



LEARNING UNIT  
**PHOTO ANALYSIS**



## LEARNING MATERIALS



### EXERCISE:

Analyse the photo.

Ask yourself the following three questions as you do so:

#### 1 Observe and describe: what can you see?

- ▶ What impression does the image make on you?
- ▶ How is the photograph composed?  
Who or what can you recognise in the foreground?  
Who or what is in the background? What can you see?

#### 2 Observe and describe: what can't you see?

- ▶ Think about what you can't see in the photo. What may have happened immediately before or after? What information is not shown about the people or individual relationships?  
What knowledge do you have about the situation that enables you to say that something is not shown in the picture?

#### 3 Put into context the conditions under which the photographs were taken: what do we know?

- ▶ Who took the photo? Does it tell us anything more about the photographer? What was the photographer's intention? When and where was the photograph taken? What was its purpose? What power relations does it express? In what context is the photo presented?
- ▶ Additional information is needed in order to decode a historical photograph. What sources might we find today that help explain the situation depicted or show it in a completely different light?

### NOTE:

Photographs are an important source of information about past events. **However**, they only ever show a fragment of the situation they depict. Many are deliberately framed to convey a specific message or to give a particular impression. It is therefore important to look at photos very closely.

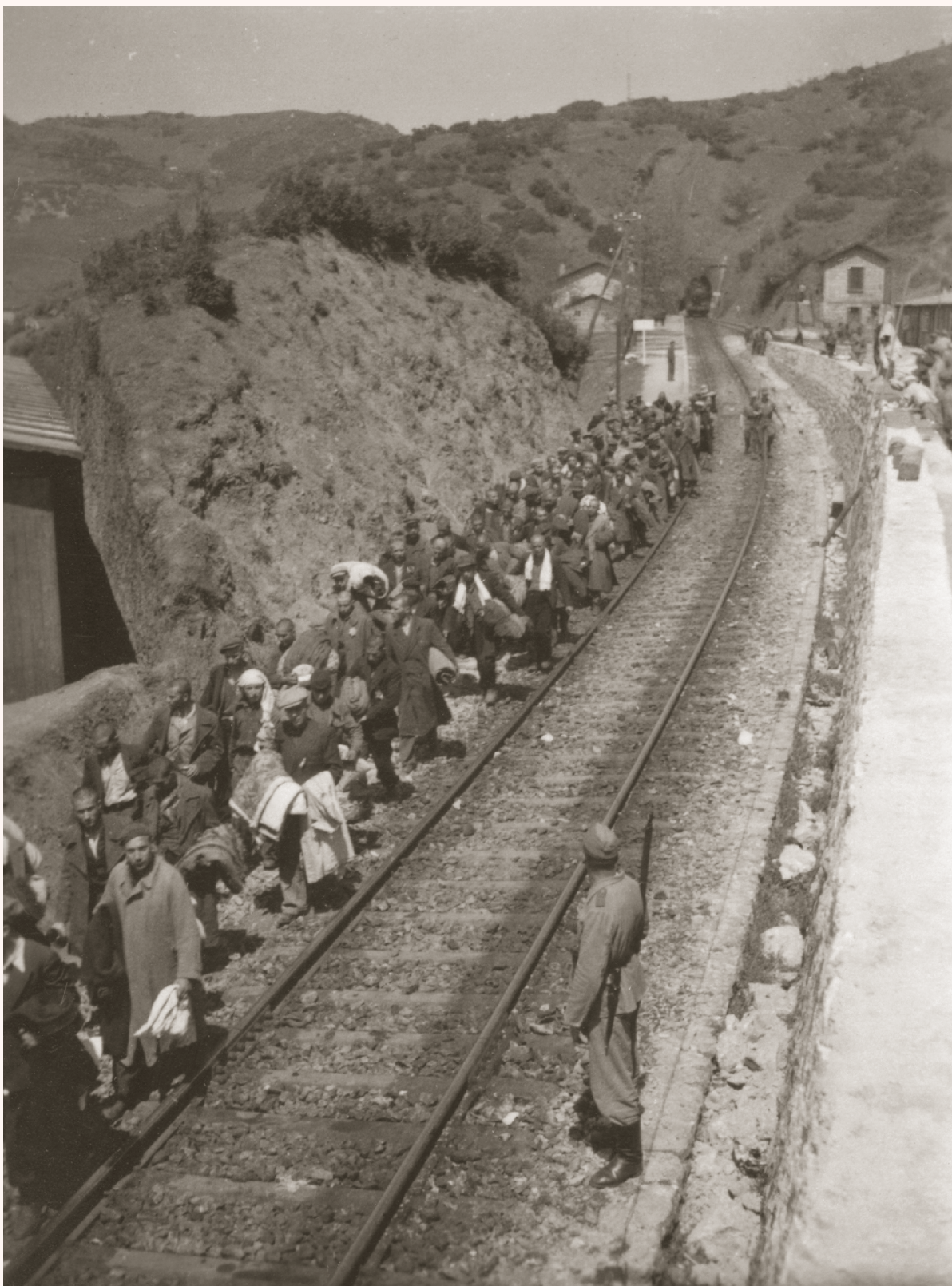


## PHOTO 1





## PHOTO 2





## PHOTO 3





## BACKGROUND INFORMATION: THE PHOTOGRAPHER

Born in Nuremberg in 1905, **Hanns Rössler** worked on motorway construction in Lower Franconia before the Second World War and met his future wife Hilde (1908–2007) at a forester's lodge near Bad Brückenau. They married but had no children. In 1930, Rössler joined the National Socialist Party (NSDAP). He was stationed in the Balkans during the war, and from 1942 worked in various places in Greece as a construction site manager for Organisation Todt (OT), including Karya. After the war, Rössler was employed by Fränkische Überlandwerk AG (now N-Ergie AG), a regional electricity supplier in Roth. The Rösslers travelled widely and also visited Greece. Until his death in 1995, Hanns Rössler lived with his wife in a small detached house in Freiligrathstraße, Roth.

As a construction site manager, Rössler's photographs depict his building projects. His focus was on the progress of construction and successful completion of the project. The naturalness with which he photographs the forced labourers reveals that Rössler had no qualms about exploiting the Greek population – to him it seemed normal. As site manager, Rössler was responsible for the deployment of forced labour and therefore for the inhumane conditions at his construction sites.

Many of Rössler's photographs give the impression that his time in occupied Greece was a tourist trip to be bragged about with friends back home. He therefore ignores completely the crimes committed by Wehrmacht soldiers on Greek soil: the massacres, the victims and the burned down villages.

In many photos it is possible to detect Rössler's fascination with ancient Greece. He poses in front of famous landmarks. Many members of the German occupying forces took photos of this kind. In several of his photographs, Rössler focuses on the simple architectural style or dilapidated buildings. Basic living conditions are clearly highlighted deliberately to make all Greeks appear primitive.

Rössler is not visible in most of the photos. This suggests that he took them himself. For interesting subjects or important events, however, he hands the camera to someone else so he can be in the picture.