

## LATI Mail to the United States

In September 1939 Germans lost their airmail service to South America by Deutsche Lufthansa, leaving the Pan American Airways route out of Portugal via the US as their only viable alternative. On January 18, 1940 mail from PanAm planes began to be examined by British censors in Bermuda, leading German radio on January 27 to declare that this "home of pirates, buccaneers and thieves now lives up to its vile reputation by pirating mail." Fascist Italy's **Linee Aeree Transcontinentali Italiane** (LATI), in development since 1938, began commercial operations on December 21, 1939. While its service was slower and its rates higher than PanAm's, it promised a chance to avoid British censorship.

People eventually figured out that LATI's South American service could be used as the first stage for mail to the United States. This led to a cat and mouse game as British intelligence and sympathetic Americans inside PanAm sought to subvert this LATI-based end run around British censorship. US entry into the war led to termination of LATI's South American Service in mid-December, 1941.

The overwhelming majority of covers carried by LATI were addressed to South American countries, principally Argentina and Brazil, and these are more or less common and readily available. However, LATI mail to the US is relatively scarce, and it comes onto the market infrequently.



*From a Jewish sender, Max Israel Urman, mailed 11 November 1941, delivered December 9, two days before the US and Germany declared war on each other.*

Given the high 240rpf postage for a single-weight cover (vs. 65rpf for carriage by PanAm), it is surprising that only about 15% of known LATI covers from Germany to the US were registered, for the small additional fee of 30rpf.