

Hugo Weigold - father of bird ringing

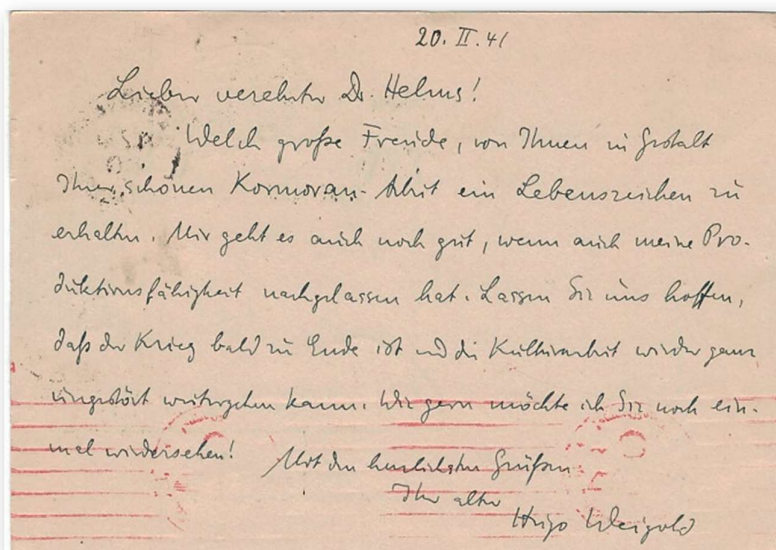
In February 1941, people in Berlin are no longer thinking about Operation Barbarossa, because the planning for it has been completed. And it has become customary to finish cards and letters with "Heil Hitler" to put one's signature underneath - and to avoid attracting attention.

The postal stationery (Hindenburg 6 Pf.) is striking because of the franking and the two different postmarks of 20.2. and 21.2.1941 (Thursday and Friday). It seems that the card was franked with a machine advertising postmark (Reichsmesse in Leipzig in March 1941), but returned (on the left are

remains of the return slip), franked with 9 Pf. and sent a second time to the PA Hannover. The recipient of the card is the ornithologist Dr. O. Helms in Charlottenlund, Denmark, which has been occupied by the Germans since 1940. As the postage costs seemed "strange" to me, I consulted Matthias Hapke of the Nordic States Research Association and received the following answer (he quotes Detlef



Fürth): DK and D were postally independent countries with (also) their own stamps during the entire WW II, i.e. they were foreign countries in relation to each other. This means that foreign postage had to be paid, which explains the card (back to sender and refranked). A special feature, however, is the Euro-European Postal Union initiated by Germany (German Reich, Mi.-Nos.



820-825). For postcards and simple letters, the domestic tariff applied for dispatch within the postal union countries. From 01.06.42 this applied only to mail between DK and D (both directions), and from 01.04.43 also to Albania, Bulgaria, Finland, Italy, Croatia, the Netherlands, Norway, Romania, San

Marino, Slovakia, and Hungary. This meant that a card from the North Cape to Sicily cost only domestic postage! On 25.11.45, the Postal Union came to an end.

Hugo Weigold, born in Dresden in 1886, studied natural sciences and ecology in Jena, also under Ernst Haeckel. In 1909 he received his doctorate from the University of Leipzig and moved to the Prussian Biological Institute on Helgoland. In 1910 he founded the Vogelwarte Helgoland there. From 1913 to 1915 he traveled through China and Tibet; the First World War prevented his return - he worked as an assistant teacher in Guangzhou from 1916 to 1919. From 1926 he was head of the natural history department of the Provincial Museum in Hanover until 1934; he obviously remained connected to the museum, because his return address on the card from 1941 is precisely this museum. On Helgoland, Weigold began ringing the birds in 1909, catching them [see Helgoland trap] and putting a metal or plastic ring on them. Weigold thanks Helms "with kind regards" for his submitted work from 1940: Skarven, Phalacrocorax c. carbo og Ph. c. Sinensis Shaw & Nodd., in Danmark. Dansk Ornitolog. Foren. Tidsskr. 34: 158-186. On the back, we also find a sloppily applied censorship stamp of the OKW.

Further reading: Wikipedia