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Series: National Socialist Racism and Genocide; Photographic Sociology and Research Methodology by Miriam Y. Arani (1)

Translated and edited by Gita Marta Yegane Arani

This series:

This series is dedicated to the research and legacy of my sister Dr. Miriam Yegane Arani / Miriam Y. Arani – born in Siegen-Weidenau on 23.01.1964 – passed away in Frankfurt am Main on 16.07.2019. My sister chose in her work on National Socialist racist policies, foremostly as implemented in the so called Reichsgau Wartheland, a criminological approach, through the development of a historiographical-sociological methodology for the analysis of photographic materials in conjunction with the study of archival materials through source-critical and contextualized photo-historical proofs of authenticity. Meanwhile Miriam took a pedagogical approach to thus facilitate the introduction of the difficult subject matter in order to provide a broad, informed perspective on the events, especially in the "Reichsgau Wartheland", in a way which should be equally accessible to every interested reader.

Tags: national socialism, ns racism, photography, sociology, methodology

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Miriam Y. Arani:

Fotografische Selbst- und Fremdbilder von Deutschen und Polen im Reichsgau Wartheland 1939–1945. Unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Region Wielkopolska, Hamburg 2008.

Miriam Y. Arani, Miriam Djamileh Yegane Arani, Dissertation at the UDK Berlin, 2007:

Fotografische Selbst- und Fremdbilder von Besatzern und Besetzten während des Zweiten Weltkriegs am Beispiel der Fotografien von Polen und Deutschen während der nationalsozialistischen Besatzung 1939-1945 in Poznan/Posen und Wielkopolska/Großpolen (sog. Reichsgau Wartheland)

Photographic Images of the Self and of Others by Occupiers and Occupied During the Second World War Using the Example of Photographs of Poles and Germans during the Nazi Occupation 1939-1945 in Poznan/Posen and Wielkopolska/Grosspolen (so-called Reichsgau Wartheland)

Abstract: Images of the Self and the Other under Nazi-Occupation in the ‘Reichsgau Wartheland’

German and Polish photographic images of the Self and the Other in Reichsgau Wartheland, 1939-1945.

With particular emphasis on the Wielkopolska region.

The Second World War began in September 1939 with Germany’s attack on Poland. “Reichsgau Wartheland” was a German administrative unit created from former Polish territory after the military occupation. It became a model for the implementation of the Nazi regime’s population and land settlement policies for Eastern Europe. The region, which was mainly populated by Poles, was to be completely “Germanized” within ten years. As a result, from the end of 1939, several hundred thousand Polish citizens were expelled and their property was expropriated. The Jews among them were concentrated in ghettos and murdered. Reich Germans and ethnic Germans (Volksdeutsche) from Eastern Europe were settled in place of the expelled Polish citizens. Nazi race ideology decreed that these members of the German “master race” were now to rule over Polish work slaves. In relative terms, Poland was the country which suffered the highest percentage of civilian casualties during the Second World War. As a result there are still significant communication problems between the two societies concerning the past.

According to the psychological communication theory of Paul Watzlawick, Janet Beavin and Don Jackson, human beings define their relationships to each other primarily in non-verbal ways, so that the “power of images” increases in conflict relationships.

Consequently, a conflict can be expressed in a visually symbolic manner even though it can no longer or not yet be articulated verbally. Working within the framework of this theory, I analysed photographs created under German occupation in the Wielkopolska region, the centre of the new “Reichsgau Wartheland”, as a medium of visual communication. My aim was to examine German and Polish images of the Self and the Other as reflected in the photographs taken during the period of war and occupation.

In order to make the most valid and reliable statements about the pictures, I examined approximately 30,000 photographs from three West German, and more than a dozen Polish archives, museums and libraries. From these, approximately 10,000 contemporary prints were classified as relevant picture sources from the place and period under investigation. These prints make up the body of source material subsequently analysed and interpreted. The photographs were described and compared, using methods of historical source criticism and art-historical techniques for the safeguarding of objects.

Many of the photographers could not be identified, nor could the circumstances under which many of the photographs were taken be individually reconstructed. Consequently, the form of the photographic primary sources themselves became the basis for statements about their creators and their purpose. Theoretical and methodological approaches from the social sciences were used in the analysis and interpretation of the mass of photographs that have survived.

The body of source material thus generated allowed me to make statements about national and institutional differences in the preservation of photographic material. In the West German institutions only photographs taken by Germans had been preserved, while the Polish institutions held pictures taken by both Germans and Poles. After the war the photographs from the “Reichsgau Wartheland” were preserved with differing national thematic emphases. Pictures that were incompatible with the collective memory of the respective nation state were generally not preserved in public institutions. Where such pictures were preserved, they existed only on the margins of the collections.

In addition, the body of source material enabled me to make statements about German and Polish group specific photographic images of the Self and the Other. These images are not identical with the nationally homogenous images of the Self and the Other assumed by stereotype research. The empirical findings contradicted the assumption that nationally homogenous German and Polish photographic auto- and heterostereotypes existed even during the war. The homogenisation of national images of the Self and the Other is only evident in those photographs produced and disseminated by institutions.

The description and critical comparison of the pictures as physical objects, including aspects such as format, and of the characteristics of picture composition and subject, enabled me to

reconstruct several significant creator groups. Each group is typified by a different group style, and each style is connected with particular social functions of the medium of photography:

- the function of individual self-representation within the context of a civil society (studio portraits)
- a function of private memory (“snaps”, private photo albums)
- the function of social control (police use of photographic records)
- the function of mass communication (press photography and photo-journalism)

During the war German and Polish portrait photographers, working in their studios, were often more faithful to their profession than to changing political ideologies. They photographed their customers as they wished to be photographed. The portrait photographer has traditionally masked flaws in a subject’s appearance in order to provide the “nice” picture that most customers want. The techniques employed to achieve this include a flattering use of light, conventionalised studio staging and subsequent retouching. The images created in the portrait studios during the war years were based on the same principles. Where both parties agreed to the transaction, these principles held good, regardless of the nationality of photographer and customer.

The photographs with the widest public reach were press photographs. The Nazi regime controlled the production and distribution of these photographs, just as they controlled the entire German press. The Nazi Party press experts were well aware of the propaganda effect of photographs, which are considered by the public to be more reliable than words. When the war began, close-up images of corpses were presented to the German public in print media targeted at various audiences. The images supposedly depicted ethnic Germans (Volksdeutsche) murdered by “brutish” Poles. These atrocity pictures were published repeatedly during the war. For the Germans, they became a visual symbol of “Polish cruelty”, seeming to justify acts of aggression towards Poles.

The entire German press received daily instructions from the Ministry of Propaganda as to which subjects they could cover, and how those subjects were to be presented. Basic instructions for portraying Poles in the press were issued in October 1939. The Polish press in the “Reichsgau Wartheland” was closed down, and in its place a Nazi Gau press, from which Poles were excluded, was set up. The Ostdeutscher Beobachter (East German Observer), a German daily newspaper published in Poznan, and other print media used photographs repeatedly to illustrate an antagonism between “German” order and culture, on the one hand, and “Polish” disorder and lack of culture on the other. The photographs from the Warthegau published in the Ostdeutscher Beobachter create the illusion that the area was populated entirely by Germans, whose alleged superiority was manifested in major economic and cultural structural change. The Poles, who made up three quarters of the population, were generally not represented pictorially. The restrictions imposed by the Nazi propaganda

institutions led to a national homogenization of German images of the Self and the Other in press photography.

The German SS and police were collective originators of numerous photographs for internal purposes. These photographs produced by police institutions were not made public at the time. They can be divided into roughly two types.

1. A standardised use of photography for criminal identification in the form of a three part photograph, giving a front, profile and three quarter view of the head. At the beginning of the 20th century this type of picture established itself as the model for the photographic depiction of criminals. The Polish people had been criminalised en masse, as an ethnic group, by the Nazi regime's "racial policy". Thus in "Reichsgau Wartheland" they became the favoured object of this type of photographic record.

2. Non-professional photography also appeared in internal police reports documenting the performance of the police. Most of the photographs used for this internal reporting were snapshots. Some of these images depicted the police in their working relationship to the Polish citizens. The SS and police photographs I located were nationally homogenous in so far as all the photographers were German, and the Poles were, without exception, the objects of the photographs.

Another large group of images is made up of snapshots taken by Germans. The creators of these pictures chose their subjects freely, and did not intend for their photographs to be seen by the general public. The individual priorities evident in this non-professional photography give rise to a generally greater degree of heterogeneity in the images of the Self and the Other. However, there is a difference in subject matter between the snapshots taken by Germans preserved in West Germany and those preserved in Poland. For example, photographs taken by Germans, showing public executions of Polish citizens by Germans were, with one exception, preserved only in Polish institutions. The West German picture collections consisted predominantly of snapshots taken by Germans, dealing with domestic German relationships. In Poland, on the other hand, the institutions preserved many snapshots taken by Germans, illustrating the violent relationship between Germans and Poles. After the war, in the People's Republic of Poland, enlarged photographs of public executions of Polish citizens, taken by Germans, were published repeatedly and became the visual symbols of "German barbarism".

Under the German occupation, Poles in "Reichsgau Wartheland" had to work in German managed businesses. More than one hundred Poles worked as photographic laboratory assistants in such businesses. In the darkrooms they became invisible observers, witnesses to what the Germans were photographing during the war. At first, the occupying power had restricted the activity of Polish photographers in the Warthegau to the private sphere, but in the summer of 1941 even the private possession and use of cameras was forbidden. Only a minority of Poles continued to photograph in secret after this ban. The photographs taken by Poles which have been preserved are heterogeneous. Many Poles collected photographs taken by Germans.

Polish laboratory assistants often secretly made extra prints of photographs brought in by Germans to be developed. Some lab assistants passed on photographs showing Nazi crimes or German troop movements to the organised Polish resistance. The most extensive documentation of the anti-Polish occupation policy in the “Gau capital” of Poznan was preserved by the Szare Szeregi, the Polish boy and girl scouts who joined the resistance at the start of the war. From 1940 onwards, they photographed numerous signs in public places forbidding Poles to enter parks, playgrounds, sports grounds, museums, libraries etc. Other photos taken by the Szare Szeregi show the secret schools they organised. The significance of these pictures can only be understood against the background of cultural and educational policy in the Warthegau at this time.

The Polish population were denied access to education by the Nazi occupation force. In photographs the Poles presented themselves as equals of the Germans, and they used photographic representations of Polish culture to counter the occupiers’ assertion that they were an uncultured people. The German public are unfamiliar with Polish photographic images of the Self from the war years.

These images are by no means limited to a visual self representation as victim.

Miriam Yegane Arani, Berlin, November 2009

Miriam Y. Arani: Fotografische Selbst- und Fremdbilder von Deutschen und Polen im Reichsgau Wartheland 1939–1945. Unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Region Wielkopolska, Hamburg 2008.

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Excerpt from Chapter II.: Methods and Findings

II. Methods and Findings

1. Methods of source criticism of historical photographic images [1]: the external and the internal criticism of the source

[Excerpt pp. 67-69]

Against the background of the controversies surrounding the photographs of the so-called Wehrmacht exhibition [Wehrmachtsausstellung] [2], the necessity of a source-critical approach to historical photographs has become particularly clear. Although the general statements conveyed in this exhibition were scientifically secured, controversies developed over the photographs presented, which had not been subjected to a thorough and careful source criticism by the exhibition organizers. It had also not been sufficiently taken into account that the locations where most of the photographs were taken were outside of today's German territory and that the events that took place there at that time, which are depicted in the photographs, cannot be reliably reconstructed solely on the basis of German-language sources and secondary literature [3]

The present study aims to objectify the problems of source identification, source criticism, and interpretation associated with photographs from the World War II period. Therefore, it is necessary to discuss source-critical methods in more detail. [4] There is no method of source criticism for photographs developed by university-based historical scholarship. [5] This has led to the assumption among numerous historians that there are no specific methods for critiquing photographic image sources. But fruitful methodological approaches to the criticism of photographic sources do exist, especially in art history, ethnology, and the social sciences:

1) The art historical methods that can also be applied to non-art photographs include, in particular, object identification and determination, comparative vision, and Panofsky's iconography and iconology (insofar as it can be applied). In particular, the procedures of item securing and item description [6] commonly used in art history are very pertinent, as they lead one to pay more attention to the overall nature of an individual image – both the image carrier and the image content – and to view it analytically.

2) A number of methodological approaches to the critique of photographic image sources have been formulated specifically in relation to photographic sources on history. [7] This is a transfer of source-critical methods commonly used in historical studies to photographs, which have been modified in interaction with empirical experience in working with historical photographs according to the specifics of the medium.

3) In addition, applicable media-sociological approaches have been developed in the social sciences, as well as methods for more precisely determining the sociological information content of photographs as data sources. [8]

Here, we first discuss the critique of photographic sources from a historiographical perspective. In historical research, a distinction is made between external and internal source criticism. External source criticism is an authenticity check that is carried out on the basis of external characteristics of a source. It is supported by a description of the source, which contains information about the form of the source, its origin and tradition. Internal source criticism, on the other hand, serves to determine the message content and epistemological value of a source. For this purpose, the source is analyzed in terms of how the author depicts a state or an occurrence, what he was able to depict and what he wanted to depict. To determine the value of a historical source, external source criticism is not sufficient; for this purpose, internal source criticism is always required as well. The surest method of determining source value is a comparative analysis of several contemporaneous sources, independent of each other, that report the same event or condition. [9]

1.a. External Source Criticism: Authenticity Verification

Methods for verifying and ensuring the authenticity of historical photographs are particularly important in the case of photographic images of politically controversial event-fields. These accusations usually relate only to individual elements of the photographic image and completely ignore the overall context of the creation and transmission of a photograph. This, however, is of crucial importance in the authentication process. The rejection of photographic information that does not correspond to the prejudice structure of the recipients has also become known within the social sciences. [10] Since in the case of politically controversial historical event-fields and facts, one must expect primarily politically motivated doubts about the authenticity of photographic sources whose content contradicts the political-historical prejudice structure of individual population groups, a careful external source criticism to prove authenticity is the indispensable basis of any further analysis and interpretation of photographic sources.

Proven methods of authenticity testing of historical photographs have been described by Wolf Buchmann [11] and Diethart Kerbs [12]. While Kerbs presents methods related to the material form of transmission and the real history [Realgeschichte] of photography, Buchmann is oriented towards the traditional methods of historical science, which are also used for authenticity testing of written documents. Both methods of source criticism complement each other: while Buchmann deals with general methods of source criticism that can also be applied to photographs, Kerbs deals with methods that relate specifically to the historical modes of production and material forms of transmission of photographic image sources. Buchmann's essay grew out of his work at the Bundesarchiv; it, too, was confronted with accusations of forgery regarding photographs from its own holdings that had been used in the first exhibition of the Hamburg Institute for Social Research on the crimes of the Wehrmacht 1941-1944. [13] In the following, the methods of authenticity testing for historical photographs presented by Wolf Buchmann are briefly described. They form a framework for

the specific photo-historical-realistic methods [14] as presented by Diethart Kerbs. These methods can be used to ensure that the photographs are indeed “genuine” photographs from the period under investigation. Wolf Buchmann distinguishes between two procedures for checking the authenticity of historical documents, which can also be applied to photographs:

- a) the examination of the document itself (shape of the source) and
- b) the examination of the origin of the document (origin and transmission of the source).

It is through the application of these two examination procedures – which together constitute external source criticism – that the authenticity of a historical photographic record can be assured. As has been shown in the course of this investigation, the examination of the gestalt of the photographic source requires special attention in a decidedly photo-scientific and photo-historical approach. Therefore, the examination of the gestalt of the sources is explained here in great detail. The examination of the origin of the document, on the other hand, is only sketched out in outline and presented in the individual chapters in relation to the concrete photographic traditions.

[1] The methods of critiquing photographic sources are presented here in relation to the findings collected in this research.

[2] The actual title of the Hamburg Institute for Social Research exhibition was “Vernichtungskrieg. Die Verbrechen der Wehrmacht 1941-1944“; see Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung, 1996.

[3] The most influential critics of the first exhibition (Bogdan Musial and the magazine “Focus,” cooperating with the Polish weekly “wprost”) substantiated their theses with Polish-language sources and findings of historiographical research in Poland. On the second exhibition, see Hesse 2002 and Arani 2002.

[4] Among the methodological approaches that have been published in historiographical discussion contexts, there is a relatively strong tendency to apply the iconographic-iconological method of interpretation, familiar from art history, to historical photographs of contemporary historical interest (see Jäger 2000, pp. 75f.; cf. for example Berg 1994). Such attempts often amount to interpretations of the meaning of individual pictorial elements of a historical photograph without being able to prove the authenticity of the photograph to outsiders. In these cases, the images are not subjected to any source criticism, as is usual with written sources. This tendency to interpret images without using source-critical methods opens up the possibility of doubting the authenticity of both the photographs and the photographically documented facts and probably also leads to the fact that no general progress in knowledge is achieved with regard to the producers and production methods of the photographs that have been handed down.

[5] Cf. Bartov et al. 2000; among the few professors of history who persistently advance an examination of images is, for example, Gerhard Paul; cf. Paul 2006.

[6] Cf. Sauerländer 1988; also M. Schmidt 1994.

[7] Cf. Sauer 2002; Jäger 2000, pp. 65-88, esp. pp. 72-75 (realienkunde and social-historical consideration); Buchmann 1999; Kerbs 1990, p. 24.

[8] See remarks on visual sociology in the appendix.

[9] Faber/Geiss 1992, pp. 96f.

[10] Cf. Wagner 1979.

[11] Buchmann 1999, pp. 296-306.

[12] Kerbs 1990, pp. 241-262.

[13] Buchmann 1999.

[14] Cf. Jäger 2000.

Excerpt from Chapter III.: National Socialist Press Control [Presselenkung] and Photographic Publicity

From Chapter III.: National Socialist Press Control [Presselenkung] and Photographic Publicity

2. Press photography in the context of Nazi propaganda media in the Reichsgau Wartheland;

a. Photographs as propaganda means and as documentation medium of visual propaganda means; The officially licensed press photographers in the Warthegau [...]

[Excerpt pp. 224-230]

[...] 2. Press Photography in the Context of National Socialist Propaganda Means in the Reichsgau Wartheland

Compared to other areas of photographic application, the special feature of press photographs lies in their journalistic news value, topicality, and a mass communicative duplication. In the media landscape of the time, press photographs were the most up-to-date news images and they were created with the help of an imaging process that was considered objective. [170] Only through their reproduction do press photographs acquire a mass media function and public relevance. An original contemporary paper print can only be in one place; the circle of viewers is limited to a micro-social field. Only mass reproduction catapults a photograph to a macrosocial level of communication and causes the photographic image to penetrate the public sphere and social consciousness. Through mass reproduction, the notoriety of an image expands spatially far beyond the location of the original photographic image (negative and first prints). The purpose of a press photograph is to communicate pictorial news to a wider public.

A decisive intervention by the National Socialist occupying power in the pictorial coverage of the territory of the Reichsgau Wartheland from September 1939 to January 1945 was the exclusion of all Polish press photographers. Poles were completely excluded from the press here, although they formed the majority of the population in this administrative unit. For this reason, no press photographs by Polish authors from the region have survived from the period under study. The exclusion of Polish press photographers did not occur directly, but indirectly through several measures taken by the occupying power in various policy areas.

The photographic stocks examined included contact sheets and enlargements of press photographs and photographs of “German” press photographers from the Reichsgau Wartheland printed in the press. So far, no research has been conducted on the German press photographers in the western Polish territories annexed by the Germans in 1939-1945. In the

empirically collected findings, the press photographs could be narrowed down relatively easily on the basis of external characteristics. As already described in more detail elsewhere, the external characteristics of the press photo prints of the time include, for example, image formats and captions standardized in a certain way. The two largest inventories of press photographs from the Warthegau that have been examined are the partially preserved photographic contact sheets of the NSDAP-Gaupresseamt in Posen [171] and the photographs from the Gau area published in the *Ostdeutscher Beobachter* from 1939 to 1945. This chapter outlines the general production conditions of press photographs legally produced under National Socialist rule in relation to the empirical findings collected. It examines the extent to which the photographs are propagandistic or not, and which images of the Germans of themselves and others were conveyed through the press photographs.

The findings from press photographs allow us to say that since the beginning of the war in 1939, all of the pictures – largely independent of the personal political dispositions of the individual press photographers – propagated a consistently positive self-image of the “Germans” and, at the margins, a negative external image of the “Poles. What is of interest here is which production conditions led to this homogenization and how the positive self-image of the “Germans” and the negative foreign image of the “Poles” were shaped in detail.

Even if the German press photographers – as they themselves frequently emphasized – belonged to a professional group that emphasized the “individualism” of the group members, it was possible for the Propaganda Ministry, in conjunction with the state organs and party institutions that exercised violence, to steer the majority of the “German” photojournalists in the desired political direction. On the other hand, it is also known from press history research that during the National Socialist era, individual journalists who personally rejected National Socialist ideology and politics and secretly helped fellow citizens of Jewish origin nevertheless served National Socialist press propaganda with their journalistic products. [172] Such paradoxical constellations must also be considered in the case of press photographers.

So far, it is unclear to what extent political distance from propaganda can be expressed in press photographs. The repressive character of the National Socialist dictatorship must be taken into account, as well as the fact that since the earliest days of mankind, “tyrants” have instilled mortal fear in political dissenters in order to subjugate them in this way. In honor of the few people who nevertheless dared to violently resist a tyrant’s rule, “democrats” for example, erected a stone monument already in ancient Greece. [173] The communication processes within a modern nation-state at the beginning of the 20th century in Poland or Germany are far more complex than in the Greek city-states in the 5th century BCE. For this reason, this study aims to provide as differentiated an understanding as possible of the scope of action of German press photographers under the conditions of National Socialist “tyranny”.

In order to resolve the contradictions that arise between some of the previous explanatory approaches and the empirical findings, it proved useful to distinguish between a micro level of individual cases (individual photographers and individual photographs) and a macro level of National Socialist media policy in its entirety (as a socially dominant framework of action), following sociological approaches to the analysis of complex social networks of relationships

[174] in the analysis of press photography in the National Socialist state. In order to arrive at an adequate understanding of photographic image propaganda in the National Socialist state and to reconstruct the contexts in which the press photographs were created, the overall media policy context and the cross-media National Socialist propaganda steering system must be included in the analysis: National Socialist media policy significantly limited the scope of action of press photographers. When analyzing the various organizational levels at which press photographs were created and distributed, a distinction must be made between the photographers, as producers of the photographic images, and the exploiters of these photographic images (picture editors, publishers, etc.), who were the people primarily responsible for the political line of the printed products during the Nazi dictatorship. The picture editors, publishers and propaganda experts were responsible for the practical implementation of the instructions from the Ministry of Propaganda in Berlin. Indirect censorship and National Socialist propaganda were realized in the interlocking of several state and party institutions and organizational levels at the same time. If one asks which organizations and hierarchical levels were responsible for photographic image propaganda, one encounters procedures based on the division of labor: Functionaries of the propaganda apparatus formulated propaganda goals, which were then realized by the picture agencies or editorial offices with the help of press photographers. Representatives of the propaganda apparatus were involved in the formulation of the captions officially distributed to the newspapers.

Sonntag, den 23. Januar 1944 Ostdeutsche

Geburtstag des Gauleiters

Die besten Wünsche des gesamten Deutschland gelten dem Beauftragten des Führers und seinem Werk

Gauleiter und Reichsstatthalter Arthur Greiser vollendete gestern sein 47. Lebensjahr. Aus diesem Anlaß fanden sich am Vormittag in den Diensträumen des Gauleiters im Deutschen Schloß zu Posen die führenden Männer der Partei und Wehrmacht, der staatlichen und kommunalen Verwaltung, der Wirtschaft und des Kulturlebens ein, um dem Gauleiter ihre herzlichsten Glückwünsche zum Ausdruck zu bringen.

Als erste erschienen die Vertreter der Wehrmacht mit dem Stellv. Kommandierenden General und Befehlshaber im Wehrkreis XXI General der Artillerie Petzel an der Spitze, der dem Gauleiter die besten Wünsche der Wehrmacht überbrachte. Im Namen der vollzählig erschienenen Gauamtsleiter richtete Gaustabsamtsleiter Walther herzliche Glückwunschworte an den Gauleiter und verband damit das Gelöbnis weiterer treuer Gefolgschaft und Mitarbeit aller Parteigenossen des Gau. Ebenso überbrachten die Führer der Gliederungen der NSDAP, der Polizei und der Dienststelle des Reichskommissars für die Festigung des deutschen Volkstums persönlich ihre Glückwünsche. Der Allgemeine Vertreter des Reichsstatthalters, Ministerialdirektor Jäger, erschien mit den Abteilungsleitern seiner Behörde. Ferner waren Gauhauptmann Schulz, die Regierungspräsidenten des Reichsgaues Wartheland, die Leiter der Sonderbehörden und der Oberbürgermeister der Gauhauptstadt an diesem Ehrentage des Gauleiters zugegen.

Zum Abschluß des Empfanges richtete General Petzel eine von tiefer persönlicher Kameradschaft getragene Ansprache an den Gauleiter, in der er sich zum Sprecher aller erschienenen Gäste und darüber hinaus der gesamten deutschen Bevölkerung des Gau. machte und dem Gauleiter als dem Manne in dessen Hände der Führer das Schicksal und die Neugestaltung des Warthelandes gelegt hat, und der in unermüdlicher Arbeit und Zielsicherheit seine geschichtlich bedeutsame Aufgabe meistert, die besten



General Petzel überbringt die Glückwünsche
Aufn.: OB. (Römer)

Wünsche für eine erfolgreiche Weiterführung seines großen Werkes und für sein persönliches Wohlergehen zum Ausdruck brachte.

Der Gauleiter dankte in herzlichen Worten für alle ihm dargebrachten guten Wünsche und hob auch bei dieser Gelegenheit wieder die treue Kameradschaft und gegenseitige Achtung als das vorherrschende Gesetz der gesamten Aufbauarbeit in unserem Gau hervor. Diese Kameradschaft bestimme auch das Verhältnis zwischen Partei und Wehrmacht als den beiden Säulen des nationalsozialistischen Staates.

An seinem Geburtstage gingen dem Gauleiter außerdem von vielen führenden Persönlichkeiten des Reiches, sowie aus allen Teilen unseres Gau. Glückwünsche zu. Sie alle sind ein Zeugnis der Treue und Verehrung, die unserem Gauleiter entgegengebracht wird, und die keinen besseren Ausdruck finden kann, als in dem Willen der Bereitschaft, mit allen Kräften dem Gauleiter bei der Erfüllung der ihm vom Führer übertragenen Aufgaben zu helfen und unter seiner Führung für den deutschen Sieg und die deutsche Zukunft zu arbeiten.

Der Rundfunk am Montag

Deutschlandsender: 17.15 bis 18.30: Konzert der Philharmonie des Generalgouvernements. 20.15 bis 21: „Ich denke dein“, Liebeslieder und Serenaden von Bach, Haydn und Mozart.

Verdunkelung: Von 17.25 bis 7.10 Uhr

Fig. III.39: Ostdeutscher Beobachter [East German Observer] of 23.1.1944, p. 6

The first question is how the National Socialist dictatorship caused a large number of German photojournalists to produce photographic images that could be exploited for the political propaganda of National Socialism. In connection with a sketch of the framework of journalists' activities under the National Socialist dictatorship, the specific production, selection and regional publication contexts of press photographs from the Warthegau are explained in more detail.

2.a. Photographs as a Propaganda Means and as a Documentation Medium of Visual Propaganda Means

In the following, we will speak exclusively of German press photographs that were legally produced at the time. In the empirical findings, these can be quite clearly distinguished from other contemporaneous forms of application of photography due to the aforementioned external characteristics of the primary sources. The term "propaganda photographs" is not used in the present study. [175] As far as can be discerned, this term is usually used in the German-language secondary literature to describe photographs that positively portray a past, non-democratic state and its state ideology by means of a specific choice of motif and mode of depiction in each case. Often, different photographic genres (portraits, press photographs, art reproductions, etc.) are grouped together under the term "propaganda photography," which is characteristic of the ambiguity and ambiguity of the term's usage. The photographs meant by this term have not yet been precisely delimited either thematically, motivationally, or stylistically. The word "propaganda photography" was not used in the period 1939-1945; it describes the political use of photographs in the past from today's point of view. The term propaganda photography combines the means (photography) with the function (propaganda), which should be kept apart to analyze the facts. Moreover, it should be taken into account that photographs can be not only means of propaganda, but also means of documentation of visible means of propaganda.



Fig. III.40: *Ostdeutscher Beobachter* [East German Observer] of 15.2.1942, p. 5

In the scientific German-language secondary literature, press photographs from the period of the National Socialist dictatorship have often been understood as fundamentally ambiguous images of reality, which primarily had a propagandistic function through demagogic captions, but were otherwise free of propaganda. [176] Another approach is to prove the NSDAP membership of individual German press photographers in order to explain the conformity of press photographs with National Socialist ideology. [177] Both approaches proved inadequate with respect to the empirical findings collected in the present study. Only some of the surviving photographs from the Warthegau, taken by “German” professional photographers, can be classified as ambiguous and interpreted propagandistically through image texts. [178]

The attempt to reduce the propagandistic function of National Socialist press picture propaganda to the picture captions or even to identify individual German press photographers as National Socialists did not lead to any generally valid and reliable statements about

German press photographers and the functions of photography in National Socialist press propaganda in particular.



Fig. III.41: *Ostdeutscher Beobachter* [East German Observer], 16.2.1942, p. 3. Photographic illustration for the article “>A auch unsere Frauen helfen siegen<. First special meeting of the “Landfrauen” at the Landesbauerntag in Posen”.

The attempt to reduce the propagandistic function of National Socialist press picture propaganda to the picture captions or even to identify individual German press photographers as National Socialists did not lead to any generally valid and reliable statements about German press photographers and the functions of photography in National Socialist press propaganda in particular.

The thesis of the ambiguous photograph, which is primarily limited in its meaning to a propagandistic statement by the caption, is only partially true. A large number of press photographs in the National Socialist state were published not with demagogic, but with short informative captions about who or what is to be seen in the picture (Fig. III.39). For example, the photograph depicted here, including the surrounding captions, does not show an ambiguous visual fact that is propagandistically charged by the caption: In the foreground of the image, a uniformed man can be seen in the center shaking hands with another uniformed man in the foreground on the right. Even if there were no text attached to the photo, one could figure out by comparing it with other captioned photographs from that time and region that the man in the middle was the military district commander in Posen, General Petzel, and the man on the right was Reichsstatthalter and NSDAP Gauleiter Greiser. One may also assume

that the handshake is a gesture of respectful recognition and mutual solidarity. These facts are not ambiguous.

As with the majority of all photographs, it is not possible in this case, based solely on the visual information provided, to pinpoint with absolute accuracy the time and place, or even the cause, of the symbolic interaction depicted (the mutual handshake). The time, place, and cause of the gesture can be narrowed down with relative accuracy: The visible uniforms were worn only in a certain period of time, the regionally prominent persons can be identified by comparison with other pictures, and the places where the two gentlemen shook hands can also be delimited. The caption of the picture at the time merely adds information to the photograph about the cause of the handshake: General Petzel extends congratulations. The caption of the article provides further information: General brings birthday wishes to the Reichsstatthalter. The propagandistic aspect here lies in the fact that the highest military commander on the ground in Poznan personally delivers his congratulations to the Gauleiter, which emphasizes the extraordinarily high social status of the Reichsstatthalter in the occupying society and symbolically affirms the close ties between the Wehrmacht and the NSDAP. This propaganda message did not emerge from either the photograph or the text alone, but it was created in the context of reception by the German readership at the time.

The following pages show other photo publications that served press propaganda in the Reichsgau Wartheland and for which it is also true that the thesis of the ambiguity of photography and its transformation into propaganda through picture captions does not apply. Nevertheless, these photographs are often propagandistic, since the content of the images can also convey propaganda messages (Figs. III.40-III.43).



Fig. III.42: Ostdeutscher Beobachter [East German Observer], 12.1.1943, p. 3: Photographic illustration for the article „Vorkämpfer für Großdeutschlands Sendung. On the 50th Birthday of Reichsleiter and Reichsminister Alfred Rosenberg”.

Winfried Ranke attempted to define the propagandistic in the photographs of the propaganda companies of the German Wehrmacht more precisely in order to distinguish it from the non-propagandistic in the photographs. Apart from the image texts guiding interpretation, he also cited external features of original contemporary press photo prints as a distinguishing criterion: Only press photo prints that show the corresponding release stamps of the censorship offices on the back would be undoubtedly propaganda. [179]

The problem posed by this external distinguishing feature, which according to Ranke is reliable, is its comparatively rare occurrence: As a rule, the image holdings examined did not contain contemporary master prints of the agencies with censorship notices, but rather other contemporary uses of press image prints. Of the propaganda companies, the Federal Archives have preserved predominantly photographic images in the form of (contact-copied) negative film strips without any labeling. This means that this extraordinarily large stock of photographs cannot be differentiated into propagandistic and non-propagandistic on the basis of the external criterion cited by Ranke, since the decisive feature is not part of the primary source. However, it is fundamentally indisputable that the producer of these photographic images – the “Propaganda Companies” (PK) – had a propagandistic intention.

If one tried to apply Ranke’s external criterion of distinction to all surviving PK photographs, one would arrive at the quite bizarre result that of more than a million PK photographs, perhaps only a dozen could be undoubtedly described as propaganda. Thus, orientation on this single criterion is insufficient and does not lead to reliable results. Propagandistic can also be the image contents and photographic presentation methods of the image object, if they are in accordance with the specifications of the Ministry of Propaganda, or if they were published in the legal press of the Nazi state. It may be assumed that the majority of legal photographic publications complied with both the censorship regulations and the instructions of the Ministry of Propaganda. Photography was a propaganda medium alongside and in conjunction with other propaganda media. Single-image analyses do not provide sufficient insights into such synaesthetic phenomena in the National Socialist ‘media network’. [180]



Fig. III.43: *Ostdeutscher Beobachter* [East German Observer], 24.1.1944, p. 1. Photographic illustration for the article „Kämpfendes Volkstum sichert den Lebensraum. Gauleiter Greiser und SS-Obergruppenführer Lorenz sprachen zum Abschluß der Reichstagung des VDA.“

The officially authorized press photographers in the Warthegau

In the territory of the Reichsgau Wartheland, with a focus on the Posener Land, it was possible to establish the activity of various press photographers. In addition, the press offices of various state and party official organizations also distributed photographic images to the press, whose photographers were not named in the press copyright notices. [181] Individual press photographers traveled through the Warthegau on behalf of organizations in the Reich territory (for example, Hilmar Pabel, Liselotte Purper, Boris Spahn). The stay of individual PK photographers in the Warthegau is also documented (Wiesemann, Zermín). [182] Apart from the PK photographers who worked in Wehrmacht uniforms, the activities of various “German” press photographers in civilian working contexts could be proven:

- freelance press photographers who traveled through the Warthegau (Fritz Halleger, Liselotte Purper, Boris Spahn)
- permanently employed professional and press photographers (Nikolai Bogner, Willy Römer, Gerhardt Wolbrandt)

– journalists of the *Ostdeutscher Beobachter*, who occasionally also took photographs (especially in local reporting from the small towns of the Gau: Eugen Petrull, Fritz Albrich, Heinz Urban)

– German amateurs (Ernst Stewner) and part-time photographers (Wilhelm Holtfreter, Alfred Kiss, Waldemar Rode) [183].

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[170] Equally true-to-life and, moreover, moving technical news pictures were provided by the film newsreels, but since they changed only on a weekly basis, they had less topical value than the press photographs in the daily press.

[171] Part of the stock is in the West Institute (Instytut Zachodni), another part in the Museum of the City of Poznan. See also the list of surviving contact sheets of the NSDAP-Gaupresseamt Posen in the appendix.

[172] One of the best-known individual cases is the journalist Ruth Andreas-Friedrich; see Frei/Schmitz 1989, pp. 73, 82, 121, 132.

[173] In Athens in the 5th century B.C. there was a famous bronze statue group of the tyrannicide Harmodius and Aristogeiton, which can be seen today in the form of a Roman marble copy in Naples. The represented had fought the tyranny of the Peisistratids and murdered one of them, Hipparchus, during the Great Panathenaea. Harmodius was killed by the bodyguard of the Peisistratids, Aristogeiton was tortured and executed. The monument in memory of them – created by the sculptor Antenor after the expulsion of the Peisistratids in 510 BCE – was of extraordinary importance for the subsequently developing, time-specific “democratic” self-image (slavery!) of the Greek city-state in the 5th century BCE. In antiquity, the Greek city-states were repeatedly invaded by the Persians, who at that time were a world power like the United States of America today. The Persians at that time desecrated the temples of the Greeks, toppled their statues and stole valuable bronze statues, among them in 480 B.C. the bronze statue group of the tyrant murderers. In 447 B.C., the artists Kritios and Nesiotes created a new statue of the Tyrannicide as a pictorial expression of their Athenian “struggle for freedom” and political self-image. This statue group is so famous that one can find some sentences about it in every relevant handbook on classical archaeology (“Strict style”). Tyranny was a form of rule that occurred intermittently in the Greek city-states at the time, pushing back the rule of the nobility and favoring the very heterogeneous urban population of Athens in comparison. Due to the greed for power and extravagance of the tyrants, it was not a form of government that was stable in the long term.

[174] See, for example, Aulinger 1992, p. 139f.; Wössner 1986, p. 163. Macrosociology examines the systems of action that govern society, in contrast to microsociology, which examines interpersonal relationships between individuals.

[175] See, for example, Sauer 2002, pp. 591f.; Jäger 2000, pp. 113-122; Sachsse 1982, p. 62; Diskussionsprotokoll AG NS-Propagandafotografie 1982, pp. 74f.

[176] See, for example, Ranke 1992. Winfried Ranke argued that propaganda began with the captioning of pictures. He writes that photographs were never used solely as a means of propaganda: The decisive factor for their propagandistic use was their subsequent captioning, and the captioning determined the interpretation of the image (pp. 64 and 72). Cf. also the completely uncritical – or better: naive – understanding of photographic image sources in EdN p. 340; here all photographs from the time of the National Socialist dictatorship are presented as “image sources” without any reference to the original propagandistic purposes of the photographic source groups mentioned.

[177] See also Ranke 1992 and the published directories of photographers by Rolf Sachsse, who has dealt very intensively with the identification of NSDAP memberships of German professional photographers – although he did not identify as such one of the most efficient suppliers of photographs for the National Socialist “Greuelpropaganda” (“atrocities propaganda”) of the war period – Karlheinz Fremke; cf. on this list of photographers here in the appendix under “Fremke” and the chapter on the “Bromberger Blutsonntag”.

[178] See in particular the examples of images discussed in the chapter “Institutional Producers of Photographs” in the section on the Deutsches Ausland-Institut.

[179] Ranke 1992, p. 62, 67.

[180] It seemed methodologically more sensible to typologize the multitude of themes and modes of representation as far as possible in order to do justice to the quantity of the surviving pictorial material. Within the given framework, it was not possible to compile a list of the particularly frequent pictorial themes and modes of representation of the contemporary press photo paper prints, because the density of their transmission with motifs from the Warthegau was too low in the sifted holdings.

[181] On the author’s notes, Sachsse 2003, Doc. 4.48. Most party organizations, business enterprises, and some state agencies had press departments that regulated the procurement and dissemination of journalistic information in the spirit of their organization. For example, Dr. Heinrich Bosse, a Baltic German who had initially worked in Posen in the press office of the Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle, was “detached” to the Higher SS and Police Leader in Posen as a press officer on February 1, 1940, and worked there in the office of SS-Oberführer Döring. See APP-VoMi-Sign. 145, Bl. 25; APP-VoMi-Sign. 148, Bl. 16, 22, 173; Fielitz 2000, p. 371.

[182] Cf. list of photographers in the appendix under “Purper” and “Spahn” and chapter “Institutional Photography” on the propaganda companies.

[183] The photo publications in the daily Ostdeutscher Beobachter from the region also confirm for the Warthegau that local photo reporting in the province was a sideline field of craft photographers and amateurs; see Herz 1994, p. 355 note 110.

Excerpts from Chapter IV.: The Change of the Production Conditions of Photographs for Poles through the Occupation Policy in the Territory of the Reichsgau Wartheland 1939-1945

The entire economic order in the newly formed Reichsgau Wartheland was “restructured” under National Socialist occupation rule from the end of 1939 to the effect that not only Polish state assets but also the private assets of Poles (including Jewish Poles) were confiscated by the Haupttreuhandstelle Ost (HTO), which was created for this purpose, and then transferred to the National Socialist “Volksgemeinschaft”.

Excerpts from Chapter IV.: The Change of the Production Conditions of Photographs for Poles through the Occupation Policy in the Territory of the Reichsgau Wartheland 1939-1945

2. changes in the photographic industry of the newly formed Reichsgau Wartheland: the expropriation of Polish business owners since the end of 1939 [...]

3. the ban on the possession and use of cameras by all Poles, “enemy aliens” and “Jews” in the Reichsgau Wartheland from 1941; a. the confiscated cameras of Poles in the Schrimm (Srem) district [...]

[Excerpt pp. 436-438 and 440-441]

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From Chapter IV.: The Changes in the Conditions of Production of Photographs for Poles by the Occupation Policy in the Reichsgau Wartheland 1939-1945

2. Changes in the photographic industry of the newly formed Reichsgau Wartheland: the expropriation of Polish business owners since autumn 1939

[Excerpt: pp. 436-438]

Within the general framework of Poland policies, which had been presented comprehensively for the first time in the November 1939 memorandum of the NSDAP’s Office of Racial Policy, Poles were successively excluded from photographic production in the Reichsgau

Wartheland by the National Socialist occupying power in the following years. The German occupation administration increasingly denied them access to the means of photographic production. After all Poles in the Reichsgau Wartheland were initially excluded from the press and publishing professions, something similar happened some time later in the photographic crafts and trades. Finally, Poles were eventually forbidden, under threat of punishment, to privately own and use cameras. This gradual process of excluding Poles from photographic production in the Reichsgau Wartheland finds its parallels in other measures taken by the National Socialist occupying power, all of which aimed to exclude the Polish population from participation in cultural life and modern means of communication. In specialist literature, this was also referred to as an attempt of a “de-culturalization” of the Poles.

The entire economic order in the newly formed Reichsgau Wartheland was “restructured” under National Socialist occupation rule from the end of 1939 to the effect that not only Polish state assets but also the private assets of Poles (including Jewish Poles) were confiscated by the Haupttreuhandstelle Ost (HTO), which was created for this purpose, and then transferred to the National Socialist “Volksgemeinschaft”. [28] The HTO had been established by Hermann Göring in mid-October to November 1, 1939, and was headed by Max Winkler. A regional branch of the trusteeship office was established in Posen in December 1939, followed in 1940 by another branch in Lodz. These offices recorded the commercial and industrial assets of Polish citizens in the Warthegau and carried out their confiscation and directed its further utilization. For the forced confiscation of Polish assets, the HTO had at its disposal the police and the SS. The HTO confiscated businesses, valued them, and then sold them to Germans or handed them over to German trustees for provisional administration. In this way, it regulated the competition for the most economically interesting objects among the Germans and gave the appearance to the outside world that the state-organized looting of Polish property, which was not permissible under international law, was a legitimate act of state. [29]

In order to regulate the confiscation of Polish state and private property in a pseudo-legal manner, the National Socialist occupying power in the Reichsgau Wartheland issued a whole series of fundamental decrees in 1940. [30] The “Polish Property Ordinance” [“Polenvermögensordnung”] of 17.9.1940 generally confiscated all commercial and private property of Polish citizens in favor of the German Reich; the HTO was to dispose about commercial assets and municipal land from Polish ownership. [31]



Fig. IV.01: NSDAP-Gaupresseamt Posen, „Q – Wirtschaft. Sitzung der Haupttreuhandstelle-Ost, Abteilung Handel, Handwerk“ Posen, ca. 1940/41 (IZ NSDAP-Gaupresseamt Arch. Nr. Q 6, 4th film strip, negative 11).

The Polish businesses that were gradually confiscated were assigned to the economic groups of the newly formed Gauwirtschaftskammer Wartheland. When the HTO auditors judged a property to be productive, it was transferred to German companies or individual entrepreneurs in provisional administration, in trusteeship, or by sale. Since within the HTO economic objectives were linked to population policy and military objectives, not only the newly founded Chamber of Crafts and Chamber of Industry and Commerce of Wartheland, but also RKF and Wehrmacht services participated in the selection of applicants. By 1942, the registration and transfer of ownership of Polish business enterprises was almost complete. [32]

The resale of the confiscated Polish farms to German buyers was mediated according to certain distribution keys, according to which certain groups of Germans were to be preferred

as buyers. For this reason, the HTO's documents also recorded whether the prospective buyer was a "Reichdeutscher", a "Volksdeutscher" (i.e., a Polish-German), a "Baltic German", or the like. A "General Referent for the Consolidation of German Nationality" [Generalreferent für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums] (GVSS) determined which groups were to be given preferential treatment in economic life in order to "consolidate German nationality" [einer "Festigung deutschen Volkstums"] and demanded, for example, of the Posen Trust Office that "ethnic Germans and resettlers, insofar as they come into question as applicants for purchase, should be admitted as quickly as possible" to the companies – "subject to verification of their political harmlessness". [33]

All this also applied to the Polish photographic businesses located in Poznan, Lodz and the small towns of the Warthegau. At that time, drugstores often already carried out photographic work, which was now, of course, also taken away from the Polish owners and transferred to new German administrators or owners in the form described above. As a rule, when businesses were transferred from Polish to German owners, the largest and most lucrative businesses were first confiscated and handed over to Germans. Especially in the center of the city of Poznan, the transfer of photographic businesses took place quite quickly, which was also related to the fact that numerous Baltic Germans had already settled here at the end of 1939, to whom the formerly Polish businesses were now handed over. It is very likely that many of the Polish owners of photo studios and photo shops in the center of Poznan were among those who were first resettled in the General Government by the German occupying power, since the city center in particular was to be populated with Germans as quickly as possible. The lives of the numerous Polish and German photographers can hardly be reconstructed, but the systematic transfer of Polish photographic businesses to Germans in the city of Poznan can be traced on the basis of contemporary telephone directories, advertisements, photographic sources with proof of authorship, and preserved administrative files.

[...]

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[28] With the exception of agricultural property, which was confiscated by the RKF services.

[29] See especially Rosenkötter 2002; also Aly/Heim 1991, p. 155 Röhr 1989, pp. 41f., 47f. and Doc. 24, p. 132f.; Serwanski 1970, pp. 156f., 159; Luczak 1969a; Luczak 1966, pp. 197-204; Deresiewicz 1950.

[30] Serwanski 1970, pp. 157f.; Pospieszalski 1952, pp. 215, 221f., 226f.; Deresiewicz 1950, pp. 29f., 33f. 65f. It concerns the decree of 15.1.1940 (Polish state property), the decree of 12.2.1940 (state management of agricultural land by the Ostland Company [Gesellschaft Ostland]), and the decree of 17.9.1940 (private property of Polish citizens).

[31] Reichsgesetzblatt I, p. 1270; see also Broszat 1965, p. 127. Agricultural property was confiscated for the disposal by the RKF.

[32] Röhr 1989, pp. 41f.; Aly/Heim 1991, pp. 155, 165.

[33] See APP-Haupttreuhandstelle Ost, Sign. 8798, Bl. 15.

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The process of successive expropriation of all Polish photographic businesses, which had been going on in the newly formed Gau in the East since the end of 1939, reached a new climax in the summer of 1941 in the form of a police order prohibiting all Poles in the Gau from owning and using cameras.

From Chapter IV: The Change of the Conditions of Production of Photographs for Poles by the Occupation Policy in the Reichsgau Wartheland 1939-1945

3. The ban on the possession and use of photographic equipment for Poles, enemy aliens and Jews in the Reichsgau Wartheland as of 1941

[Excerpt pp. 440-441]

The process of successive expropriation of all Polish photographic businesses, which had been going on in the newly formed Gau in the East since the end of 1939, reached a new climax in the summer of 1941 in the form of a police order prohibiting all Poles in the Gau from owning and using cameras. [39] A few fragments of documents concerning the police order for the Poznan administrative district in 1941 have been preserved, which provide some insight into the implementation of this ban on photography for Poles: On June 26, 1941, the president of the Poznan administrative district, Viktor Böttcher, apparently issued the first order that Poles in the administrative district must hand over their cameras and binoculars to the German occupation authorities. [40] On June 28, 1941, he sent a quick letter to the police chief in Posen, to the district councils of the administrative district, the gendarmerie, and the district commissioners concerning the “submission of Polish-owned cameras and binoculars.” He informed them that a “police order on the possession of cameras and binoculars” would soon appear in the *Ostdeutscher Beobachter*, according to which “Poles, enemy aliens and stateless persons” were prohibited from possessing these objects. The police order was to be publicly announced to the population immediately “by public notice”. The cameras had to be delivered by the Poles to the district commissars or gendarmerie posts and in Posen to the police stations by July 7. [41] On the following Sunday, June 29, 1941, the German police in

Seewörth (Strzeszynek) in the Posen district conducted a search of all the Poles gathered at the lake there, taking away their cameras. [42]

On July 1, 1941, Viktor Böttcher, the District President of Poznan, again sent a quick letter to the Chief of Police in Poznan, the District Administrators, the Gendarmerie and the District Commissioners. He informed them that the issuance of the police decree would be postponed for a week and that a report on the execution of the decree was to be made by August 1, 1941. He also urged the addressees to “take care that the cameras as well as the binoculars are delivered in perfect condition. If there is any suspicion that the Polish owner has deliberately rendered them unusable, the Gestapo is to be asked for further measures”. [43] Finally, on July 7, 1941, the police order issued on July 4, 1941, appeared in the Ostdeutscher Beobachter. [44] It stated:

“Police Order – on the possession of photo cameras and binoculars. On the basis of § 6 of the Second Regulation for the Implementation of the Decree of the Fuehrer and Reich Chancellor on the Division and Administration of the Incorporated Eastern Territories of November 2, 1939 (RGBl. I, p. 2133), the following is ordered for the administrative district of Posen:

§ 1. The possession of photographic equipment and binoculars is forbidden to Poles and enemy aliens.

§ 2. The persons mentioned in § 1 shall deliver the photographic apparatus and binoculars in their possession to the local police station (gendarmerie post, district commissars), in the city of Poznan to the police stations, not later than 5 p.m. on July 12, 1941.

§ 3. The sale of films, photographic equipment and binoculars to the persons mentioned in § 1 is prohibited. In case of violation, the buyer and the seller shall be liable to prosecution.

§ 4. violations of the police regulation shall be punished by RM 150 or imprisonment, unless higher penalties or other measures are applied.

§ 5. The Police Regulations shall come into force immediately. Posen, July 4, 1941, the District President.”

As early as July 8, 1941, the district commissioner from Schrimm (Srem) wrote to the district president in Posen to describe the problem that would arise if all Poles had to hand over their cameras: There was no German professional photographer in Schrimm, but only the Polish professional photographer Piasecki, who had a studio and film apparatus. If the Polish photographer had to hand over his studio equipment, the German “Volksgenossen” would be forced to travel all the way to Posen to take photographs, which would take a lot of time. [45] In Moschin (Mosina) the same conditions would prevail: “In the whole Schrimm district there is not one German professional photographer. If the apparatus of the Polish photographers were confiscated, not one photograph could be produced in the whole district.” [46] Thus, the responsible district commissioner in the Tiefenbach (Ksiaz) district of Schrimm County also left the Polish professional photographers their cameras, since no German professional photographers were resident. [47]

Different conditions prevailed in the district of Grätz (Grodzisk). On August 13, 1941, the district administrator there reported to the district president in Posen on the enforcement of the police order: "Polish professional photographers and photo stores have not been allowed to keep their equipment. The apparatuses already delivered have been taken into custody here under lock and key." [48]

As a result of the public requests, Poles in both counties delivered cameras to the German authorities concerned.

[...]

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[39] Cf. Luczak 1990, pp. 284f., Majer 1981, pp. 415f., 452f.; DO XIII, Doc. VIII-3, pp. 284f. (police order banning photographic equipment for Poles, Regierungspräsident Litzmannstadt 28.6.1941).

[40] Luczak 1989, p. 247.

[41] APP-Landrat Schrimm, Sign. 73, Bl. 234.

[42] Luczak 1989, p. 249.

[43] APP-Landrat Grätz, Sign. 22, Bl. 31.

[44] „Ostdeutscher Beobachter“, 7/7/1941, p. 4, section „Amtliche Bekanntmachungen.“ Cf. APP-Landrat Grätz, Sign. 22, Bl. 33 (quick letter from the Regierungspräsident of Posen, Viktor Böttcher, to the Polizeipräsident of Posen, the Landräte of the Regierungsbezirk, the Gendarmerie, and the Amtskommissare of 5.7.1941: the Regierungspräsident informs that the police order cited in the circulars of 26.6. and 1.7.1941 will appear in the Ostdeutscher Beobachter on 7.7.1941).

[45] APP-Landrat Schrimm, Sign. 73, Bl. 262.

[46] APP-Landrat Schrimm, Sign. 73, Bl. 263.

[47] APP-Landrat Schrimm, Sign. 73, Bl. 251 (letter from the Amtskommissar vom Bezirk Tiefenbach (Ksiaz) to the Landrat in Schrimm dated 28.7.1941).

[48] APP-Landrat Grätz, Sign. 40.

About the author

Miriam Yegane Arani did her doctorate at the UDK in Berlin under the supervision of the photo historian Prof. Diethart Kerbs. Her work focuses on the survey and analysis of photo-historical materials from the NS period. Her dissertation dealt with the Reichsgau Wartheland, where the Nazis implemented “exemplary” oppressive measures against the native Polish population. Similar methods were soon to be used in the old Reich territories in an increased dimension against the antagonized parts of the German, especially the German Jewish population. In the “Reichsgau Wartheland”, a German administrative unit newly formed from previously Polish territories after the military occupation, the Nazi regime realized its population and settlement policy plans for Eastern Europe in an exemplary manner.

Tierautonomie

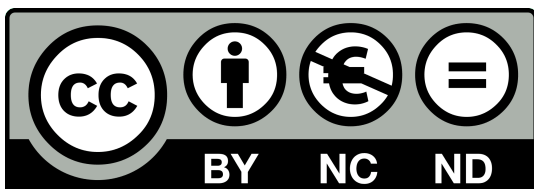
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