

The Holocaust: Transport to Death Camps

The Nazis' plan to annihilate the Jews of western, central, and southern Europe typically unfolded in stages. First: identification, arrest, expropriation of property, and incarceration in camps. Second: deportation to ghettos in Czechoslovakia, Poland, Ukraine, and the Baltic countries. Third: transport to death camps for extermination.

Above: The June 10, 1942, SS-fieldpost post card was mailed from Dolina Camp 1, an assembly center in Ukraine for Jews who had been selected for extermination. Below: The March 1, 1944, post card from Vienna to a German Jewish woman at Theresienstadt is an example of mail to a ghetto resident that is seldom seen. This exception reflects the period just before a staged and widely publicized visit from the International Committee of the Red Cross, when the Nazis relaxed their cruelty temporarily for propaganda purposes. Over the cancel is a rectangular March 13 arrival datestamp of the Jewish Self-Government Postal Facility. After the Red Cross visit in July, deportations to the Auschwitz and Treblinka death camps resumed, and continued as long as their gas chambers were in operation. Of 140,000 Jews deported to Theresienstadt, only 19,000 were still alive when the ghetto was liberated in May 1945.

