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Ernst Leitz of Wetzlar and Altruism During the Holocaust  
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Photography was greatly exploited as a communications and propaganda device during the Holocaust.[1] At an early stage in my research, it was clearly evident that the still camera was a tool of choice whether the objective was to inculcate anti-Semitism and report and/or publicize officially approved versions of anti-Jewish activities engaged in by the Nazi state. In addition, individual Germans also turned to photography to record their own enthusiasm or even disapproval of such anti-Jewish measures. Furthermore, against all the odds, individual Jews relied upon cameras to leave their historical testimonies of this period and those involved in the resistance conveyed photographic warnings of Nazi activities. Finally, at the end of the war, the Allies used still photography to portray themselves as the liberators bringing freedom to the suffering innocents and defeat to the bestially evil enemy.[2]

A vital factor in the achievement of the spontaneous and revealing photography that so characterises the work of this period was the development of the miniature camera in Germany. The most successful camera was the 'Leica', first produced commercially in 1925. The Leica was extremely compact and could be fitted with very high quality lenses that enabled photographers to work in ordinary indoor settings without special lighting. It was always instantly ready to capture life and action effortlessly from any angle and with the photographer often able to remain unnoticed. Without cumbersome equipment, photographs of people no longer had to be confined to stiff or conventionally artistic poses.

The dominance of the miniature camera in German photojournalism was made official by the Minister of Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, on 1 August 1937: 'photojournalists who do not understand that the use and promotion of small modern cameras constitute a duty inherent to their mission should remove their official photojournalist armbands.' [3] Press photographers who insisted on clinging to what were considered to be old-fashioned and heavy cameras were banned from their profession. Since the camera was viewed as an effective tool for the Nazi mission of proving the racial and athletic superiority of Aryans and conveying the touristic and architectural glories of Germany, Goebbels saw fit to mandate modern methods so that professional photographers would produce dynamic propaganda images efficiently. When it came to the urgent task of publishing the heroic achievements of the Nazi revolution, even the cameras utilised were required to be radical German designs.

Undoubtedly, there were also economic motives for Goebbel's directive concerning the adoption of the latest German equipment. Surely, Goebbels would have been aware that it would be desirable to enhance the sales figures and public respect of world famous companies such as Ernst Leitz of Wetzlar, the manufacturer of the Leica. Here was an opportunity to promote simultaneously the Nazi ideal of German economic self-sufficiency and the public perception of the German optical industry as offering the world's most technologically advanced professional equipment.

The miniature camera was not just professionally destined to capture the political, industrial and military successes of the Reich, it also figured in Nazi plans to control the leisure activities of the nation. Famous

photographers such as Paul Wolff extolled the virtues of the Leica as he instructed the amateurs who devoured his best-selling books. Here, lightweight and easy to use cameras were seen as playing the decisive role in forging a new German collective visual memory.

One textbook, produced as part of a course organized by the German Labour Front, defined the purpose of a new kind of conformist photography:[4]

Amateur photography is the patrimony of the whole people and it should perform a useful task the nature of which is more manifest in the Germany of today than it has even been before. The education of the people includes photography and should provide each and every citizen with the technical knowledge to enable them to persevere responsibly in this domain and to control their own cameras. But they should not stop there. The skill required for handling a camera is not enough to create a true photographer but it does set up all the conditions necessary for his creation so that amateur photography may aspire to be one of the major factors in the history of civilization. Furthermore, it makes possible to leave to one's children and grandchildren a collection of images whose influence is far greater than that of any number of speeches.

The consumer advertising produced by Leitz, for example, during the Nazi period reflects this authorized version of the historical significance of the German family's snapshots.[5] Vacationing Aryan females balance themselves on the ends of diving boards and pose with pets on the beach. Aryan infants frolic waterside, school-aged sisters wearing plaited hair and dressed in folk costumes smile agreeably. Young men with straight noses and sporting Alpine hats gaze upon snow covered mountains. A very masculine uniformed teenager holds a model airplane aloft; to the right of this erect youth, an eagle perches on a stone column. The thrust of these advertisements is that the Leica will enable its owner to produce lasting evidence of his family's rightful adherence to Nazi ideals of beauty, strength and cooperation.

In addition to supplying both professional and amateur photographers with cameras and accessories, Leitz also produced much for the German military. Exact quantities are not known, but it appears that most of the equipment was first sent to a governmental purchasing agency in Berlin. Often the cameras were specially engraved when placed into service. The Luftwaffe was a major customer and their cameras were engraved 'Luftwaffe-Eigentum' (air force property) and also with the military contract numbers. The Leica was prized by the military for its abilities and was routinely utilised for intelligence and publicity work. In one prominent instance, Propaganda Kompanie 689, attached to the army forces in Warsaw, used Leicas to photograph extensively the Jews in that city's infamous ghetto.[6]

Behind this 'whiter than white' Leica corporate image, however, there lay another reality: the top management at Leitz was systematically saving Jews. Activities enabling Jews to emigrate began shortly after Adolf Hitler became Chancellor in 1933 and intensified after the nationwide 'Kristallnacht' pogrom of 9-10 November 1938. With Germany's invasion of Poland and the sealing of her borders in August 1939, these activities largely came to an end. [7]

During the early years of the Nazi regime, the German policy of forced emigration and the Jewish interest in escaping persecution did coincide. Before the peaceful conquest of Austria in 1938, approximately 150,000 Jews Ñaround one-quarter of the population of Jews in GermanyÑ had left the Reich. But, by

July of 1938, when representatives of international relief agencies sought help from the emissaries from over thirty governments at the Evian Conference, there were very few places left for asylum seekers to go. At this gathering, which was a symbolic gesture urged by President Roosevelt, profound sympathies were routinely expressed by all but there was to be very little in the way of positive action.

Within days of the Nazis assumption of power in Germany, however, the Leitz organisation responded to the pleas of Jewish people. One early example is that of Nathan Rosenthal (born 1881 in Wetzlar) who had served with Dr Ernst Leitz II on the local board of the Deutsche Demokratische Partei (DDP) later known as the Deutsche Staatspartei (DSP). Dr Leitz had also served on the town council from 1916-33 and publicly opposed the Nazi party. In a letter to Dr Leitz dated 10 February 1947, Rosenthal recalls with gratitude how:

...when I pleaded my plight to you fourteen days after Hitler's rise to power, when my son Paul, who was in the upper fifth of the high school and who could no longer shield himself from the anti-Semitism of his teacher, and you immediately accepted him into your firm without taking into account the political [consequences]. His training with you and later employment in your firm here [in New York] made a way for us to emigrate which would otherwise have been completely impossible.

Rosenthal's seventeen year old son, Paul, was first interviewed by Dr Henri Dumur (Direktor) and Alfred Turk (Verkaufsleiter) and then offered a contract as an apprentice. Paul Rosenthal was placed into a three year sales training programme, supervised by Dr Hugo Freund (Leiter der Verkaufsabteilung) that included a lengthy course in mechanics so as to give him a strong practical background.

Upon completing this training in 1936, Paul Rosenthal asked if he could be recommended for employment at the Leitz agency in New York. Rosenthal was supplied with a letter of introduction and gained a position in the scientific instrument division at the firm's New York office. In addition to providing an immediate career prospect to a vulnerable young man, Leitz also rented warehouse space from the elder Rosenthal, after he was forced to close his own business of fifty years standing, thus providing a Jewish family with an indispensable source of income.

Another example of a young Jewish person helped by the Leitz organisation is Kurt Rosenberg (1918-44). According to apprenticeship documents, he completed four years of training at Leitz in Wetzlar to become a feinmechanik, between 4 April 1933 and 4 April 1937. Rosenberg received compliments and pay increases as he progressed with his training. At the end of January 1938, Rosenberg emigrated to the United States and Leitz paid all expenses. Once arriving in America, he worked repairing cameras for Leitz and was even awarded a patent for inventing a close-up attachment. Sadly, after joining the United States Army, Rosenberg was among those killed on 20 April 1944 when the troopship ÔPaul HamiltonÔ was sunk in the Mediterranean.

According to Norman Lipton, a Leitz employee in New York and an eyewitness to the arrival of 'Leitz refugees', these individuals also included: [7]

The New York photographer, Julius Huisgen [who] was a Catholic with a [partly] Jewish wife [whom the Nazis regarded as racially Jewish], who had been employed at the Wetzlar factory and had volunteered for transfer [overseas] to keep his wife out of danger. He had a long

career after the war as a Leica salesman in Pennsylvania.

Dagwood [originally 'Dagelbert'] Horn, a Leica dealer in Wetzlar [or, possibly, Wiesbaden?] was 'adopted' as a Leitz employee and sent on to New York, where the Leitz firm set him up as a Leica dealer on Fifth Avenue, one block south of the Empire State Building. Any customer who came to the Leitz showroom, [part of the company's offices located on 730 Fifth Avenue] and decided to purchase equipment, was referred to Horn's shop.

It is not clear to what extent Horn was adopted as a Leitz dealer in the United States. Within the highly competitive marketplace in Manhattan, the practice of a manufacturer referring customers to only one retail outlet would seem doubtful. In fact, Norman Lipton, who was periodically assigned to the agency showroom, recognised this to be a potential issue when he was specifically directed to make such referrals by the showroom manager, George Moran. When Lipton mentioned his concerns to his boss, Augustus Wolfman, he was told that '...Horn had been a Wetzlar dealer and that Leitz had been responsible for his setting up shop [italics mine] in New York.[8] It would be fascinating, indeed, to learn if Horn was assisted financially by Leitz in any way exceptional, e.g.: special credit terms for the merchandise that he held in stock or credits received for equipment repurchased by Leitz in Germany.

Even if Leitz supported Jewish refugees merely by supplying letters of reference, this alone constituted a potentially dangerous activity. On one occasion, such a letter supplied by Leitz to a Frankfurt camera dealer relocating to the United States held grave consequences for Alfred Turk, Verkaufsleiter at Leitz.

In August 1938, a photographic dealer based in Frankfurt was advised by Ernst Leitz II, Henri Dumur and Alfred Turk on how he could liquidate his business and re-establish himself profitably in the United States. Unfortunately, on 9 November 1938, during the events of 'Kristallnacht', the man's shop was looted and destroyed. Both he and his brother were incarcerated at Buchenwald, but then the Nazis released him on 21 November as he had an appointment with the United States Consul in Stuttgart to have his visa application processed. [9]

On 30 December 1938, just prior to his leaving Germany, the photo dealer received a letter of recommendation from Leitz addressed to the New York office asking that assistance be offered to him after his arrival. The man learned just after he had left Germany, however, that a copy of this letter, signed by Ernst Leitz II, had fallen into the hands of the Gestapo. As a result, Alfred Turk had been jailed on 27 January 1939 and then released after three weeks only because of an arrangement whereby he was to be retired immediately from his duties at Leitz.

In his postwar letter of 10 February 1948 to Ernst Leitz II, Nathan Rosenthal hints that the aid provided to Jews by Leitz reached well beyond the ranks of employees and dealers. 'How many innumerable young Jewish people from Glessen, Frankfurt, Darmstadt, etc., did you train in your photo business during the Hitler period in order that they were able to earn a living on emigration without taking into account whether your assistance pleased the Nazis or not?'

Norman Lipton's eyewitness testimony also points to an image of Leitz responding actively to help Jews leave Germany: [10]

I observed [the absorption of refugees] in action soon after I was

hired by the New York office of Leitz on May 18 1938. On alternate weeks, I witnessed the arrival and processing of 30 or more Leitz-sponsored refugees who were lined up along the wall of our office waiting to be interviewed by Alfred Boch, Executive Vice President... Boch put them up at the nearby Great Northern Hotel and spent the succeeding days on the telephone finding jobs for them throughout New York and the nation.

The efforts that Leitz extended to resettling of refugees at its 'absorption centre' in New York did not go unnoticed by American Jewish self-help organisation. Unequivocal gratitude is expressed in a letter written to Alfred Boch by Nell Mann, Employment Supervisor, Greater New York Coordinating Committee for German [Jewish] Refugees: [11]

We wish to convey this expression of appreciation on the part of our Committee for your generous contribution to our work of rehabilitating German refugees. We know that you will be glad to hear that the two young men you re-trained in American methods of photo finishing were placed most constructively... These individuals could not have qualified for the positions which came into our office without this preliminary period of instruction.

In the late 1930s, New York was the centre of what can only be described as a miniature camera 'boom' in America. Picture-led magazines such as Life, Collier's and the Saturday Evening Post were dominated by the work of photographers using the Leica. Kodachrome colour transparency film Ñavailable only in the 35mm miniature camera formatÑ was a sensation after its introduction in 1936-37. The biggest single market for sales of Leitz cameras and scientific instruments was now the United States.

It is not difficult to imagine that Leitz-sponsored refugees were well placed to succeed within this rapidly expanding economic sector. Whether it was in retail sales, marketing, distribution, teaching, repairing, photo finishing, or manufacturing, skilled personnel were needed all over the United States. Those trained in various aspects of the Leica and its already vast system of interchangeable lenses and accessories arrived at America's shores at a time of great opportunity.

Alfred Boch, who spearheaded the absorption operation in New York, had himself once been a refugee. [12] Boch, a Protestant, was born in Wilno in 1904. During the First World War, he and his family were imprisoned in Siberia. After the War, they returned home to Wilno but decided to flee when war broke out between Russia and Poland in 1919. Together with his brother, Karl, Boch reached relatives in Wetzlar after escaping through Lithuania to the German border. After his arrival in Wetzlar he gained employment at Leitz as an apprentice mechanic. In addition to his commercial astuteness, Boch's own personal history gave him the sense of urgency when it came to the plight of the refugees from Germany.

But, what about the senior management at Leitz in Wetzlar? Other than sensing a good opportunity for exporting useful personnel overseas, what other factors might have motivated them to enable Jews to flee persecution on a systematic basis? Might Ernst Leitz II (1871-1956), for example, have been guided by principles other than purely 'pragmatic self-interest'?

The Leitz family had long been known for its positive paternal outlook towards employees. Since 1869, under the direction of Ernst Leitz I (1843-1920), the

company had become one of the world's major makers of microscope and scientific instruments.

As early as 1885, a company health insurance scheme was made available to workers and their families. In 1899, there was a pension scheme and company funds available for workers to build homes. In the prosperous town of Wetzlar there had also been instituted an unemployment insurance scheme for industrial workers in 1888. These workers' benefits were, however, broadly in accordance with the state social provisions introduced by Bismark. To be sure, the aim was for a healthier and more stable workforce. In this age of rapid industrial growth, illness represented a threat to production.

During the period of strong industrial growth in Germany in the late nineteenth century, skilled engineers were in great demand. According to sixty-year Leitz employee Emil Keller, retaining this talent was important for an industrial enterprise of this period: [13]

Beginning with the end of the last century, Leitz attracted engineering talent from all over Germany. We would call them mechanical engineers today, but they themselves preferred to be simply called 'mechanics'. They were widely traveled, rugged individualists with a bent for practical solutions to new mechanical problems. They were high salaried employees to whom the relationship with management was most important. Ernst Leitz I hired most of these men personally. [His son] Ernst Leitz II was particularly adept at maintaining a cordial relationship with them. In fact, he knew almost all of his employees by their first names and this cordiality was freely reciprocated, resulting in a strong interdependence between them and the administration. 'Du kannst mich gar nicht reize, mein Vater ist bei Leitze', school kids would respond to one who might make a deprecating remark about the other's father. ('You can't get me into fights, my dad works for Mister Leitz.')

The post World War I period leading up to the introduction of the Leica camera was particularly difficult. Most traumatic was the runaway inflation during the period 1923-24. In order to ameliorate the effects of this inflation in Wetzlar, Ernst Leitz II announced on 9 November 1923 to his employees a programme in which :[14]

...a part of their wages would be paid in paper credit printed and signed by the firm in order to allow its workers to purchase groceries in the appropriate shops at pre-determined prices, but these prices would be subject to change, and these changes would be listed in future announcements. What Leitz had done was to import foodstuffs from Denmark with foreign exchange, earned through export sales, and then truck the food to Wetzlar for distribution through designated merchants.

It was during this unstable period that Ernst Leitz II decided to launch the Leica camera at the spring 1925 Leipzig Fair. Here was a new product clearly designed for an international market. Fortunately, this miniature camera, the brainchild of Oskar Barnack, one of Leitz's most brilliant engineers, rapidly took the world by storm with sales rising from 857 units in 1925 to 19,895 units in 1930. As sales of microscopes and scientific equipment had fallen, the continued employment of 1500 workers and the future of the company had been at stake.

So, it is quite plausible that not only did the Leitz refugee programme make sound economic sense at the end of the 1930s, but, also, these actions reflected

long held company traditions of behaving humanely towards a highly valued work force. The refugee activities were conducted with the involvement of the very highest management personnel including Dr Ernst Leitz II and Dr Henri Dumur (1885-1977). Dumur, for example, was a cousin of Ernst Leitz II and a company director for many years. He was also a Swiss citizen and, apparently, a man of formidable intellectual and linguistic abilities not to mention possessing considerable panache when it came to negotiating with Nazi bureaucrats during the war: [15]

In his office, behind his desk, there was a large picture of the Prussian King 'Frederick the Great', for all to see when they came in. When representatives of the N.S.D.A.P. (National Sozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei) called on him to make demands on Leitz in which in Dumur's opinion couldn't be fulfilled or were contrary to company policy, he would refer his visitors to the picture and say: 'I am quoting from what Frederick the Great said 200 years ago: "we were not born in chains and we cannot live in chains either".' That almost always ended the conversation and the subject matter was decided in Leitz's favour. Dumur would later turn to his assistant, after the visitors were gone, and say: 'Das hat der alte Fritz nie gesag!' ('Old Fritz never said that.')

Dr Henri Dumur was to play a key role in negotiating with the American Occupation Authorities and guiding the way for the company to get back on its feet rapidly. During the period of 19-26 November 1946, Dumur assisted investigators from the British Intelligence Objectives Sub-Committee in their inquiries concerning 'the methods of manufacture and constructional details of the Leica Camera with particular reference to finish, assembling and testing'. [16]

With regard to the Leitz labour force, the British investigators concluded that sound labour practices made for the Leica camera still being 'worthy of its pre-eminent position': [17]

The Leitz factory is a well-run, happy organisation, this being due in no small measure to the family nature of the business and to its importance in the neighbourhood. Discipline is strict without being severe and one gets the impression of great interest by employees of every grade in the work being performed.

This pride in workmanship and the just pride all have in their world-wide reputation for quality work is the permeating spirit of the place and helps greatly to offset apathy caused by the present dismal state of the country.

This 'well-run, happy organisation' rapidly gained its post-war footing through excellent productivity and the introduction of extraordinarily successful innovations such as the Leica M-3 camera and the Summicron lenses.

The wartime activities of Ernst Leitz II's daughter, Dr Elsie Kühn-Leitz (1903-85), however, point towards another facet of the concern for the welfare of Jews and other victims of Nazism. In a written testimony completed in 1946, she details the emotional and physical suffering that she witnessed among female forced labourers (Zwangsarbeiter) and how she sought to improve their living conditions. [18]

As Leitz was supplying equipment to the military and had lost a great number of workers to the war, approximately 700-800 Ukrainian women were attached to the factory as forced labourers beginning in 1942. [19] Elsie Kÿhn-Leitz's efforts to better the living conditions of these Ukrainian women included: improving their food, obtaining clothing and radios (!), setting up a sewing room and organising a schedule so the workers could bathe regularly. Elsie Kÿhn-Leitz's frequent visits to the camp housing these women aroused the suspicions of the Gestapo.

According to Kÿhn-Leitz, in May 1943, there was renewed persecution against Jews Ñat this point those in mixed marriages especiallyÑ in the Hessen-Nassau district. She was approached by Julie Gerke, who sought help for another woman, Hedwig Palm, a member of a Wetzlar family that was well known locally for making eyeglasses. Kÿhn-Leitz helped them to flee to her aunt in Munich and, after some time, the two women attempted to escape to Switzerland but unfortunately they were caught as they were searching for the place where they intended to cross the border.

Elsie Kÿhn-Leitz was implicated and arrested by the Gestapo. From 10 September to 28 November 1943 she was imprisoned by the Gestapo in Frankfurt. The cost to her physical and emotional health was considerable and it was only through the payment of a massive ÔransomÕ by her father (negotiated by Dr Willi Hof, a prominent advocate of the autobahn and family friend) that she was released. Months of medical care were required to heal her head injuries. After her release Kÿhn-Leitz was subjected to regular harassment by the Gestapo until the end of the war.

It is with the testimony of Elsie Kÿhn-Leitz that an image emerges of a humane and altruistic personality.[20] She was very concerned with improving the day to day conditions of forced labourers. She voluntarily assisted the attempted escape of a Jewish woman without seeking any reward for herself. Even while imprisoned by the Gestapo, she took an active interest in the welfare of Jewish and non-Jewish inmates and shared the care packages that she received from her family. Elsie Kÿhn-Leitz had much to lose: a privileged existence consisting of wealth, high social position, a university education and motherhood.

When Norman C. Lipton approached Ernst Leitz II's youngest son, Gunther (1915-69) with whom he was well acquainted, about his desire to write the story of the 'underground railway out of Germany' for Reader's Digest, he was told 'absolutely not': [21]

Gunther, who was usually very soft spoken, almost lost his temper. 'Not while I'm alive,' he practically shouted. 'My father did what he did because he felt responsible for his employees and their families and also for our neighbours. He was able to act because the government needed our factory's military output. No one can ever know what other Germans had done for the persecuted within the limits of their ability.'

Gunther Leitz's refusal in 1967 to have the story published during his lifetime could well have been the result of an innate modesty about his family's actions. For him, there was no heroism involved. Helping Jews in the way that was done was what any decent human being would have done, given the opportunity.

Given the overall history of how photography was employed by Nazis during the Holocaust, it is certainly remarkable to learn of the rescue activities engaged in by one of the most celebrated camera manufacturing firms in Germany.[22] Not only did the saving of Jews by Leitz make good long-term pragmatic sense, but,

the apparently selfless actions and words of the Leitz family strongly suggest altruistic motivations. This story of humaneness deserves considerably more research. [23]

#### Notes

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[1] F. D. Smith, 'Photography and the Holocaust'. The Journal of Progressive Judaism 1 (1993), pp. 5-56.

[2] Smith, 'Photography and the Holocaust', p.5.

[3] J. C. Legmany and A. Roille, A History of Photography, Social and Cultural Perspectives (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 150-57.

[4] Legmany and Roille, A History of Photography, p. 154.

[5] A sampling of such advertising may be found in F. W. Ruttinger, Leica in der Werbung 1925-1950 (Huckelhoven, Germany: Wittig-Fachbuchverlag, 1986).

[6] The definitive published collection of this work is U. Keller (ed), The Warsaw Ghetto in Photographs (New York: Dover, 1984).

[7] I have learned much through my correspondence with Norman C. Lipton, a Leitz employee in New York who witnessed these activities.

[8] See n.7

[9] A letter of testimony dated 17 February 1961 and written by Henry Enfield, a Florida photographic retailer. In addition, his son, Kurt, was assisted by Leitz to find a position at Wallace-Heaton in London until able to rejoin his father and other family members in the United States in 1939.

[10] See n.7

[11] Letter dated 18 April 1939.

[12] E. G. Keller, E Leitz Inc., New York, The Odyssey of an Enterprise Importing Leitz Scientific Instruments and Leica Cameras from Germany between 1893 and 1930 (New York: Keller, 1996), p.28.

[13] E. G. Keller, *The Source of Today's Thirty Five Millimeter Photography, Part I* (New York: Butts Hollow Services, 1989), unpaginated.

[14] Keller, *The Source of Today's Thirty Five Millimeter Photography*.

[15] Keller, *The Source of Today's Thirty Five Millimeter Photography*.

[16] H.J. Bigg and L.G.H. Cattle, *The 'Leica' Camera* (London: British Intelligence Objectives Sub-Committee, 1946), p.1.

[17] Bigg and Cattle, *The 'Leica' Camera*, p.11.

[18] E. Kÿhn-Leitz, 'The Time of My Imprisonment by the Gestapo in Frankfurt/Main from 10th September to 28th November 1943' (England: Leica Historical Society, 1984).

Elsie Kÿhn-Leitz's account of her imprisonment is included with other letters and experiences in *Elsie Kÿhn-Leitz Mut Zut Menschlichkeit, Vom Wirken einer Frau in ihrer Zeit*, edited by Dr Claus Otto Nass and published by Europa Union Verlag in 1994, 521 pages, ISBN 3-7713-0451-4.

[19] I am also trying to gain an understanding of the complex subject of the Zwangsarbeiter who were assigned to Leitz. I would be very interested in hearing from anyone who may be able to help me, particularly eyewitnesses or survivors.

The camp housing the Zwangsarbeiter where Elsie Kÿhn-Leitz engaged in her humanitarian efforts was located virtually across the road from the Leitz-Werke. Today, there is a sports stadium on the site of the labour camp. The barracks that housed the labourers were 'recycled' after the war and some are still in use in Wetzlar. On a site near the former labour camp, they house some ethnic/cultural organisation and they are still referred to as 'Leitz-Barracks' on the signs posted outside.

[20] For a systematic study that explores the personal characteristics of rescuers of Jews during the Nazi era, see S. P. Oliner and P. M. Oliner, *The Altruistic Personality, Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe* (New York: Macmillan, 1988)

[21] See n.7.

[22] Leitz's chief competition came from Carl Zeiss Optics located in Jena. There, too, efforts were made to safeguard a few prominent Jewish managers and scientists. See G. Gilbert, *The Illustrated World Wide Who's Who of Jews in Photography* (New York: George Gilbert, 1996), p.151.

At the firm of Franke and Heidecke, producers of the Rolleiflex, there may have been efforts to help a few Jewish employees escape. The picture at the

Rollei factory is coloured, however, by a staunch association with the Nazi Party. This tie led to the abandoning of the production of a 9 x 9cm format studio camera whose prototype had been utilised by a well-known Jewish portrait photographer in Berlin, Solomon Kahn. See I. Parker (ed.), *Rollei TLR, The History* (Jersey: Club Rollei, 1992), pp. 89-104.

[23] Further research would be well served by interviewing additional Leitz personnel and others who were actually helped. In addition, any further evidence such as boat tickets, letters, personnel files, diaries, and Gestapo reports would be immensely useful.

There is also, of course, the basic question: how many people were actually saved by Leitz? One history of the Jewish communities in Hessen discusses the wartime fates of Jews in Wetzlar and also mentions the rescue activities at Leitz, but numbers are not mentioned nor is it possible to infer anything from the meagre population statistics offered. See P. Arnsberg, *Die jüdischen Gemeinden in Hessen* (Germany: Societats-Verlag, 1967).

George Gilbert and Norman Lipton have claimed on various occasions that the Leitz family helped union leaders, gays, radicals and other anti-Nazis. For example, see Gilbert's article 'About Leica Cameras and the Freedom Train' in *Viewfinder - Quarterly Journal of the Leica Historical Society of America*, Volume 35 Number 2 (issue 2/2002), p.26. Norman Lipton never shared any details of such claims with me nor have I seen any other relevant evidence. I do not want to risk embellishing what is already a remarkable piece of history by repeating such unsubstantiated assertions.

Obviously, extensive archival work is necessary.

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The author would be pleased to receive any further evidence:

Frank Dabba Smith,  
46 Crown Street,  
Harrow on the Hill,  
Middlesex, HA2 0HR  
United Kingdom.