

ZKD receipt dated 4.11.1971

F.Kruis

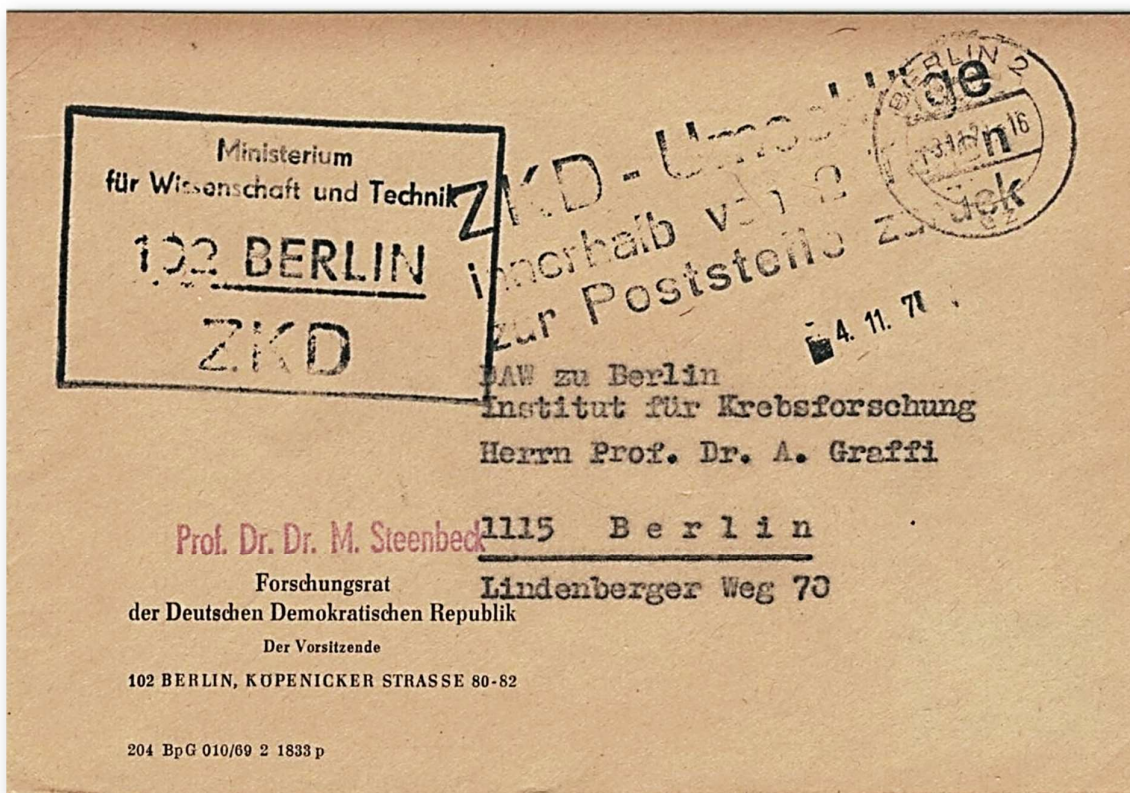
Philatelic information on the cover:

The Central Courier Service" was a postal service of the Ministry of the Interior of the GDR, operated by the Deutsche Post of the German Democratic Republic.

In the midst of the "Cold War", the GDR felt compelled to take measures to secure postal transport for state, administrative and economic authorities, as "secret" had become a key term for the GDR leadership. In February 1952, the Ministry of the Interior set up a postal service for mail between state agencies. These agencies had their mail delivered by a messenger. This mail was transported in an expedited manner, separate from normal mail.

It is noteworthy that not only the sender but also the addressee had to be a subscriber; if an addressee was not registered as a subscriber, the letter was stamped as normal mail and processed or returned.

For more information, see: https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zentraler_Kurierdienst



History of the cover:

Max Steenbeck - the sender of this letter - was born in Kiel in 1904 and studied chemistry and then physics at the university there. His instructors were the Nobel Prize winners Hans Geiger and Albrecht Kossel, and it was no coincidence that he did his doctorate on measuring the intensity of X-rays.

After graduating, he went to Siemens-Schuckert in Berlin, where he became head of the scientific department. There he constructed the first functioning betatron, an electron accelerator used in radiation therapy and radiation tests. He was thus at the cradle of modern radiotherapy and of pioneering basic physics research with the successors to the betatron being known today as particle accelerators.

In addition to this remarkable contribution to the welfare of mankind, Professor Steenbeck is also an exponent of the dichotomy in which scientists found themselves in the search for the elementary part of our existence: the atom.

For, soon after the first nuclear fission by Hahn and Strassmann (Berlin 1938), a military application of the process was contemplated at the Army Weapons Office in Berlin. The creation of the so-called Uranverein

was initiated. Steenbeck thus became part of the international race for the atomic bomb and the subsequent nuclear arms race.

Immediately after the defeat of the German Reich in May 1945, Steenbeck and other leading scientists in the field such as Manfred von Ardenne and Gustav Hertz were visited by Russian officers of the KGB. Shortly afterwards, they were transferred to Sukhumi in the Caucasus, where they had to work on the construction of the Russian atomic bomb.

After successfully completing this project, they were allowed to return to Germany in 1956 to the GDR mentioned above. Steenbeck became a leading member of the National Research Council, founded in 1957 on the West German model, which he chaired from 1965 to 1978. He thus had considerable influence on the development of nuclear energy in the GDR.

Another special aspect of this ZKD letter is the **recipient: Professor Arnold Graffi**. He was a German physician who pioneered experimental cancer research, including the use of neutron radiation. His scientific contribution is very extensive and varied, and despite the reluctance to use the sender and recipient as a philatelic element, I think this letter could have a place in a medical collection.