

EHRI Online Course in Holocaust Studies

CDEC

Persecution and Deportation in Western Europe

Anti-Jewish Legislation and Persecution of the Jews in Western Nazi Occupied Europe: some examples - The Persecution of the Italian Jews under Fascist rule.

Translation: *C02 Personal letters from the camps inmates to their families*

Fossoli di Carpi 20/3/44

My dearest,

We hope you receive this letter soon, since it will be posted from outside the camp. Yesterday we sent you a note in Vittorio's letter that was sent this morning and will be hand delivered to Ettore, the son of aunt Bellina, who was asked to deliver our note to aunt Giulietta's address. In any case, if you see him, ask him for it. We gave another note to the Di-Veroli brothers and they hope to be able to hand it over today to their sales clerks who came on Saturday to visit them from Rome and who promised to come again today.

Yesterday we asked you to send us some money. Since we got no response from those to whom we turned to (maybe they didn't respond out of fear), send us a little money. Here we can receive even 1,000 Lire each, but to be safer, send us each this amount in two instalments, a few days apart. I think the best way is through an express postal transfer or also a cashier's check sent in a letter via registered mail.

As for the body-linen, since the package postal service is not working, especially from Rome, is it better to let it go, and what's more, we have no impellent need for it. Unless you happen to know by chance someone who has to travel nearby and then you could send us some things. He could also try to request to speak to either one of us but this is quite unlikely to be granted, or else he could try to see us or call out to us somewhere along the barbed wire fence. In any case, this is no feat you should undertake yourselves and don't do anything crazy.

As we've already written, we are in a concentration camp in the province of Modena; this camp is divided in many parts. We, the 45\*, are all gathered together and right now we are 420 in all, divided in many dormitories. In each dormitory are lodged around 60 people who sleep 4 or 5 to a room. Families can stay united together in the same room.

As we've written to you, Adriana and I are in the same dormitory or lodge and we sleep in the same room near each other. Furthermore, because we are always together, we are taken for husband and wife. In the morning we wake up at 8:30/9:00, drink coffee with milk and then, if we care to do so and the weather is

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nice, we walk around camp. Around one o'clock we eat some soup and then again around 8 in the evening and they give us a little loaf of bread that weighs about 200 (or 20?) grams. Work in the kitchen, as well as all the cleaning of the dormitories is done in shifts by us Jews.

Adriana has already done 3 days of shifts in the kitchen peeling carrots, onions and potatoes while I was many times on duty cleaning our dormitory.

We can move around the camp till 9 in the evening, after that hour we are not allowed to leave the dormitory, where we stay and play a few card games or checkers. There are also workers, but up to now they have been volunteers and they serve as unskilled construction workers. All and all, life is not hard. We are in very good health. If need be, the doctors are Jewish and the surgery is run by a Jew, the shoemaker and the barber are Jewish as well. Therefore do not worry about us and if you want us to keep feeling good make sure we get letters from you at least until it is possible. So write us perhaps a few short lines every day. If it is possible we would like to know if you are still all together and do try to let us understand where you are without mentioning names.

All we can do is send you all hugs and kisses. Adriana and Giacomo.

Dear Elio, write to me often, even a few lines. Don't worry about me, I'm fine. Say hello to your brother and to Adriana and to you, I send a hug. Yours, Adriana.

Dear parents, I am always thinking about you just as I think about everyone, my dear sisters and my dear nephews. I only wish to know that you are well and calm, especially mom. The rest is not important; the storm that has hit our family will be behind us soon and blue skies will return. Then I will be able to hug you all. Yours, Adriana.

(There is a phrase, barely legible that says:)

Tell Alberto that his father needs money; he should send him a postal transfer. Greetings to all, Giacomino

Dear Marcella, don't worry about me, this storm will be behind us soon. Have faith and the strength to endure if you want to hug your Giacomino again. Take care of our children and try to make sure they don't lack anything. Congratulations to Pina for her birthday. Kisses to Lauretta and let's hope that by now she has healed. Kisses to Angelo. Yours, Giacomino

\*the number 45 in Judeo-Roman dialect is the equivalent of “Jew”

Translated by Victor Stow