



Irme Schaber

Gerda Taro – with Robert Capa as Photojournalist in the Spanish Civil War

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In this new, fully revised biography, now published for the first time also in English, Irme Schaber presents groundbreaking insights regarding cameras, copyrights and the circumstances surrounding Taro's death. The exact track of Taro's work also helps to shed light on Capa's iconic *Fallen Soldier* photo – but without solving its mystery.

Irme Schaber studied cultural and art history in Marburg. She lives as a freelance author and curator near Stuttgart. Documentary and war photography, exile and cultural history, and photographic art are the focus of her work. She became known above all for her research work on Gerda Taro.

Distributors

Brockhaus Commission
Kreidlerstraße 9
D-70806 Kornwestheim
Germany
tel. +49-7154-1327-24
fax +49-7154-1327-13
menges@brocom.de

Gazelle Book Services
White Cross Mills
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Edition Axel Menges

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Introduction: from precise observation to discovery

Paris in the summer of 1937. A giant funeral procession wends its way from the city center eastward toward the Cimetière du Père-Lachaise, accompanied by the sounds of Chopin's *Marche funèbre*. The photojournalist Gerda Taro had been killed in the Spanish Civil War a few days earlier. Thousands come to pay their last respects to the émigrée from Hitler's Germany. The poet Louis Aragon speaks at the graveside, young girls hold up a large portrait of the deceased. Why did the French Communist Party honor a foreigner – one who was not even a member of the party – with a »first-class« burial?

In search of the »better Germans« I came across Gerda Taro; that is what Ernest Hemingway had called those Germans who fought in the Spanish Civil War. Taro is today considered one of the path-breaking pioneers of photography. She captured some of the most dramatic and widely published images of the Spanish Civil War and was the first female photographer to shoot images in the midst of battle. Her willingness to work close to the fighting set new standards for war photography and ultimately cost her her life. Taro stands alongside early 20th century war photographers like Robert Capa and David »Chim« Seymour. Her death, the first fatality during war coverage, garnered worldwide attention. She had broken new ground, as a woman and as a photographer.

Despite this, Gerda Taro has largely fallen into oblivion, especially in comparison to her colleague and partner Robert Capa. Whether gender and religion played a role in this would require a separate investigation. In any case, in her study of women resisting fascism, Ingrid Strobl reaches the conclusion that a combination such as woman, Communist and Jew represented a threefold stigma, and would almost guarantee Taro's exclusion from official history, both in the East and West.¹

It was a small note that drew my attention to Gerda Taro. The fact that I could discover anything at all about her was due to three typical gender-role factors: Taro was in a relationship with a man who later became world-famous; she was young and beautiful; and she died under tragic circumstances.

At the start of my research, in the 1990s, I quickly realized that »armchair investigations« would get me nowhere. Half a century after her premature death in the Spanish Civil War, there remained only vague clues about her life story. Her family had been murdered during the Holocaust. Her war reportages had been forgotten. At the time that I began my inquiries, Taro's collaboration with Capa was regarded and reported as merely a love relationship. And yet, I was fascinated by her story (and still am), probably because a number of my research interests converged on her: the art and photography of the Weimar Republic; the history of National Socialism; questions of exile and gender.

Macro history and life story are very closely linked in Gerda Taro. As the daughter of Jewish-Galician immigrants, Taro had to fight for her place in life from an early age. She most likely grew up following the traditions of Jewish culture, but not of the Jewish religion. She and her family lived in Stuttgart and Leipzig. The year 1933 in Germany and the beginning of the Spanish Civil War in 1936 not only represent important external events in her personal biography but, more importantly, signal clear intrusions into her daily life and plans. Consequently, in this book, I have taken account of the events and figures of media, cultural, and contemporary history that were associated with her life in any significant way. In particular, it is the dynamic relationship between political events and private life, the forming of structures and being formed by them, which prevents Taro's life from becoming a discarded historical phenomenon. Some of the most urgent questions at the beginning of the 21st century – immigration, the politics of refugee status and asylum, and gender democracy, for example – also played a decisive role during Taro's lifetime.

This biographical research regarding Gerda Taro is rooted in cultural history, social history and historiography. It ties into new historiographical approaches and methods regarding biography. In addition, I examine everyday life and its conditions, the construction of meaning, and questions of identity formation. The depiction of Taro's life story is primarily based on unpublished materials. Taro left behind no diaries, no personal records or notes. Except for a few letters to friends, which have been preserved, her legacy consists of her photographs of Spain.

The scarcity of source material makes the search for contemporary witnesses all the more urgent. This search was expensive and, from 1990 onward, occurred under extraordinary time constraints. Taro's friends, acquaintances and colleagues were very elderly. Interviews and archive visits led me to the United States and throughout Europe. One friend reminisced about events over a Swabian lunch in New York City. In Denver, in front of the panorama of the Rocky Moun-

tains, Soma Kurtis spoke eloquently about »the old days in Leipzig«. In Toronto, the screenwriter and film producer Ted Allen reminisced about the time he spent with Gerda Taro in Madrid. Gerda's friend Ruth Cerf really did not want to talk »about all that« anymore. Nevertheless, I traveled to Zurich anyway and had the history of the times and a life story presented to me in an unexpected, reflective and compelling way. These elderly men and women are all long dead. At that time I asked them about friends and acquaintances, everyday life and events that lay more than half a century in the past. Fragments emerged, segments of feelings, hopes and fears. Memory is always formed and overlaid by the subsequent experiences of life, by survival. Years later, this memory formation also involves Taro.

The archives from twenty years ago also no longer exist as they did then. Today I carry out my research at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France via the internet, leafing comfortably through its digital collections. In the early 1990s I researched on location, at the Bibliothèque Marxiste de Paris, the Instituto Municipal d'Historia of Barcelona, the Hermeteca of Valencia, the Stuttgart Stadtarchiv, the New York Public Library and the National Archives in Washington, D.C. A few months before the fall of the Berlin Wall, I began to seek out traces of Gerda Taro in the former German Democratic Republic. This search brought me into contact with Taro's family situation and the estates of people who had fought in Spain. More recently, this material has been stored in the various state archives, as well as in the Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik im Bundesarchiv Berlin (SAPMO) (Foundation Archives of Parties and Mass Organizations of the German Democratic Republic in the Federal Archives, Berlin).

Gerda Taro's close collaboration with Robert Capa necessitated examination of part of his archives at the International Center of Photography (ICP) in New York. Among other documents available there, I had access to the letters and interview materials that the American art historian Richard Whelan had assembled for his biography of Robert Capa. Subsequent to my investigation, the ICP began to research and maintain Taro's photographic legacy in an appropriate manner. The first comprehensive retrospective of Gerda Taro was presented in 2007 on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of her death. While preparing the visual material for the exhibition I discovered ten contact sheets that proved that Taro had been closely involved in the genesis of Capa's legendary war photograph *The Falling Soldier*. Gerda Taro had also photographed the soldier and his comrades.

Shortly afterward, the discovery of the so-called »Mexican Suitcase« led to further important developments. A suitcase was found among the effects of a diplomat in Mexico City. It contained film rolls with 4,500 photographs by Capa, Chim and Gerda Taro from the Spanish Civil War. It had been smuggled out of France at some point during 1941/42 in order to rescue it from the Nazis.

The »Mexican Suitcase«, believed for decades to have vanished, was a sensation in the history of photography. My earlier investigations were fully confirmed and Gerda Taro's significance for modern war photography once again underscored. Over 800 photographs have been categorically attributed to her, using the evidence of stamps and abbreviations. There are well-known single images among them but also entire series that had previously been thought to be the work of Capa. This book will present for the first time new findings and insights that are primarily the result of technical analyses of these film negatives. These findings relate to the time of origin of individual photo series, previously unknown technical details, and a new perspective on the copyright policies of Capa and Taro. It is clear that Taro used her professional name from the beginning, whenever possible. The 35 mm camera that she employed was investigated and, when possible, precisely analyzed and described, even down to the lenses.

The research findings regarding Taro's first camera are also significant and instructive. It can be demonstrated that, during her first trip to Spain in the summer of 1936, the medium format camera she used was a Reflex Korelle 6x6 and not a Rollei flex, as had been previously assumed. Research into camera technology and a technical evaluation of the film negatives from the »Mexican Suitcase« have allowed us to draw far-reaching conclusions regarding Gerda Taro's everyday life and practice as a war photographer.

A separate chapter is devoted to the destruction of Gerda Taro's family in the Holocaust and to strategies of commemorative culture after the end of the Spanish Civil War and the Second World War.

These ideologically-dominated policies regarding the past, both to the east and west of the Iron Curtain, have been decisive with regard to the preservation and suppression of memory. French Communism co-opted Taro as an anti-fascist martyr after her death. For Robert Capa

she represented heartache and hidden sorrow, and yet he used her death as a political protective shield in order to avoid the attacks of the McCarthy committee at the height of the Cold War. He worked merely as a photographer in Spain; the dead woman was the politically active one. This politically determined division of labor defined the paths of memory.

The »ideal of responsible photography«, the synergy and inspiration that Capa and Taro had developed and learned to appreciate during their close collaboration in Spain, was further expanded at the agency Magnum Photos. Capa, David »Chim« Seymour, George Rodger and Henri Cartier-Bresson founded this renowned photography collective in Paris in 1947. In this context, however, Gerda Taro's work had no part in postwar photography. In subsequent years, and after the premature death of Robert Capa during the Indochina War, ignorance and the media-driven interests of commerce led to her work being ignored or simply attributed to Capa. While Capa's photos represented the memory of the Spanish Civil War, Taro was assigned the tragic role in a romantic love story. She was reduced to serving as the explanation for the restless life of Robert Capa, the famous war photographer.

Research and the concrete representation of Gerda Taro as photographer, have substantially altered our view of Robert Capa and the origins of modern war photography in the 20th century. The common image of the solitary hero has little correspondence to reality. Capa was the war photographer of the 20th century. He was not solitary, however. Rather, he preferred collective ways of working.

Gerda Taro photographed on the cutting edge of time. Her metamorphosis from Nazi refugee to prototype of modern photojournalism during the first bombing war in Europe took place between the poles of personal experience and the public sphere. Her reportages were a vote for a different kind of politics. The world should not look away.

¹ Ingrid Strobl, »Sag nie, du gehst den letzten Weg«. *Frauen im bewaffneten Widerstand gegen Faschismus und deutsche Besatzung*, Frankfurt am Main, 1989, p. 27 (*Partisans. Women in the armed resistance to fascism and German occupation, 1936–1939*, AK Press, Edinburgh and Oakland, 2008).

From east to west (1870–1914)

Gerda Taro¹ was actually called Gerta Pohorylle. Her family history needs a view back into the 19th century and a geographic detour to the eastern fringe of Central Europe.

Both her parents, Heinrich Pohorylle and Gisela Boral, grew up in eastern Galicia, Gerta most likely got to know the homeland of her parents in her earliest childhood. With the fall of the Habsburg Monarchy not only the ethnically and culturally diverse world of the former Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria vanished from the map. Also the once numerous Jewish inhabitants and their history disappeared, were forgotten, eradicated and scattered to the four winds. But prejudice, defamation and anti-Semitism remained, focused on the so-called Galicians or Eastern Jews.

At the end of the last century the easternmost corner of Austria-Hungary was one of the largest Jewish settlement areas of the world. The Austrian bureaucracy registered the more than 600,000 Jews in its statistic as Germans or Poles. In rare cases they were added to the Ukrainian peasants and called Ruthenians. Public commissions and many occupations were closed to Jews. Only a small insignificant group enjoyed modest prosperity, economic strength and education.

In the agro-structured, nearly feudal region, the upheaval of industrialization caused an unimaginable impoverishment: Above all the Jewish masses in the Shtetl were victims of modernization, next to the small Polish landholders and the Ruthenian peasants. The traditional anti-Semitism intensified the catastrophic conditions.

Constant conflicts between the nationalities of the multi-ethnic state, and the virulent anti-Semitism of Poles, Germans and Ruthenians, kept the traditional Jewish experience of expulsion and assault alive. And also the waves of pogroms in Czarist Russia ended not always at the state's border. In 1881/82 over 20,000 Jewish pogrom refugees gathered in Brody, near the homes of Gerta's parents.

Impressive reports and descriptions of the daily life and decline of the east-Jewish world can be found in the works of Joseph Roth, Manes Sperber or Alexander von Guttry. Their internal view of the east-European Shtetl illuminates masterly and vividly its life and world of ideas at the threshold to the 20th century – the infancy of Gerta's parents.²

In 1876 Heinrich Pohorylle was born in Husiatyn (Gusyatyn). The little town was on both sides of the Galician-Russian border river Zbrucz: On the eastern bank a small village with thousand inhabitants, much morass and a Russian army outpost. On the western bank the Austrian part of town where the father was born, with over 5,000 inhabitants and an Austrian army post. The Pohorylles were citizens of the Danube Monarchy. Jewish traders, Polish civil service burghers and the Ruthenian peasants formed the face of the town, which was well known for its poultry farms. The city emblem shows three towers with geese on top. Gustaytin, the Russian name of the place, derives directly from gus = goose.

German and Polish, Russian, Yiddish, Hungarian and Ruthenian were spoken in this important trading center on the Russian border – few knew how to read and write. It is not known when exactly Heinrich Pohorylle left his home town. Neither is it known when and how he found his wife Gisela Boral in Buszacs, 60 km away. However, since 1884/85 both places were conveniently connected by the Galician transverse railway. Were by Jewish custom spouses promised to each other in their youth? Did a »shadchen«, a Jewish matchmaker, arrange the wedding? Or was it – exceptionally – a love marriage? Gisela's older sister Ernestine was already married to Moritz Pohoryles, being also from Husiatyn. Moritz and the three years younger Heinrich were not related, though their families, the Pohorylle and Pohoryles from Husiatyn probably had common ancestors.

It seems German and Jewish forenames were common: Heinrich was Hersh, Gisela had the Jewish name Ghittel, Moritz was called Moses and Bernhard Boral, Gerta's grandfather, was known as Berleib Boral. In this multi-language region, where German, Polish and partly Hungarian were official languages, the German version may have been used, also to indicate a degree of emancipation.

The ancestors of Gerta Pohorylle's mother originated from the old town Buczacz, lying on both sides of the river in the deep Strypa Valley in Podolia. Buczacz counted over 9,000 inhabitants, the majority – two thirds – were Jews. There was a Hebraic elementary school and a German gymnasium. The ancestors of Sigmund Freud stem from here and also Simon Wiesenthal, who was born 1908 in Buczacz.

Already for decades, the Jewry of the East no more formed a uniform culture. Profound economic, social and political changes caused in the Jewish population ideological differentiation and

von Ossietzky, Ludwig Renn and Erich Mühsam and in May under the auspices of Heinrich Mann, the »Deutsche Freiheitsbibliothek« was established on Boulevard Arago. The events in German language offered also a little »nest warmth« in the Paris exile.

In July the news of joint action by Socialists and Communists caused a great sensation. In summer still, the great French workers' parties signed an initial »pact of unified action«. A year later the 7th World Congress of the Comintern in Moscow adopted the Peoples' Front policy as its new strategy. The surprising change of course in favor of an anti-Hitler front meant a radical reversal of Communist policy. Adversaries in class struggle became Socialist and Social-Democratic partners. But the sudden closeness also induced suspicion and created speculation. The Paris SAP group, meeting regularly in Rue Mouffetard or at the Capoulade, wanted to analyze the sensational change. The cardinal question remained to be the relationship to the Soviet Union and Stalinist politics.

Willy Chardack tells us: »Arthur Koestler consorted with the Capoulade circle, his wife Dorothea was Gerta's friend.« Dorothea Ascher came from Berlin. In Paris she worked at Münzenberg's office. Arthur Koestler had collaborated on the *Braunbuch über Reichstagsbrand und Hitlerterror*. He and Dörte got married in 1935. According to Koestler the banker's daughter »did not fit any of the categories of women predominating in the German Communist Party: the jaunty working-class girl or the neurotic middle-class Cinderella«. In those days he was engaged in the INFA, the »Institut zum Studium des Faschismus«, close to the KP. For some time also Manes Sperber and the art critic Oto Bihalji worked in the institute located next to the Jardin des Plantes. Dörte's sister Lise went with Bihalji (alias Peter Thoene alias Peter Merin). In 1937 he published in Switzerland one of the first comprehensive books on the Spanish Civil War in the German language, including photos by Taro and Capa. Also in 1937, Dörte's brother became a victim of Stalinist terror. Without success the friends in the Paris exile tried to have him released. Ernst Hugo Ascher had emigrated with his wife Else to the Soviet Union and worked as physician in Saratow.⁵

The doctor and later psychoanalyst Rosa Lenz – then married to the sociologist Boris Goldenberg – recalls another young woman from the Capoulade circle, who was close to Gerta and Trudel Frank-Fromm: Lotte Rappaport. The journalist from Dresden had worked till 1933 in Berlin, then immigrated through Holland to Paris. She was part of the group, but like Gerta, not a party member. Rosa Lenz recounts, during lectures and educational events of the SAP, which usually happened in private quarters, the women were »permitted to attend and listen, but not to talk«. ⁶ Also Ruth Cerf describes the ideological debates and political discussions as entirely limited to men. »One knew where to belong«, but did not say so. Trudel was the exception, she spoke up, expressing original thoughts. It did not change when Ruth became member of the SAP and got much more involved than Gerta. She was engaged in practical, even dangerous work – otherwise she »just followed«. Several times Ruth Cerf went to Germany to bring supporting funds for relatives of political prisoners. She went without heroism, being »terribly yellow«. One of these tasks touched Stuttgart, where she met at the Zeppelin building Gerta Pohorylle's schoolmate Meta. Meta says, the »beautiful blonde« explained to be Gerta's friend and on the way through. She told her »to have overcome« and to suffer »no more hunger«.

1 Re. Ackerknecht in the LO and his break with Trotzky: <http://www.ifz-muenchen.de/archiv/zs/zs-2077.pdf> (last access Mar. 2018); letter by Mrs. Ackerknecht to the author (Zurich, 5 May 1992).

2 Oral information by Ruth Cerf Berg (Zurich, 11 Dec. 1992).

3 Letters by Gertrud Frank-Fromm to Stefan Ernst Possony (Paris, 15 Mar. and 18 Mar. 1934). Sächsisches Staatsarchiv Leipzig, PP-S 2779.

4 Interview Ruth Cerf Berg (Zurich, 13 Aug. 1991) and oral information of 11 Dec.1002. See also: Philipp Halsmann, *Briefe aus der Haft an eine Freundin*, Stuttgart, 1930; Martin Pollack, *Anklage Vatermord. Der Fall Philipp Halsmann*, Vienna, 2002.

5 Arthur Koestler, *Als Zeuge der Zeit*, Frankfurt am Main, 1986, pp. 217, 363.

6 Letters by Renée Mayer (sister of Lotte Rappaport, Minusio, Switzerland, 20 Apr. 1992). Politically interested young people were invited to these meetings and workshops about politics and history. Verbal information by Rosa Lenz to the author (New York, 15 May 1992).

André Friedmann

In September 1934 Gerta Pohorylle got to know the Hungarian photographer André Friedmann. He spoke to her friend on the terrace of Café »La Coupole«. Sitting with some acquaintances, Ruth Cerf remembers exactly: »He was invited to a cup of coffee – he had no money and looked like it. Suddenly he asked if he may photograph me, he had a commission and needed a blond, blue-eyed girl with short hair.« The pictures should be taken outdoors, with a park bench, shrubs, trees. So they met on an afternoon at a small green place on Montparnasse. Ruth took Gerta along. »She did not want to be alone with this »type.« In contrast to Ruth, Gerta found the young photographer very pleasant; in Paris he had right away adopted a new French forename and soon became her friend.

In 1913 André had been born as Endre Ernő in Budapest, where his parents possessed a large ladies' tailor shop. He was the Friedmann's second child and though having left the gymnasium long before, was still called by his nickname »Bandi«. At the end of his school years in 1929 he decided to become a journalist. The high-school student began to be interested in literature and politics; he took part in the artistic and political group called Munkakör, the core figure of which was the Hungarian Socialist, poet and painter Lajos Kassák. The avant-garde artist issued a newspaper that also published work by »Szociofoto« artists connected with Munkakör, who aimed their camera at injustices in the country.

Bandi Friedmann agitated in the workers' suburbs and took part in protests by unions, Socialists and Communists against the authoritarian and anti-Semitic regime of Miklós Horthy. Because of his political activities he was imprisoned for a short time and afterwards had to leave Hungary. For the winter semester 1931/32 he inscribed at the Deutsche Hochschule für Politik in Berlin. Quickly he found contact with Hungarian emigrants, artists and intellectuals, who had left Hungary because of intellectual narrowness and political repression.

The young student entered employment as assistant of the German picture agency and photo service »Dephot«. He worked in the darkroom, was »jack of all trades«. Dephot had been established and directed by the innovative Hungarian Simon Guttman, it was a center for young talents and was in the early 1930s among the most progressive agencies of the new German photojournalism. Friedmann earned little and learnt much: As errand boy and in the darkroom he studied the métier from the ground up. He also had the luck to work with some of the most acknowledged and creative photoreporters of Germany – such as the Bauhaus graduate Umbo or Felix H. Man.

Guttman discovered Bandi's talent. He furnished him with a Leica and continuously passed to him small jobs. At the end of 1932 he started Bandi's career as a photographer by sending him to Copenhagen to take pictures of Leo Trotzky for the *Welt-Spiegel*.

The artistic and practical photo training that Friedmann got at Dephot was marked by the technical possibilities of the new 35 mm cameras and the innovative style and perspective of modern photo reportage. His teachers ranked among the photographic avant-garde of the republic and represented a type of experimenting and engaged photographer, who sharpened his view for everyday things, studied the milieu, picked up social deficiencies and »adopted physically and literally exceptional points of view«.

The intensive application of matter-of-fact observation and the current upheavals among people revolutionized the visual culture of this group. Unfamiliar presentation by means of close-ups, fragmentation and blurring, the use of dynamic picture series, montages and cut-outs, opened new experiences for millions of illustrated media users.

Hitler's ascension to power abruptly ended the fascinating development of photojournalism in Germany. Like many colleagues, Friedmann had to leave Berlin already during the night of the Reichstag fire and went via Vienna to Paris.

The young Hungarian hardly spoke a word of French and had a very difficult time to survive. He searched desperately for work, »canvassed newspapers, periodicals and photo agencies«. With the help of former colleagues and new acquaintances – in spring he had met his compatriot André Kertész – he got hold, from time to time, of small commissions. The successful photographer had a good position at *VU*, a periodical similar to modern German illustrated papers, and showed personal and professional interest in his fellow countryman.

André Friedmann also quickly made friends with the Pole David Szymin, who, after Leipzig, continued his studies at the Sorbonne. To relieve his family in Poland he financed his life as photojournalist. Under the name »Chim« he worked successfully for photo agencies and the weekly *Regards*. Like Münzenberg's *AIZ* in Berlin, the Communist illustrated magazine focused on prole-

tarian life, printed critical social reports and covered culture and politics in the style of modern photo journalism. The layout followed Kurt Tucholsky's demand for »more photography!« and visual confrontation, to quick-wittedly transport political and societal themes.¹ Chim may not only have heard from Leipzig Tucholsky's famous appeal. In Paris he began to create essays with the camera, such as propagated by Stefan Lorant or Andor Kraszna-Krausz. They had come to photography from filming, and embodied big city rhythm, the speed of the time, mechanization and a new spirit by innovative layout, cuttings and montage. Their dynamic presentation invited the eyes to roam, to glance from here to there, to discover new things all the time. At night prowling through Paris, Chim photographed for *Regards* social reports. In his free time he usually sat with Friedmann and the French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson in the Café du Dôme on Montparnasse.

When Gerta Pohorylle met André Friedmann he was past his worst phase. Although he still had to run after casual jobs, he had been able to cover and sell a few interesting subjects. Just over twenty years of age and furnished with recommendations and tips by an impressive number of journalist friends and acquaintances, he hoped for the »great success«. In Paris he had gained »a reputation as cash raising genius«, who in spite of chronic lack of money, enjoyed life. With his charm and largesse – if he exceptionally had a few Francs in his pocket – André was a popular entertainer in cafés and bars. The photographer excelled with stories of adventure and tended to boasting. André Friedmann was handsome, funny and unconventional, Gerta liked him for his boy-like carelessness, full of ideas and shrewd plans.

Ludwig Wronkow describes, how in those days Friedmann advanced to title character and boomerang murderer. The cartoonist, caricaturist and later assistant of Manfred George at the New York *Aufbau*, remembers on the occasion of Friedmann's death in Indochina an experience with the photographer in Paris: »It happened in 1933, in the first months of our immigration from Germany. We were sitting in the Café du Dôme on Montparnasse and waited. For what, we did not know exactly. We had little to do and therefore little money. One day I got from Fritz Drach, then chief editor of *VU*, the best illustrated paper in France, the commission to illustrate the crime novel *The Murderer with the Boomerang* with photographs. The pictures were taken by the daughter of Lucien Vogel, the recently diseased publisher of *VU*. I had to write something like a script, to find the right actors and be the director. I did not engage professional actors. From the Dôme and nearby cafés I put together a group of eight immigrants. The most difficult was to find a killer who after all did not kill. Until I hit upon Robert Capa. Just the day before he gave his camera to a pawnshop and had less to do than we. Capa wonderfully played the title role. He shaved less often, posed masterly as wax figure for the title page of *VU*, cleverly draped towels over his bare torso and knew how to make a guilty face, like the contemporary »Reichstag arsonist« Lubbe. With the fee for acting Capa got his camera back from Mont-de-Piété, the Paris pawnshop...«² The serialized illustrated novel was published by *VU* in ten installments. The role of the bully was exceptionally lucrative for André. Not because he earned some money but because of the contact with Fritz Drach, the German chief editor of *VU*, and with Marie-Claude Vogel. Under Lucien Vogel, her father, the paper had become one of the most modern and liberal illustrated magazines in France. In 1934 his daughter Marie-Claude married Paul Vaillant-Couturier who was in French exile, as co-founder of the PCF and editor-in-chief of *L'Humanité*, one of the most important intellectual fellow combatants of Willi Münzenberg.

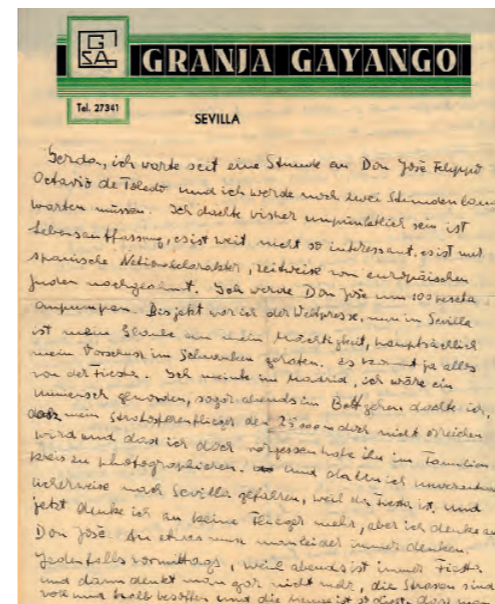
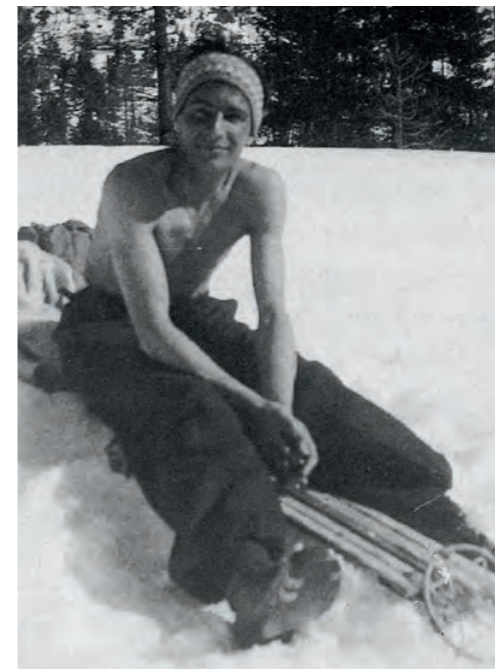
Gerta took the work of her new acquaintance very seriously, she was convinced of André's talent and inspired by the idea to help him gain the recognition he merited. She thought he only lacked a good marketing concept and also a proper appearance to raise his chances; on Gerta's counsel André Friedmann had a haircut, wore a suit instead of his leather jacket and adopted a regular work style. The former student of commerce improved not only his clothing, but with determination applied her commercial experience, pleading for a methodical approach. Friedmann called her ironically »boss«, but her assessment was important for him and he was spurred on by her ambition and ideas.³

In September he went to the Saarland to make for *VU* a photo reportage about the election campaign. Since the end of World War I the Saarland was under control of the League of Nations; in a plebiscite it should be determined whether the status quo would be kept, the Saar be given to France, or again joined to Hitler Germany. The slogan »home to the Reich« was omnipresent. Friedmann and the journalist Gerta had the impression of being already in Nazi Germany, everywhere they were greeted with »Heil Hitler« and a normal greeting was like a »revolutionary act«. In November *VU* published their report and André's pictures ominously show streets decorated by swastika flags.

40. André Friedmann as »Murderer with a Boomerang« on the title page of *VU* of July 1934. The photo story with himself, Ludwig Wronkow, Marie-Claude Vaillant-Couturier and Fritz Drach as crime-novel actors comprised 10 issues. Fritz Drach, the German chief editor of the French illustrated magazine, had participated in 1919 in Berlin in the Spartacist uprising. He died in 1943 in a Gestapo cell at Nîmes. Marie-Claude Vaillant-Couturier survived Auschwitz and spoke as resistance member at the Nuremberg Trials.

41. Georg Kuritzkes skiing.

42. At the end of a letter dated April 1935 André Friedmann dared to make a little declaration of love to Gerta, after having had a »glass of Manzanilla for breakfast«.



Exile was not at all an amusing coffee-house session: The deadly attack by Croatian nationalists on King Alexander of Yugoslavia and on the French foreign minister Barthou in October inflamed again sentiments against foreigners. Police raids and expulsions were daily events; the right press attacked the right of asylum, and succeeded in dangerously tightening the laws for foreigners. Gerta Pohorylle had an affair with Willy Chardack. Because of the affection for her friend, who supported her since the first days in Paris, she left Ruth Cerf and moved with him to a hotel. Ruth was disappointed: »Faithfulness or personal relationships were not much developed.«. Gerta was in her friendships »quite egocentric«. Also Willy had to feel how strongly she defended her interests and how impulsively she lived her feelings. The flirtation ended soon. »It was the most inharmonic relationship imaginable«, he writes in a letter to Georg. She took the blame upon herself.

She moved to an acquainted lady in Rue Pécelet in the fifteenth arrondissement, where Erich Holz visited her in January 1935. When she asked him how Georg was doing, Erich read from a letter, in which the friend complained to have little to eat and much distress. Through Chardack was Georg Kuritzkes informed and Erich intended to give Gerta a wiggling. »I reproached her as strongly and as often as I could«, reported Georg to Italy. All of them »long ago saw through the whole swindle«. Furthermore he strongly criticized her political environment. Erich complained that Gerta was stuck in a »mess«, but acted like noticing just now »how shitty and dishonest the whole SAP gang« was. In this intellectual milieu she »did not have it easy« and should not have become involved.

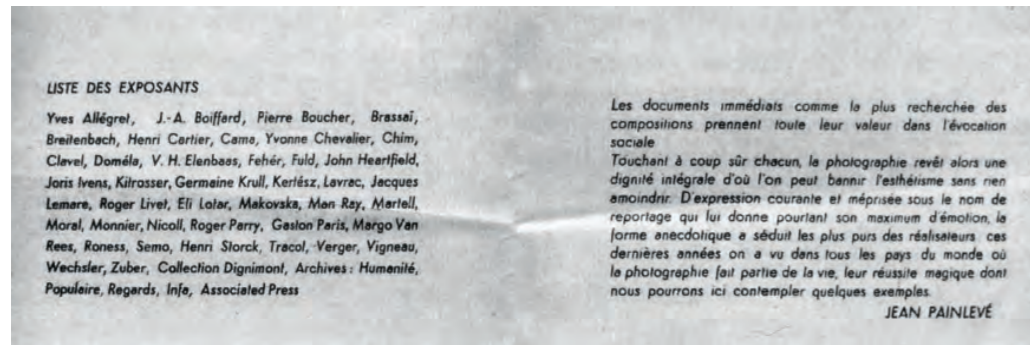
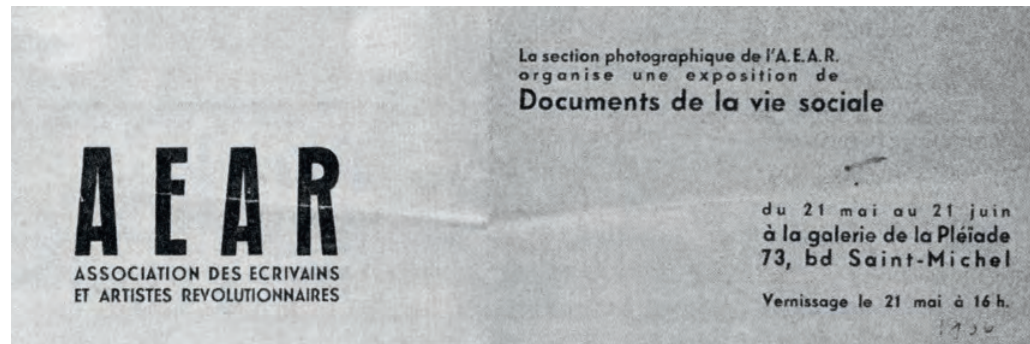
Several times Gerta Pohorylle made short visits to Georg in Italy, including also meetings with others from Leipzig. One went to the mountains, was skiing. Georg Kuritzkes tells us, she met Alfred Schmidt-Sas in Turin. The music teacher, with whom during the first days of Nazi dictatorship she put posters against the new rulers, was on his way back to Berlin. For several months he worked at Portofino as tutor of the German language and piano playing. It seems Gerta not only met an old friend but also acted as courier passing on information. At least the cryptic diary notes by Sas point to such assumptions. About his stay in Turin it says: »Turin. Important talk with babi«. His biographer Volker Hoffmann notes, the curious circumstances of Sas' return trip raise the question of illegal activities: First Sas waited in vain for a package from Turin, then continued by train via Zurich to Langenthal in Switzerland. According to the diary he attended there a »conference«. Finally, he made a »four-day stop in Leipzig before returning to Berlin«, where he directed a private music school. In April 1943 Alfred Schmidt-Sas was executed in Berlin-Plötzensee because of his contacts to the resistance. He was hiding devices for the multiplication of leaflets.

André Friedmann's first declaration of love

When Ruth and Gerta met from time to time, they sat together and exchanged working tips. Ruth Cerf had found new earning possibilities. For Robert Jungk, who lived near the Pantheon, she typed long film scripts. Ruth met him by chance, just when he had received from Los Angeles the order of a script for a »historical concoction« named *Maria Valeska*. Jungk could not pay much, but he recommended her to film and theater director Max Ophüls. Now she worked in his office. She liked her new position: It was easy to work with Ophüls and she met a lot of prominent people. In his film on Werther she even got a role.

In a letter dated April 1935 she wrote to Gerta Pohorylle: »I don't feel particularly bad. By helping each other we always can pay the rent, this is the most important. Above all one must have a room, a place for sleeping and working, all the rest can be managed somehow.« She even helped André Friedmann, who neither found work nor money. Now she had received mail by him from Spain. His old sponsor Simon Guttman got him two photo reportage commissions. After having photographed a balloonist in Madrid, who wanted to establish a new altitude record, he went shortly before Easter to the famous fiesta at Seville. At the end he dared to add in faulty German a shy declaration of love: »... sometimes I am quite in love with you.«

While André stayed in Spain, Gerta Pohorylle moved with her girlfriend Lotte Rappaport to Liselotte and Fred Stein. Probably Lotte knew the Steins already from Dresden. Gerta may have known the couple from the SAP, since Fred Stein was a party member. The attorney from Dresden worked with the »Verband deutscher Journalisten in der Emigration«. In emigration he started to photograph and recently had opened the »Studio Stein« in a large apartment in Rue Caulincourt on Montmartre. To finance it he rented three rooms.



Lotte Rappaport's sister remembers, though both women lived together in one room, they often had difficulty to pay the rent on time. But Fred generously helped them out: They gave him money for the room and he secretly lent it back. His wife Lilo should not know about it, she had problems herself to run a household with so little money. Lotte was a journalist and laboriously earned some more as seamstress. According to Fred Stein, Gerta stayed afloat by typing. In addition she already made some money helping in darkrooms and had first experiences in photographic practice.⁴

Fred Stein used the apartment's bathroom also as darkroom. The other tenants did not like it, except Gerta. She asked if an acquaintance of her could share the darkroom. Lilo and Fred cleared the deal with the other tenants and gave their okay. André Friedmann met the Steins at a housewarming party by Gerta and Lotte. The dwelling was decorated with green and red lamps, Lilo Stein was happy with pleasant André. In particular she liked how he charmingly presented himself with a deep bow, letting his black hair sweep down over his eyes. From time to time he developed his films in the bathroom. Gerta Pohorylle's interest for Friedmann's work grew in Stein's environment of photographers and press people. Maybe she helped André in the darkroom, but much more valuable was that Gerta accompanied him, translated for him and helped with the captions. After all, as Pierre Gassmann jovially said, one did not get far in Paris without good French. In addition Gerta Pohorylle spoke perfect English and typed without a fault. Though Friedmann spoke German, his writing was faulty. Still bigger problems he had in French, says Ruth Cerf.

Chim spoke French fluently and through *Regards* probably was attached to AEAR. The »Association des Écrivains et Artistes Révolutionnaires« was a union of artists and intellectuals led by Paul Vaillant-Couturier. Since the radical turn of alliance policy, the previously strict Communist Party organization was open to a broad cooperation against nationalism and fascism. The AEAR engaged itself for progressive middle-class intellectuals, whose work not long ago was defamed as »effusions of a rotting class«. André Gide and André Malraux belonged to the union as well as the Surrealists and other artists of the avant-garde.⁵ Vaillant-Couturier pushed the liberalization of the AEAR. Yet, *Commune*, the weekly literature paper of the union, was published by Paul Nizan and Louis Aragon.

Chim apparently belonged to the photo section of AEAR. In any case he participated in the exhibition of »Documents de la vie sociale« that opened on 21 May 1935 at the Galerie de la Pléiade on Boulevard Saint-Michel. Chim is mentioned in the *Commune*'s review of Aragon's exhibition meeting, together with Germaine Krull, René Zuber, John Heartfield, Kertész and others. The list of exhibitors reads like a Who's who of the 1930s: Eli Lotar, Josef Breitenbach, Man Ray, Gertrude Fuld, Brassai, Kitrosser and, of course, Chim's friend Henri Cartier-Bresson.⁶

43, 44. At the time of the Front Populaire the AEAR was an important union of writers and artists. In 1935 its photo section organized an exhibition in which participated Man Ray, Brassai, Zuber and Chim with many more exiled photographers.

45. Fred Stein, Gerta at the typewriter, Paris ca. 1936. This portrait is one of 92 photos from a suitcase with pictures by Capa, Chim and Taro of the Spanish Civil War. In 1979, after Franco's death, and Spain being a democratic country, the Swedish ambassador Lennart Petri gave the suitcase to the Spanish foreign minister. Nearly forty years before unknown persons had handed over the suitcase to the Swedish embassy in Vichy.

46, 47. Fred Stein, Gerta's friends at a café in Paris, ca. 1936. In a Parisian café Fred Stein spent a whole film on pictures of Gerta and her friends. The roll of film was found in the »Mexican Suitcase«. Besides André Friedmann (left) who apparently joined them at the end, nobody could be identified.

48. Robert Capa, Gerta with unknown friend at a café, Paris, ca. 1936. The picture by André Friedmann was in the »Mexican Suitcase«.



Already one month later the AEAR opened at the Mutualité the »Erster Internationaler Schriftstellerkongress zur Verteidigung der Kultur«. In spite of most varied »idealist and aesthetic positions«, novelists of thirty eight countries came to Paris, to make a mark against fascism. Much attention was given to Soviet authors and exiled writers like Bertolt Brecht and Heinrich Mann, who demanded »freedom of thinking«. Egon Erwin Kisch propagated the »reportage as art form and form of fighting«. Gisèle Freund wrote: »The large hall with three thousand seats is overcrowded.« Like Chim, she took pictures at the congress.

In the meanwhile André Friedmann knew many friends and acquaintances of Gerta Pohorylle. He liked to consort with the Steins at the Capoulade and nearly belonged to the Leipzig circle. Actually, he had planned to accept for the summer an invitation by Spanish friends. But Gerta's vacation plans changed everything. She, Willy Chardack and his student friend Raymond Gorin wanted to spend the vacation at the sea. The three hitchhiked to southern France. In Cannes they took the ferry to Sainte-Marguerite Island. On 14 July, the French national day, André still photographed at Marseille. Afterwards he met his friends in Cannes and went with them to the small island.

They lived as simply and cheaply as possible. Near a ruined castle they pitched their tents, enjoyed sun and leisure. Their monotonous food consisted of sardines. Here, far away from the continent's problems, Gerta fell in love with André. Together they strolled through the island. Willy reports, Gerta and André were photographing. Here at last Gerta must have adopted the camera. The two set out to write a common story. They wanted to stay together, to work together. Chardack says Gerta Pohorylle's sentiments for André were very deep and strong. The couple returned home without money but full of élan and ambitious plans. In Paris the enamored André Friedmann told his compatriot Kertész that »only hoe and spade« could separate him from Gerta.

While looking for an affordable accommodation, they moved again to their old rooms. André stayed at his previous hotel, Gerta lived with Lotte at the Steins. She sent a beseeching letter to Georg Kuritzkes: »Stay calm, do you hear! Luckily we got to the point of talking openly to each other!« Most likely he knew about André Friedmann, because Gerta continues: »Our paths are currently separate, but parallel.«

During her absence, the official founding of the »Front Populaire« had been celebrated by a grandiose mass rally at the Buffalo Stadium in Montrouge. But the SAP's controversial debates about the Peoples' Front did not end, not even on weekends, when the local section met politically interested friends for an outing. The leftwing Socialists had to accept that the Communists succeeded to appear as carrier of the popular idea of unification. Ruth Cerf attended regularly; people visited friends living elsewhere or hiked through the forests of Meudon. Werner Thalheim, who had met Gerta through Fred Stein, recalls the singing of German wandering songs. The SAP guy liked Gerta very much. She sympathized with the party, but »theoretical discussions« were not important for her. On the other hand, Thalheim's interest in the comrade was also personal.

The bathroom is their darkroom, the street is their studio

A letter by André Friedmann proves, that those days Gerta Pohorylle began full of drive to realize their plans: »Gerta photographs and I make enlargements«, it says in late September 1935. It is noteworthy, *he* was in the darkroom while *she* went out with the camera. Shortly after, they moved to a small apartment near the Eiffel Tower. The bathroom was their darkroom, the street their studio. Rent was low, nevertheless their finances dropped towards zero. Wringing their hands they sought a regular job; to pay the rent Gerta sent desperate »cries of distress« to Erich Holz in London. In 1935 came somber news from Stuttgart. »Germans, don't buy at Jews!« said a listing, officially calling for a boycott of Jewish shops in Württemberg. The enterprises of Uncle Moritz, Aunt Terra and other relatives were on the list.

In a detailed letter André introduced his new girlfriend to his mother, told of their »solid life«: They got up early, took on all sorts of work and were tired when returning home. Only then began the really important work, together writing articles. He showed Kertész his newest pictures, wrote to Simon Guttman, and hoped the tough drudgery would pay soon. At the end stresses André that they finally were independent.

Not every day he saw it that optimistically. Sometimes André lost hope, thinking to have no future as photographer. He wrote to an aunt in Budapest that conditions had become terrible, that

as foreigners they were not wanted. He tried the film branch. His twenty-second birthday was celebrated by a kind of »working lunch«. Gerta gave André a pack of American cigarettes and cooked. She had invited a lady lawyer, hoping to help him getting into the film branch.

On the other hand, Friedmann luckily had found a job for Gerta. In October she began working for Maria Eisner, who had presented him to Simon Guttman at one of his visits in Paris. In Berlin, Eisner had been secretary of Martin Hürlimann, photographer and publisher of *Atlantis*. When Guttman immigrated to London, she represented him in Paris for a short time. Meanwhile she directed for René Zuber and some other photographers the »Alliance Photo« agency. The picture agency was so successful that Maria Eisner urgently needed an assistant. Again Gerta's knowledge of languages served her well. Alliance Photo worked with French publishers and agencies, supplying domestic and foreign newspapers such as *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar* in New York or the *Schweizer Illustrierte Zeitung*. The offices still were Maria Eisner's private apartment in Rue Froidevaux. Already by the end of the year they moved to an official office in Rue du Faubourg-St.-Honoré, where Eisner after World War II shall direct the office of Magnum.⁷

Alliance Photo – a stroke of luck

In several ways the employment at the photo agency was a stroke of luck for Gerta Pohorylle. Alone the regular income removed the permanent worry about basics. The salary secured the rent and sufficed for food; she had to save for stockings and many other things. More decisive was the photographic know-how she obtained at Alliance Photo, and the personal contacts she developed with editing offices and distribution agencies.

Between the wars Alliance Photo was historically and aesthetically a very exciting occurrence in France. The name was the program, because the agency was a combination and union of photographers, who knew each other since some time. René Zuber was the crystallization point of the circle, who, since his formation in Leipzig, and inspired by Albert Renger-Patzsch's work, became an important representative of New Objectivity in France. During his time at the Paris agency »Damour«, where he led the photo department, Zuber surrounded himself with interesting friends and photographers, who inspired each other and loosely worked together. Together with Pierre Boucher he established in 1932 the »Studio Zuber«. Two years later they enlarged the group with Emeric Feher, Denise Bellon and Pierre Verger and started Alliance Photo. The photographers represented various currents of the thirties, were fascinated by unfamiliar things and loved modern technology and architecture. They most professionally looked at everyday motifs from new perspectives, like focusing with ethnological accuracy on foreign worlds. Important advertising clients like Peugeot, or the pharmaceutical company Debat, provided the economic basis for experimental work and independent photographic documentation by way of their expensive magazine *Art & Medicine*.⁸ The successful young collective of photographers employed experienced Maria Eisner for work at the agency. She had a European network and brought new connections, genres and photographers.

Beyond professional and commercial competence, Gerta received an aesthetic education. She got to know about styles, techniques, artistic requirements, ideas and intentions. The artistically and technically ambitious members of Alliance Photo photographed with Rolleiflex and other middle- or large-format cameras. In applied and advertising photography it was not enough to find a modern formal language. Photographic attention focused also on the product's material, which had to be highlighted, the surfaces had to be staged.

Apparently, also Gerta was encouraged by the high-class professional environment at the agency to work with middle-format cameras. We do not know with whom and with which model she learnt. André Friedmann did not know much about it. Maybe the colleagues at Alliance Photo gave her a camera, or maybe Fred Stein or Chim lent her a Rolleiflex and gave her tips. Gerta Pohorylle had quickly realized at Maria Eisner that agencies and publishers preferred the high-quality of middle-format cameras. Probably this is why she invested her first salary in a brand-new 1935 Reflex-Korelle. A few months later she shall meet with success in Spain. The relatively inexpensive mirror reflex camera with lowerable frame viewer distinguished her from André and broadened their common possibilities.

André Friedmann was elated. Hardly two months after Gerta commenced at Alliance Photo, he proudly commented with some exaggeration, thanks to Gerta's beauty and intelligence the firm now had a six-fold photo turnover. He worked now two afternoons per month for a Japanese paper, published in Paris by Mainichi Press. He got the little job through Hiroshi Kawazoe and

49. Advertising in *Foto Beobachter*, no. 11, 1935. Most likely Gerta Pohorylle had bought exactly this Reflex-Korelle with a 1000th second shutter; because of technical problems the thousandth of a second was soon omitted.

50. Gerta and André on the terrace of Café du Dôme, Paris, 1935/36.

Weihnachten steht vor der Tür...
 Welche Kamera wünsche ich mir? – Welche Kamera schenke ich ihr?
 Keine Zweifel! Eine Reflexkamera muß es sein, die schnellste Aufnahmebereitschaft und gestochene Bildschärfe garantiert.
 Da kommt für Sie nur das modernste Kochmann-Modell in Frage:



Reflex-Korelle 6x6
 Sie bietet: Schlitzverschluss v. 1/100–1/1000 Sek., Aufnahme-Zähluhr, gekuppelten Filmtransport und Verschlussaufzug, daher Doppelbelichtungen unmöglich, Kennzeichen für gespannten Verschluss, versenkbaren Rahmensucher für Aufnahmen in Augenhöhe und vieles mehr. Die

Reflex-Korelle 6x6
 kennt keine Parallaxe, da nur ein Objektiv. Sie ist leicht, handlich, stabil und kostet (e nach Optik in den Lichtstärken 4,5–2,8 nur RM 30.– bis 135.–

Ihr Fotohändler zeigt sie Ihnen
 Prospekt kostenlos von

Reflex-Korelle 6x6 mit größter Lichttafel
Franz Kochmann, Dresden-A. 16, Trinitatisstr. 42/44



Seiichi Inouye, who Gerta had met during her summer vacation at Cannes. Hiroshi claims, Gerta first was interested in himself. Elsewhere it says Hiroshi Kawazoe and Seiichi Inouye had cast an eye upon Gerta. When Gerta and Hiroshi were talking, »anxious Capa« (André Friedmann) joined them and was introduced by Gerta. They all became friends. At the time Japanese in Paris were mostly rich people. Kawazoe later became the personal consultant of foreign affairs to Prince Takamatsu, the »liberal« brother of Emperor Hirohito.⁹ In Paris they were trusted friends of Gerta and André. They helped when the camera was in the pawn shop, and once, when the young couple had a disagreement, André used their place as a hide-out.

He declared to his mother that he could be satisfied. But now he had to move a step forward. Life as a bohemian was definitely over. On evenings and weekends he and Gerta tinkered with reportages. It was clear to the team, the desired independence had to be earned the hard way.

Since ever, Paris was a city of photography, and since Daguerre's invention attracted photographers from the whole world. Already in 1929 the émigré Walter Benjamin wrote: »The city is reflected in thousand eyes, thousand lenses.« In those years Gerta Pohorylle was not the only emigrant who began to photograph. It was not uncommon in the 1930s to pick up a camera. Especially in Paris, which in the shortest time became the most important center of photographic immigration from Nazi Germany. Gisèle Freund, Hans Namuth and many others debuted in exile and considered photography as material and aesthetic basis for survival. They used the fact that a camera was an affordable tool of production, that artistic work was hardly regulated in France, and last but not least, photos had an international market. Actually, already in October 1933 the French union of photographers complained about competition by exiled photographers.¹⁰

Their point of departure was relatively favorable. They had a broad circle of acquaintances, widened by Gerta's contacts in the Paris milieu, otherwise hardly accessible for immigrants. The Café du Dôme remained their main meeting point. There, Friedmann met with Géza Kárpáthy, a schoolmate from Budapest, and Csiki, a friend from the time of political awakening at Munkács. Géza shall start filming during the Spanish Civil War and shall have as Charles Korvin an actor's career in Hollywood. Csiki's name actually was Imre Weisz and with André he shared the beginning of exile in Paris. At the Dôme were many of the new friends and colleagues. Among them, Henri Cartier-Bresson and Chim, who were increasingly important for André as confidants and advisors. Gerta Pohorylle esteemed the intellectual Pole, who was half-a-year younger than herself, without looking it. Chim was a gentle, calm and introverted person. His inconspicuousness was in strong contrast to her and the sociable and loud André.

Meanwhile he was »terribly neat«, »hellishly shaved«, a »philistine«, »freshly pressed«, with suit and tie. His changed appearance caused bouts of laughter. »Everybody laughs about me.« The dress-up as successful businessman must have been unreal to him. No letter in those days, with-



»An army is born« and the pictures of refugees at Cerro Muriano

For a long time the area around Cerro Muriano was believed to be a possible location for the famous picture. Because in Capa's estate the sequence of pictures around the falling soldier carry numbers directly before those of the refugee series from Cerro Muriano. It is not known when exactly Taro and Capa arrived at Cerro Muriano. Meanwhile with help of the films from the »Mexican Suitcase« two further picture series can be placed in the close vicinity of this village. Thus Capa and Taro photographed an assembly of peasants and militiamen taking place at the country estate Villa Alicia, one kilometer southwest of Cerro Muriano. In their illustrated book about the Spanish War these photos are titled »An army is born«.

This finca was an important defensive base against the Nationalist troops advancing over the surrounding hills and from Córdoba. The meeting was at noontime. The men were seeking the shadow under trees. They surrounded a speaker in rough clothing, standing on a wooden barrel. Capa took the large group and their leader from a raised position. On one of his pictures we can find Gerda Taro on the left margin, standing amidst attentively listening militiamen and photographing from there. They had assembled to go to war. In *Death in the Making* Capa describes the new and inexperienced volunteers' army of workers, syndicalists and rural combatants, concluding that they had no choice. Pictures of this review of the situation, some taken from above, some out of the crowd, also appeared in *Regards* and *Illustrated London News*.

As assumed for a long time, Taro and Capa possibly spent in this area more than a few hours. For it seems there resulted another photo series by Capa, showing totally exhausted sleeping



83. Gerda Taro among militiamen and peasants (left margin, middle). Photo by Robert Capa, Cordoba Front, September 1936.

84–86. Some more photos of the gathering – probably taken also by Taro – were published in *Death in the Making*.

87. Robert Capa, Gerda Taro crouches behind a Republican soldier, Cordoba Front, September 1936.



militiamen, lying outstretched on the barren ground in bright daylight. Among them were very young fighters, almost children. Some, with leathern gear, probably came from Alcoy. Other sleeping combatants wore typical rural garments with various headgear. They had blankets and food bags with them and many even in sleep held the rifle, or at least it was kept within reach. While Capa spent a whole film on the sleepers, only three photos by Gerda Taro are known.

On 5 September 1936 the fascists forestalled the offensive announced by the Republicans and bombarded Cerro Muriano in early morning. Capa and Taro moved around the village and photographed from various spots. Their range of movement indicated a longer stay and that they knew the place. By contrast, Namuth and Reisner who, together with Franz Borkenau, also arrived at Cerro Muriano in the afternoon, operated only from one position on the main street at the northern village entry. Borkenau reports from the air raids in the afternoon: »What we found around half-past-three was hell. (...) The whole village was fleeing; men, women and children; on foot, on donkeys, in cars and trucks.« The teams Capa/Taro and Namuth/Reisner photographed – without meeting each other – the fleeing on the road. As emerged later, even the same persons. Borkenau, who dared to go to the deserted village, thanked his courageous driver for getting him away from Cerro Muriano, in spite of bombs and machine gun fire. Another car with journalists was shamefully deserted by its driver.⁹

La Voz reports about the young pair of photographers

The next day, Sunday 6 September, Taro and Capa met Clemente Cimorra. The reporter of Madrid's paper *La Voz* liked both so much, that he reported in his paper not only about the progress of fighting in the area, but also wrote a »Eulogy of a French pair of journalists«. »When I reached the house ›La Malaguña‹ I noticed two young people, nearly children. They were not armed, each in the hands with nothing more than a film camera (sic!). Without the least fear they watched the disturbing dive of a plane above their heads. I spoke to them and we introduced ourselves amidst the noise of fighting. Robert Capa, of *VU*, journalist, Gerta Pohorylle, of *Regards*.«

Cimorra joined the two, fascinated by their determination and fearlessness. He reported to his readers, the young people »want to make a film that shows the events at zero distance. They defy even the worst devastated fighting spots and encourage each other with a beseeching forwards!« On the same morning Cerro Muriano was taken by Franco's forces. Two days later, on 8 September, Cimorra's report appeared in *La Voz*. He closed his eulogy of Taro and Capa with thoughts about the innocent bravery of youth and the hope that finally the next day the Republican air force would act »effectively«.

Spain's wealth

Far behind the front, life goes on. It must. Factory wheels must turn. Industry must be reorganized. The soil of Spain is rich. Mercury spurts from it. In the mines of Almadén, known to the Roman and the Arab, invaders too, methods are as ancient as the coat of arms from Charles the Fifth over the gateway.

Foreigners have ever coveted the wealth of Almadén. Soon the barren fastnesses of the Sierra Morena will see a new invader, foreign troops from a poorer nation across the Mediterranean.

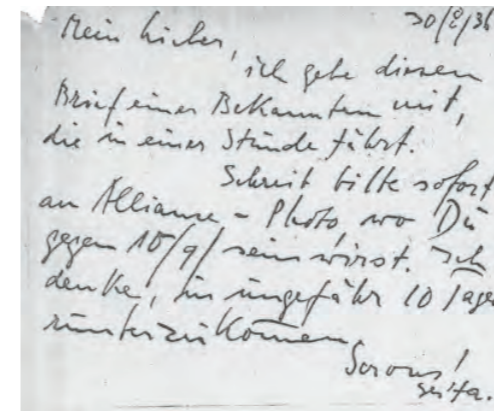


Again Taro and Capa could not record a victorious attack; instead people ran full of fright and terror in front of the camera. Such traumatizing experiences strengthened Taro's and Capa's partisanship. Ever stronger seemed to be the necessity of closeness to the protagonists, in order to show what really happened. Bombarding the civilian population »accelerated« the front, carried the fighting from the trenches to the nearby schools or village yards. The advance of the Spanish Legion with battalions of Regulares and Moros went together with mass executions and massacres.

Capa's dictum that a poor picture meant, one was not close enough, is often used to illustrate bravado by war photographers. Although Gerda and he are known to »go near«, his statement should not be reduced to spatial closeness. To leave a safe observation point arose from the need for sympathy and participation, it was consequent solidarity. The inner closeness and the common ideology demanded proximity beyond limits – similar to women and men who joined the militia as volunteers. The striving for »nearness« is a central element of the working ethos of Capa and Taro. Not distanced observation, but reflected consternation and intensive self experience, determined their procedure. But the desired inside view was only possible within limits. The strangeness and distance between fighting Spanish peasants and the photographing passers-by could not be resolved anytime and everywhere by »solidary« access. On the other hand the simultaneity of nearness and foreignness may have allowed sensing the essence of the individual events and appearances.

A nomadic life had begun for Taro. She and Capa had been en route since more than six weeks, had traveled hundreds of kilometers and tried to come close with the camera to revolution and war. A colleague, the photographer Romeo Martínez, reports that Gerda was distinguished by quick perception and high motivation, and by very sensitive and intensive work. For a smooth functioning of their close cooperation in practical reporting, it required much more technical

88. Taro and Capa documented at Almadén the production of mercury, being vital to the war effort. 89. *Photo-History* used photos by Taro and Capa for illustrations showing Hitler's and Mussolini's interest in Spanish mercury. After the end of the Civil War production reached a peak in 1941. Nazi Germany imported mercury from Spain. 90. Lines from Spain to Georg Kuritzkes by Gerda Taro, dated 30 August 1936.



agreements and coordination of content, than Taro and Capa were used to from their work in Paris. Apparently in these weeks they had created a stable working basis, which allowed both of them enough scope of development.

On their return trip they visited Almadén. There are the richest mercury mines of Europe, being exploited since Roman times. During the Civil War production of this strategic material rose enormously. Gerda Taro documented the work of the miners and the whole course of production in a comprehensive photo series from laborious excavation to cartouches ready for delivery. Production was antiquated. A commentary to her and Capa's pictures from Almadén in *Death in the Making* says, only the clenched fists of the workmen reveal that a change has come over Spain. Taro's pictures were also published in *War in Spain*, the first issue of the American magazine *Photo History*. The central importance of this raw material was emphasized in the Spanish pavilion of the 1937 Paris World Exhibition, where Alexander Calder had built a fountain discharging mercury instead of water.

On their way home the pair of photographers made a last stop in Toledo, where hundreds of other reporters documented the taking of the Alcazar. Since the outbreak of the Civil War revolting cadets and officers with some hostages had holed up in the seat of the infantry academy. The military on the Alcazar had been declared by Franco a symbol of glorious national Spanish firmness. For weeks the Republican militia besieged and shot at the medieval fortress. Now they tried with tons of TNT to blow up the westside, to finally free the hostages. But the besieged did not give up. When days later Hans Namuth observed the fighting, also Capa and Taro had gone on with worry.

1 Bernard Lebrun and Michel Lefebvre, p. 86; *VU en Espagne, la défense de la République*, special issue of 29.8.1936, p. 20; Franz Borkenau, *Kampfplatz Spanien: Politische und soziale Konflikte im Spanischen Bürgerkrieg. Ein Augenzeugenbericht*, Stuttgart, 1986, pp. 95 ff. (*The Spanish Cockpit: an Eye-witness Account of the Political and Social Conflicts of the Spanish Civil War*, London, 1937).

2 Patrik von zur Mühlen, *Spanien war ihre Hoffnung. Die deutsche Linke im Spanischen Bürgerkrieg 1936–1939*, Berlin and Bonn, 1985, p. 62.

3 Sigrid Schneider, »Von der Verfügbarkeit der Bilder, Fotoreportagen aus dem Spanischen Bürgerkrieg«, in: *Fotogeschichte*, 1988, vol. 29, pp. 50f. – Re: on the course of war and the role of the media see: Antony Beevor, *The Battle for Spain. The Spanish Civil War*, New York and London, 2006; Cynthia Young (ed.), *The Mexican Suitcase: The Rediscovered War Negatives of Capa, Chim, and Taro*, 2 vols., New York and Göttingen, 2010.

4 Pat Sloan (publ.), *John Cornford – A Memoir*, London, 1938, reprint 1978, pp. 195 ff.; George Orwell, *Mein Katalonien. Bericht über den Spanischen Bürgerkrieg*, Zurich 1975, p. 37, 44 (*Hommage to Catalonia*, London, 1938); *Illustrated London News*, 24.10.1936, p. 726.

5 Borkenau, pp. 129 f.; Capa's quote about the singing bullets see: *Death in the Making. Photographs by Robert Capa and Gerda Taro*, New York, 1938; Arno Lustiger, *Schalom Libertad! Juden im spanischen Bürgerkrieg*, Cologne, 1991, pp. 73–78.

6 Estate Robert Capa (interview Jozefa Stuart with Jaume Miravittles), ICP, New York.

7 Re. Kuritzkes: PDS-Archiv, former SED-Bezirksparteiarchiv Leipzig (file Gerta Taro), V/6/63/46. See also: Borkenau, p. 173–195; Hans Namuth and Georg Reisner, *Spanisches Tagebuch 1936*, Berlin, 1986, pp. 12 f., 111 f.

8 Re. »*The Falling Soldier*« and Espejo see: Richard Whelan, *This is War! Robert Capa at Work*, New York and Göttingen, 2007, pp. 53–57; José Manuel Susperregui, *Sombras de la fotografía: los enigmas desvelados de Nicolasa Ugartemendia, muerte de un miliciano, la aldea Española y el Lute*, Bilbao, 2009; Fernando Penco Valenzuela, *La foto de Capa*, Córdoba, 2011; Bernard Lebrun and Michel Lefebvre, pp. 99–111; cp.: Penco: <http://www.capaencordoba.com/pdf/Documento02.pdf>; Susperregui: <https://dadun.unav.edu/handle/10171/41896>; Serrano Esparza: <http://elrectanguloenlamano.blogspot.de/2013/12/espejo-córdoba-identified-new-picture.html> (last access Mar. 2018).

9 Borkenau, pp. 197, 202. – Hans Namuth says in the interview that only *VU*'s publication of the pictures revealed that both teams of photographers took pictures of the Cerro Muriano refugees that afternoon. See: Richard Whelan, *This is War!*, pp. 59 f.; re. Cerro Muriano and Villa Alicia see: <http://elrectanguloenlamano.blogspot.de/2011/09/cerro-muriano-75th-anniversary-capa-and.html>; <http://elrectanguloenlamano.blogspot.de/2010/05/capa-and-refugees-of-cerro-muriano.html> (last access Mar. 2018).



139, 145. Gerda Taro's pictures of the Segovia Front were given three pages in *Death in the Making*: upper right center the composer and officer Gustavo Duran. Ilse Wolff de Rivera who wrote for *VI* and *Claridad*, met Taro »at the Jarama Front section commanded by Duran, there was heavy fighting«. They had got to know each other in summer 1936 at the Cordoba Front.

140. From the series »Life in the Sierra«, which Gerda Taro had photographed in the Sierra de Guadarrama near Segovia.

141. Gerda Taro, T-26 tank at the Montes de Val-sain. Segovia Front, May or June 1937.

142. Gerda Taro, Motorbike messenger at the Segovia Offensive.

143. A picture from the Segovia Offensive by Gerda Taro on the brochure published by the Embassy of the Spanish Republic in London.

144. For Hemingway war was a stimulus. Gerda Taro's pictures from the Segovia Offensive seem to have directly come out of his novel. For a report in *Life* he himself selected photos by Capa and Taro for *To Whom the Bell Tolls*.

Her photos show the Cerro Matabueyes being shelled, first aid and care of the injured, or even the Spanish composer Gustavo Duran studying maps in the pine forests of Valsain. Since the outbreak of the Civil War the artist from the circle of Salvador Dalí, García Lorca, Rafael Alberti and Luis Buñuel, had an astonishing military career. At Segovia he commanded the 69th Division. The offensive turned into a tragedy for him. Because of miscalculations his infantry had to attack without any aerial support. Three thousand of his men died. Through Ernest Hemingway and André Malraux the drama of the intellectual musician and military man resonated in world literature. In the pro-Republican novel *L'Espoir*, published in late 1937, he plays a key role; in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* Duran is characterized as an authentic hero and the opposite of Stalin's marionettes. In 1940 Hemingway's novel appeared in the USA and immediately was a huge success. In January 1941 *Life* published a »photographic essay«, for which the American writer himself had selected pictures by Capa, Taro and Chim; typically, Gerda's photos were labeled »Robert Capa – Pix«.

After their return from the La Granja Offensive, Taro and Capa went with film and photo camera to the Madrid working-class district Carabanchel. During the winter battle about the capital the fascists had advanced up to the Segovia bridge. Now the »Dinamiteros« pushed them back house by house and street by street. The »Dinamiteros« were Asturian miners, experienced in the use of explosives. When Taro began to photograph the house-to-house battle in Carabanchel, they already had wrested from the Franco troops 8 km. She showed in detail how the men loaded a kind of slingshot with dynamite, catapult it over the sand barricades and then advanced cautiously. *Ce Soir* as well as *Het Leven* and *Life* published the series. The »Dinamiteros« are among the most published pictures by Taro – both as individual images and as a series.

»Reportage CAPA & TARO« and another artist's name?

Of particular significance is the printing of two pictures from the »Dinamitero« series in the *Schweizer Illustrierte Zeitung* of 21 July 1937, because it appeared under the copyright of »Freddy Isler«. Freddy Isler is introduced as »our special collaborator« and is seen on a photo in the rubble of a house in Madrid. The well-dressed young lady cannot be identified clearly as Gerda Taro, so the question arises as to whether or not there is a mistake. But research about a photographer with this name in the 1930s remained without result. Since a month later *SIZ* again publishes a whole page of pictures from Spain by »Freddy Isler«, it could be that the editorial staff reworked various Spanish pictures as a new reportage. It seems not likely, but cannot be excluded, that Gerda Taro herself used another artist's name. In Switzerland she usually published under »Prisma«, »Prisma Press« or »Union-Prisma«. Combined photos by Taro and Capa were named »Ca-



pa Prisma«. Marketing went through Capa's discoverer Simon Guttmann. Since 1936 he ran the »Press Agency Zürich«, probably renamed 1937 »Prisma Press Service«. In Zurich »Prisma Press« was known as the »mark of quality for elite photography«, because Guttmann supervised there only a handful of selected photographers. Recalls the Swiss photographer Ernst Scheidegger: The name of the agency was a sign of quality.

There are only few original prints of the 1930 »Dinamitero« series. Two of them are a special rarity since they are stamped on the backside as »Reportage Capa & Taro«. This stamp is found exclusively on 35 mm photos and therefore was designed for joint series after Gerda's change of camera in March 1937. Because the joint projects were later mostly divided into film (Capa) and photography (Taro), it hardly was used afterwards.

The Puente de los Franceses (Bridge of the French) in Madrid was as much embattled during the winter months as Carabanchel. Taro documented the enormous effort of securing and protecting this bridge section now. There stood the famous armored train under the command of Angel González Moros, with which also Gustavo Duran's military career had begun. The whole area was built up with sandbags and stone barricades. At the moment is was quiet at the Puente de los Franceses; Gerda jokingly snapped in front of a sandbagged shelter a soldier in a lounge, leaning relaxed through a magazine. She also took pictures of General Miaja, who probably visited



But the best blood of Spain spills in torrents over the yellow land. Is spilled wantonly. Spills generously. The blood of men and women and boys, of worker, student, lawyer, peasant, mechanic, miner. But the ranks are ceaselessly replenished and each death, each replenishment, tightens the bond. In Spain a new army *has been forged*. In Spain a new nation *is being forged*. And that new unity within has set up vibrations. There are answering vibrations from without. And these vibrations are interactive. On the battlefields of Brunette the People's Army won its first victory. And the blood that was shed was not only Spanish blood. Among the dead were the youth of nine other lands. Among the dead and among the victors. In Valencia on that day there was a convention of the progressive writers of Europe and America. . . .



the »Alianza«. He is seen with his hands on the back walking through a garden. Miaja talks with Maria Teresa León and Rafael Alberti, in the background is a bunch of escorts. In mid-July *Het Leven* brought large-size pictures of Miaja, together with Taro's pictures of the Segovia Offensive.

Photo and film work in the munition factory

The next photo and filming work took place in an ammunition factory in Madrid. Some sweeps through the hall were used for Capa's sequences in *The March of Time*. Taro photographed a young worker with forage cap at the workbench; he had appeared for a moment in the newsreel film. The caption in *Regards* says, with his sixteen years he was too young for the front and therefore worked in munition production. At last the photo work in the factory gave Gerda the opportunity to design pictures in a careful and relaxed fashion. She took advantage of the light rays entering the hall, followed up lines and movements. Like in earlier photos of square medium format she



146. *Ce Soir* of 18.6.1937 about house-to-house fighting in the Madrid workers' quarter Carabanchel. The pictures of the »Dinamiteros« were among the most published photos by Gerda Taro.

147. Gerda Taro, Near the Front: instruction for illiterates.

148. Gerda Taro, Time-out from war to learn. Probably photographed at Puente de los Franceses.

149. Gerda Taro, Young worker in a munitions factory in Madrid, June 1937.

150. Gerda Taro, Rest at the Puente de los Franceses, which was much fought for during the winter. Madrid, ca. June 1937.

151. *Schweizer Illustrierte Zeitung*, 21.7.1937. Gerda Taro's photos of the »Dinamiteros« were published under the name »Frey Isler«.



composed diagonally, inserted objects oblique in the picture. From a high position, as also used by Capa for a few camera sweeps, resulted top views, dominated by geometrical planes and shapes. It certainly was noisy in the factory. But in the midst of war and danger it became a place for contemplation. Taro's compositions transmit an atmosphere of calm, concentration and clarity. The reportage from the ammunition factory is the only one about manual-industrial work known from her.

»Rehearsal for War«

Time Inc. *The March of Time* released on 6 August 1937 the newsreel with the Spanish pictures under the title »Rehearsal for War«. The contents stressed the international connections of the Civil War with the position of the US government. There are few pictures of the war. Short sequences of the Segovia Offensive and from the ammunitions factory are included. Two injured persons, limping along a forest path and already filmed by Capa, were also recorded by Taro's

field he reversed to the road. He learnt of the accident only outside the battle zone, where he was to put up a second line of defense. His friend Fernando Plaza, who also drove a T-26 shouted to him: »You knocked down the French woman.« They knew who was the victim, Taro and Capa were known. Fernando Plaza did not see how and why the photographer fell from the car. He only saw her when she lay on the path, behind a bump. And he saw how the tank of his comrade came over the small hill and rolled over her. Anibal could not notice. Anyway, everything was in panic and hectic. Nobody stopped, everybody fled, wanted to get away.

The tank driver Anibal Gonzales

In 2009, many years after the death of Gerda Taro, the identity of the tank driver and the exact circumstances of the accident had surprisingly become known. Because of the first exhibition of Gerda Taro in Spain at the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya at Barcelona, Fernando Cambrotero, a nephew of Fernando Plaza, contacted the press to talk about the »legacy« of Anibal González and his uncle (El País, 12 July 2009). The two friends till the end of the Civil War were tank drivers. After Franco's victory Anibal González could not return to his village since his family was subject to reprisals. Fernando Plaza spent three years in a work camp and then lived again in Cenizate. Only after decades he talked to his nephew about his friend Anibal González, Gerda Taro and the Civil War. He had hidden the old newspaper articles about Gerda's death in his boots.

The English Hospital in El Escorial

Gerda Taro and Ted Allen were treated in hospital number II, the so-called English Hospital in El Escorial. It was responsible for the 35th Division (35th International Division) commanded by General Walter. The hospital was accommodated in the Seminary San José de los Sagrados Corazones near the train station.⁸ At 1000 m altitude the place was dominated by the huge palace and monastery buildings of Philipp II, the burial place of Spanish kings. Here lay also Charles III and Charles IV for whom worked Francisco de Goya. Like Capa and Taro with a camera, Goya documented hundred-thirty years earlier the atrocities of the Spanish War of Independence. Like the photo journalists, the painter explicitly considered himself an eyewitness, as show the grippingly accurate etchings in his cycle *Desastres de la Guerra*. One of it even carries the programmatic title: »Yo lo vi« (I saw it).

According to Gustav Regler, Gerda Taro received on the way to the hospital a blood transfusion – from one of the mobile units initiated by Dr. Bethune. For this Dr. Reginald Saxton was responsible at the English Hospital. He had been trained by Bethune and developed the method further. She was »unbelievably brave« reports Gustav Regler. During the whole transport she pushed her intestines back – with the hands on the belly. The head physician of the 11th Brigade, the famous surgeon Dr. Jolly from New Zealand, operated Taro. Attending was Anna Maria Revesz, also known as senior nurse Annemarie (or Anne Marie). The highly qualified nurse of Hungarian-German origin belonged until the end of 1938, when all Inter-Brigadists were removed from the front, to his operating team. Alfred Kantorowicz recorded her report of the operation in his diary. »Shortly before the operation she asked calmly if it was likely that she would die. She was reassured. No danger, her heart being healthy. (Actually they were sincere, they did not consider the injuries as mortal). Gerda T. insisted on being openly told the truth. If she had to die she wanted to give several messages to her friends. Annemarie convinced her that she had nothing to fear. After this she even laughed and asked for a cigarette. Eagerly she inquired about her film camera. At the operation one saw how serious her injuries were. The broken leg was nothing, but her pelvis was squashed, inner organs damaged. Dr. Jolly said: »This is not good.« The American nurse Irene Goldin cared for Gerda at the hospital. Decades later she remembers exactly that the young woman was »terribly wounded«. Dr. Jolly ordered for the severely injured to »keep her comfortable«. It meant, he could do nothing more. The photographer should receive enough morphemes to have no pain, if possible. Once she shortly revived and asked: »Are my cameras in good hands? They are new.« Goldin normally was not assigned to Dr. Jolly. By chance she was still there when »the terribly injured young woman« was received.⁹

When Ted Allan arrived at the hospital, the operation was already over. He himself was supplied with antitetanus and morphine by Dr. Caldwell. The injured leg did not hurt anymore; still, he



187. Anibal González (left) on his T-26 tank with a Russian comrade.

188. The last photo of Gerda Taro on her death-bed shows the mortally wounded photographer in the English Hospital in El Escorial, where she died on the morning of 26 July 1937. The Hungarian doctor Dr. Janos (John) Kiszely (1909–1995) dabs away the blood that ran from her nose. Even when Rafael Alberti and Maria Teresa Leon arrived to take the body to the Alianza in Madrid, blood was still dripping »from the pale face«. Kiszely's son posted the photo on Twitter in January 2018, sparking much attention and new research.

could not sleep. In the morning Ted Allen asked again if he could see Gerda. Shortly after he received a sedative injection, Gerda Taro had died around seven o'clock.

The last photo: Gerda Taro on the deathbed

More than eighty years after the photographer's death, a photograph surprisingly revealed indications of another doctor who had taken care of Taro. The doctor's son, Sir John Panton Kiszely, retired general, had published the picture on Twitter. On 16 Janaur 2018 he wrote: »Just dug out this photo of a young doctor with the International Brigade in the Spanish Civil War in 1937 – my father.« His father Dr. John Kiszely kneels next to a stretcher and removes the blood streaming from a young womans's nose. As soon as the picture was published, the first indications were already received that the injured or dead person might be Gerda Taro.

Immediately a Spanish TV reporter asked me to appraise if the woman on the photo really was Gerda Taro. I thought the visible part of her face and her hairdo suggested it. John Kiszely junior, whom I contacted right away, could not say anything about the origin of the picture. He got the photo only after the death of his father: »I went to a small reunion of his British medical colleagues and one of them, whose name was, I think, Reg Sexton, gave me the photo or sent it to me afterwards.« However, I quickly found details in the Imperial War Museum in London, where in 1992 the physician was interviewed at length about his time during the Spanish Civil War.« Accordingly Dr. Kiszely had come in February 1937 from Budapest to Spain. At the Brunete battle he was responsible for the reception and classification of the wounded (triage). In those days he treated Gerda Taro without knowing who she was: »She was not in the army, she was a reporter, a newspaper woman. But I did not [have] a clue who she was when I (...), somebody took a picture of me cleaning up the blood from her face, but at the time I did not know who she was nor did the person who took the photograph.«

The picture of Gerda Taro on her deathbed must have been taken very near the time of her day of death on 26 July 1937. The arrangement of her hands and the flat lying body emphasize the impression that she was already dead (not a position of a severely injured grasping for breath). Already in 2006 the photo appeared in a book about the medical service of the International Brigades. There it says without mentioning the patient that Dr. Kiszely treated a facial wound in the reception room of the El Escorial hospital. However, the blood from the nose is not due to an injury of the head, but seems to be a typical indication of postmortem blood coagulation in the severe wounds of the pelvis.¹⁰

Laid out at the »Alianza de Intelectuales«

In the morning of 26 July 1937 Maria Teresa Léon and Rafael Alberti hurried to the hospital. They were led to an empty room. There lay Taro, covered by a sheet; María was astonished how small she was. »During the war we always were short of coffins«, also now they could not find any to transport Gerda to Madrid. Maria Teresa Léon tells: »Finally they brought us a truck loaded with crates and we put Gerda between the cargo.« The drove behind the truck, asking Gerda to forgive this undeserving treatment and tried to ignore Franco's again bombarding planes.

They laid out their friend in the winter garden of the »Alianza«. Maria Teresa Léon, the militia-women Rosita, and Lola, a surgeon, sewed a red silken flag with the insignia of »Alianza de Intelectuales« and decorated the diseased with flowers. They organized an honorary guard. The first colleagues, friends, female and male, came to take leave. Walter Reuter learnt from Norwegian journalists what had happened to Taro. The same evening he went to the »Alianza« to sit with many others in the room next to the winter garden. Through the glass they could see the piled-up flowers.¹¹

Georges Soria, the Madrid correspondent of *L'Humanité* and Marc Ribécourt, her colleague of *Ce Soir* had come to the »Alianza«. They informed the editorial office in Paris and Louis Aragon. Somebody had to deliver the terrible message to Robert Capa. The authorities in Madrid were informed and during the night teleprinters spread the news of her death. Till late at night and during the following morning soldiers, writers, artists and political persons came to the »Alianza« to pay homage to Taro. General Enrique Lister, who had conquered Brunete with his troops, bowed before her coffin. Maria Teresa Léon spoke in the name of Spanish intellectuals, praised the diseased as a soldier and sadly added to have to get used to never again see Gerda coming home



to the »Alianza«. And Rafael Alberti thought how she helped him to install a dark room at the »Alianza« to develop his photos himself.

Ce Soir decided to quickly transfer Taro to Paris. A Spanish paper cites chief editor Louis Aragon: »We are sure, Paris, so loved by Taro, shall accompany her honorably to her final rest, and makes her family, which suffered such a heavy blow, feel that its daughter also was a bit the daughter of Paris.«¹² In the afternoon a car with Gerda's coffin departed for Valencia. She arrived at dawn of 28 July, accompanied by Frederico Vidal, the poet Luis Perez Infante, Georges Sori and Marc Ribécourt.

The Republican papers appreciated in detail Taro's brave work, her death at Brunete was emphasized and the offensive blandished. Not for nothing had the opposite side declared 25 June a victory and a holiday, the day the Republican troops had to retreat and Taro had in the evening the accident. The great offensive was indeed a disaster. The Republicans lost 25,000 men, eighty percent of their tanks and a third of their planes, for the gain of 25 sqkm. Draconian punishments and the execution of hundreds of their own soldiers who tried to flee from the inferno, led to an enormous demoralization of Republican troops. Critical comments to all that were treason.

Lying in state in Valencia

A grand salon was prepared in Valencia's house of the »Alianza« at Calle Trinquete Caballeros. The Spanish government bore the costs for lying in state and transport to the border. There the official goodbyes by party and government representatives should take place. On the balcony hung the tricolor with black ribbon. Hardly four weeks earlier Taro was sitting here and joking with participants of the writers' congress. Now soldiers, writers and artists from Valencia were her honorary guard. Wreaths were dispatched, nearly all ministers made visits of condolence and Juan Gil-Albert, the secretary general of the local »Alianza«, received representatives of parties and various other unions. The laying-outs in Madrid and Valencia were a must for official delegates, but apparently also the general population flocked in.

Because of international shipping rules transport to Toulouse by plane was not possible, the car with the corpse went during the same night to the French border. Vidal, Soria and Ribécourt followed the hearse and handed at Port Bou the coffin to the French novelist Paul Nizan, who was sent by *Ce Soir*. The poet Luiz Perez Infante had to say farewell to Taro in Valencia. He dedicated to her a poem. The comrade should remain unforgotten.

¹ Elisabeth Freundlich, *Die fahrenden Jahre*, Salzburg, 1992, pp. 73, 75 (*The Traveling Years*, Riverside, Calif., 1999). Freundlich left Austria in March 1938, then lived in Paris and the USA, where she met her later husband, the philosopher Günther Anders.

² Herbert Matthews, »Madrid Admits Brunete Lost«, in: *New York Times* of 26 July 1937.

³ Letter by Boris Guimpel to the committee of fighters in Spain, East Berlin, 25 Jan. 1962. PDS-Archiv, former SED-Bezirksparteiarchiv Leipzig (folder Gerda Taro), V/6/63/46; Hanns Maaßen, »Wie Gerda fiel«, in: *Brigada Internacional ist unser Ehrenname ... Erlebnisse ehemaliger deutscher Spanienkämpfer*, Berlin, 1983, vol. 1, pp. 375 ff.; Maury Dashevsky, »The Girl we Left Behind«, in: *The Book of the XVth Brigade* (reprint of Madrid, 1938), Newcastle upon Tyne, 1975, p.167.

⁴ Raymond Fielding, *The March of Time, 1935–1951*, New York, 1978, pp. 176 f.

⁵ See: Cynthia Young, *The Mexican Suitcase*, vol. 2, p. 263.

⁶ Werner Beumelburg, »30000 sterben in Brunete«, quoted from: Heinrich Jaenecke, *Es lebe der Tod. Die Tragödie des spanischen Bürgerkrieges*, Hamburg, 1980, pp. 280–281. Beumelburg describes in detail the air raids of 25 July 1937.

⁷ Antony Beevor, p. 358.

⁸ The description is based on my interview with Ted Allan (Toronto, 13 July 1991) and his unfinished memoirs »Happy Ending. A Fictional Autobiography«, London, 22 July 1969, see: <http://www.normanallan.com/Misc/Ted/nT%20ch%202.htm> (last access Mar. 2018); for exact identification of the hospital and death certificate etc. see: Alfonso del Barrio, »In memoriam«, in: *FV Magazine*, no. 253, June 2017, and no. 254, Sept. 2017 (<http://www.revistafv.es/>); further information about the battle of Brunete as well as Gerda Taro give Ernesto Viñas and Sven Tuytens on: <https://bruneteenlamemoria.blogspot.com.es/> (last access Mar. 2018).

⁹ Estate Robert Capa (interview Jozefa Stuart with Gustav Regler, 1959) ICP, New York; legacy Alfred Kantorowicz, C1, diary entry 12 August 1937, (StaBi HH – NK: C1); for Anna Maria Revesz see: Gusti Jirku, *Wir kämpfen mit*, edited by Ayuda Médica Extranjera, 1938, p. 93; RGASPI 545-6–48, p. 56; interview with Irene Goldin Spiegel (Vienna, 9 Dec. 2000).

¹⁰ John Kiszely (oral history), IWM, London 1992: <https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80012663> (last access Mar. 2018); Manuel Requena Gallego and Rosa Maria Sepulveda Losa, *La sanidad en las Brigadas Internacionales*, Cuenca, 2006, p. 68: <http://www.brigadasinternacionales.uclm.es/publicacion/la-sanidad-en-las-brigadas-internacionales/> (last access Mar. 2018); see also: Alfonso del Barrio, »Si, era Gerda Taro«, in: *FV Magazine*, no. 257, Mar. 2018, pp.16–23 (<http://www.revistafv.es/>); records from the Comintern archive in Moscow indicate that in Spain Dr. Janos (John) Kiszely was not trusted because of his descent »from an impoverished aristocratic family«. In one of the reports he is referred to as »elemento sospecho«, meaning a »suspicious element«; RGASPI 545-6-332 and 545-3670.

¹¹ Maria Teresa León, p. 171; Córdoba Iturburu in *El Mono Azul*, 12 Aug. 1937 and interview with Walter Reuter (Cologne, 8 Oct. 1990).

¹² »Glosando a ›Taro‹ calda en el ejercicio del periodismo«, in: *El Pueblo* (Valencia), 28 Aug. 1937.

For Gerda Taro, fallen on the Front of Brunete

Though regrettably you fell,
You keep living,
Eternal youth among us.

For us you continue to be
A rose in full bloom,
As we have discovered on a morning in May,
Though later we found it tread down,
Far away from the rose bush.

The old-gold color of your hair,
The fresh flower of your smile against the wind,
How gracefully you leapt,
Defying the bullets,
To record battle scenes
They still give me courage, Gerda,
In spite of your death, your corpse.

Believe me, you keep living in our house.
You are in every nook,
All walls reflect your figure,
And if we suffer, as we suffer,
We mourn above all you.

War continues, as you know it,
And amidst this dying and this misery,
More screaming than the whistle of grenades,
More powerful than the explosion of bombs,
We tell you what we believe and hope:
Stronger than all of this is
Through her beauty
The flower.

Luis Perez Infante

The poem by Luis Perez Infante appeared in *El Mono Azul. Hoja Semanal de la Alianza de Intelectuales Antifascista par la Defensa de la Cultura* (Madrid), no. 28, 12.8.1937.