

WWII INTERNMENT OF POLISH SERVICEMEN IN LITHUANIA 1939-1940.

The attack on Poland jointly orchestrated by Germany (Sept. 1, 1939) and the Soviet Union (Sept. 17, 1939) forced the Polish High Command to order its military forces cross the borders of neutral countries. Approximately 13 000 Polish servicemen entered Lithuania in September 1939 and were interned there. The territory of Poland was split between Germany and the Soviet Union.

On October 10, 1939, the Soviet Union signed a treaty with Lithuania by which it traded a strip of occupied territory adjacent to the Lithuanian border with the city of Wilno (historic capital of Lithuania) for the Lithuanian consent for the Soviet military bases at its territory. Those bases played a pivotal role in the Soviets' plans of destabilizing and subduing Lithuania (June 1940) and incorporation into the Soviet Union a few months later. Wilno, under the Lithuanian name Vilnius, became the capital of the Republic of Lithuania.

Eight months later, Lithuania, along with other Baltic States, was subdued by the Soviet Union. The Red Army took the Poles (militaries as well as civilian refugees) from Lithuanian hands and shipped them to the Soviet Union.

Of 13 000 Polish servicemen who crossed the border: 3 400 were released and repatriated to the Soviet and German zones of occupation, 5 300 were released to the Wilno/Vilnius region, 150 were evacuated to the Polish Army in France and the remainder, approximately 4200, were taken over by the Red Army and shipped to camps in the Soviet Union.



In the presentation of postal history aspects of the internment of Polish servicemen in Lithuania focus is being placed on the following issues:

- [1] how free frank privileges were exercised;
- [2] identification of postal rates for mail exceeding the free mail quotas;
- [3] postal routes where identifiable;
- [4] illustration of mail censorship practices in Lithuania and Germany.

To avoid duplication the above listed issues are being examined in parallel.

The exhibit is based solely on the author's individual research which is being prepared for publication.

In September 1939 the Lithuanian authorities were not prepared to accept 13 000 Polish militaries into their territory and initially quartered them in privately owned houses in summer resorts.

The internees were not restricted in sending and obtaining mail but the free frank privileges were introduced only several months later.



Saukėnai — Senoji medinė statyba
L'ancienne structure en bois

Proszę mi podać
adres z Ameryki
ciotki — pochłonięta
najbardziej szczerze
z listy easy tam.
Jestem zdrowy, nawet
jest dobre Ciepło.
Alytus 21.8.39.

LIETUVA + LITHUANIE

ATVIRUKA

APMOKĖTŲ ATSAKYMU

CARTE POSTALE

AVEC REPOSE PAYEE



Deutschland

Bromberg

Cieszkowski-strasse 17-6.

An Fräulein

Janina Radzewska

Properly paid postcard (35 centai to foreign destination) mailed on Oct. 21, 1939, from Alytus, a temporary holding place where internees were housed only till the end of October 1939, to Bydgoszcz/Bromberg in German occupied Poland. No trace of Lithuanian censorship.

Violet coloured marking of the **FOREIGN MAIL CENSORSHIP OFFICE IN KÖNIGSBERG**

[1 of 2 recorded].

Postcard sent on Oct. 14, 1939,
from **Palanga** (in operation until
December 1939), through
Königsberg, to Kraków/Krakau
in German occupied Poland.
No trace of Lithuanian censorship.
A pencil annotation "D4" and a
circular violet coloured marking
have been applied in the
**FOREIGN MAIL CENSORSHIP
OFFICE IN KÖNIGSBERG.**
Red hand stamps: [1] **POLISH
RED CROSS/ THE CRACOW
DISTRICT**, [2] **FREE
DELIVERY** evidenced
that this postcard was hand
delivered by a Red Cross
volunteer.



Postcard sent on Dec. 20, 1939,
from **Palanga** to Rawicz/Rawitsch
in German occupied Poland.
Another type of censorship
marking, this time in red and
with indication **CENSORED**
applied in the **FOREIGN
MAIL CENSORSHIP
OFFICE IN KÖNIGSBERG.**

Oro paštu
Par avion

Marciusz Henryk
Bizštonas
Lithuania

British Radio
Corporation
(Polish Box)

London



Properly paid (90 centai)
air mail cover sent on Oct.
14, 1939, from Birštonas
(camp in operation until
January 1940) to BBC, in
England.

The cover probably
housed a request to
broadcast a message
that the sender is well
and has found refuge
in Lithuania.

In late October and early November 1939 new permanent camps adapted to winter conditions had been opened in several locations.

Postcard sent on Nov. 8, 1939,
from Ukmerge (in operation
from November 1939 until
May 1940) to Kluczewsk
near Kielce in German
occupied Poland.

Circular stamp of the
**FOREIGN MAIL CENSOR-
SHIP OFFICE IN
KÖNIGSBERG.**

The return address indicates
that the camp in Ukmerge had
the number "2". Three weeks
later the numbering of camps
was changed from Arabic
to Roman. The Ukmerge was
assigned the number "VI".



Birštonas

LIETUVA + LITHUANIE

Mehr nicht zugelassen

ATVIRUKAS

CARTÉ POSTALE



via Danzig

Prny Bar

Edward Michalski

w Kluczewsku
powiat Młoczerowa
woj. kielecki

Michalski Józef
Ukmerge
Internukigij
Starykles Nr. 2
Lietuva

A special message form # 32 was used when the International Red Cross received a request for information and the person sought was located in Lithuania.

The name of the enquirer was entered on the front of the form with an indication that "he is well".

The pre-printed instructions directed the person sought to write a message up to 25 words on

Kaunas, 4.02.1940

5524

Interné à Kalvarija



lit. 5200

32

Comité international de la Croix-Rouge

Agence centrale des Prisonniers de guerre

Palais du Conseil général, Genève, Suisse



A.L.

32

Comité international de la Croix-Rouge

Agence centrale des Prisonniers de guerre

Palais du Conseil général, Genève, Suisse

lit. 932

Kaunas, 2f. 10. 1939

591

Interné à Rokiskis

Das Internationale Komitee von Roten Kreuz in Genf bittet um Nachrichten über Ihr Befinden. Wollen Sie bitte umseitig antworten und dieses Formular an die obige Adresse zurückschicken.

Croix-Rouge à Genève a été les. Il vous serait reconnaissances du présent formulaire qui

von Roten Kreuz in Genf Befinden. Wollen Sie bitte Formular an die obige Adresse

zwrzonego Krzyża zapytuje na (i), oraz prosi o przesłania j str.) na wyżej wymieniony

Międzynarodowy Komitet Czerwonego Krzyża zapytuje niniejszym o stan zdrowia JW Pana (i), oraz prosi o przesłania w kopercie odpowiedzi (na drugiej str.) na wyżej wymieniony adres.

Im Auftrag von :

Powyższe w imieniu :

Katucki Stanislas

Jest zdrow

23 JAN. 1940

Antwort Umseitig. — Odpowiedź na drugiej str.

18766

enowski Franciszek
i Robert

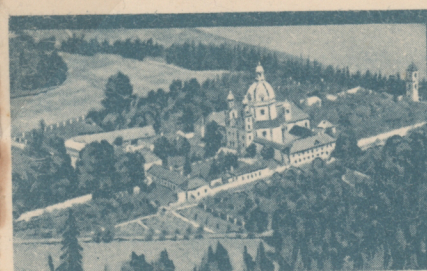
Two types of this form have been recorded: [1] at the bottom the bilingual form (in German and Polish) issued in late September 1939, [2] on top tri-lingual form (the French text added) issued in early 1940.



Properly paid postcard mailed on Jun. 21, 1940, from Warszawa/ Warschau to Kalvarija (in operation from October 1939 until July 1940). Framed "Ž" marking of Lithuanian censorship. Circular red coloured marking of the German HIGH COMMAND MILITARY CENSORSHIP OFFICE IN KÖNIGSBERG and manuscript German censors' annotations "U5" and "Z12". Note that an attempt has been made to mail the card as postage free which was not respected by German postal employee.

Censorship hand-stamps with framed "Ž" (žiureta-seen) can be found only on incoming mail to some of the camps between November 1939 and June 1940.

Postcard sent on Nov. 7, 1939 from one brother held in **Palanga** internment camp to another held in **Kulantuva** camp (in operation until January 1940). 15 centai paid the inland postcard rate. Framed "Ž" marking of Lithuanian censorship. Mail between camps is very rare.



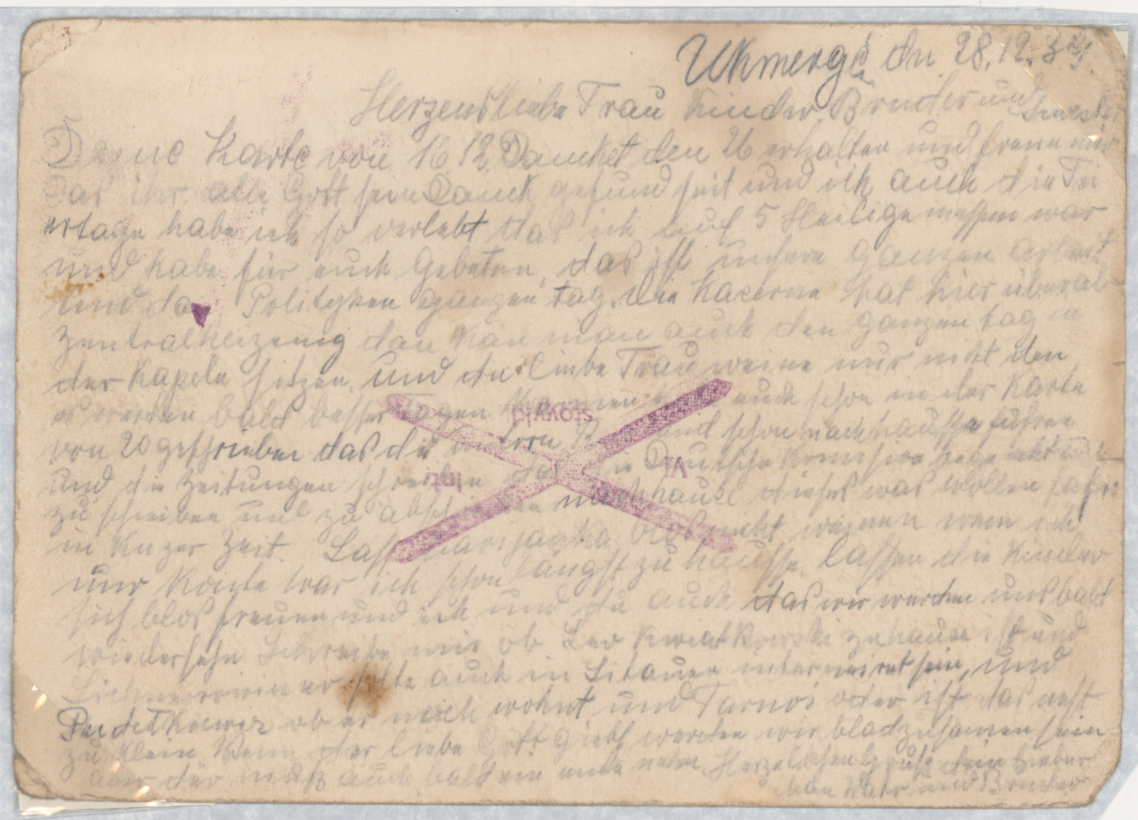
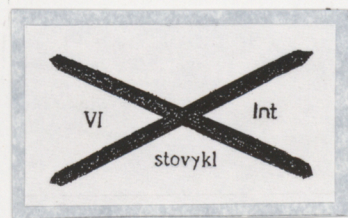
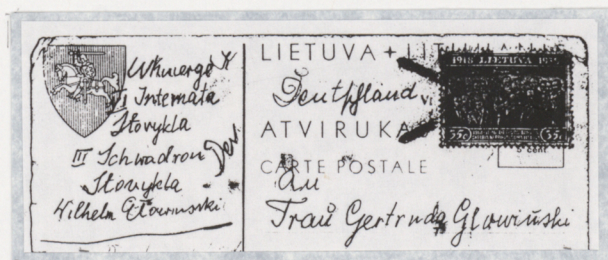
Pažaislis

LIETUVA + LITHUANIE
 Ž
 ATVIRUKAS
 CARTE POSTALE
 PALANGA
 -Z XI 39
 15 CT
 LIETUVA

J. M. P. Bohdan
 Laskowski

Kulantuva
 Internatų įėjimas
 Kamb. 5.

The official camp cachet seen here with text in Lithuanian "Internment Camp No. VI" written into St. Andrew's cross, is the only recorded marking of this kind used on correspondence originating from Lithuania.



Properly franked postcard written on Dec. 28, 1939, in Ukmergė and addressed to a village near Tczew/Dirschau in German occupied Poland. A 35 centai post stamp (paying postcard rate to foreign destination) tied with the official camp marking bearing text "Intern. Camp # VI" written into St. Andrew's cross. The same marking appears on the reverse of the card, probably as evidence of censorship. No trace of German censorship.

Abfender:

Seldpost



An

Aleksander Dachowski

Litauen (Litwana)

in Rokiškis, Dvaras

Straße, Hausnummer, Gebäudeteil, Stadtviertel oder Postschließfachnummer

9.39

Underpaid (15 groszy instead of 30 for a postcard to foreign destination) postcard sent on Dec. 4, 1939, from Warszawa/Warschau to Rokiškis (in operation from October 1939 until April 1940).

Red marking of the FOREIGN MAIL CENSORSHIP OFFICE IN KÖNIGSBERG.

A corner card cover of the Lithuanian Red Cross in Kaunas sent on Jan. 22, 1940, to Polish military interned in Ukmergė with official cachet of the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Red Cross.

Two annotations in Polish in red pencil: [1] 2nd company, and [2] Addressee not in Ukmergė.

UVOS RAUDONASIS KRYŽIUS
Kaunas, Kęstučio g. 8

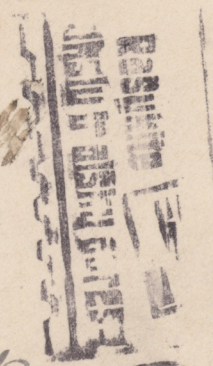
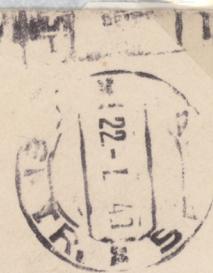
Intern. Kowred. Wzarski



Ukmergė

Intern. motulų, Stovyklų

Polesat 5 Ukmergė
niewer



Postcard with proper postage
written on Mar. 12, 1940, in
Rokiškis, and mailed from Kaunas
on Mar. 14, 1940, to Kraków /
Krakau. Red coloured marking
and pencil annotation "Z75"
applied in the **FOREIGN MAIL**
CENSORSHIP OFFICE IN
KÖNIGSBERG.



08/1

W. Pani

Stanisława Berejowa

Lublin

Deutsche Post Osten

ul. Króle Leszczyński 54 m 5.



Nadawca: Zygmunt Berej
Litwa - Wilkaviškis
Internatijos Plovykla Lbl 32 pokoj Nr 3.

Underpaid letter (15 instead of 60
centai for letter rate to foreign
destination) sent in 1940 (day and
month not legible) from Wilkaviškis
(in operation from the end of
November 1939 until July 1940) to
Lublin in German occupied Poland.
On the reverse, censorship sealing
tape and hand stamp of the German
HIGH COMMAND MILITARY
CENSORSHIP OFFICE IN
KÖNIGSBERG.

On the front, pencil annotations
"08/1" and "5" applied by
German censors.



Vilnius, vaizdas iš Gedimino Kalno
la vue de la montagne de Gediminas

Sokołowski Zygmunt
S. Kalvarija
Stovykla
Lietuva - Lumbia

LIETUVA + LITHUANIE



Свердлов Кнур

Красный Крест

Біалясток

Белосток

ul. Timaszkiewicza 29

ул. Терацкого 29.-

alla

Kofii Sokołowski

София Соколовской

Swisłocz

Свислочь

Srednia Bialostocka

Средняя Биларуская

Shkola.

Школа.-

Западная Беларусь.-

Properly paid postcard sent on Apr. 22, 1940, from Kalvarija (in operation from November 1939 until July 1940) to Swisłocz/Свіслочь near Białystok/Белосток in Soviet occupied Poland. Receiving datestamp CCCP-СВИСЛОЧЬ-БЕЛОСТ.БССР -18.5.40.

Properly paid postcard (15 centai for inland postcard rate) sent on Jun. 26, 1940, from the camp # VII in Kaunas Fortress (in operation from November 1939 until July 1940) to Wilno/Vilnius in the area which was seized by the Red Army and transferred to Lithuania. Datestamp of Panemune which is a district of Kaunas.



VII Internatų ju
Stovik la

Kaunas

all Panemune

Franciszek
Caruk

LIETUVA + LITHUANIE

ATVIRUKAS

CARTE POSTALE



J. M. P.
Katarzyna
Caruk

Vilnius

Pakalnes g-vė 5.-12.

Probably in February-March 1940, the Lithuanian authorities announced the introduction of free frank privileges. Apparently, this announcement was not followed by regulation specifying how postage free mail should be marked out. Consequently, a number of unfranked pieces of mail had been hand stamped with "T" (postage due) marking.

Lietuva

Kartka pocztowa

Deutschland

Nadawca:

Ukmergė

Internutu stovykla

16sala 10 kungo.

Czerłowa Strada 10

*Polizkowania i pozostali
mieszkańcy w tym
miejscu.*



via Königsberg



Wanda Rami

Janina Radoszewska

Krakau

T

Gregorzka str. 12-9

Un-franked postcard sent on Mar. 30, 1940, from Ukmergė to Kraków/Krakau with "T" (postage due) marking. Red circular marking of the German **HIGH COMMAND MILITARY CENSORSHIP OFFICE IN KÖNIGSBERG.**

374 *Vokietija*
Sia H. Königsberg
28.V.40.
E

Kartka pocztowa

Nadawca:

Lietuva

Ukmergė
Int. stov. 5 km.
C. straziūno.

Wielmożna Pani
J. Radoszewska
Krakau
Gregorzeka str. 12-9.

Nr. 3898 RAK

Postage free postcard sent on May 28, 1940, from Ukmergė to Kraków /Krakau.
Red cachet of the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Red Cross.
Red circular marking of the German HIGH COMMAND MILITARY CENSORSHIP OFFICE IN KÖNIGSBERG and pencil annotations "Z74" and "U25" of German censors.

Only postcards and only those sent through Lithuanian Red Cross could be recognized as postage free.

The bottom card seems to suggest that in Ukmerge camp, regular postcards used for postage free correspondence were pre-stamped with the cachet of "the Lithuania Red Cross Central Committee – The Information Bureau for Internees and Civilian Refugees" and then mailed out from the camp.

Postcard sent on Jun. 14, 1940, (one day before the Red Army seized Lithuania), from Ukmergė to Łomża /Ломжа in Soviet occupied Poland. The card was pre-stamped with the cachet of the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Red Cross which allowed it to go free of postage. A 15 centai stamp was attached probably by mistake since proper rate for this mail was 35 centai (postcard rate to foreign destination). Receiving datestamp of Łomża/ Ломжа 5.7.40.


Nadawca
Lietuva
Ukmergė
~ Internautųjų Stovykla
Kompania 7. sala № 61.
Petelsky Shicystan

LIETUVA + LITHUANIE
Pašto laiškas
Preštacio g. ve 8.
ATVIRUKAS
CARTE POSTALE
C.C.C.
Łomża (Łomia)
ul. Bongka № 47.
Ulynovskii Dwomp
Łomża
ulica Bongka № 47.
Szumowski Piotr.
albo ul. Bongka 47. Marciniał Jan.


1918 LIETUVA 1938
15c
1918-1919 LIETUVOS TARYBA
SKELBIA NEPRIKLUSOMĄ LIETUVĄ


14.V.40.
E


28.V.40.
E


5.7.40.
E

Postage free postcard written Jul. 8, 1940, in Kalvarija, forwarded to the Lithuanian Red Cross in Kaunas from where it was sent on Jul. 12, 1940 (datestamp of Kaunas Centr. Nr 5) to Jermališkes in Lithuania. Red marking of the Lithuanian Red Cross.



The postcards mailed from Kalvarija camp were directed first to the Lithuanian Red Cross in Kaunas, where the Red Cross cachet was applied and then mailed from Kaunas to the addressee.

Before the card was put into the mail in Kaunas, the original addressing to the Red Cross was crossed out.



Free of postage postcard written on Jun. 21, 1940, in Kalvarija, forwarded to Kaunas first and then re-sent on Jun. 26, 1940, to Pińczów in German occupied Poland. Cachet of the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Red Cross; red circular marking of the German HIGH COMMAND MILITARY CENSORSHIP OFFICE IN KÖNIGSBERG and two pencil annotations "Z77" and "U28" of German censors.



Lietuvos Raudonasis Kryžius

ŽINIŲ BIURAS INTERNUOTIEMS
IR PABĖGĖLIAMS

Croix - Rouge Lithuanienne

BUREAU DE RENSEIGNEMENTS SUR LES

INTERNÉS ET LES RÉFUGIÉS CIVILS

KAUNAS

Kęstučio gatvė 8, tel. 2 55 42

Telegr. adr.: LIETKRYŽIUS

J. J. Stominski
Vilkaviškis
Internuotųjų Stovykla
Komp. Paber.

Nimba



Józef Stominski

w. Rogowo i. Polesie

Xopou

y. Belostok

Postage free postcard written on Jun. 11, 1939, in **Vilkaviškis**, forwarded to Kaunas (where it was date stamped Jun. 12, 1940), and then sent to village Rogowo/Polesie, near Choroszcz/Xopou in Soviet occupied Poland.

Cachet of the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Red Cross. Transit date stamps of Białystok/Белосток (СССР-БЕЛОСТОК БССР-1.7.40) and Choroszcz (СССР-ХОРОШЦ БССР-1.7.40).

The special pre-printed postcards issued by the Lithuanian Red Cross were also used for the internee mail.

As shown above, the cards originating from Vilkaviškis camp were also directed first to Kaunas where they were date stamped.

Postage free postcard sent on Jun. 14, 1940, from **Kaunas** fortress to Warszawa/Warschau.

Cachet of the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Red Cross. Censorship markings of the German **HIGH COMMAND MILITARY CENSORSHIP OFFICE IN KÖNIGSBERG** and pencil annotations "Z79" and "U28" applied in the same place.



Lietuvos Raudonasis Kryžius

ŽINIŲ BIURAS INTERNUOTIEMS
IR PABĖGĖLIAMS

Croix - Rouge Lithuanienne

BUREAU DE RENSEIGNEMENTS SUR LES

INTERNÉS ET LES RÉFUGIÉS CIVILS

KAUNAS

Kęstučio gatvė 8, tel. 2 55 42

Telegr. adr.: LIETKRYŽIUS

Nadawca:
Bohdan Wilnarski
Lietuva
Kaunas
a. Konemune
Internuotųjų Stovykla
I komp. I. paber.
5 fortas.

A T V I R U K A S



Deutschland

Lietuvos Pab

Kazimierz Machnicki

Warschau

Washington Straße 136 m. 10





Požaislis

LIETUVA + LITHUANIE

ATVIRUKAS

CARTE POSTALE



Lietuva
Žeimiai pašto
Vigin dvakas
Jon Gudrevici

C. C. C. P.
Западна Грѣна

Robert
Монополевая А 32/1
W. Gudrevici



Priglasz mi adres mojej
matki

Properly franked postcard sent on
Apr. 27, 1940, from Žeimiai to
Kowel/Ковель in Soviet occupied
Poland. Receiving datestamp of
Kowel/Ковель (СССР-КОВЕЛЬ-
ВОЛЫН.ОБЛ. - 23.5.40).

In early 1940 many internees were released from camps and employed in the private sector.
Their status was changed from military internee to civilian refugee. Consequently, their
return address indicated either a place of employment or a local branch of the Lithuanian
Red Cross.

TELEFON MIĘDZYMIASTOWY USUWA ODLEGŁOŚĆ

KARTKA PO

NADAWCA:

Jerry Gołęb-
uski zemi. w domu Ga-
lanta u Truskolassów

Osada: Bzdaków

Państwo: Bzdaków

Powiat: Tomaszów

Mazowiecki.



Woj. Pan
Lacinski Władysław
Lietuvos Raudonojo
Kryžiaus Tarybą
A. Panemune

Kaunas

Lithuania

Slightly overpaid (32 groszy)
postcard (starting Apr. 1, 1940,
the postcard rate to satellite and
neutral countries as well as the
countries occupied by the German
forces was 30 groszy) sent on Jun.
26, 1940, from Tomaszów
Mazowiecki to a Pole staying in
the Red Cross sanatorium in
Kaunas-Panemune.
Red circular marking of the
German HIGH COMMAND
MILITARY CENSORSHIP
OFFICE IN KÖNIGSBERG
and pencil annotation "Z71"
of German censor.



LIETUVA + LITHUANIE



ATVIRUKAS
CARTE POSTALE

Litauen - Lietuva
Lietuvos Raudonosios Kryžiaus
Birštonas
Wojciechowski Józef

über Königsberg.
Wielmoira Paul
Janina Nowakowska
Warschau
Nalewki 27 m. II.

Postage free postcard written on Mar. 8, 1940, in Birštonas, then forwarded to the Red Cross in Kaunas and sent on Mar. 13 to Warszawa/Warschau. Cachet of the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Red Cross. Circular marking of German FOREIGN MAIL CENSORSHIP OFFICE IN KÖNIGSBERG and pencil annotation "Z71" of German Censor.

At least some of the civilian refugees were allowed free frank privileges.

After the Soviet seizure of Lithuania in mid July 1940, Polish internees and civilian refugees were taken over by the Red Army and shipped to camps in the Soviet Union.

Properly paid postcard sent on Jul. 30, 1940, from Birštonas to Kraków /Krakau.

Circular censorship marking PASSED - MILITARY HIGH COMMAND and pencil annotations: "D34", "Z38" and "1z/w" have been applied in Königsberg.

Example of very late mail.

By this time most Poles had already been deported to camps in the Soviet Union.



LIETUVA + LITHUANIE

über Königsberg.

ATVIRUKAS

CARTE POSTALE



Lietuva
Grybowicki Witold
Birštonas
Liet. Raud. Kryžiaus



Wielmoira Paul
Ligumunt Grybowicki

Krakau
ul. Grodzka 48. II p.