

**Press statement by Harriet Scharnberg
on AP's review "Covering Tyranny. The AP and Nazi Germany: 1933–1945"**

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On 10 May 2017 the Associated Press (AP) published a 160 pages [review](#) dealing with the company's history and its photojournalistic coverage in and about Nazi Germany. In addition, the AP published a selection of 70 [documents](#) from its corporate archives which were hitherto unpublished and/or unknown. This endeavor is very laudable and highly appreciated. AP's review and the documents need to be – and of course will be – investigated in detail in future by historical research.

AP's efforts to review its history during the Nazi era were prompted by my article published in spring 2016 in the academic journal "Studies in Contemporary History", titled "The A and P of Propaganda. Associated Press and Nazi Photojournalism" (online: <http://www.zeithistorische-forschungen.de/1-2016/id=5324> – a pdf file on the homepage provides an English translation). After studying the parts of the AP review which refer to my article, I can underline: None of the results presented in my paper are disproven by the review. It goes without saying that the AP tends to a different assessment of the results.

The AP review confirms the following findings of my research:

AP was the only Anglo-American picture agency – operating on an international level – that decided to keep its Berlin subsidiary open after 1935. AP accepted the German press control laws and thereby fitted in the press control system of Nazi Germany.

On German terms and conditions the AP was able to continue to deliver pictures until the US joined the war in December 1941, namely as follows:

- a) From the US to German newspapers and magazines. AP pictures were also - but not exclusively – used in anti-semitic propaganda-pamphlets as *Die Juden in USA (The Jews in the USA, 1939)* and *Der Untermensch (The Subhuman, 1942)*. Today, AP regrets that it did not protest against such a use of its pictures.
- b) From Nazi Germany via AP-New York to American Newspapers. These pictures were subject to the control of the infamous German Ministry of Propaganda. Whether these pictures should be regarded as German propaganda or as documentary presentations of the events of the day is debatable in each single case and probably will remain controversial.
- c) From Nazi Germany to German newspapers and magazines. In this case the pictures served as propaganda against (Soviet) *Untermenschen* (subhumans) or they were used to celebrate the expulsion of the Jews from Cracow. The AP did not give its own perspective of these practices in its review.

The AP GmbH in Berlin was not allowed to employ Jewish photographers after 1935. In Germany, at the German side of the front and in the German occupied territories (case b) und c)) only "aryan" photographers took pictures for the AP. The *Schriftleitergesetz* (Editors' Law) obliged them not to act to the detriment of the Reich. Their paramount loyalty had to be with the Minister of Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels. AP's review confirms that these preconditions existed.

AP employed in the person of Franz Roth a SS-Oberscharfuehrer ("senior squad leader") who was at the same time an ardent Nazi and an acclaimed SS-photographer. Given Roth's example it is possible to outline the extensive consequences of this fotojournalistic agreement. At the beginning of July 1941, the Jewish population of Lemberg/Ukraine (today Lviv/Lwow/Lvov) suffered an atrocious pogrom under German occupation and with German participation. About 4,000 Jewish inhabitants were killed in those days. AP- and SS-photographer Franz Roth was in Lemberg on 2 July. Instead of covering the violent purge, the German shootings or the Jewish victims, he photographed Soviet POWs, captured tanks and the happy Lemberg people, cheering at the German invaders. Even American newspaper readers were able to look at these pictures as they passed German censorship and were distributed by the AP in the US. American readers looked at them assuming that their newspaper – supported by AP's news photo service – would present the most important events in and around Lemberg. Therefore, as I argued, pictures like these taken and disseminated by the AP helped to obscure a war of extermination and instead make it look like a conventional war.