

Auschwitz Concentration Camp (Oświęcim, Poland)

On May 15, 1943 on orders from the SS (elite armed wing of the Nazi party) scrip (Lagergeld) for concentration camps was introduced. For most camps there were two standardized designs (1943 and 1944). Terminology varied between premium notes, prize-coupons and premium favors. The scrip was distributed irregularly and apparently with great prejudice (particularly in favor of the Kapos).

Excerpts from Primo Levi (Survival in Auschwitz): "...Another boom period occurred for a singular reason: the arrival of a fresh contingent of robust Polish girls in place of the old inmates of the Frauenblock. In fact, as the prize-coupon is valid for entry to the Frauenblock (for the criminals and the political; not for the Jews)....hence the re-valuation, which in any case did not last long."

Excerpts from Viktor Frankl (Man's Search for Meaning): "...(after digging a tunnel) just before Christmas 1944 I was presented with a gift of so-called premium coupons. These were issued by the construction firm to which we were sold as slaves. The coupons cost the firm fifty pfennig each and could be exchanged for cigarettes. The privilege of actually smoking cigarettes was reserved for the Capo, who had his assured quota of weekly coupons; or possibly for a prisoner who worked as a foreman in a warehouse or workshop..."

The illustrated Pramienschein (premium note) is a Type 3 blue 1 Reichsmark (RM) issued in 1944. At total of 500,000 Type 3 notes were issued in August 1944 and printed on cardboard.

