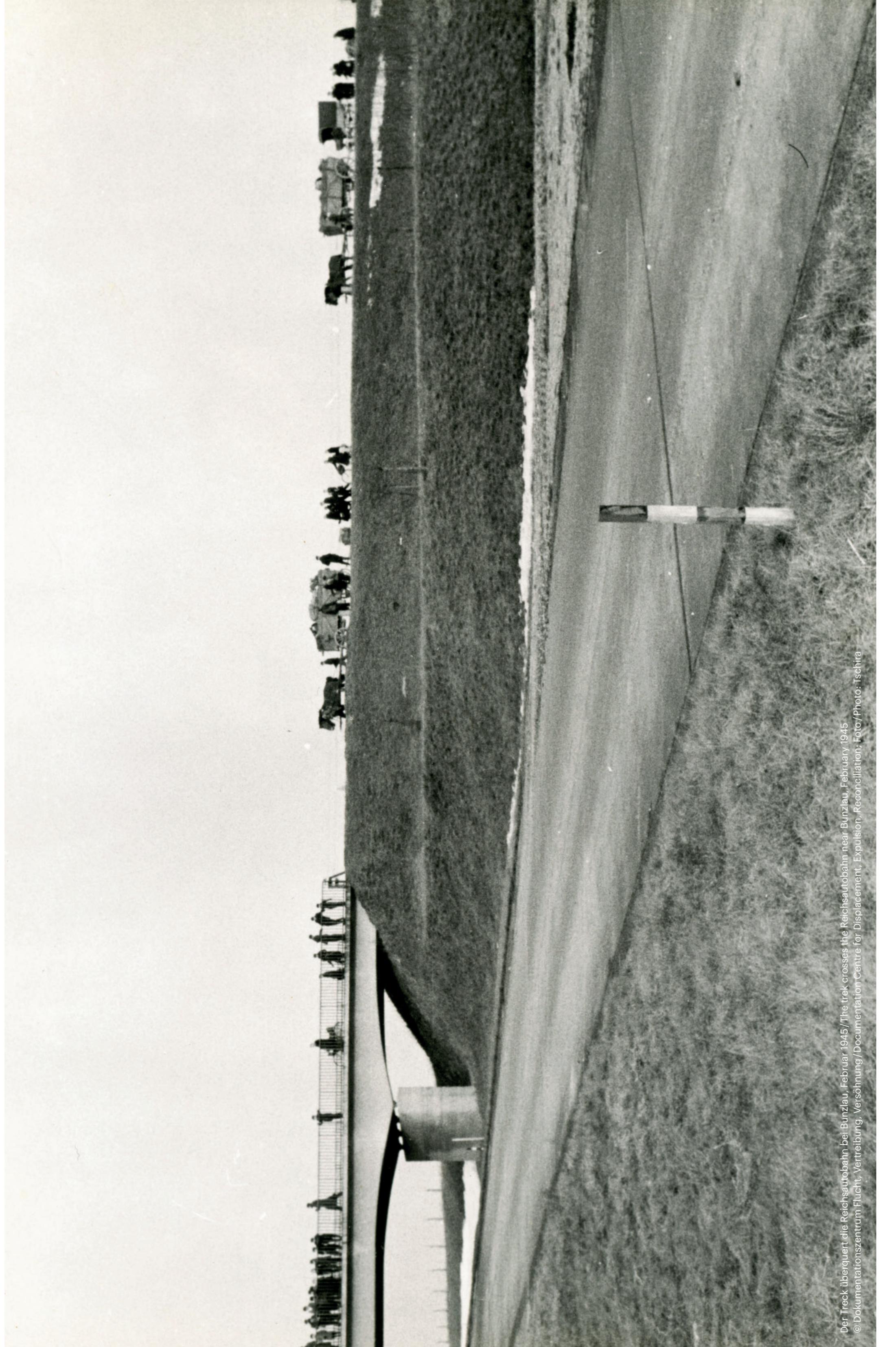




Landstraße vor Lubów (früher Lübchen), 2025 / Country road near Lubów (formerly Lübchen), 2025 © Foto / Photo: Meyer, OSTKREUZ



# Keil Jed

20.6.25-18.1.26

# Fotografien einer Flucht 1945

The Trek — Photographs of Displacement 1945  
An Exhibition About Displacement, Memory,  
and the Power of Images

In January 1945, millions of people fled westwards to escape the advancing Red Army. Chaos, fear and freezing temperatures prevailed. Private photographs from this period are extremely rare, as photography was prohibited. Most surviving images of these events were taken by Wehrmacht propaganda units.

The flight from the village of Lübchen in Lower Silesia is an exception. On 21 January 1945, 350 villagers departed. Among them were photographer Hanns Tschiira and his assistant Martha Maria Schmackeit. The gruelling journey to the Ore Mountains lasted five weeks. During this time, approximately 140 photographs were taken using Leica cameras—the most extensive photographic documentation of a refugee trek, captured by two civilian, professional photojournalists.

This remarkable photographic collection forms the starting point of a historical investigation. How did this series come about? What brought these professional

photographers to Lubchen? What exactly do the images show—and what do they omit? Who else was on the move in 1945—and why?

“The Trek — Photographs of Displacement 1945” presents all the surviving photographs in full for the first time. Visitors follow the trek’s route and learn about the people and their fates. The exhibition also explores the story behind the images: How did a former onboard photographer come to run a photo agency in a Silesian village during the war? What role did he play within the Nazi visual propaganda system?

The exhibition also examines the post-war legacy of the photographs. Some were reproduced in schoolbooks and displayed in museums. To this day, they are used in television documentaries—often without adequate context. For this reason, the images have become some of the most iconic visual representations of the collective memory of flight and displacement from the eastern territories at the end of the Second World War.

Finally, the view shifts to Lubów, as Lübchen has been known since 1945. The new Polish inhabitants of the village also experienced wartime uprooting and forced resettlement. Eighty years later, photographer Thomas Meyer (OSTKREUZ) retraced the historical trek route on behalf of the Documentation Centre, capturing the ech-

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# DOKUMENTATIONSZENTRUM FLUCHT VERTRIEBUNG VERSÖHNUNG

Der Beauftragte der Bundesregierung  
für Kultur und Medien

HNUNG  
ECONCILIATIO

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Projektleitung/Project management: Barbara Kurowska M.A. und Dr. Nils Köhler  
Gestaltung/Overall design: Marc Naroska  
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