



Karl Schafranek

Postcards from the Labour Camp

Karl Schafranek

9 June 1890 – 1944 (Belzec, Poland)

Jewish tradesman from Etsdorf am Kamp (Lower Austria)

In 1940, **Karl Schafranek** was sent to the **Bründlgschütt** labour camp, near **Eisenerz**, Styria. There, he drew these postcards, writing to his daughter **Lily** (born 1928) on the reverse side. The postcards were smuggled out of the camp and reached his family in Vienna. **Mr. Schafranek** together with his wife and daughter were deported in 1941 to the Modliborzyce ghetto, a village in the district of Lublin, Poland, where he had to work for a farmer. After the liquidation of the ghetto in October 1942, the family was transported to the Belzec death camp, where they were murdered in 1944.

After the war, the postcards came into the property of his sister, **Ida Schafranek**, who had left Austria in 1938 for the United Kingdom. They were later inherited by his grandnephew, **Dr. Martin Komjati**, who made the postcards available for public display for the first time on the occasion of the third International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust at the Vienna International Centre in January 2008.

The series consists of 4 postcards of the family property in **Etsdorf** and 17 postcards depicting life at the **Bründlgschütt** labour camp, including descriptions and comments by the author and various other prisoners.

Bründlgschütt*

Labour camp for Jews in Eisenerz, Styria

In early 1938, unemployment was high in Austria. One year later, there was a labour shortage in some branches, which was the result of migration of about 100.000 skilled workers to Germany, the military draft and the increased production of military equipment.

In May 1940, shortly after Berlin declared that Jews “should be used for road construction and excavation works”, three camps were assigned to them: “Prebichl”, “Bründlgschütt” and “Kremplhof” in Gsoll. As early as in 1940, 174 Viennese Jews were assigned to the company “Teerag ASDAG” for the extension of the Präbichlstraße.

At first, Jews received an hourly wage of 60 Reichspfennig, which was later reduced to 40 and finally to 11 Reichspfennig. This meant that for nine hours of work the gross pay was 99 Reichspfennig. The daily food costs which the inmates had to pay, amounted to 1.30 Reichsmark, which led to workers being regularly deprived of food. In the event of non-payment, workers were threatened with the Gestapo.

**Source: Heimo Halbrainer
Institut für Strukturforchung und Erwachsenenbildung der AK-Steiermark
(Hg.): Zwischen den Fronten. Die Region Eisenerz von 1938-1945. Leoben
2000, S. 31-33.*