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Annemarie Schwarzenbach's Image Reports 1937-38. Journalistic Travel Photography and Political Aesthetics of the Documentary

The dissertation examines the photographic work of Annemarie Schwarzenbach (1908-1942) – the Swiss journalist, writer and historian – in the context of her photojournalistic travels to the USSR, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Finland and Sweden in 1937-38. The drafts of photographic reports and their publications in the Swiss illustrated press are analysed. Schwarzenbach worked from 1933 to 1942 as an image reporter for the *Zürcher Illustrierte*, since 1933 her engagement in the anti-fascist resistance movement influenced actively her photographic perspectives.

Schwarzenbach's pioneering contribution to the journalistic travel photography in the 1930s focuses on an interdependent relationship between the image report format, the genre of documentary photography and the political nation state discourses. Looking closely at photographs and drafts of image reports from Schwarzenbach's journeys particularly to Moscow in 1934, during which she attended the First General Assembly of Soviet Writers together with Klaus Mann, and in 1937, the project takes into account Schwarzenbach's journalistic networks in the USSR and allows for a new perspective on her photographic work in 1937-38.

Furthermore, the impact the rivalling styles of Soviet Constructivism and Socialist Realism had on Schwarzenbach's photographic aesthetics are investigated, suggesting that her perception of photography as a form of social activism and political critique preceded her encounter with the photographic program of the Farm Security Administration in the United States in 1937-38.

The analysis uses the concept *Bildträger* for those archival materials which are not related to the photographic media themselves but carry information for understanding content and context of an image and suggests it as a crucial method for approaching Schwarzenbach's photographic practice. This critical approach allows for new insights into Schwarzenbach's work, particularly concerning her photographs and image reports' drafts from the USSR, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Finland and Sweden in 1937-38 and her political engagement through the medium of documentary photography. The research is located within the disciplines of Art History and History and Theory of Photography.