

## Summaries

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### “Fictional Reality”: Everyday Life, Lifeworlds and the Memory of the German Occupation of Poland: An Introduction

Occupation is a “great combination of social and moral paradoxes”<sup>1</sup>. This is how occupation was described by Kazimierz Wyka in the introduction to the second edition of his essay *Życie na niby* [*A Make-believe Life*] (1958). Both the occupier and the occupied exist in two spaces – the apparent and the actual one:

By completing the basic obligations of their professions and working in the framework of an officially existing community, they live a make-believe life; by enclosing themselves among their mates, they live a real life<sup>2</sup>.

Looking for chances of survival, Polish society was determined by deeply corrupting factors. The conditions imposed by the occupier turned the lives of Poles into a fictional reality, while their own desires, values and beliefs were limited to the realm of a deeply closed-off privacy. Living a make-believe life meant that the daily coexistence of the occupiers and the occupied was a “mutual exchange of fiction”<sup>3</sup> in an atmosphere of constant terror and humiliation, in which attempts to preserve the dignity and functional cooperation with the occupiers intertwined. This extremely

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1 K. Wyka, *Życie na niby*, Universitas, Kraków 2011, p. 144.

2 Ibidem, p. 145.

3 Ibidem, p. 146.

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apt metaphor can also be seen in other autobiographical accounts of the war, including memoirs by writers such as Maria Dąbrowska<sup>4</sup>, Zofia Nałkowska<sup>5</sup>, Stanisław Rembek<sup>6</sup>, the world-renowned sociologist Jan Szczepański<sup>7</sup> or the Krakow officer Edward Kubalski<sup>8</sup>. These are just a few examples that, in our opinion, most relate to the multi-faceted layer of everyday life. While the mechanisms of life under the occupation still belong to scientifically unexplored areas, a number of ego-documents presents a wide range of attitudes and behaviours and inspires new research questions to be asked. The inertia found in the research on everyday life under the occupation and the importance of memoirs has been aptly presented by a Polish culture expert, Pawel Rodak:

Victims speak to the imagination. However, everyday life is a bit like the air. It seems clear and obvious, not worthy of consideration, but we only start to see it once it becomes “disturbed” or “contaminated”. Everyday life under occupation is a disturbed life, derailed from the mode of “everyday” functioning; it is an “unusual everyday life, as Małgorzata Baranowska calls it, or an “untamed everyday life”, as it is referred to by Jerzy Jedlicki... Therefore, ways of taming new experiences, which gradually become something normal and begin to be regarded as components of everyday life,

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4 M. Dąbrowska, *Dzienniki. 1914–1965*, T. Drewnowski (ed.), Polska Akademia Nauk, Wydział I Nauk Społecznych, Komitet Nauk o Literaturze, Warszawa 2009.

5 Z. Nałkowska, *Dzienniki czasu wojny*, Czytelnik, Warszawa 1972 and eadem, *Dzienniki*, Vol. 5: 1939–1944, Introduction and Commentary by H. Kirchner, Warszawa 1996.

6 S. Rembek, *Dziennik okupacyjny*, Agawa, Warszawa 2000.

7 J. Szczepański, *Dzienniki z lat 1935–1945*, Introduction by D. Kadłubiec, Galeria “Na Gojach” ABK Hreczko, Ustroń 2009.

8 E. Kubalski, *Niemcy w Krakowie: dziennik 1 IX 1939 – 18 I 1945*, J. Grabowski, Z.R. Grabowski (ed.), Austeria, Kraków – Budapeszt 2010.

are so important during occupation. The sphere of “tamed experiences” is an example of a wider phenomenon<sup>9</sup>.

In Poland, until 1989, despite many significant studies, scientific publications and representations in culture, the subject of the occupation was a “victim” of political censorship and part of the strategy for legitimizing the prevailing political system. *Życie na niby* [*A Make-believe Life*] by Kazimierz Wyka was a pioneering work, which has been inspiring to this day. A new research direction was set by Tomasz Szarota’s monograph entitled *Okupowanej Warszawy dzień powszedni* [*Everyday Life in Occupied Warsaw*], which was first published in 1973<sup>10</sup>. After the political transformation in 1989, the German occupation did not enter the mainstream narrative of the war, as evidenced even by the minuscule number of Polish historians of the younger generation concerned with this topic. Instead, the focus has mainly been on problems concerning the Soviet terror in Poland, the broad issue of the resistance movement and, more recently, the fate of the Jewish community.

Only two years ago, the Institute of National Remembrance began its research project, “Polish Lands Under the Occupation of 1939–1945”, the aim of which was to continue the Institute’s research on German and Soviet occupation during the World

9 P. Rodak, *Niecodzienna codzienność czasu okupacji*, „Znak” 2009, no. 652, (<http://www miesiecznik.znak.com.pl/6522009pawel-rodakniecodzienna-codziennosc-czasu-okupacji/> – (accessed on 20th June 2015); cf. *Warszawa 1943 – Warszawa 1944. Fotograf nieznanany*, A. Grupińska (ed.), Wydawnictwo Książkowe “Twój Styl”, Warszawa 2002 and Michał Głowiński, *Tak jest dziwnie, tak jest inaczej*, in: idem, *Narracje literackie i nieliterackie. Prace wybrane*, R. Nycz (ed.), Universitas, Kraków 1997, Vol. II, p. 145 et seq.

10 T. Szarota, *Okupowanej Warszawy dzień powszedni*, 4th edition, Czytelnik, Warszawa 2010.

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War II<sup>11</sup>. The first volume of this project's research results was published in 2015. The content relates to both the everyday life of the occupied and the repressive policies imposed by the occupiers<sup>12</sup>. The project title, which refers to occupation in the grammatical singular form, indicates an intention to unify the occupation experiences of Poles, abandon any attempts to develop distinctive indicators of German and Soviet occupations, and explore what they specifically meant for Polish society. One has the impression that, by starting with exiguous research, it was forgotten in the first instance to make a varied, yet thorough and comprehensive, summary of the achievements of Polish historiography, which primarily developed in the 1970s and 1980s and has been neglected by Polish researchers in recent years. It is paradoxical, then, that this period of Polish historiography has often been viewed as an important benchmark for Western European studies. Despite the tendency to unify occupation experiences, the volume entitled *Polska pod okupacją 1939–1945* [*Poland under Occupation: 1939–1945*] suggests that certain changes should be made: that it to say, while it is necessary to stop "heroizing the past" and "building monuments", there is also "a need to take stock of the findings of Polish historiography", preferably in comparison with international studies<sup>13</sup>.

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11 Cf. T. Szarota, *Dokowania badawcze Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej w zakresie historii II wojny światowej*, in: *Bez taryfy ulgowej. Dorobek naukowy i edukacyjny Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej w latach 2000–2010*, A. Czyżewskiet et al. (eds), Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, Oddział w Łodzi, Łódź 2012, pp. 67–85.

12 *Polska pod okupacją 1939–1945*, Vol. 1, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, Warszawa 2015.

13 M. Gałęzowski, *O projekcie wydawniczym „Polska pod okupacją 1939–1945”*, in: *ibidem*, pp. 20–21.

In addition to historical research, the current studies carried out by Polish literary scholars, sociologists and cultural theorists (filmologists and teatrologists) offer an additional perspective to the problem of the occupation, especially in the context of second degree history. By using their own methods, they significantly enrich the cognitive perspective on this topic. Three recent publications by Grzegorz Niziołek<sup>14</sup>, Małgorzata Hendrykowska<sup>15</sup> and Sławomir Buryła<sup>16</sup> are worth mentioning here. The album by Joanna Urbanek of the Museum of the World War II in Gdansk<sup>17</sup> is also an important publication. From the point of view of historiography, the book *Pamięć – brzemień i uwolnienie* [*Memory: Burden and Liberation*] by Anna Wolff-Powęska summarizes the problem of dealing with the war past. The author analyses the mechanisms with which Germans dealt with the Nazi dictatorship until 2010<sup>18</sup>. To this day, there is no similar monograph concerned with the meaning of the war and the occupation in Polish memory<sup>19</sup>.

14 G. Niziołek, *Polski Teatr Zagłady*, Krytyka Polityczna, Warszawa 2013.

15 M. Hendrykowska, *Film polski wobec wojny i okupacji. Tematy, motywy, pytania*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, Poznań 2011.

16 S. Buryła, *Tematy (nie)opisane*, Universitas, Kraków 2013 and S. Buryła, Paweł Rodak (eds.), *Wojna: doświadczenie i zapis*, Universitas, Kraków 2006.

17 J. Urbanek, *Codziennosc w cieniu terroru. Okupacja niemiecka w Polsce 1939–1945*, Muzeum II Wojny Światowej, Gdańsk 2014.

18 A. Wolff-Powęska, *Pamięć – brzemień i uwolnienie. Niemcy wobec nazistowskiej przeszłości (1945–2010)*, Zysk i s-ka, Poznań 2011.

19 This gap has been filled by individual studies conducted primarily by the following Polish sociologists: P.T. Kwiatkowski; L.M. Nijakowski; B. Szacka, *Między codziennością a wielką historią: druga wojna światowa w pamięci zbiorowej społeczeństwa polskiego*, Warszawa – Muzeum II Wojny Światowej, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, Gdańsk 2010.

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In current Western historiographies, the Holocaust represents the central category of stories about World War II. Other events, such as the war of extermination, the resistance movement, collaborations, displacements and deportations, have been grounded by numerous well-established historical studies. The occupation, understood as an imposed system of terror, which rapidly changed society and affected every citizen, was neither the subject of thorough historical research<sup>20</sup> nor the main element of cultural memory. The reception of the occupation as a historical experience is viewed differently in a number of countries; in German communicative and cultural memory, it is automatically associated with the period from 1945 to 1949, when Germany was under the post-war Allied occupation.

Publications by Jan Tomasz Gross<sup>21</sup> and Timothy Snyder<sup>22</sup> have brought a new impetus to historical research. Although they do not focus exclusively on the topic in question, they describe the attitudes of the population enslaved by the occupiers in an innovative manner and from different perspectives. The latest reference point

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20 A large contribution to the historiography has been made by the recently published works of young German researchers: Maximilian Becker (*Mitsstreiter im Volkstumskampf: Deutsche Justiz in den eingegliederten Ostgebieten 1939–1945*, De Gruyter Oldenbourg, München 2014); and Maren Röger (*Kriegsbeziehungen: Intimität, Gewalt und Prostitution im besetzten Polen 1939 bis 1945*, S. Fischer, Frankfurt am Main 2015).

21 J.T. Gross, *Złote żniwa. Rzecz o tym, co się działo na obrzeżach załudy Żydów*, Znak, Kraków 2011 and idem, *Polish Society Under German Occupation: The General Government, 1939–1944*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, Guildford 1979.

22 T. Snyder, *Bloodlands. Europe between Hitler and Stalin*, Basic Books, New York 2010; Polish edition: *Skrwawione ziemie. Europa między Hitlerem a Stalinem*, translated by B. Pietrzyk, Świat Książki, Warszawa 2011.

for further research on everyday life under the occupation is a book entitled *Gewalt und Alltag im besetzten Polen: 1939–1945*<sup>23</sup> [*Violence and Everyday Life in Occupied Poland: 1939–1945*] and an international publishing and research project, conducted by the Herder Institute in Marburg, called “Der Zweite Weltkrieg – Alltag unter deutscher Besatzung” [World War II – Everyday Life under German Occupation]<sup>24</sup>.

From the perspective of both the diverse experience of the occupation in Europe and its importance to the understanding of the trauma and the interpretation of the war in Poland, a new look at everyday life between 1939 and 1945, together with the memory of it, becomes an important research hypothesis. The Centre for Historical Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Berlin has proposed reintroducing “the occupation” to the central categories that define the World War II. Rather than comparing the Soviet and German occupations, we focus on the lands under German terror. We hope that this will allow us to focus on analysis and, at the same time, facilitate a greater diversification in terms of research questions. Our approach is not limited to the perspective of everyday life, as it also covers the attitudes and behaviour of the occupying forces, including “ordinary” officials and their families. The background to the analysis of these relations is the Jewish community, which was sentenced to the Holocaust by the German occupation authorities, thereby excluding Polish Jewry from the category of “the occupied”.

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23 J. Böhrer, S. Lehnstaedt (eds.), *Gewalt und Alltag im besetzten Polen: 1939–1945*, fibre Verlag, Osnabrück 2012.

24 <https://www.herder-institut.de/forschung-projekte/laufende-projekte/world-war-ii-everyday-life-under-german-occupation.html> (accessed on 1st December 2015).

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We focus on the history of events, which today is heavily dominated by the study of processes of collective remembrance. A “make-believe life” was continuing under the duress of everyday terror for five years, which were filled by frontline fighting, partisan warfare, the nightmare of waiting for death in concentration camps and eventual extermination. Different survival strategies were developed, while fear was mingled with envy and loyalty. The lifeworlds of the occupied and the occupiers – understood as social spaces surrounding individuals and subjectively perceived by them as the real world – created new contexts for the reception of reality. Only from this perspective can we move to collective memory: the forms and methods of recording (including repression and forgetting) the German occupation of Poland within a Polish-German comparative context.

Our book neither summarizes nor closes the topic. We are of the opinion that the proposed approach to the occupation is still a research desideratum, which should not be limited to Polish historiography. Wishing to, at least partially, contribute to the introduction of the category of the occupation to the central narrative of the World War II, we have decided to prepare a publication containing texts of speeches, which were made at our all-day symposium during the 19th General Congress of Polish Historians, held in Szczecin on 19th September 2014. In addition, the publication also contains texts by researchers who empirically deal with the German occupation, whom we have not managed to reach earlier. In our volume, we had planned some texts dealing with the educational system in the Warta Land (Kraj Warty), the situation in Upper Silesia (Górny Śląsk) and how the occupation has been described in Polish schoolbooks. Unfortunately, for reasons beyond our control, these texts couldn't be published.



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There are three spaces describing the history of events and the second degree history of the German occupation in Poland: everyday life, lifeworlds and memory. They are treated as the main research areas with high cognitive potential. The texts refer directly to the proposed categories. As we do not seek to limit the topic to only one of these spaces, we have decided against dividing the book into three chapters. It is subdivided into the history of events and second degree history, which will determine the order of the key texts. Among the authors are representatives of many humanistic disciplines from Poland and Germany, which allows for an interdisciplinary and transnational approach to the German occupation of Poland during the World War II<sup>25</sup>.

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25 We standardized the rules of spelling the names of selected historical events, such as: warsaw uprising, warsaw ghetto uprising, World War I, World War II. Consistently, we write "Third Reich" in quotation marks, because this was not the official name of the German state; it was only an allusion to its ideological content.

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### Robert Traba, *The Need for New Research on the German Occupation of Poland during World War II*

This article attempts to reintroduce the subject of occupation into the global trend of research on World War II as an experience and analytical category that should be examined along with the Holocaust, the crimes of the Wehrmacht, the war of attrition and the resistance movement. This study is primarily based on Polish-German experience. The author argues that research on the German occupation suffered a double misfortune in Polish historiography. Firstly, despite its high substantial quality, it was used to legitimise power in communist Poland. Secondly, it was forced out of mainstream research after 1989 and, so far, has not recovered the appropriate scientific importance in the study of World War II. Over the last quarter century, Western European studies have been dominated by the Holocaust.

The author focuses on the reception of historiography on everyday occupation under German rule, its research and perception methods. The main narrative reflects on the research on the organization of the occupying power, methods of subordination of the Polish society, daily life and the survival strategies adopted by residents of both the areas incorporated into the Reich and the occupied territories. Issues such as the activity of the resistance movement, extermination in concentration camps and the reception of occupation in literature and film are only mentioned in the background. The new impetus to analyse the problem of occupation – as reflected in the literature of the children and grandchildren of the witnesses of the war – indicates that this subject will still be present in the years to come.

**Anna Czocher, The Mechanisms of Repression  
and Terror Structure in Everyday Life.  
The Example of Krakow 1939–1945**

After settling down in the occupied Polish territories, Germany deprived local communities of their power and imposed on them a system of terror. The occupation had its own dynamics; it can be divided into two periods (1942 can be assumed to have been a turning point) both because of the terror structure and methods of repression used by the Germans, and because of their “reception” by the occupied people. Each of the periods is discussed with respect to three areas: direct terror, understood as a direct use of violence and physical coercion; symbolic and terrorism, understood as a blow to the identity of the occupied community, and the “codification” of terror, which introduced new rules to various levels of everyday life. The analysis of these selected issues concerns terror directed against people of Polish nationality in Krakow, the city chosen by the occupier as the administrative centre of the occupied Polish territories.

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### Jerzy Kochanowski, *Civilian Survival Strategies in 1939–1945*

This paper attempts to categorise and analyse civilian survival strategies during the German occupation. The scope of this article is limited to a part of Polish society (the intelligentsia), almost exclusively in the General Government (GG), and only marginally involves areas incorporated into the Reich. The analysis of newspapers and other sources suggests the following division of survival strategies adopted by the intelligentsia: 1. “creative strategies” (including work outside former professions, trade, setting up their own businesses); 2. “strategies of continuation and legalisation”, consisting of permanent employment in both Polish and German institutions; 3. “pre-emptive” strategies, consisting in finding and using loopholes in the occupation system and proper interpretation of rules, and 4. “partnership” and “dominance” strategies, which could be practically used only by landowners holding estates in the GG. This division can be seen as an invitation to a methodologically innovative, cross-sectional study of Polish society during World War II.

**Sylwia Grochowina, German Cultural Life in Toruń,  
1939–1945**

The inclusion of the western, northern and south-western territories of Poland into the “Third Reich” in the autumn of 1939 was associated, among other things, with the absolute annihilation of Polish culture in these areas, which was part of the programme to destroy Polish national identity. In National Socialist terms, culture was treated as a factor leading to the possibly rapid and long-lasting fusion of these lands with the Reich. Therefore, after the total liquidation of Polish cultural life, the German authorities began to organise their own. This article analyses the image of German cultural life in the occupied city of Toruń, indicating some general regularities in the implementation of Nazi cultural policy.

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### Aleksandra Paradowska, "Exceptional Tasks" in the "new German East." The Nazi City Planning and Architecture in Wartheland as Part of the Occupation of Polish territories during World War II

This article concerns the problem of the use of urban planning and architecture as one of the measures taken by German authorities to Germanise Polish territories, based on the example of Wartheland. These areas were of particular importance for the introduction of a new order, combined with, among other things, a broad programme of resettlement and extermination of the local population. Ultimately, Polish towns and villages were to gain a "genuine German" character testifying the integral membership of these areas to the "Third Reich". Although German designers and planners described the Polish lands as a tabula rasa, supposedly devoid of any order, in fact, they had to conform to existing solutions, and often copied Polish plans of the interwar period. The examples described in this paper clearly highlight the problems outlined above, and at the same time present issues that allow for the linking of Nazi policy and architecture in the whole empire.

**Robert Parzer, New Insights into the Study of Nazi Extermination of Mental Patients in Wartheland**

After German units attacked Poland on 1 September 1939, the killing of mental patients began almost immediately. This article challenges the long-held notion that these killings were steered by the Action T4 authorities in Berlin and explores the roles of different categories of perpetrators: physicians, bureaucrats and executioners, who formed the Sonderkommando Lange that later ran the first death camp, Kulmhof. Finally, the paper discusses an innovative form of remembrance of the murdered patients of the Kochanowka hospital in Łódź.

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### **Joanna Krakowska, What Does Theatre Need War for? What Do Historians Need Theatre for? Images of War and Occupation in Polish Theatre after 1945**

Theatre is a medium of history and also a public medium in which social tensions, political disputes and identity conflicts are concentrated. The World War II is a topic that has allowed Polish theatre to reveal historical antagonisms and hot spots of public discourse. The theatre reaches for topics of war for three major purposes: therapeutic – to confront the trauma, concerning identity – to negotiate community, as well as deconstructive – to revise and redefine historical discourse. The analysis of the ways in which theatre has been dealing with this subject as well as the political effects and polemical receptions of these theatre pieces allow to effectively investigate how Polish public discourse about the war and occupation has been evolving, from elevation through propaganda appropriation, reclaiming and revision, to deconstruction.



**Florian Peters, The Daily Life of the German Occupation Officials in Poland in Micro-historical Terms on the Basis of Private Photographs**

This chapter elucidates the value of private photography as a historical source of knowledge on everyday life under the German occupation of Poland during the World War II. In order to bridge the gap between the vast body of research on the Holocaust and war crime perpetrators and the study of social and cultural history of life under occupation, it proposes a micro-historical inquiry into the perceptions of everyday life by German civilian officials working for the occupation authorities. Exemplifying the fruitfulness of such an approach as well as the methodological challenges it implies, the chapter presents findings based on a collection of amateur photographs taken by a German post official working in German-occupied Warsaw throughout the war. The analysis of this material offers significant insights into the grey zone between perpetrators and victims, where active support of the criminal German occupation regime did not necessarily presuppose positive engagement with Nazi ideology, but rather originated from everyday conformism. Private photography is thus considered especially useful for tackling the low profile of consciousness in German society for the participation of “ordinary Germans” in establishing and sustaining German rule over large parts of Europe during the war.

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### Michał Łuczewski, *The Reception of Occupation Expressed by Emotions*

The author describes the emotions of a local community during the Nazi occupation (under German rule) and Communist occupation (under Russian rule), using the example of a mountain village, Żmiąca. Referring to Znaniecki's theory and symbolic interactionism, the author constructs a theory of emotions, one which explains their formation when an event/phenomenon does not meet social expectations at the following levels: force (a phenomenon is more active than we expected), assessment (a phenomenon is more positive/negative than we expected) and scope (a phenomenon is connected with more objects and in a deeper way than we expected). In addition, this analysis takes into account the relationship of emotions with their embodiments, metaphors and rationality. This allows for an explanation of why the greatest excitement in Żmiąca occurred after the end of World War II.

**Isabel Röskau-Rydel, "The Most Beautiful Years?"  
The Occupation of Krakow and the Krakow District  
in the Memory of the Germans**

The study outlines the different perception of the German occupation of the City and District of Krakow by individual Germans who lived there for shorter or longer periods during that time. Included are quotations from the *Memoirs* of Ralf Dahrendorf, who in the summer of 1940 was evacuated with his Berlin secondary school to Zakopane as part of the Children's Evacuation Programme. More extensive memories of the occupation come from the Roman Catholic paediatrician, Josef Ströder, who in 1942 was posted from Würzburg to Krakow as Director of the Children's Hospital, and worked there in close association with Polish paediatricians. Practically unknown are assessments of teachers, both women and men, who were transferred to the General Government to ensure the provision of classes in schools for German pupils. This study cites memories of male and female teachers who describe the occupation, mostly without further reflections, as the "best time" of their lives.

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### **Stephan Scholz, Albums of the Nation? History Textbooks of the Federal Republic of Germany as the Visual Media of Modern History**

Over the last few decades, German history textbooks have emerged increasingly as visual media. Today, they are not only “autobiographies of the nation” (Wolfgang Jacobmeyer) but also photo albums of the nation. They represent the visual memory especially of the twentieth century and shape it at the same time.

With regards to technical, cultural and educational changes, the essay reconstructs the development of the use of historic photographs in history textbooks. It analyses photographic usage, intentional effects and possible receptions, in order to answer the question of how the use of photographs produces and conveys historical meaning.

### **Katarzyna Woniak, The German Occupation of Poland in German School Textbooks**

This article attempts to investigate the scale, form and content of texts devoted to occupation in selected German secondary-school textbooks. The focus has been placed on the analysis of facts, the number of details presented in such descriptions and the degree of contextualisation. Moreover, there is a question of how the occupation is described from a national perspective and whether these descriptions include any external interpretations. The fundamental narrative on the World War II focuses on the Holocaust and the functioning of German society in the face of dictatorship. The German occupation is presented only briefly in textbooks. There is no reflection on the dimension of German terror against the occupied population and the most important responses to this terror, such as the characteristics of the underground state and the Warsaw uprising.