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Forming a Profession

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Forming a Profession

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The ethical standards that guide contemporary photojournalists are a common source of debate, among both members of the profession and those who see their work—the audience. The techniques and technology photojournalists use and the process of selecting or editing this work to represent the subject well are fraught with ethical implications. The frequent discussions, on and off the job, in the professional journals and among newspaper and magazine readers, all are based on the premise that there are correct ways—professionally responsible and ethically acceptable—to picture current events in the mass media.

This article explores some of the historical roots of contemporary ethical debates about how photojournalists carry out their work. A major premise of this exploration is that ethical standards are established in accordance with evolving patterns of work. As decisions are made about what to photograph and how, an organizational structure arises to routinize those decisions, to make them less problematic. Ethical questions are woven through this process, implied by the larger set of questions that guide the editorial practices of the publication: What subjects should a news magazine or newspaper cover? How should photojournalists approach these subjects? To whom are photojournalists accountable for the fullness and accuracy of their visual reports? The historical and organizational environment in which these decisions are made influences not only the day-to-day work of the photographer but also the evolution of the profession itself, forming standards that photojournalists refer to as they embark on new subjects, for different publications, in different historical settings.

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The German Roots

Looking for roots of contemporary photojournalistic practice, sooner or later one comes to Weimar Germany, where, by 1926, an active and vibrant press photography was evolving out of a long tradition of magazine journalism. The German picture press as it existed from 1926 to 1933 provided models for the development of photojournalism as a profession in Western Europe and the United States. At least a few American publishers, including William Randolph Hearst and Henry Luce, had known of the German magazines and in several cases hired German photographers for specific assignments. And after the Nazis forced the emigration of many who had worked in Germany, the picture press in the United States benefited in a very direct way from the skills and ideas the emigrés brought with them. These opportunities existed at a formative period in the American press at the genesis of Life and Look, the picture magazines that established the status of photojournalism in the United States.

The tools for this examination are three German magazines published between 1926 and 1933, two politically centrist popular weeklies, the Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung (BIZ) and the Münchner Illustrierte Presse (MIP), and, as a political and organizational contrast, the biweekly Arbeiter-Illustrierte-Zeitung (A-I-Z), supported by the Communist Party.1

A systematic analysis of these three magazines has been carried out, noting the sources of the photographs by photographer and agency, the proportion of each issue devoted to photographs, patterns in the choice of topics covered, and the form the coverage took, with special emphasis on the editing style and content of photo series or essays. This analysis was supplemented by several interviews with persons who had worked on these publications.2 Work patterns were inferred from the content of the magazines, looking particularly at changes in editing style, topics of coverage, and the frequency of the appearance of work by individual photographers. Changes in the political, economic, and social environment of Germany from 1926 to the spring of 1933, when the Nazis came to power, were also taken into account in interpreting the magazines’ content.

The ethical dimensions of this work were drawn not from the magazines themselves but retrospectively, from the context of contemporary photojournalistic practice in the United States.3 The issues photojournalists deal with in their day-to-day work, including their choice of subjects, what equipment to use, and how they present themselves and their work to their subjects, their editors, and their audience, are interlaced with ethical choices that are made easier by the routines they develop to guide them on the job. Central to this process is the sense of collegiality with other photojournalists performing parallel tasks.
This accountability to a professional group and its standards has a historical and political base, resting on an identity that distinguishes photographers from the people they photograph, from the editors who judge and publish their work, and from the audience that evaluates them according to what it sees in the press. This complex set of interrelationships among subjects, editors, and audience is mediated for the photojournalists by their sense of how other members of their profession whom they respect (or disdain) have managed the conflicts inherent in their work.

The process of building standards for photojournalistic practice, including its ethical dimensions of accountability, is thus one of accretion, based on the precedents of personal experience and the experience of those the photojournalist recognizes as colleagues.

Tracing the observed patterns of contemporary work into the past, one finds easy parallels in Germany in the late 1920s. The 35-mm roll-film camera, now standard for photojournalists, was first used by photographers working for German magazines. The editor's role in selecting subjects and editing photographs, now built into the organizational structure of large American newspapers and news magazines, had its origins in the photographer-editor relationship that evolved at the DIIZ and MIF. The publication of series of photographs on a single subject originated at these magazines, became the central feature of picture magazines in the United States in the late 1930s, and survives as the most prestigious in-depth report an American photojournalist can achieve. Because each of these features of photojournalistic work is seen today to have ethical components, the gradual adoption of these practices in the German press merits a closer examination.

Understanding how these aspects of work developed and became routinized for a group of early press photographers enables us to trace the ethical concerns that are woven through the work of contemporary photojournalists.

To accomplish this task, we begin with an examination of the organizational structure of the three German magazines considered here, including the development of the photographers' role via a via these magazines. The photographic context in which the magazines arose is then examined, to account for the popularity and applications of photography in the German press at the time. The competitive environment in which the magazines existed exerted certain
Figure 2  Cover, Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung, Volume 38, Number 39 (1929), with a photograph by Martin Munkacsi.
Figure 3  Cover, Arbeiter-Illustrierte-Zeitung, Volume 6, Number 44 (1927)
pressures on the photographers that influenced their patterns of work. These patterns are then compared across photographers working for magazines with different political orientations, for it is in this context that the implications of editorial position on ethical practice can be seen most clearly. Finally, the status of the photojournalists is examined, including their social rights and obligations. Depending on which magazine they worked for, the photographers either established a new status for themselves as individually respected members of an emerging profession or remained masked within the collective of the politicized working class.

The BIZ and MIP

The Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung was founded in 1890, published by the large and profitable House of Ullstein. It featured commentary, entertainment, and serialized novels, as well as numerous illustrations. In the early 1920s, the BIZ began to use more photographs—a trend also evident in other House of Ullstein publications including Die Dame, Die Woche, and Uhu. With Kurt Korff as publishing director, aided by Kurt Szafranski as artistic director, the BIZ gained the largest circulation of any Ullstein magazine. When its circulation peaked at 1.95 million in 1931, Korff and Szafranski had created a package of pictures, text, and illustration that not only had widespread national appeal but was imitated by picture magazines elsewhere.

The Münchner Illustrierte Presse was founded in 1923 by the Knorr and Hirth publishing house, in direct competition with the BIZ. It was a successful rival, first under Paul Feinheal and then, after 1926, under the editorship of a young Hungarian, Stefan Lorant. Although Munich-based and emphasizing regional topics, the magazine had a national circulation. In 1928, Lorant moved his offices to Berlin to be closer to the events that were of greatest national interest and to afford him better access to the writers and photographers who could document them. The two magazines, MIP and BIZ, hired many of the same photographers, used the same picture sources, and, judging from their content and design, were competing for the same readers—the German middle class and bourgeoisie.

Picture agencies were initially the magazines’ most important source for photographs. Numerous picture agencies were operating in Germany during the 1920s, including Weltbildschau, Atlantic and Pacific, Mauritius, and Dephot. For significant international news events and breaking news stories, the agencies remained the major source of photographs for the weekly magazines. However, agencies proved less satisfactory in providing series of photographs on single topics.

Photographic series became the heart of the BIZ and MIP during the late 1920s. Gradually, one- to three-page spreads of photographs on single topics occupied greater portions of both magazines, with at least three and often five or six series in each issue. It would have been difficult and time-consuming to construct these series out of diverse agency photographs, although the editors often tried. A more efficient means was to receive an entire “take” on a subject from one photographer and select from these the three to eight photographs that typically comprised a published series or essay.

Many of the photographers whose work appears in the BIZ and MIP were employed by agencies. However, rather than working through the agency, they often brought their work directly to the editor, or the editor would give them an assignment. Thus, a structural pattern developed as photo series came to occupy a central role in the BIZ and MIP: editors selected the work of specific photographers over others, until certain photographers came to be closely linked to one magazine. Martin Munkácsi, for example, re
ceived a high guarantee from Ullstein in exchange for exclusive rights to his photographs. He came to be one of Korff’s favorite photographers. Alfred Eisenstaedt, working for Atlantic and Pacific, was by 1930 frequently published in the BIZ and MIP. Felix Man remained with the Dephot agency, but it was not unusual for Lorant to publish two or even three of his photo series in one issue of the MIP.

Those magazines had no subscription sales. Each issue went on the newsstands, with a photograph on the cover to attract attention. Twenty-five to forty percent of its pages were devoted to advertising. Single photographs, often portraits, were dotted throughout the text, which remained a combination of comment on current events and short or serialized fiction pieces. Yet it was the ten to twenty percent of each magazine that was devoted to series of photographs which established its character and popularity. The editors said they put much care and effort into securing and displaying the photographs, and their records show that they paid the photographers more handsomely than other contributors to the magazine.

With this formula and a popular price, the BIZ and MIP maintained large circulations. Neither claimed a particular political position; they were more concerned about narrowly skirting a style of coverage that could be considered racy or scandalous, while maintaining a balance between frivolous topics and those that were more weighty.

There were numerous alternative choices to this popular and centrist position among the approximately twenty picture magazines published in Germany during the late 1920s. Die Dame catered to the upper-class woman with its tasteful blend of fashion and the arts. The National Socialists established Der Illustrierte Beobachter in 1926.

The A-I-Z
The principal Communist oriented magazine in Germany was Die Arbeiter-Illustrierte-Zeitung (A-I-Z), established in 1925 by Willi Münzenberg. It was a profusely illustrated photographic biweekly magazine with a clear political position. Through its organizational structure and content, one can see evidence of
relationships among editors, photographers, subjects, and readers that suggest the evolution of ethical standards different from those of the other picture magazines.

Münzenberg founded the A-I-Z as an outgrowth of the Workers’ International Relief (WIR), an organization to aid the people of Soviet Russia suffering from the 1921 drought. The A-I-Z replaced and consolidated Münzenberg’s earlier publications for the WIR in 1925 and continued as an international effort to bring together writers and artists of the Left who wished to help workers build a politically unified movement. The A-I-Z’s circulation has been placed at approximately 300,000 in 1929 (Eskildsen 1981).

Since the newstand were controlled by the large media cartels, the A-I-Z was distributed primarily by a system of street hawkers. Operating with a small staff under several different editors, the magazine was a package of photographs, photomontages, articles on workers’ movements around the world, and games and puzzles intended for readers of all ages. With material also in Esperanto, the magazine was aimed at an international audience.

The A-I-Z’s sources for photographs were varied. Many came from agencies; these were often file photographs, such as portraits, that were cut and morticed over each other for a dynamic display. Still others represented the efforts of worker-photography clubs in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and, increasingly, Germany.

The picture agencies, Münzenberg argued, represented a bourgeois perspective on society. Their photographers were not capable of documenting the cultural life and events of the workers for whom the A-I-Z was intended. It was necessary for workers to begin to document themselves—the conditions of their lives and work, what they found beautiful or offensive—in order to confront the bourgeois point of view presented in the photographs of the other mass media. This ideology of photography created an accountability of the A-I-Z photographers to their audience markedly different from that of the BIZ and MIP photographers: in the A-I-Z, readers were to see their own lives pictured in ways that would also lead them to criticize the absence of such images from the dominant mass media.

To encourage workers to become active in photographing themselves, in 1926 the A-I-Z sponsored worker-photography clubs, formed through advertisements and competitions. A new magazine, Der Arbeiter Fotograf, presented discussions of the relationship between art and work, suggestions for homemade and less expensive equipment, tips on ways to improve photographic composition and technique, and examples of photographs by workers, together with accounts of how the photographs were made.

The link between the A-I-Z and Der Arbeiter Fotograf was clear: occasionally the same photographs appeared in both magazines, and the assumption was that the photographers who read Der Arbeiter Fotograf would have their work published in the A-I-Z. Even at the height of the worker-photography movement, when Der Arbeiter Fotograf’s circulation was 7,000, the A-I-Z did not receive enough photographs from workers to fill its pages, and it had to continue to rely on agency sources. The absence of credit lines in the A-I-Z makes it difficult to trace the concrete results of the worker-photographers’ efforts. They worked collectively, rather than as individuals, and appear to have accepted collective credit, often with only the name of their city appearing under the published photograph. Also, maintaining the photographers’ anonymity was a precaution taken probably to protect them from the repression exerted on the Left in Germany at that time (Rink 1967:30). There was little opportunity for a privileged relationship to develop between specific photographers and A-I-Z’s editors, given the structure of the organization and the orientation of the photographers to a party press. They were not making a living as photographers.

Nor was there much opportunity for influence between the A-I-Z and other picture magazines. Editors regularly looked at each other’s magazines, and the work of the well-known master of the political montage, John Heartfield, which appeared in each issue of the A-I-Z, was admired. But the editors did not borrow photographs, ideas, or staff from each other. With the onset of Nazi control and widespread arrests in 1933, the editors and major photographers of the BIZ and MIP moved west, to England and many eventually to the United States. The A-I-Z editors moved to Prague, where the magazine continued until 1936 but was rarely seen in the West.
The quality and influence of the magazines produced is not a primary issue here. Rather, the goal is to examine how different organizational structures and patterns of work create and support the peculiar network of relationships binding editors, photographers, the subjects of the photographs, and their audience. It is within these networks that lines of accountability and ethical standards arise. A comparison of the A-I-Z, BIZ, and MIP affords an opportunity to examine how these different news organizations developed different guidelines for photojournalistic practice within their historical situation.

The Growth of the Weimar Picture Press

The widespread popularity of photography in Germany between the wars is the most obvious explanation for the proliferation of picture magazines during this period. The renowned international "Film und Foto" exhibition that opened in Stuttgart in 1929 was an impressive indication of the diverse paths photography had taken during the Weimar years (Steinorth 1979). Here were shown Laszlo Moholy-Nagy's experiments with light-sensitive materials, which expressed his belief that the significant content of photography was the action of light. Others used photography to explore more closely the formal, structural properties of objects. Karl Blossfeldt's stark yet delicate examinations of plant forms and Germaine Krull's industrial thromos were two examples of photographic attempts to reveal the functional simplicity and pattern found in everyday objects. The inclusion of work from the Group f.64 in the United States and of contemporary Soviet photography and film showed the eclectic spirit of German art photography during this period. Advertising was included, for photography had also infused this field, in a real blurring of boundaries between art and commerce. For example, the work of Albert Renger-Patzsch, perhaps the best known of the German "new realist" photographers, regularly appeared in magazine advertisements for Kaffee Haag, with his credit line.

The invention of the roll-film camera and the small 35-mm Leica had made many more subjects accessible to photographers without their having to use obtrusive lights. Making photographs was also a
possibility for a growing segment of the population. The small, inexpensive Kodak and Agfa cameras invited the average person to participate in photographic documentation. Frequent ads in the magazines suggested that these new amateurs photograph their travels, holiday celebrations, and family life. Camera clubs arose, including the worker-photography clubs with their overtly political goals.

This widespread enthusiasm for photography is consistent with Neue Sachlichkeit ("new objectivity"), a movement that originated among painters as a reaction against the excesses of Expressionism. As it influenced many facets of German art and culture, Neue Sachlichkeit was interpreted in a variety of ways. Today Neue Sachlichkeit has emerged as an explanation to tie together efforts at precise and unflinching description, assertions of rationality, searches for pattern, and the desire for order found in many German works of the late 1920s.

Elements of each of these concerns are evident in the photography of Weimar and in the orientation of its new picture press. For the journalist, Neue Sachlichkeit meant a renewed commitment to go to the heart of a subject, to look for the essence of its "thingness." It stood for attempts to reveal a subject's source or base and its boundaries, what distinguished it from and connected it to its environment. Neue Sachlichkeit was thus also critical, in the sense of examining a subject's root through a process of comparing and discarding inessential explanations.

In the picture magazines, this was expressed as an obligation to go "behind the scenes." Dr. Erich Salomon's photographs of diplomats in head-to-head discussion around tables of wine are the obvious and best-known examples. Photographers for the BIZ and MIP were assigned to go into major institutions, to photograph the work that went on during a symphony rehearsal, in the stacks of a library, on the floor of the stock exchange, in the dormitories and dining halls of the military academies, in the training camp of an Olympic athlete. The BIZ had a series on leading German artists and scientists that presented not formal portraits but candid photographs of the men at work in their studios, homes, and classrooms. In the A-I-Z and Der Arbeiter Fotograf, living conditions were revealed by photographing a day in the life of working-class youth. The experiences of poor people going through an arrest and trial were shown in photographs taken inside the courtroom and surrounding hallways.

This kind of photographic description required series of pictures. A single photograph could not show the processes of life or work; photographs taken from different angles and distances revealed different facets of the subject. A fuller, more complete understanding of the subject is implied by this kind of coverage, a style that had not been used in the press before. Emphasis was established by varying the size of the photographs, with the largest one giving a visual summary of what was considered most important about the subject. Compositional elements within the photographs became important means of guiding the viewers' eyes through the series. Similarities in tone or in shape were used to create continuities or to heighten a contrast between different aspects of the subject. The form that the series took in the magazine was a result of the editors' work and represented a new development in the character of photojournalism.

This awareness of new possibilities within the medium of photography was a topic of discussion and debate for the magazines themselves. Articles discussed how the world is revealed through photographs. Some photographic series were accompanied by text explaining the special perspective the camera had provided on the subject. In other words, the subject of the series was presented not as self-evident but as mediated by the camera. Throughout the magazines, readers were reminded in various ways that they were seeing a selective view of the world.

One of the more subtle ways this was accomplished was by presenting the photographs as "authored." In the BIZ and MIP, the picture source—whether an agency, a specific photographer, or both—was routinely printed under each photograph. The A-I-Z abbreviated or omitted credit lines, keeping each photographer's identity anonymous, precisely because photographers were understood to interpret their subjects. The ideology of the A-I-Z, that the photographs represented the perspective of the photographer's class, further underscores the notion of the photograph as an interpretation or point of view. And, at the other end of the political spectrum, it was not unusual to see a photographer's credit under an advertising photograph.

These patterns together suggest that the diffusion of photography throughout the culture of Weimar Germany was based on ideas about the medium as, on the one hand, appropriate to a wide range of forms of expression and documentation, and, on the other, accessible to large segments of the population. This combination is particularly propitious for the rise of photography within the popular press. The popularity of photography during a period of critical reflection and inquiry, as represented by Neue Sachlichkeit, further shaped ideas about the medium itself, the kinds of records it could provide, and the accountability of the photographers and editors who created the picture press.
Competition and Candor

Germany's new picture magazines existed within a highly competitive atmosphere. Lorant's move from Munich to Berlin and the editors' attempts to bypass agencies in favor of developing privileged relationships with good photographers are evidence of editorial rivalry over getting the best photographs for magazines. Efforts to secure exclusive coverage of a subject were also consistent with ideas about photographs as news. A photographer's work was of greatest interest to an editor if the subject was recent or timely and if no one else was publishing photographs of it. Thus, the BIZ sent Munkacsy on the first transatlantic zeppelin flight and then prominently displayed photographs and drawings of the event for several weeks. Walter Bosshard's trip through China also resulted in exclusive coverage for the BIZ. When a photographer was the first to cover a subject, for example with the first photographs of government in action, or the first look behind the scenes of a monastic order, this was noted in the text.

As these photographic "firsts" began to appear in the BIZ and MIP as a series or photo essay, new ideas about what constituted complete coverage also emerged. A single photograph was insufficient for revealing the workings of government or the daily routine of monastic life. A fuller picture was created in a variety of ways, through the series. Sometimes a photographer presented a composite view by making photographs of many of the participants in an event—showing each of the monks at their work, for example, or portraying the stratification of the social order by photographing the families living on each successive floor of an apartment building. In other cases, a series might consist of showing the steps required to perform a task.

Most common in the BIZ and MIP, however, were series that included photographs made from a variety of angles of view. The three to eight photographs in a series typically included an overview, often from above to show a sense of location, a middle-distance or close-up shot of one or more participants, and then a closer detail of an individual or object that was part of the environment of the event.

While today this notion of visual variety may seem obvious, it was not the earliest way of presenting multiple photographs on a single page. Rows of photographs, all approximately the same size and taken from the same angle and distance from the subject, had appeared in newspapers and magazines prior to 1920. In contrast, the picture editing style that emerged in the BIZ and MIP relied on visual elements within the image to lead from one to another throughout the page. This visual flow was easier to establish if an editor had a range of photographs containing a variety of compositional forms to use in laying out the series. The various angles the photographers learned to use also gave readers a sense that they were receiving a more fully rounded view and thus a better understanding of the subject.

An additional and equally significant aspect of this style of photographic coverage was that the subjects appear to be unaware of the presence of the camera. Certainly the adaptability of small 35-mm cameras to low-light situations made it easier for photographers to make candid photographs. Yet the availability of this technology alone does not account for the ways people in the photographs appear to be going about their work as if the photographer were not present. Photographers were adopting the idea that candid photographs were preferable, that the better photographs were those that were imposed, creating the illusion of the photographer's invisibility.

This selection and encouragement of candid photography, often noted as an important development in the photojournalism of Germany in the 1920s (Gidal 1973), also implies a different relationship of the photographer to the subject portrayed in the photograph. Either the photographer had to take photographs when people were in fact unaware that they were the
subject, or the photographer had to be able to convince the subjects to continue their activities while forgetting (or acting as if they were forgetting) the photographer's presence.

The workers' photographs in the A-I-Z, in contrast, are less candid. The subjects are often looking into the camera, agreeing to be photographed. Yet the poses are rarely stiff or formal, which suggests that the photographers may have presented themselves as members of the group or as colleagues, gaining their subjects' cooperation as peers (Hardt and Ohm 1901). This was certainly the goal of the A-I-Z's editors and was the reason they avoided, if possible, photographs from agencies or professionals when they were seeking to present the experience of the working class. The photographers were not expected to make photographs that hid their participation or interaction with their subjects.

Occasionally the A-I-Z photographer's camera became an active witness to events, offering an explicit corrective to an article in the bourgeois press. The MIP's coverage of a prosperous factory, functioning near capacity, was republished in the A-I-Z, with photographs of the same factory standing idle and empty. Photographs of healthy prisoners at Dachau, representing the official view, were published in the A-I-Z, with a photograph and text describing what the camp was "really" like. The A-I-Z editors and photographers used the belief that photographs could constitute evidence or proof to create and support their political perspective and to underscore their contrast with magazines like the BIŻ and MIP.

The topics covered in the photo essays of the MIP and BIŻ approximate what a contemporary photojournalist would consider "feature" photography: the daily routine of a well-known entertainer or scientist, the lives of students in a military academy, sailors enjoying their shore leave. Political events were portrayed to emphasize the processes of diplomatic discussion or the tasks of elected officials; political unrest was downplayed. Elections were covered in ways that conform to contemporary ideas of journalistic balance: each candidate was presented as part of a well-rounded coverage of the campaign process. The A-I-Z, in contrast, presented the Communist candidate on the cover of the magazine and explicitly questioned the surface differences among the other candidates. Political activities of workers received overt emphasis.
VOLK IM KAMPF

GEHT ES WIEDER AUFWÄRTS?
HABEN WIR DEN TIEFPUNKT DER WIRTSCHAFTSKRISE ÜBERSCHRITTEN?
These news magazines thus stood in different relationships to the society on which they reported. Parallel topics received different inflections, according to the political aims of the magazine. The photographic coverage was a primary means of creating these inflections and thus the ideological position of the publication.

The implications of this for the photographers' work was significant. Getting exclusive coverage was a requisite, but this was established in different ways. Using the role of participant or member for the worker-photographers meant building cooperative relationships with people they attempted to view as peers. For agency photographers or for freelance professionals, the right to take photographs was a function of their position working for a popular magazine like the BIZ or MIP. They used their professional role, rather than their class identity, to gain access to situations where, once admitted, they could photograph unobtrusively. Their coverage of events reflected without evaluating many of the issues German society faced during this crucial period. The working-
class photographers, on the other hand, worked as members and participants of an economic class portraying experiences they understood because they had shared them, apart from their roles as photojournalists.

The Photojournalist as Professional

To be a "journalist" within the magazine industry carried a high social status in Weimar Germany. Lengthy essays, offering interpretation and analysis of complex social phenomena, had long been a hallmark of the German magazines, and their authors were well-educated individuals who often wrote in a variety of modes. Their pieces were widely discussed, especially among the intelligentsia, and established the boot among them as influential opinion leaders in German society.

Within the evolving profession of photojournalism as seen in the BIZ and MIP, this appears to have been a primary model. Photographers' bylines, including their academic titles, were published with the photographs. Their work was interspersed with written essays in the magazines' pages. Gradually their photo series came to be referred to as "photoreportage" or "photo essays," to be viewed as the visual equivalents of written essays that offered interpretation and analysis of the subject—this despite the fact that most photo essays lacked the political commitment found in the work of many German writers.

This role of the journalist as a critical intellectual was clearly not a model for the A-I-Z photographer. It was irrelevant or even opposed to their photojournalism. Their credibility rested not on their status as journalistic commentators but on their roles as workers. They did not strive for individual recognition, but tried to present a collective picture of working-class experience that would be familiar and moving to their working-class readers.

Their different standards of accountability to their readers was the basis for the photographers' contrasting orientations to the practice of photojournalism. Among the BIZ and MIP photographers, there was a growing loyalty to photojournalism as a profession. Some traveled widely on assignment for various publications. Erich Salomon, as one example, be-
came well known on both sides of the Atlantic for his photo-orientations of diplomatic meetings. Other photographers moved with their editors, to work for new or better magazines. When Lorant emigrated to England in 1938, he hired Felix Man and Kurt Hutton from the MIP to work on the Weekly Illustrated in London. When Kurt Korff was hired by Henry Luce as a consultant on the prepublication staff of Life, he recommended several photojournalists for staff positions, including Munkacsi and Eisenstaedt, whose work he knew from the Ullstein magazines.

The worker-photographers, on the other hand, remained tied to their class interests as workers; to be recognized as professional photojournalists would have meant disassociating themselves from that class identity. When the editorial offices of the A-I-Z were forced to leave Germany for Prague in 1933, the photographers remained anonymous to their readers and to the expanding profession. Thus, it was the practices and ideas of the middle-class professionals that had an opportunity to influence photojournalistic work outside of Germany.

Within the growing ranks of professional photojournalists working in the United States, a small number of these émigrés met with success and established reputations on the new picture magazines or as members of picture agencies.

**Contemporary Concerns**

The patterns of work that arose in the context of German photojournalism of the mid-1920s established lines of accountability that imply many of the ethical concerns of contemporary photojournalists. Because of the technology and the techniques the BIZ and MIP photographers used, they were capable of working unobtrusively. In the context of a competitive market, photographs that were exclusive or privileged reports from "behind the scenes" were valued by their editors. And the relationships the photojournalists established in those settings, masking their own presence as photographers, allowed them to take photographs that appeared as candid representations of "things as they are." The editors' growing emphasis on series of photographs further required that the photographers learn not only new ways of shooting but also how to establish relationships that allowed
them closer and more extended access to their subjects. Each of these practices had the potential for creating a closer bond between the photographers and their subjects.

Contemporary photojournalists share these practices with their predecessors in Germany. They, too, the possibility of getting closely involved with their subjects and frequently find themselves walking a thin line between advocating for the people they photograph and maintaining an allegiance to their positions as journalists. The work patterns that place them in this dilemma, to the extent they are shared, serve also to identify them with the profession. The guidelines for making photographs that conform to journalistic standards thus bind them together into a professional group with an identity that distinguishes them from the individuals and groups they photograph.

When photojournalists locate themselves as members of a profession, they learn to mask or deny other characteristics while carrying out their work. Class background and personal history are considered irrelevant, except when they allow one access behind the scenes to get a better story. Erich Salomon gained access to meetings of international diplomats by donning black tie and tails and introducing himself to the doorman in a language the man would not understand. Today the practice of matching a photographer to a particular story—for example, assigning a woman photographer to cover a conference for working women or a black to cover the funeral of a young black man shot by a Hispanic policeman—is also done instrumentally. The photojournalist who receives such an assignment can make better pictures, it is believed, because he or she is a professional first, rather than being primarily accountable to the subjects for how they are pictured.

Many differences do exist between the picture magazines of Weimar Germany and contemporary photojournalistic practice. The notion of the photograph as an objective report, and the requirement that the photojournalist avoid the objective stance by getting too involved with a subject, remain complex cultural issues. Ways of establishing journalistic balance are also subject to variation across time and culture, and are further complicated by the varying editorial policies of particular newspapers and magazines. The competitive environment of photojournalism within the United States has become solidified through the building of professional organizations and systems of regional and national contests. Each of these factors, as well as others, has ethical dimensions that influence photojournalists' accountability to their audience, their subjects, their editors, and themselves.

We can be certain that the guidelines for ethically professional behavior undergo continual change. In addition to changes that have occurred in the photojournalism industry itself over the past sixty years, each day photojournalists confront situations slightly different from the day before, requiring continual adjustment of the ethical rationales for the work they do. Yet the sense that a set of rules and practices does exist to guide these day-to-day decisions—including the ethical ramifications of those decisions—continues to shape the arena in which the professional photojournalist works.

Notes

1 The research reported here is based on a larger study being conducted in collaboration with Hanno Harrt, University of Iowa, on the rise of photojournalism in Weimar Germany and its influence on British and American press photography prior to World War II. The research has been supported by an Old Gold Summer Fellowship from the University of Iowa in 1979, a Murray Fellowship from the University of Iowa in 1982, a grant from the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst in 1982, a Developmental Assignment from the University of Iowa in 1983–1984, and a Travel Grant from the American Council of Learned Societies in 1983.

2 Especially helpful were Stefan Lorant, editor of the Münchener Illustrierte Presse from 1928 to 1933, and Antonio Beitz, former publisher with Knorr and Hirth, which produced the MIP during this period. Lorant was interviewed in August 1980 and May 1983 at his home in Lenox, Massachusetts. The Beitz interview was conducted in July 1982 in Düsseldorf.

3 I have conducted fieldwork on the work practices of photojournalists at several daily newspapers noted for their photojournalism staffs, including the Courier-Journal and Times in Louisville, the Miami Herald, and the San José Mercury-News. I participated in the Missouri Workshop, a week-long photojournalism practicum staffed by professional photographers and editors in 1983. In my capacity as a teacher of photojournalism, I have also participated in regional meetings of the National Press Photographers' Association and have observed the judging of photography contests sponsored by this professional organization.

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