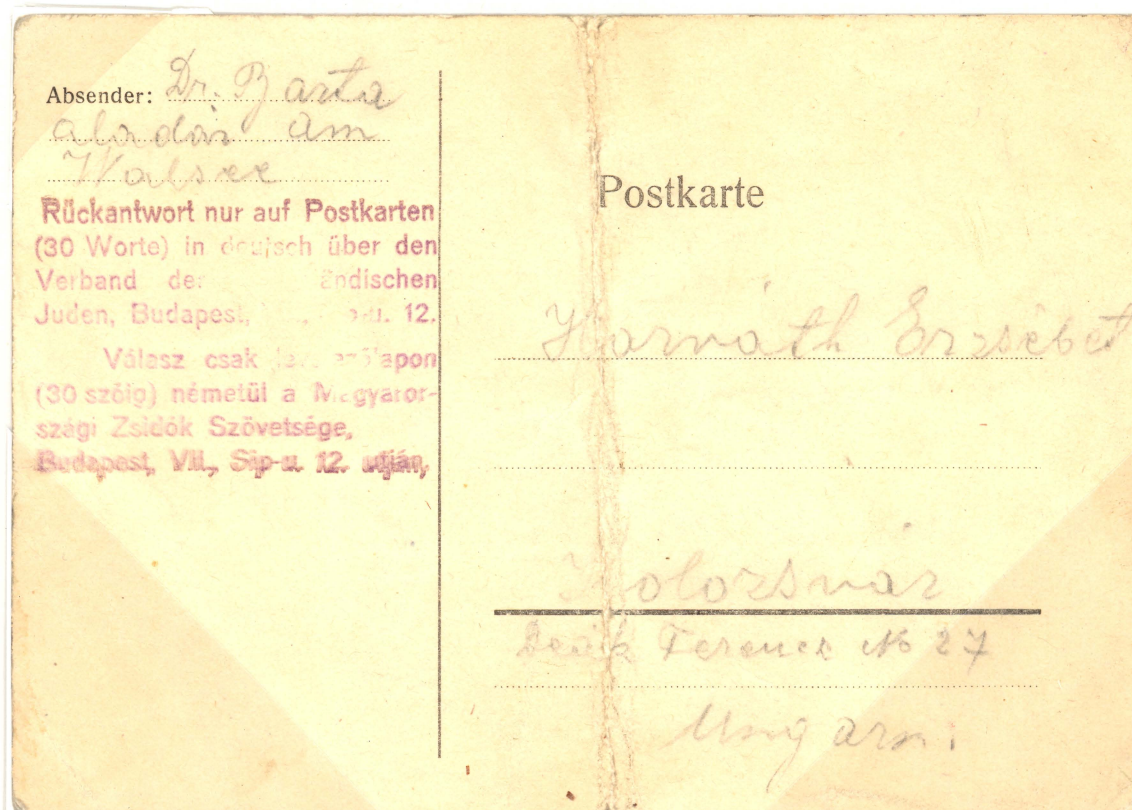


"Am Waldsee": Extermination Camp Auschwitz-Birkenau

Hungarian Jews were the last to be transported to the gas chambers of Auschwitz-Birkenau. By the time these deportations began, Jewish leaders were aware of their fate. To revive the deception, Adolf Eichmann's deputy said they were being sent to "Waldsee," a resort in southwestern Germany. Upon arrival at Auschwitz, deportees were instructed to write post cards telling relatives they had arrived safely and well. These were returned to Hungary outside the mails by SS couriers, and delivered to the Jewish Council, so they bear no postage stamps or cancellations.



The message on this May 31, 1944, prisoner's post card from the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp to Kolozsvár, Hungary (today Cluj, Romania), reads, "1944 V/31 Am Waldsee Dear Goske: I arrived safely and am healthy. I hope next to be occupied with my profession. You should write for Gabor, and also tell me what your Aunt Treve wrote to you. Hopefully I will write more next time. Kisses to you from Aladar." The message is more detailed than was required or typical of this mail. Circumspect references to others may have been Dr. Aladar Barta's way to communicate more than the Nazis wished to allow if, for example, these were deceased relatives or would have had some other comparable meaning to the recipient. The bilingual German-Hungarian handstamp instructs the recipient to reply only by post card (30 words) written in German addressed to the Society of Hungarian Jews at Budapest.