE CENSORSHIP

Mail entering and leaving the camps was censored by the special censorship offices set up in the camps themselves within the Post Offices of the SS. In the letters the disputed texts were obscured or even cut out. Sometimes whole letters were blocked and remained in the file of the prisoner's file. Camp censors were usually SS non-commissioned officers. Each censored letter was endorsed with a censorship stamp. In the case of a letter with envelope, the stamp was placed both on the envelope and on the sheet. All shipments had to comply with the rules contained in the camp regulations and the mail, before following the normal transmission routes, had to pass through the SS Post Office.



Censorship stamp impressed inside a letter sent from the Auschwitz camp.



Auszug aus der Lagerordnung:

Jeder Häftling darf im Monat 2 Briefe oder Postkarten empfangen und absenden. Eingehende Briefe dürfen nicht mehr als 4 Seiten & 15 Zeilen enthalten und müssen übersichtlich und gut lesbar sein. Geldsendungen sind nur durch Postanweisung zulässig, deren Abschnitt nur Vor-, Zuname, Geburtsstag, Häftlingsnummer trägt, jedoch keinerlei Mitteilungen. Geld, Fotos und Bildereinlagen in Briefen sind verboten. Die Annahme von Postsendungen, die den gesetzten Anforderungen nicht entsprechen, wird verworfen. Unübersichtliche, schlecht lesbare Briefe werden vernichtet. Im Lager kann alles gelauft werden, Nationalsozialistische Zeitungen sind zugelassen, müssen aber vom Häftling selbst im Konzentrationslager bestellt werden. Lebensmittelkarten dürfen zu jeder Zeit und in jeder Menge empfangen werden.

Der Lagerkommandant

Postal card sent on 6.8.1944 from Neuengamme concentration camp (Hamburg),
with censorship stamp (1)

and another stamp specifying that the text may only be written in German (2).

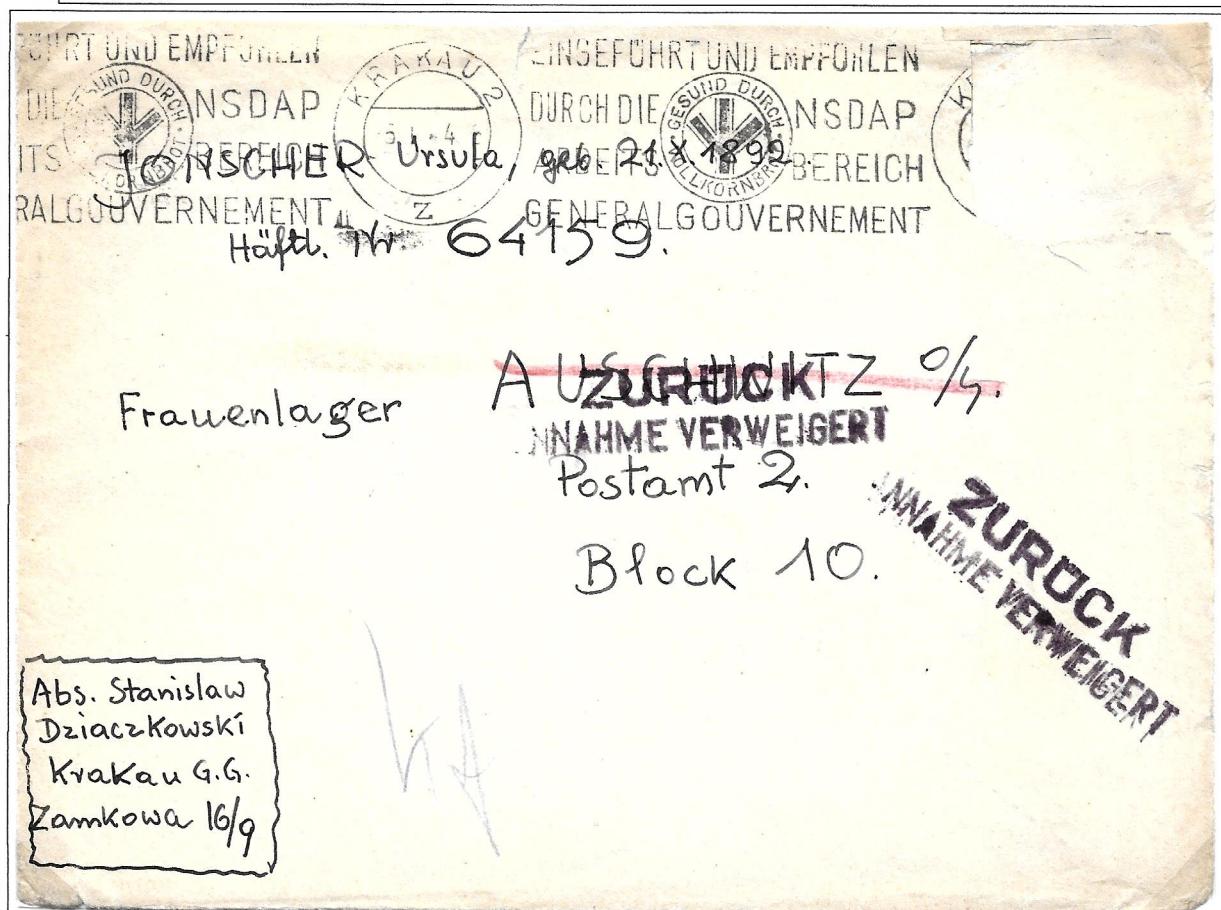
POSTAL DOCUMENTS from concentration/extermination camps:

The concentration camp of **Auschwitz-Birkenau** generically identifies the set of concentration camps and the extermination camp built during the Nazi German occupation of Poland near the Polish town of Oświęcim (in German Auschwitz) which is located about 60 kilometers from Krakow. The main concentration camps were Auschwitz I – Auschwitz II (Birkenau) – Auschwitz III (Monowitz). Birkenau was a "extermination camp" in which about a million people lost their lives. Operational since June 14, 1940, Auschwitz I was the operational center of the entire complex. The camp was liberated by Soviet troops on January 27, 1945.

Postcard written on 9.1.1944 in the Auschwitz –Birkenau camp and sent from Berlin through the German Jewish State Association.

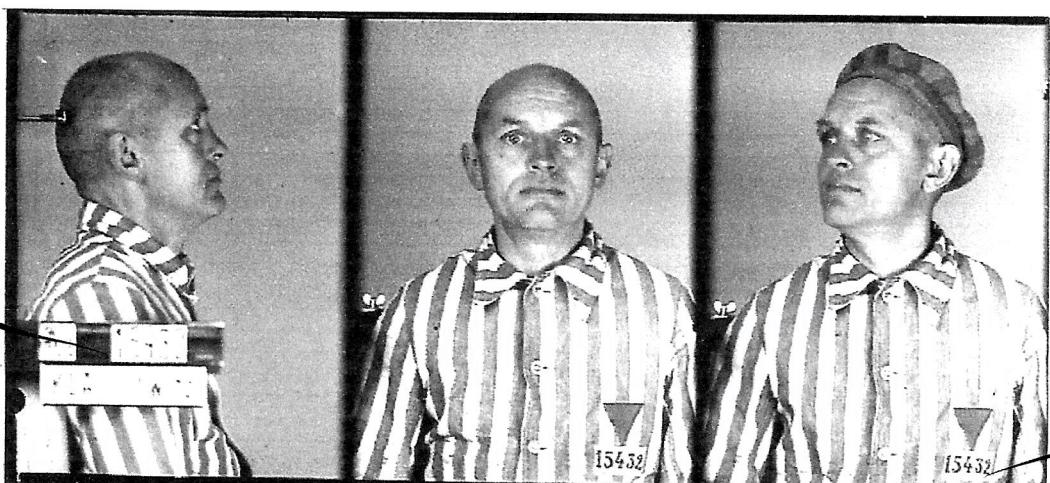
The linear purple stamp, embossed on the postcard, indicated that the answer must always be done on postcard, written in German and through the association itself.

In the first months of 1944, up to the month of July, they were "invited" to write to their friends and perhaps even relatives, groups of temporarily escaped Hungarian Jews at the crematorium oven. It was just a ruse to deceive about what he was really happening.





Postal note, written on 22.8.1943, sent on 26.8.1943 from the Auschwitz camp block 3, with stamp of purple censorship, franked with a German 12 pf stamp. and cancel Auschwitz (Oberslesien). Below is the photograph of the prisoner taken after he was filed upon entering the camp. The number 15432 (Gef.-Nr.), attributed to the prisoner, is present on the postal note and on the three photos.



Gef.-Nr. 15432.

Sachsenhausen, Nazi concentration camp established in 1936 in the area called Sandhausen in the town of Oranienburg, 35 kilometers from Berlin. It was one of the largest concentration camps in Germany where around 100,000 prisoners died. The prisoners, largely political opponents of National Socialism coming from the European states occupied by the Nazis, were employed in workshops and companies owned by the SS operating in more than 100 external concentration camps among which, the most important were

Oranienburg, Neuengamme and Groß-Rosen became independent on

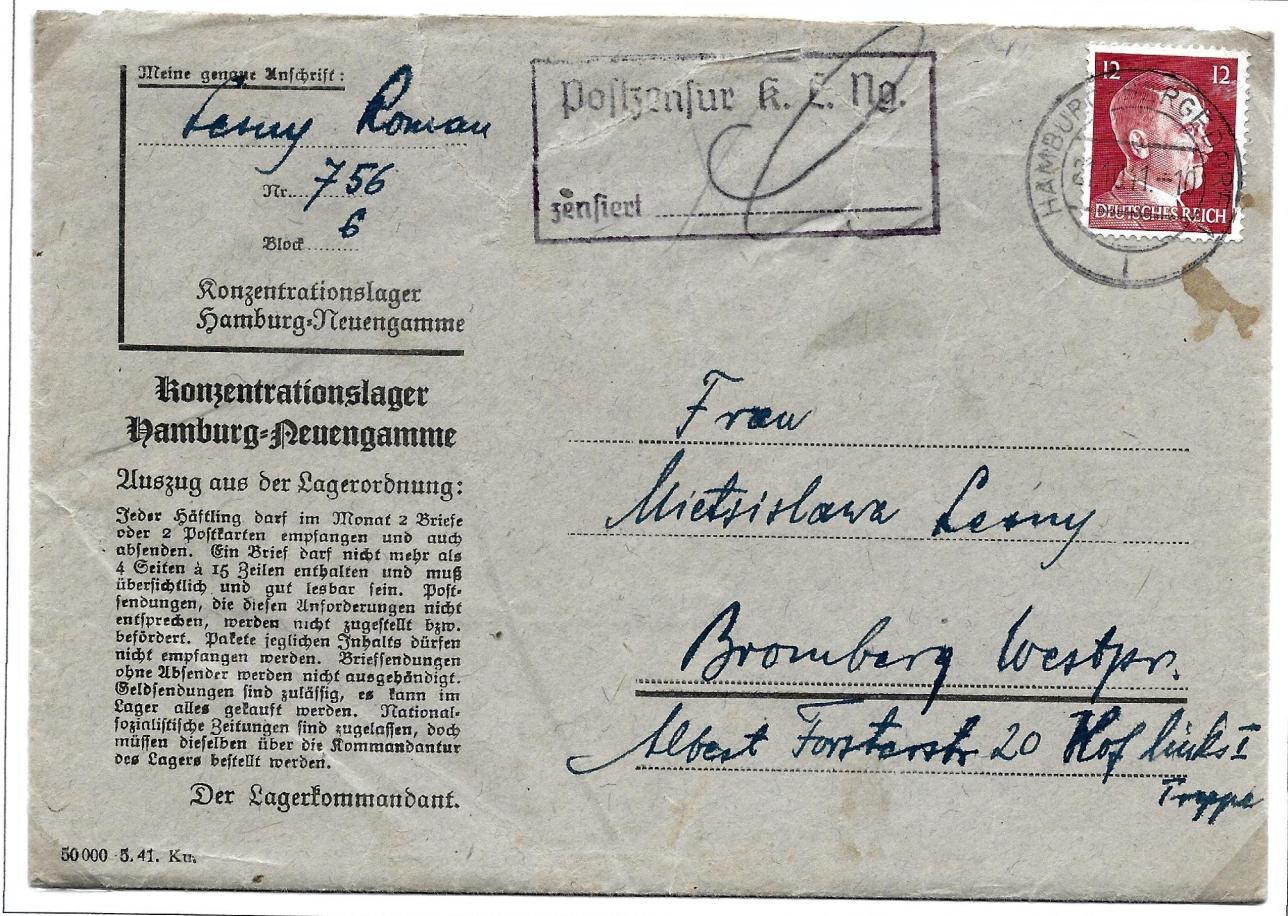
1 May 1941. The camp was liberated on 22 April 1945 by the Red Army who found 3,000 people dying there, given that most of the internees had been transferred by the SS with the infamous death.



Pre-printed postal card written on 24.1.1943 and sent on 6.2.1943 from Sachsenhausen camp, block 26 with censorship stamp.



Pre-printed postcard sent on 11.12.1940 from the Oranienburg camp near Berlin block 63/A – with censorship stamp of the main camp Sachsenhausen.



Pre-printed envelope sent on 21.10.1941 from the Neuengamme camp with rectangular field censorship stamp.

Gross-Rosen was a concentration camp located in the city of the same name, today Rogoźnica in Lower Silesia (Poland). It was founded on August 2, 1940 as a subcamp of Sachsenhausen but became independent on May 1, 1941. In addition to deportees resistant to the German forces, the majority of the population of the camp consisted of Jews initially transferred from the Dachau and Sachsenhausen camps and subsequently from the camp of Buchenwald. A total of about 125,000 prisoners passed through the complex and it is estimated that about 40,000 of these died from work. The camp was liberated by advancing Soviet forces on February 14, 1945.



Pre-printed mailing card written on 6/20/1944 and sent on 2.7.1944 from the Gross-Rosen camp – block 6 - with round censorship stamp.

Mauthausen-Gusen is the name given to a group of 49 Nazi concentration camps and subcamps located near the small town of Mauthausen in Upper Austria about 20 kilometers east of Linz. The main camp was opened on August 8, 1938 and functioned until liberation on May 5, 1945 by the 41st Reconnaissance Squadron of the US 11th Armored Division. It was used as an extermination camp to be implemented through forced labor and malnutrition for intellectuals, people and members of the different social classes of the countries that Nazi Germany occupied during the Second World War. The victims were 122,000.



Pre - printed mailing card mailed on 21/8/1942 from the camp of Mauthausen Gusen, block12.

It is imprinted, in purple, the censorship mark of the camp. Shipping from the office post office of St. Georgen.

Correction on regulation leading from two to one the months authorized for the receipt of a single letter or postcard.

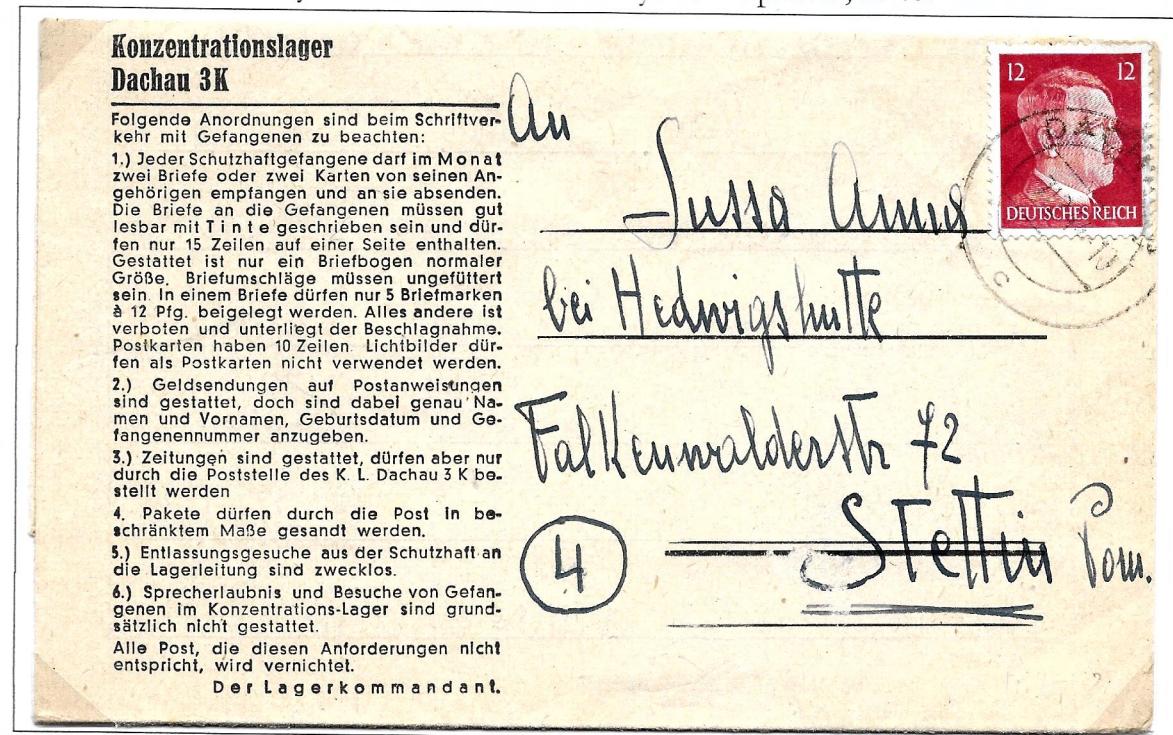
Stutthof was a concentration camp located in the city of the same name located 35 kilometers east of Danzig. The prisoners were mostly members of the Polish intelligentsia and activists of organizations disliked by the new regime. In the summer of 1944, numerous Jewish deportees from Auschwitz arrived in the camp through the "death marches". The camp was liberated on 9.5.1945 by Soviet forces. It is estimated that about 65,000 of 115,000 internees died



Postal note written on 10.23.1944 from the Stutthof field. The circled 5a represented the number of letters sent.

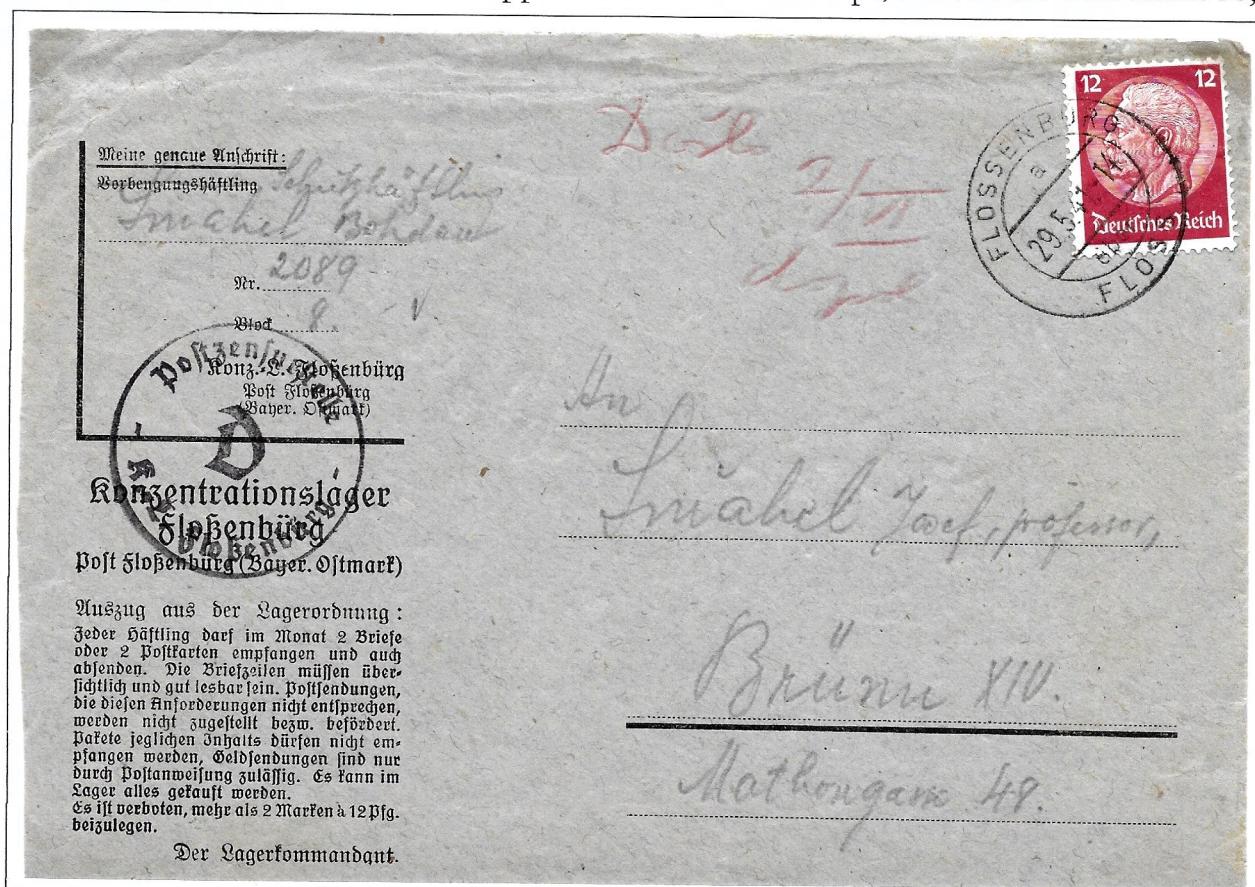
Chmielewski Josef,
Nr. 25563 Blod Kr-Bau.
K.L. Stutthof,
bei Danzig,

Dachau concentration camp was established in 1933 near the town of Dachau, north of Munich in southern Germany. It was the first camp built by the Nazis and therefore became the prototype and model for the other camps to be built throughout Europe. It was originally intended for Hitler's opponents and only later were Jews and other "unwelcome" ethnic minorities interned. At the beginning of 1941 its structures were used, in addition to forced labour, also for actual extermination: about 30,000 people were killed while thousands more died of hunger and starvation. The Dachau camp was also used as a central camp for Christian prisoners. He was liberated by the 45th Infantry Division – US 7th Army – on April 29, 1945.



Pre-printed postal card written on 3.12.1944 and sent on 7.12.1944 from the Dachau camp block 25/1 with purple rectangular field censorship stamp.

The **Flossenbürg** camp was built on May 16, 1938, near the town of Nuremberg. At the beginning it consisted mainly of prisoners from the concentration camps of Dachau, Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen. In the first months of 1945, although the capacity was for 5,000 people, 15,000 prisoners were reached. The camp was evacuated on April 20, 1945 due to the approach of the allied troops; the victims were about 30,000.



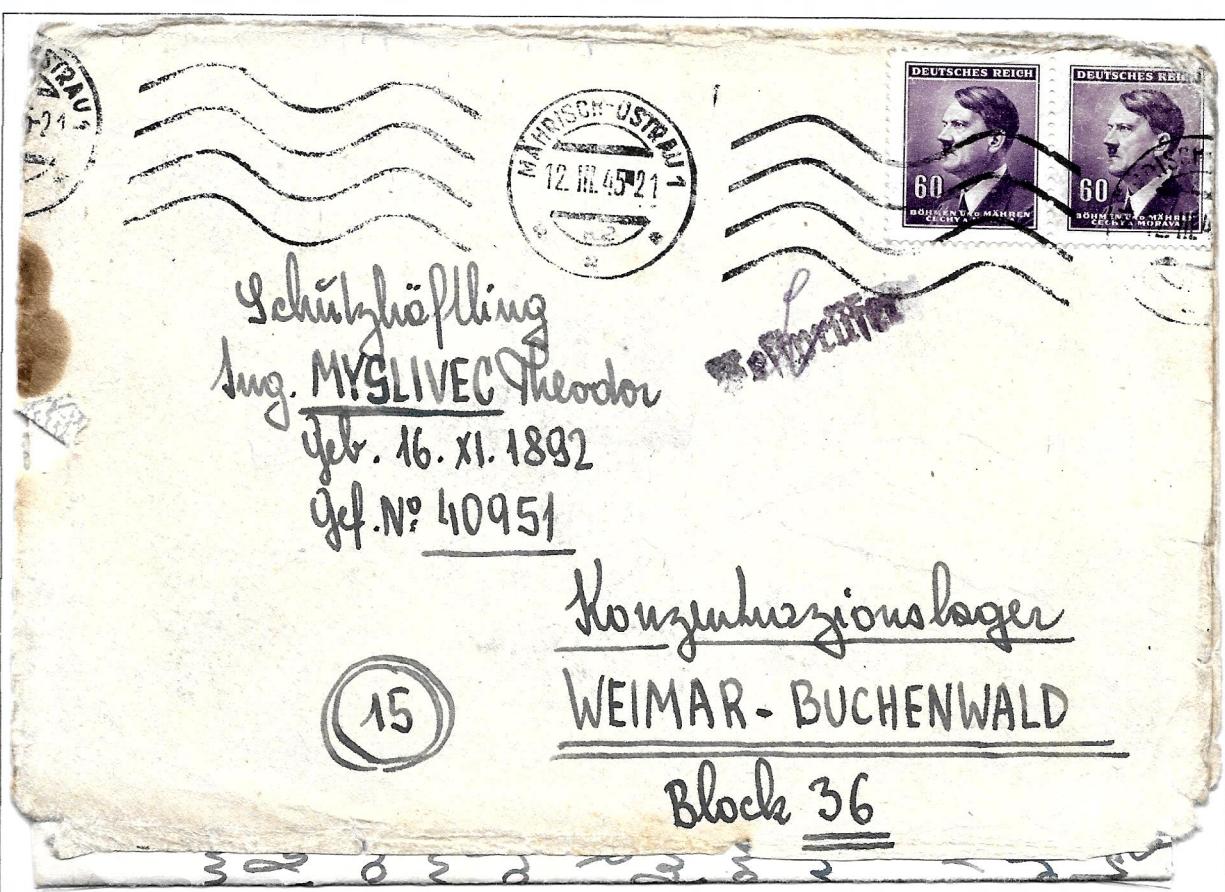
Censored preprinted envelope sent from Flossenbürg concentration camp on 29.5.1941 – block 8.

The **Buchenwald** concentration camp was established in the summer of 1937 in Thuringia in eastern Germany, about eight kilometers from Weimar, as a place of punishment for political prisoners. During the Second World War it became one of the largest concentration camps in Nazi Germany, reaching its peak in 1944 with over one hundred thousand internees; 56,000 were the dead. The allies liberated the camp on 13 April 1945 when it was already in the hands of the deportees themselves and an international clandestine committee managed its life democratically.



Copy of the personal file filled out for the deportee Bobacek Wenzel, politician (red triangle), deceased (red cross in pencil) on 24.8.1944.

Postcard written on 25.7.1943, sent 27.7.1943 Buchenwald camp. stamps: "Schrifverkehr nur deutsch" (write only in German) "Dofsprüfer" with the examiner's signature.



Letter sent on 12.3.1945 for the Buchenwald camp, block 36, 15th shipment, complete with letter and purple stamp of censorship.

The **Ravensbrück** camp, used by the Nazi regime in the context of the Holocaust, was located 90 kilometers north of Berlin, near Fürstenberg/Havel. It was intended mainly for women and children and had thirty-one sub-camps. Its construction began on 11/25/1938 on direct orders from Himmler and on 1/15/1939 the first 900 deportees from the Lichtenburg women's camp were interned. From that moment it became the most important women's concentration camp in Germany. On April 30, 1945, Soviet forces liberated the camp. It is estimated that between 1939 and 1945, the camp hosted 130,000 deportees of whom around 92,000 were victims.

An Matuszak Annelie
Nº 7450

F.R.P.A. 1944
Fr. Konz.-Lager Block J.A.I.
Ravensbrück
Fürstenberg i. Mekl.

10.12.1944
letter shipped
for the field of
Ravensbrück,
block J.A.I.
3rd shipment,
and stamp
censorship
purple of the field.

Meine genaue Anschrift:
Adriana Brzynkiewicz
Nr. 1893 Blok 16
Fr.-Konz.-Lager Ravensbrück
Fürstenberg i. Mekl.

Krauen - Konzentrationslager
Ravensbrück
Fürstenberg i. Mekl.

Auszug aus der Lagerordnung:
Jede Schriftgefangene darf im Monat
einen Brief oder eine Karte absenden oder
empfangen. Die Seiten müssen mit Tinte,
übersichtlich und gut lesbar geschrieben sein.
Briefe dürfen vier normale Seiten mit je 15
Zeilen und Karten 10 Zeilen nach Werksruten.
Sodann Schreiben darf nur eine 12 Rpf. Brief-
marke beigefügt werden, welche verfallen der
Beschlagnahme zugunsten minderer Häftlinge.
Fotos dürfen nicht gesandt werden. Alle
Postsendungen müssen mit Häftlings- oder
Blocknummer versehen sein. Pakete jeglicher
Inhalts dürfen nicht empfangen werden. Es
kann im Lager alles gekauft werden. Geldsen-
dungen sind zulässig, müssen aber durch Post-
anweisung erfolgen. Nachhaltigliche Beis-
tungen sind zulässig, müssen aber vom Häftling
selbst über die Postanweisung des Frauen-
Konzentrationslagers bereitstehen. Ent-
satzungsgefechte aus der Haupthäft an die Lager-
leitung sind zwecklos.

Der Kommandant

U.S.S.R.



Heinz
Kazimierz Masto
Varschan

ul. Promenada 19 m 5
Generalgobernment.

The **Majdanek** concentration camp was established by the Nazis in October 1941 in the town of the same name about 4 kilometers east of Lublin in Poland. Its original name in German was "Konzentrationslager Lublin". Initially it was a prisoner of war camp run by the SS and in February 1943, it was transformed into a concentration and extermination camp. 300,000 prisoners passed through the camp, 78,000 died. It was liberated by the Red Army in July 1944.



Postcard dated 1.12.1943 from the Majdanek camp, forwarded via the Red Cross.

Sangerhausen was a subcamp of the Nazi concentration camp of **Mittelbau-Dora** built in 1944 near Nordhausen in Saxony. The field was explicitly built for the production of the German Wunderwaffe, in particular the V2 missiles. Prisoners from 40 subcamps including Sangerhausen worked under him. The total number of interned prisoners was about 60,000, of whom "officially" 12,000 died. However, the total number of dead is estimated at around 20,000 people.



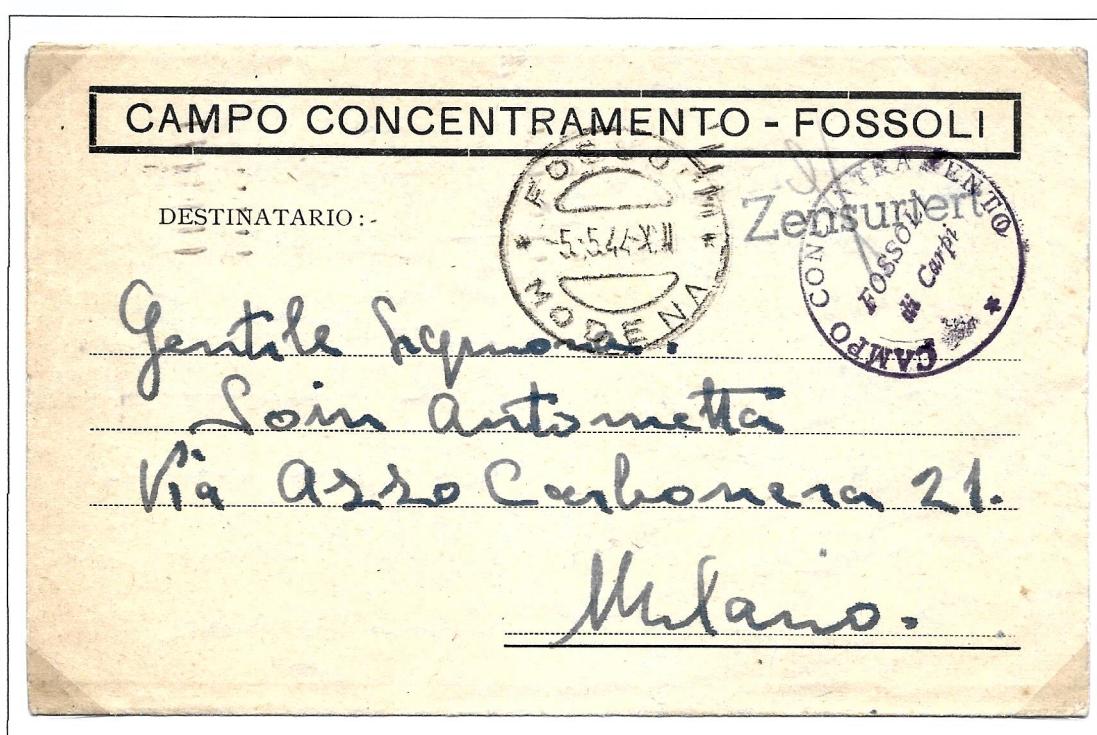
23.3.1945
postcard sent
from the
Sangerhausen
subcamp, of the
Mittelbau Dora
concentration camp
with rectangular
censorship stamp
" May only be
sent in German ".

The *Fossoli* camp was a military internment camp located in the town of the same name in Emilia Romagna, set up by the Italians in 1942 and subsequently used by the SS as a police camp for the collection and transit of political and racial prisoners. The 5,000 deported for political and racial reasons had tragic destinations in concentration camps in Germany.



Italian post card written on 3.1.1944 from the field of Fossoli and sent the next day by the post office of Carpi (Modena).

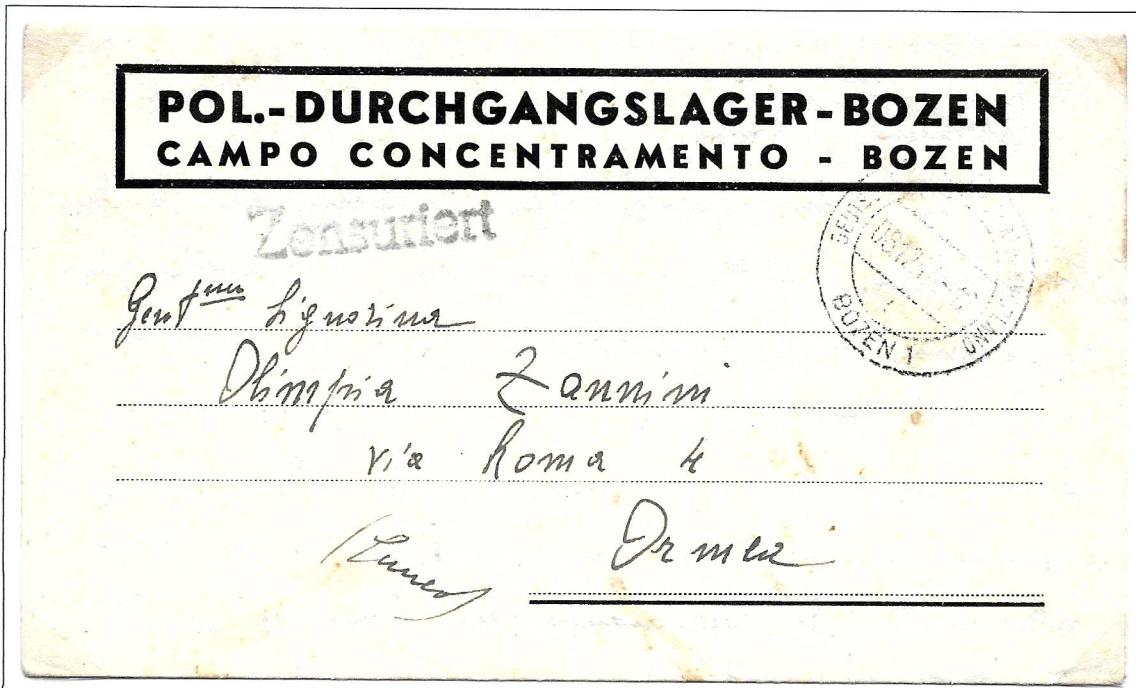
Guido Melli, was part of one of the 5 train trains destined for Auschwitz between January and August of 1944, where he died.



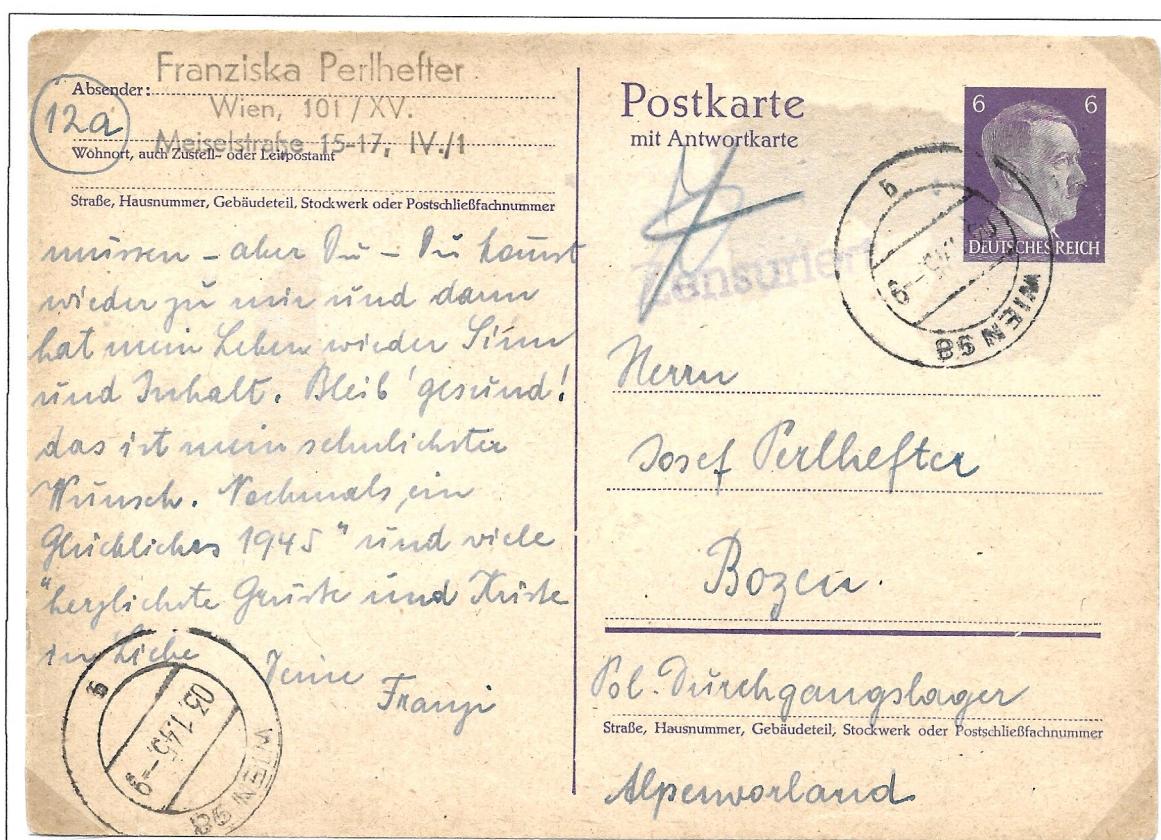
Back of the pre-printed postal card with arrival postmark in Milan 8.5.1944.

Postal card from the field of Fossoli concentration sent from the Fossoli post office on 5.5.1944 for Milan, with round censorship stamp of the field.

The **Bolzano** camp was located on the outskirts of the city in the Gries district. From 21 July 1944 it functioned as a transit camp, "Durchgangslager", for prisoners from all over Italy destined for German concentration camps. More than 15,000 prisoners were interned and passed through the camp.



Pre-printed ticket - sent on 8.12.1944 from the Bolzano concentration camp via the *Deutsche Dienpost Alpenvorland BOZEN I* with the camp's linear censorship stamp. The postal service authorized by the SS camp command officially began in October 1944 until the end of February 1945. In the first half of the aforesaid period the prisoners, including Jews, were assigned two tickets a month, in the second period the assignment was reduced to one deductible per month. The exemption was granted only to prisoners assigned to work in the camp and to those of the work-kommandos. No concessions at all for inmates in cells.



German postal card of 6 Pf. sent from Vienna on 3.1.1945 (cancellation and round stamp Wien) sent by Perlhefter Franziska to her husband. Giuseppe Perlhefter, arrested in 1944 because he was a Jew, deported first to the Fossoli camp and then in July 1944 to the Bolzano camp, was head cook in the kitchen of the SS command. Already in the Fossoli camp, some prisoners had been excluded from the last deportation and transferred to Bolzano, precisely by virtue of the tasks assigned to them.