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A Symbolic Message About the War in the Photos of Red Army Photo Correspondent Emmanuil Evzerikhin from 1945

Summary: War photography is rarely treated by researchers of the past as a separate historical source. It rarely becomes a subject of in-depth research or separate academic studies. Even if its documentary value is noted, it is considered in the convention of image carriers rather than separate material for analysis. Meanwhile, the source knowledge about the war contained in the photographs allows military historians specialising in decoding it to use it broadly for cognitive purposes. In this paper, the author presents and discusses the symbolic narrative elements contained in the photographs taken in the final stages of World War II by Red Army photo correspondent, Captain Emmanuil Noevich Evzerikhin (*Эммануил Ноевич Евзерихин*). At the same time, the paper shows that the photographer's individual work was harnessed to execute tasks of the military propaganda services.

Keywords: photos, narratives, photo correspondent, Emmanuil Noevich Evzerikhin, Red Army, 1945

There is a Chinese saying that one picture means more than a thousand words. This proverb can still be considered appropriate, if only in explaining the message contained in the examples of Soviet war photography from World War II which is the subject of analysis in this paper. Historically speaking, the dissemination of information about war has for centuries been the domain of specialised services, which are usually an integral part of military or civilian structures that control access to soldiers and the battlefield. Starting with chroniclers and battle painters for hire, who would depict victories in literature and works of art celebrating the rulers while smoothing

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over or even omitting news of the defeats they had suffered. Nowadays, however, the activities of military information structures combine the tasks of disseminating the specific message of the armed forces with counter-intelligence activities, actively cooperating with – often independent of the army – mass media, but still regulating access to and generating universal knowledge about war within the limits of the security of the army and the state.

In the years 1941–1945, the military information activities of the Red Army were directed both internally and externally – mainly to the inhabitants of the Soviet Union. It was based on the authoritarian theory of the functioning of media systems commonly used at that time by totalitarian states. The most widespread media providing public information at the time – i.e., newspapers and radio – were subordinated to the Communist Party controlling the Soviet state. The Party allowed only for the publication of its point of view and importunately persuaded soldiers and civilians to its own rationale.[1]

Photography as a way of recording images was invented in the early 19th century, after which, along with the development of printing techniques and widespread education, it found its way into the mass media, also in terms of the journalistic approach. It allowed the press to present social events from all over the world, including the wars fought at that time. The first armed conflict reported in newspapers with the use of photography was the Crimean War of the mid-19th century. Burdened at its beginnings with the problems caused by the need to transport a large box camera and the long exposure time of the metal or glass plates on which the selected image was reproduced, during World War II, reportage photography was already undergoing another stage of its rapid development. It was characterised by the miniaturisation of equipment, small-format cameras and celluloid film rolls coated with light-sensitive silver salts. The technological progress at the time also significantly changed the technology of chemical processing with negatives and making prints on light-sensitive paper, allowing mobile photographic laboratories to be installed, for example, in adapted trucks or railway cars.[2]

In terms of composition and content, the photographs presented war only in its small sections embraced by a two-dimensional, flattened image. The frame, that is, a chosen from reality or posed element of space, captured by the author of the photographs in a single image, contained various elements resulting from the specific circumstances associated with the creation and the intention to present this specific piece. The photographer usually had a personal influence on the selection of the location, the presentation of human figures, and the richness and aesthetics of the elements of

1 Goban-Klas T. 2002, 167–169.

2 In Poland, the history of military and war photography, partly also Soviet photography from the World War II period, was studied by Henryk Latoś. His most important publications include Latoś H. 1982.

Fig. 1. An example of a victorious weapon being better than the weapon owned by the enemy. The photo shows the Soviet Heavy Howitzer B-4 placed in a combat position. In the archive description, it was incorrectly stated that it was a tank (Photo: E. Evzerikhin, Museum of the Second World War, Gdańsk)

Fig. 2. According to the archival description, the picture shows German prisoners of war. In fact, the men walking under the convoy were civilians deported from Prussia to forced labour in the reconstruction of the Soviet Union. After the war, deportations were a taboo subject for a long time (Photo: E. Evzerikhin, Museum of the Second World War, Gdańsk)

the specifically captured scenery and background. The author could also modify light and shadow, imitate the impression of movement and dynamics of events, and suggest sounds, even smells and flavours accompanying the space captured in the image. Ultimately, a reportage photograph generally included a representation of what was currently visible in the camera lens and was captured by sufficiently long exposure to the photosensitive material. The sequence of several or more photographs could be arranged in a photo reportage, which was readily used in newspapers as a deliberate, carefully selected narrative picture story.[3]

With the further improvement of printing and the evolution of the press able to reproduce a single image in millions of identical copies and therefore reaching many recipients at once with potentially the same symbolic charge and emotions, it was not complicated or difficult for the audiences to understand and adopt the attitudes or behaviours propagated by the printed images. The narrative elements of photography, intentionally quite easily coded and decoded in the symbolic layer, seemed to convince the viewer of the apparent authenticity of events and did not require specific behaviours, but instead encouraged support, participation, or imitation. The recipient of a press photograph usually believed that what was presented in it was an accurate reflection of reality. The ability to persuade the viewers increased with the use of simple symbols, thought stereotypes that cause quick connotations, or references to the viewer's personal experiences.[4]

The archival material described in this paper was used in such abundance for the first time in Poland. A few years ago, the collection of the Museum of the Second World War in Gdańsk managed to purchase several hundred photographs taken by two Soviet war photo correspondents, Arkadij Szajchet and Emmanuil Evzerikhin, who were both active in the final stage of the conflict with Germany on the Baltic flank of the Red Army's offensive, including in today's northern Poland. The work of the former is already more widely known thanks to the album *Krzywy obraz wojny* from 2019, in which, together with Dimitr Panto, we showed examples of falsifying the image narrative and propaganda features of photographs taken to satisfy the needs of the army.[5] Now, however, focusing on Evzerikhin's works, I have decided to take a closer look at the symbolism of the imagery contained in the war photographs, allowing the viewers of the time to read the information and indoctrination codes that prompted them to uncritically accept news about the war and to react to it as suggested by the dispatchers of information. The photographs presented in print are

3 Wolny-Zmorzyński K. 2007.

4 At that time, these phenomena were used only instrumentally, today they are more widely studied. Marianna Michałowska writes about the narrative of contemporary documentary photography, using the phrase 'photo-texts'. Michałowska M. 2012.

5 Gliniecki T., Panto D. 2019.

Fig. 3. This time, the caption for the photo corresponded with the actual situation captured by the frame. A column of German military vehicles, including the assault gun inspected by Soviet soldiers, was supposed to testify to the effectiveness of the Red Army's offensive (Photo: E. Evzerikhin, Museum of the Second World War, Gdańsk)

Fig. 4. Industrial technology was captured from the Germans as a symbol of reparations to the Soviet Union. The photo shows a hammer-shaped crane called the 'Grandfather' from the shipyard in Gdańsk. Soon after, it was disassembled by the Red Army's dismantling units and sent by ship to the east, after which it disappeared without a trace (Photo: E. Evzerikhin, Museum of the Second World War, Gdańsk)

a selection of about one hundred frames taken by Evzerikhin in 1945 used for analysis in this paper. They are also only a part of a wider set of photographs taken by Evzerikhin at that time. However, it can be assumed that they represent a collection representative of the whole of his work from that period. In a condensed form, they present the phenomenon of the symbolism of the image as an element directly determining the purpose of the taking of war photography and its usefulness in presenting war events to the society involved in the conflict.[6]

6 Author would like to thank the Museum of the Second World War in Gdańsk for making the photographs available for research and for agreeing to their publication in this volume.

Emmanuil Noevich Evzerikhin was born in Russia in 1911, still under the rule of the Tsars. He was of Jewish descent and partially assimilated with the multinational Russian society and later Soviet society. He has been dealing with photography since the 1920s, although his talent flourished in 1937 when his original works were noticed at a great state photography exhibition organised on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the October Revolution, which brought the Communists to power. Over time, he gained the trust of his superiors on behalf of the state agency 'Soyuzfoto', and Evzerikhin documented political life in the Kremlin. At that time, he was a candidate for a member of the Bolshevik Communist Party (Communist Party of the Soviet Union – CPSU), trying to win a political mandate and support for himself. After the outbreak of the war with Germany in mid-1941, he was drafted into the Red Army by order of the Supreme Commissariat of Defence, like hundreds of other representatives of Soviet culture, art, and media, who were put in uniforms and assigned to perform specialised tasks at the front.[7]

Evzerikhin has since participated in the war conflict, serving in the ranks of the army as a war correspondent and a documentary photographer recording images for the needs of the Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union (TASS). He took pictures for the state information headquarters, staying on 'several fronts', as Soviet regional combat groups were called at that time. Fortunately, he did not suffer any wounds or serious injuries during the war. During the fighting for East Prussia and Gdańsk in West Prussia (which at that time were parts of German territory), from January to April 1945, he was a photo correspondent for TASS at the 2nd Belorussian Front commanded by Marshal Konstantin Rokossovsky, and then on the neighbouring 3rd Belorussian Front, then under the command of Marshal Aleksandr Vasilevsky. He worked with a camera hung around his neck in the Baltic Sea coastal strip, photographing the captured areas from Danzig (Gdańsk), through Elbing (Elbląg), to Königsberg (Kaliningrad) in today's Russian exclave. Evzerikhin served in the army in the rank of captain-engineer. During the fighting, he fulfilled the orders given to him in the place of taking photographs. On the battlefield, he was directly subordinate to the commanders of the military political structures of a given front and, in general, to the leadership of the state news agency from Moscow.[8]

During the war, the photojournalist received several military decorations, which were awarded to him for his merits in recording appropriate images needed by his superiors. First, he was awarded a medal, 'For the Defence of Stalingrad', because he took some of his best reportage photos in the ruins of this city, symbolically depicting the war. A year later, Evzerikhin was awarded the 'Order of the Red Star' for photographs taken for TASS.[9] That same year he was awarded the 'Order of the Patriotic War'

7 *Klassik.*

8 *Klassik*.

9 Award letter of Emmanuel Evzerikhin, CAMD, fund 33, inventory 686044, storage unit 4456.

of the 2nd class. With the latter, the application for the award was filed by Colonel David Weisband[10] of the 2nd Belorussian Front artillery command, who pointed out the very different requirements of the work of military photographers from the 'ordinary' media photography, namely the possibility of using such photos to identify locations where enemy guns were positioned. At the end of the war, Evzerikhin was again awarded the Order of the Red Star. At that time, Chief Kuzovkin of TASS sent telegraphic correspondence to Panteleimon Gornilo of the Political Board of the 3rd Belorussian Front as a response and support for the said award. Two such telegrams have been preserved in Evzerikhin personal files. They say that the captain went with the camera through the entire combat route in Prussia, from forcing the former Polish-German border to fighting for the capital of the region. One of these telegrams was almost literally quoted in the justification for the decoration of the photo correspondent. The award application was signed on May 21, 1945 by Lieutenant Colonel Kuznetsov, head of the Agitation and Propaganda Department of the Political Board of the 3rd Belorussian Front. The granting of the award was confirmed after a few days.[11]

Fig. 5. In Königsberg, then the capital of East Prussia, captured in April 1945, Evzerihin photographed the destroyed castle square with monuments to Chancellor Bismarck and Emperor Wilhelm I, until recently glorifying Prussian and German militarism (Photo: E. Evzerikhin, Museum of the Second World War, Gdańsk)

10 Weisband David Semyonovich, born 1906, Colonel, Chief of Staff of Artillery Command of the 2nd Belorussian Front. A Jew, a member of the Bolshevik Party since 1929. In the Red Army since the late 1920s. He fought during the Winter War in Finland from 1939 to 1940, and later, from the beginning, in the Patriotic War. Awarded with orders of the Red Banner, Suvorov of the 2nd class, Kutuzov of the 1st class, the Order of the Red Star (three times), and the Medal For the Defence of Stalingrad. At the end of the war, he received the Order of Bohdan Khmelnitsky 2nd class. CAMD, fund 33, inventory 686046, storage unit 202, 275–176.

11 Award letter of Emmanuel Evzerikhin (2), CAMD, fund 33, inventory 686196, storage unit 3218.

After the victorious end of the war, Evzerikhin continued his work as a photojournalist in the state news agency and taught the basics of photography in university art classes for many years. He died in 1984 and was buried in Moscow.[12]

We have already noticed that the Red Army front photo correspondents served in the structures of the military political division. On the 2nd Belorussian Front discussed in this paper, the group of people sending information from the area of combat to the Soviet news agencies and the central mass media numbered several dozen individuals in total. They operated under the efficient management of the dean of the correspondent corps, an officer experienced in complex contacts between the battlefield and the Moscow press, Lieutenant Colonel Pavel Milovanov.[13] In addition, there was a special team of film camera operators and their assistants, called the front 'cinematic group' (*киногрупа*) recording short scenes in the sites of combat and making paradocumentaries. Its members performed their tasks in pairs, under the leadership of Captain Mark Troyanovsky.[14] The direct supervision over the broadly understood information sphere, thus also the intelligence security and preventive censorship in all units within the structures of the front units, was exercised by Colonel Ivan Diachenko.[15] Media correspondents were treated in the military service like other political officers and were therefore subject to the orders of the commander of the Political Board of the front, Lieutenant-General Andrei Okorokov.[16]

The basic task of war photo correspondents, i.e. specific soldiers 'armed' with cameras and a monthly supply of films to fill with images of war commissioned by the authorities, was to take photographs of strong symbolic meaning, conveying extreme emotions to the audience. The photographs sent by them from the battlefield and published in the mass media, as well as other elements of the message about the war, were supposed to justify – in a very suggestive and rather uncomplicated way – the need for

12 *Emmanuil Evzerikhin* 2007.

13 Milovanov Pavel Konstantinovich, born 1913, lieutenant colonel, senior correspondent of the newspaper "Krasnaya Zvezda" dean of the correspondent corps at the 2nd Belorussian Front. Russian. Member of the Bolshevik Party. In the army since 1939, mobilised for the Patriotic War by the central committee of the party in June 1941. CAMD, fund 33, inventory 686196, storage unit 2907, 20–21.

14 Troyanovsky Mark Antonovich, born 1907, captain, commander of the 2nd Belorussian Front cinematic group. Russian. Non-partisan. He fought in the war since 1941. He received several awards, including three orders of Lenin and the Red Star, medals 'For Military Merit' and 'For the Defence of the Caucasus' as well as the Order of Honour. For the work of the cinema group during the offensive in 1945, from the Narew River to the central regions of East Prussia, he was nominated to the Order of the Patriotic War 1st class. CAMD, fund 33, inventory 686196, storage unit 2907, 20–21.

15 Diachenko Ivan Tarasovich, born 1901, colonel, Deputy Head of the Political Board of the 2nd Belorussian Front. Ukrainian. In the Bolshevik party since November 1920. Staff officer in the Red Army, in which he served from 1922. Decorated on several occasions. CAMD. fund 33 inventory 686196 storage unit 113, 19–20.

16 Okorokov Andrei Dmitrievich, born 1905, lieutenant-general, head of the Political Board of the 2nd Belorussian Front. Russian. A party member since 1927, he has also served in the Red Army since then. Staff officer. In the Patriotic War from the beginning, he was wounded once. For fighting in Prussia he was awarded the Order of Lenin. CAMD, fund 33, inventory 686046, storage unit 40, 123–124.

the Soviet society to make significant sacrifices in the name of victory over the enemy, both on the part of the soldier and the entire civilian population of the country. They were meant to boost morale and call on people to make sacrifices – first to defend themselves and then to go on the offensive ending in victory and the defeat of their enemies.[17]

News broadcasts were expected to focus mass-media audiences around the propagated ideas of fighting the enemy. They also promoted important figures, from heroic privates covering the barrels of German machine guns with their breasts to major party leaders and military commanders, which over time developed into a personalised cult of the Soviet leader Joseph Stalin, with whose name on their lips they went into battle and often died with – for it was difficult to deny that Soviet wartime propaganda was extremely effective and gained the trust of its audience, although there was also no shortage of sceptics about its actions among its recipients. Not everyone wanted to die in glory, and surviving the war in its last stage required a much greater effort from the soldiers than a reckless but heroic death rewarded with shining orders.[18]

Therefore, among the important tasks of the photo correspondents was to popularise selected Red Army figures – personally designated combat heroes – through photographs – and to exhort the masses to emulate their combat exploits. Admittedly, those heroes who fought to a glorious death in battle were praised the most. However, usually, the dead could not be photographed and shown to the public so as not to frighten

Fig. 6. An image of the Soviet victory over the enemy showing the space of the then Frederick Wilhelm Square in Elbing. Among the ruined buildings, including the town hall, there was a German cannon, no longer manned, testifying to the strength of the attack and ineffective defence against it (Photo: E. Evzerikhin, Museum of the Second World War, Gdańsk)

17 Sokolov B. 2017.

18 An example of an honourable death in battle was covering up a firing hole with one's own body, as Private Alexander Matrosov did in 1943. The followers of his feat were called 'matrosovists' and there were several hundred of them. Shkadarevich I. 1973.

the combatants and their families. Although in this case, too, there were deliberate exceptions, and unconditional mention must be made of the shocking, posed photograph of the dead partisan 'Tanya' or Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya, hanged by the Germans and described by Pyotr Lidov in the newspaper "Pravda" as a heroine.[19] The photo taken by photographer Sergei Strunnikov of the girl's naked body was published in the Soviet daily press as a cruel warning to the combatants, to whom the enemy did not give pardon, and a call for merciless revenge on the bestiality of the Germans.[20]

Most often, the photo with the Red Army soldiers as the main subject of the frame presented one or several soldiers and occasionally a larger unit. For all the official glorification of the ideal of universality by communism and the promotion of the soldier masses as collectives, only a few heroes were singled out for public remembrance. Their names were given, and their faces were shown, but the viewers were not overloaded with too many of them, so the selected few could be recognised and remembered better. Instead, they had such common biographies and their successes in combat were so easy to emulate, that practically any Soviet soldier could become a potential hero and serve the collective that awaited his sacrifice.[21]

However, many more subjects of war photographs were postulated by the authorities and designated for public dissemination. For example, symbolic photographs were supposed to show the fragility of enemy forces and the collapse of their morale, enemy soldiers already dead or wounded, or at least giving up in captivity. The enemy's destroyed or abandoned combat equipment, fortifications breached by the Red Army and abandoned by the enemy troops in their territory were also keenly depicted. The effects of the destructive occupation of Soviet lands, emotional reasons for personal revenge, and examples of justified revenge on the enemy were also worth showing. These latter tasks were also shown at the end of the war through the images of destroyed German cities, broken monuments and cultural objects, seized equipment and captured infrastructure, as well as images reflecting the emotions of losing Germans, including civilians, with whom the war caught up with all its ruthlessness and evil. In addition to this, there were mentally opposite images, i.e., examples of own reliable and deadly weapons – Soviet tanks, aircraft, or guns. At the same time, there was a reluctance to show those items of equipment that came from the abundant material aid provided by the Western Allies to the Soviets, granted to them under a programme called *lend-lease*. Red Army soldiers were rarely photographed as personified victims of fighting the enemy, i.e., the wounded staying in field hospitals or the bodies of the fallen before being buried in cemeteries.[22]

19 Lidov P. 1941.

20 The photograph is captioned: The corpse of the Komsomol member and partisan Tatiana, brutally tortured and hanged by Nazi bandits in the village of Petrishchevo, Vereya district, Moscow region.

21 Oleynikov V., Kozyirev S. 2015, 18–22.

22 Vartanov A. 2014.

Fig. 7. A detachment of Red Army soldiers photographed during the march to battle, as evidenced by bayonets placed on the barrels of their rifles. The viewer's attention may also be captured by the soldier with a harmonium in his hands, emphasising the emotional fierceness evident on the faces of the infantrymen (Photo: E. Evzerikhin, Museum of the Second World War, Gdańsk)

In these few most important groups of subjects to be photographed, the command set frontline photojournalists the task of symbolically, even journalistically illustrating the current war narrative and thus fulfilling the information and propaganda requirements ordered by the political authorities – sometimes clearly expecting and sometimes forbidding taking photos in certain circumstances. In wartime reality, however, these were not suggestions addressed to the artists as a request but indisputable military orders that had to be scrupulously fulfilled. Individual ideas and art tendencies, as well as the previous avant-garde experiences of the photographers, had to be immediately rejected or ruthlessly adjusted into the prevailing propaganda schemes defined by the guidelines of their superiors. Also, the literal documentary nature of the taken and published photographs was less important –to achieve the indoctrination goal, the photographers could introduce any symbolic elements into the presented image, even by deliberately abandoning the truth of war. Therefore, photographic fakery was often used in the form of staging battles after they had already taken place, building frames outside the battlefield and using people, equipment, explosives, and smoke and fire effects to increase the appeal and drama of the shots. Other ways of interfering with the photograph included narrowing the frame to omit less important elements, blurring or completely replacing the background, retouching details, and finally cutting out or pasting individual people or equipment in order to radically change the content of the original shot through photomontage, often directly to emphasise its symbolic dimension and increase the scale of the emotions accompanying the viewer.[23]

23 Vartanov A. 2014.

Fig. 8. Despite the hints from the archival description, it is not a butcher's shop in Augustów but in Thorn (Toruń), at 67 Chełmińska Road. During the Second Polish Republic, it belonged to Fritz Kluge. Showing the Germans' wealth was supposed to justify revenge and individual plunder by the Red Army against the defeated (Photo: E. Evzerikhin, Museum of the Second World War, Gdańsk)

In many cases, the work of the Soviet war photojournalist consisted of presenting specific events, i.e., transmitting image information expanded with additional data. The photograph was often combined with a short description explaining the place and the most important circumstances of its creation, sometimes enriched with the names of the individuals depicted in the shot. This caption under the photo was one of the basic elements of focusing the recipient's attention on the appropriate reading of the pictorial message, decoding the information contained in the photo. However, this caption, too, has often been deformed, sometimes emphasising the symbolism required by the narrative, although in many cases simply due to inaccuracies or mistakes made by the authors when naming photographed places, equipment, or people. At other times, however, captions were deliberately, manipulatively altered by censors, editors of the press or other handlers of photographs intended for public presentation or official reports.[24]

To conclude the above discussion, the social reception of the narrative content contained in symbolic photography, also in the case of Emmanuil Evzerikhin's wartime photographs taken in the first months of 1945, was based on the extraordinary simplicity of the message. In order to convince Soviet soldiers and civilians of the attitudes and behaviour expected by the authorities, as a rule, the congruence of the details of photographs qualified for the presentation with the truth and realities of the combat was not the main concern. Instead, the emphasis was placed on the suggestiveness of the narrative qualities and symbolic elements of the image contained in the proposed frames, creating the desired story of just participation in the war and the victorious struggle against the enemy. These photographs showed and testified to the defeat of the enemy's forces and the success of their own troops, their efficiency in battle and the rapid conquest of foreign lands, the multitude and wealth of the resulting spoils of war, as well as the severe revenge and punishment of the enemies for the crimes committed in the previously occupied Soviet territories.[25]

24 Gliniecki T. 2016, 19–43.

25 Igrayev B. 2016, 130–136.

Fig. 9. 'Liberators' in Brodnica (Strasburg an der Drewenz), which was then a stopover area for the frontline command and staff. Soviet soldiers in the market square, visible in the background is the Chełmno tower. A similar old city gate is located in Elbląg, hence probably another mistake in the archival description. On the left-hand side of the photograph, a proposal to crop the image has been unceremoniously scratched out (Photo: E. Evzerikhin, Museum of the Second World War, Gdańsk)

Fig. 10. The photo shows a ruined street in one of the recently captured Prussian cities, probably Elbing (Elbląg) or Neidenburg (Nidzica). At the same time, it is a classic example of photomontage, because the self-propelled gun was cut out from another photo and glued to the background, suggesting the creation of this destruction during combat (Photo: E. Evzerikhin, Museum of the Second World War, Gdańsk)

Convincing the public of the veracity of the informational and emotional messages contained in the photographs sent by photo correspondents from the battlefields in Germany brought strong public confidence to the Red Army, strengthened the army's belief in its own capabilities, and implanted an image of a universal patriotic war in the minds of the soldiers, ending in the victory of the internationalist idea and the spread of communism beyond the borders of the state. At the same time, it was an image devoid of any mistakes and weaknesses on the part of the leaders, with Stalin as a personified icon of success. This state of affairs propagandistically shaped the image of the war conflict coming to an end. It was maintained in the Soviet Union for decades to come, thus influencing historical perceptions of the struggle against Germany and public memory of the war, as evidenced, among other things, by albums with photographs and film stills, which were published in large editions, generally for successive milestone anniversaries of the victory.[26] In the Russian Federation today, the Great Patriotic War has the nature of a social experience exclusively heroic and unquestionably victorious, and archival images are one of the elements of strengthening this war myth.[27]

Finally, it must be acknowledged that the wartime treasure trove of Emmanuil Evzerikhin's photographic activity was not more widely known to the public for years after the war and actually lay this time in the archives, and it is only in the last decade that it has been increasingly and more boldly exhibited, especially often in Russia itself. Many years after the war, but also long after his death, their author became one of the war photo correspondents who regained their names and faces and whose works serve as material for the preparation of original exhibitions and album publications. In the part of Evzerikhin's collection dedicated to the battles for Prussia in 1945, one can find photographs that have not been previously widely known but which are worthy of contemporary decoding and showing the conformity of the captured images, sometimes partially arranged, with the Soviet informational and indoctrination canon imposed from above. The way in which Evzerikhin works fit into the overall propaganda narrative shows not only his deliberate selection of symbolic scenes and details captured in the frames but usually also conveys the mood of the moment and suggests the anticipated emotions of the viewers of the photographs at the time, which had faded irretrievably with the victory in the war, giving them a historical dimension.

26 The flagship example of such an anniversary publication is the five-volume album about war photography and filmography *Velikaya Otechestvennaya voyna 1941–1945 godov v fotografiyah i kinokadrah*. Kurochkin P. (ed.) 1975–1980.

27 The current historiographical interpretation is another multi-volume and richly illustrated publication prepared for the state authorities and editorially supervised by the Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation, Sergei Shoygu. One of its parts is devoted to Soviet propaganda activities, called there 'mobilisation of society to wage war'. *Mobilizatsiya.* 2015.

Summary

Evzerikhin's photographs from 1945 are examples of meticulous justification selected by the author with images of indoctrination theses proclaimed by the Soviet state, party and military authorities at the time. Despite the suggestions directed at the audience, there are no photos taken exactly during the clashes, but they are only taken in the captured places, sometimes shortly after the end of the fighting. It is no coincidence that the author of numerous contemporary albums with photographs taken during World War II, Ian Baxter, noted that they were usually not taken directly during fights:

> Such photographs were taken extremely rarely, and photographers were reluctant to risk their lives, armed only with a camera. Most of the photographs available today from the battlefield were commissioned by press agencies, many of them staged for propaganda, photographic souvenirs.[28]

The symbolic elements contained in the photographs clearly refer to the final period of the war, characterised by the battles fought on German soil at that time, treated as an area requiring first ruthless conquest and later partial takeover by the winners. The justification of the related needs for the military and, more broadly, Soviet society was contained in two different narratives propagated by the military political services of the Red Army – in both informational and emotional contexts. At the time of extinction, due to the exaggeration of revenge on the enemy and its manifestations far beyond the anticipated scale of atrocities, there was a story of the necessity of severely paying Germany for the war wrongs done to the nations they conquered in the East. The official dissemination included, however, a narrative glorifying the role of the Red Army as the 'liberators' of much of Europe from the yoke of German National Socialism. Soviet front photo correspondents eagerly fulfilled the role of knowledge and emotion transmitters indicated to them by their superiors; hence, the effects of their work – also in the case of Evzerikhin – document not so much the course of fighting as the implementation of planned military propaganda activities during the conflict.

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