



## Ethnological Studies at the *Institut für Deutsche Ostarbeit* in the Light of New Sources

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**Abstract.** – The article discusses the problem of the Nazi research projects carried out in occupied Poland during WW II by German and Austrian ethnologists employed at the *Institut für Deutsche Ostarbeit (IDO)*. Drawing on new or hitherto little-known sources, the author provides new and verifies the existing information to be found in publications dealing with IDO, mainly with the activity of one of the IDO's section – namely, the *Sektion Rassen- und Volkstumsforschung*. The paper presents results of fieldwork research and expeditions carried out by SRV ethnologists among selected groups of people in occupied Poland, with special regard to the ethnic, ethnographic, and racial studies. The analysis of the vast amount of documentation allows us to deepen our knowledge on the SRV's ideological assumptions and plans, and specifically to determine the actual scope of that research, its methods, tools, and the empirical results of field explorations. [*Anthropology and ethnology in the Third Reich; Nazi ethnic and anthropological research; Nazi ethno-policy in occupied Poland; Institut für Deutsche Ostarbeit; Podhale*]

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### Introduction

A few years ago in Poland, the discussion about the Nazi *Institut für Deutsche Ostarbeit (IDO)* that operated during World War II in the occupied Poland,

was revived in the public debate. The discussion was first sparked by a publication about the IDO, written by Aneta Rybicka (2002), and then by a book by Gretchen E. Schafft (2004) in which the author was the first to describe the collection of one of the IDO's branch called *Sektion Rassen- und Volkstumsforschung (SRV)*. The above-mentioned collection almost passed into oblivion in the National Anthropological Archives at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington since the end of the World War II. In 2008, original documents of SRV, including approximately 73,000 archival units, were transferred to Poland and deposited at the Jagiellonian University Archives (JUA). The structure and ideological principles of the IDO and SRV have already been discussed in many publications,<sup>1</sup> but it is worth returning again to the activity of SRV, mainly because of the discovery of new or hitherto little-known sources.

As a result of the research carried out by an academic team from the Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology at Jagiellonian University (IECA JU), more material was found, mainly connected with SRV activity.<sup>2</sup> It includes, among oth-

1 Michel 2000; Rybicka 2002; Schafft 2004; Bałuk-Ulewiczowa 2004; Burleigh 1988; Stopka 2008. An extensive bibliography of publications on the IDO is included in the work by A. Rybicka (Rybicka 2002: 175–186).

2 Research in the archives was carried out by the ethnologists from the IECA JU from April 2014 to June 2015 under a research project of the National Science Centre, Poland, titled: “Highlanders of Podhale in Nazi national and ethnopolitical concepts in the light of documents from the *Sektion Rassen-*

er things, over 1,250 photographs and glass plates which were found in the archives of the IECA JU. It has been established that over 500 inventory cards with attached photographs and several hundred pages of ethnographic studies are also preserved in the Archives of the Ethnographic Museum in Kraków (EMK).<sup>3</sup> Extensive documentation has also been found at the Institute of National Remembrance (INR) in the resources of the Central Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland. This documentation includes, among other things, several thousand pages of material that was collected in the field as part of an operation of systematic “description” of several hundred villages in south-eastern Lesser Poland. These materials are, for the most part, the result of the SRV’s cooperation with *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* (VoMi).<sup>4</sup> They form a very extensive documentation concerning research on folk culture in the territory of the General Government (GG)<sup>5</sup> as planned by the SRV. The above-mentioned sources, as well as the materials from Washington collection, allow us to deepen our knowledge not only on the Nazi ideological assumptions and plans of the SRV<sup>6</sup> but also learn the actual scope of the research projects conducted by that Nazi institution.

### **Referat Ethnologie<sup>7</sup> in the Structure of the Sektion Rassen- und Volkstumsforschung of IDO**

The IDO was connected with the government structures of the GG (Michel 2000: 151 f.) and was to some extent dependent on *Hauptabteilung Wissenschaft und Unterricht* (the Central Department for

Science and Teaching)<sup>8</sup>. In the beginning of 1943, this dependence was strengthened through a change in the status of the Institute. By a decree of Hans Frank, it became formally subordinate to that Office. Article 1, Section 1 of the Ordinance of Hans Frank on this matter stated: “The legal relations of the *Institut für Deutsche Ostarbeit* are changed in such a way that its independent legal personality as a public law corporation expires”. Article 2, Section 2 states: “The *Institut für Deutsche Ostarbeit* is an institution subordinated to the government of the General Government.”<sup>9</sup>

The largest number of employees was assigned to the SRV because of its exceptional importance, but this number changed over time. Sources usually mention 31 or 35 people (Harten 1993: 153; Michel 2000: 152). Erhard Riemann, who took over the direction of the section in 1942, in his report mentioned 31 posts, including 23 for Polish auxiliary academics – *polnische Hilfskräfte* and *wissenschaftliche Hilfskräfte*.<sup>10</sup> Publications emphasise that due to the multitude of tasks that this institution was to implement, as well as the German and Austrian researchers’ lack of knowledge of the Polish language, it was necessary to hire Polish personnel (Stopka 2008: 41).

In the introduction to a very interesting discussion on the IDO as a scientific institution adapted to the needs of the German policy pursued in occupied Poland, Ute Michel focuses mainly on the issue of the representation of academic ethnology in authority structures and the particular importance of ethnological knowledge for achieving the objectives of Nazi ethnic policy. Michel emphasises that she limits herself to the ethnological aspect, as it has not yet been taken into account in the quite extensive literature devoted to the IDO. She tries to answer the question of why the government of the GG put an emphasis on using ethnology in their vision of the Institute (Michel 2000: 140–150). As an argument

und Volkstumsforschung operating within the IDO” (Grant No. 2013/09/B/HS3/03574).

3 The inventory of these documents, drawn up by an employee of the EMK, is in the archives of the IECA JU.

4 INR CC 113/1–64.

5 In 1939, after Germany’s seizure of Poland, the areas that were not incorporated into the Reich, i.e., the provinces in central and southern Poland, obtained the status of lands deprived of statehood. On their territory, the General Government of the Occupied Polish Territories was created; starting in the summer of 1940, it was called the General Government. It was subordinate to Governor-General Hans Frank and was envisaged as a centre and source of labour force (Michel 2000: 150).

6 Harten 1996: 133–157; Michel 2000: 149–166; Burleigh 1988.

7 The Sektion Rassen- und Volkstumsforschung officially was divided into three divisions: Referat Ethnologie, Referat Anthropologie and Referat Judenforschung (Michel 2000: 152). In reality, the divisions are hard to distinguish. During the fieldwork research the staff of all Referats cooperated with each others.

8 In the financial plans of the government of the GG, the Institute was assigned to this department. See *Gliederung des Haushalts des Generalgouvernements für das Rechnungsjahr 1941*, Einzelplan VII: Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung (later renamed Wissenschaft und Unterricht). A similar plan for 1942 was published by *Regierung des Generalgouvernements Hauptabteilung Finanzen*, Krakau 6. Dezember 1941.

9 *Verordnungsblatt für das Generalgouvernement* (Journal of Ordinances for the General Government), ausgegeben zu Krakau, den 5. Februar 1943, No. 7 published the Ordinance of Hans Frank of 20 January 1943 (INR CC 196/300).

10 *Personalaufstellung der Sektion Rassen- und Volkstumsforschung am Institut für Deutsche Ostarbeit in Krakau*, without date (E. Riemann, Typescript, JUA “Stare IDO”, Box 71 no pagination).



**Fig. 1:** Anton Plügel posing for a photograph with children of one of the families subjected to anthropological examinations in Podhale, in 1940 (Anton Plügel's archive: "Góralen Anthr" – JUA, IDO SRV, Box 64/83/004).

against the opinions expressed by other authors, she claims that her analysis of the activities of the *Referat Ethnologie* of the IDO does not give grounds to maintain that "National Socialist ethnology" was in question. She emphasises that the fact that Plügel and other scientists assumed a causal relationship between race and culture, and thus constructed a theory about the historical continuity of German influences on Polish territory and the superiority of German culture, unfortunately, is not a premise only characteristic to National Socialism (Michel 2000: 164). As can be inferred from the text, Michel did not yet know about the documentation from the archives of the Smithsonian Institution. She based her work primarily on sources preserved in German archives and the Jagiellonian University Archives called the "Old IDO" (*Stare IDO*). The discovery of the extensive Washington documentation allows us to better understand the scope of the SRV's conducted research, its research tools and the results of its field explorations, although an examination of the collection reveals certain gaps and shows that we still do not have all of the archive resources of the section.

### Anton Plügel and His Research

The first head of the *Referat Ethnologie*, created in April 1941, was the aforementioned Viennese ethnologist Dr. Anton Plügel. Before he began working at the IDO, he was an official in *Abteilung Schulwesen beim Chef des Distrikts Krakau Gruppe Kunst, Museen und Sammlungen*,<sup>11</sup> for nearly a year, starting on 17 January 1940, when he arrived in Kraków.

His biography, including his academic and political career before his arrival in Poland, has been described in publications by Ute Michel (2000: 153–155, 160–162) and Lisa Gottschall (2015: 95–102). The present article discusses his work at the aforementioned Office and the SRV and is mainly based on sources which both Michel and Gottschall could not have known.

The Washington materials include extensive documentation, mainly in the form of photographs and questionnaires from anthropological studies that can be attributed to Plügel. It should be emphasised that almost all of it is from 1940. It is therefore probable that upon his employment at the IDO in 1941, Plügel included these materials in the archive resources of the SRV.<sup>12</sup> Also, his abundant correspondence survived from the period when he held the position of deputy head of the SRV. This correspondence includes communications with various institutions in occupied Poland and the Reich as well as reports on the work and plans of the *Referat Ethnologie* and the entire section from the period of July 1941 to April 1942. In the case of Plügel's publications from the period of World War II, his reflections on the cultural and racial inferiority of the Polish na-

11 This was later renamed *Abteilung Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung* (Department of Science, Education and Public Enlightenment), then *Abteilung Wissenschaft und Unterricht* (Department of Science and Teaching) (Pospieszalski 1958: 61).

12 Michel refers to Plügel's personal records, which imply that Plügel had conducted ethnological activity for over a year before working at the IDO (Michel 2000: 153). The materials of the SRV obtained from the Smithsonian Institution fully confirm this.

tion are usually quoted; these views were expressed in the article *Das Rassenbild des Vorfeldes im deutschen Osten*, published in the press organ of the NSDAP, “Das Vorfeld” (Plügel 1941a). An analysis of the new source material as well as a study-paper *Die podhalanischen Górale im südlichsten Teil des Kreises Neumarkt* (Plügel 1941b, 1942a, 1942b), which was the result of his field exploration among Highlanders of the region of Podhale, commonly called *Górale*<sup>13</sup>, complement the image of Plügel as an ethnologist. Referring to *Górale*, it is worth to give a brief overview about this group. In the period of national captivity between 1795 and 1918,<sup>14</sup> *Górale* were strongly mythologised by Polish intelligentsia and portrayed as “heroes of everyday life”. Their folk tradition was used in the construction of the Polish national culture (Majda 1998). Paradoxically, the cultural specificity of *Górale* which was exposed as the essence of Polishness, during World War II became an object of manipulation of the Nazi occupier who tried to use it to break the national unity of Poles by creating a separate highland nation, *Goralevolk*. Despite the pushy propaganda, the operation failed. The vast majority of *Górale* (80%) refused to join *Goralevolk* by declaring Polish nationality when the occupation authorities issued identification documents (Szatkowski 2012).

One of the first tasks assigned to Plügel, who at that time was still a museum official in *Abteilung Kultur und Unterricht*, was to assess the state of the collections of a few regional museums in Southern Poland. During this operation, he had the opportunity to, among other things, familiarise himself with the collection of the Tatra Museum (TM) in Zakopane,<sup>15</sup> where he conducted an inspection and prepared a plan for the reorganisation of the exposition. For Plügel, the collection of this museum was to constitute an important resource for his publication devoted to the *Górale* of Podhale. In a letter sent from Zakopane on 9 May 1940 to his superior Adolf Watzke, head of *Abteilung Kultur und Unterricht*, he enclosed a plan for the reorganisation of the Tatra Museum. In the letter, Plügel mentioned that the collection and archives of the museum would not be sufficient for the implementation

of this plan; therefore, ethno-cultural research in villages would be necessary.<sup>16</sup> The implementation of this plan is evidenced by the documentation of anthropological measurements carried out under his direction in Podhale in 1940. Among the records transferred from Washington, there are photographs of over 1,500 objects of the folk culture of Podhale and the whole Carpathians, as well as over 500 reproductions of photographs from museum collections which Plügel took himself or had taken at his request. In the July 1941 report on the activities of the *Referat Ethnologie*, he mentions the creation of a photographic database for anthropological studies as one of the most important tasks and writes that he already has more than 5,000 photographs of Podhale.<sup>17</sup> Plügel’s interest in the metal clasps of the highlanders is particularly noteworthy.<sup>18</sup> In his sketch on the *Górale* published in “Die Burg”, he did not pay too much attention to them, but promised to prepare a separate publication on the subject. Also, likely attributable to Plügel is the creation of a register of 638 metal shirt pins and brooches for clipping men’s overcoats, which was found in the Washington collection. For each exhibit, an inventory card was created with a photograph and data on the author and the date of acquisition. The fact that Plügel worked on this subject is also evidenced by his correspondence with the director of the Tatra Museum, Juliusz Zborowski.<sup>19</sup> It is additionally confirmed by the fact that even just before his call-up into the *Wehrmacht*, he sent a letter to several museums in the Reich looking for reference materials for the planned study on metal clothing accessories in the Carpathians.<sup>20</sup> Plügel also repeatedly addressed Zborowski with questions concerning other areas of the folk culture of Podhale, particularly literature and source documentation.<sup>21</sup> It is worth

16 JUA, IDO SRV, Box 01/04/02.

17 *Arbeitsbericht und Planung des Referates Ethnologie*, Krakau, im Juli 1941 (A. Plügel, Typescript, National Archives in Kraków [NAK], Team 545, IfDO 21: 1377–1395).

18 In Nazi propaganda, this element of the *Górale*’s dress was used as evidence of their ties with German culture. For example, it demonstrated that the clasps were derived from Gothic fibulae (Szatkowski 2012). It is worth noting that after a preliminary study of the clasps, Plügel carefully discussed this subject: “previous results of his work” would probably force him to depart from the thesis about the Goths (Plügel 1941: 61).

19 For example, in a letter written 1941, he thanks Zborowski for a copy of his article about *Górale* metal clasps published in “Lud” in 1932 (Plügel’s letter to J. Zborowski from 21 January 1941, TMA Folder: 62/A/II/a).

20 The letter from 27 April 1942. JUA, “Stare IDO”, Box 70 (no pagination).

21 See, e.g. the letters from 5 November 1941 and 4 February 1942. JUA “Stare IDO”, Box 70 (no pagination).

13 Podhale is situated in the south of Poland, at the foot of the Tatra Mountains.

14 As a result of the Three Partitions, in 1772, 1793 and 1795, respectively, Poland was divided between Russia, Prussia and Austria, losing its independence. It regained freedom in 1918.

15 Zakopane is a town situated at the foot of the Tatra Mountains. At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, this place was frequently visited by the elite of the Polish intelligentsia. Currently, it is a popular tourist resort.

noting that Plügel spoke about him in an appreciative manner: “Regarding the materials, a lot can be found in the Tatra Museum based on the private collection of J. Zborowski that he assembled with great diligence and expertise” (Plügel 1942a: 94 f.). As indicated above, in 1940, Plügel participated in pilot anthropological research in Podhale. Questionnaires have been preserved with the basic anthropometric data of 157 persons, including entire families or groups of children from the villages of Bukowina Tatrzańska, Kościelisko, Murzasichle, Nowe Bystre, Poronin and Zakopane. Students and teachers from the Timber Industry Vocational School in Zakopane during the occupation called *Berufsfachschule für Goralische Volkskunst* were also an object of interest. An extensive card catalogue with personal data including classes from 1929 to 1940 was created.<sup>22</sup>

In a study devoted to the *Górale*, which had already been published by the time Plügel was head of the *Referat Ethnologie*, there is a fragment that can complement the picture of his field explorations. He writes that it is an account of his own observations gathered during his “wandering” between the villages of Podhale: “The reception of the group of researchers, who usually visited unannounced, by families varied from case to case. Our reception ranged from a friendly interest, sometimes characterised by pride of belonging to the *Górale*, to a certain distrust of strangers. We have never met signs of servility towards us” (1942b: 246).

It can be assumed that the anthropological measurement in 1940 were organised as part of the operation undertaken either by *Abteilung Schulwesen* or as part of the relevant agendas of the NSDAP. The fact that they included groups of children from the first classes of primary school, or even entire families, corresponds to the rules adopted for the operation of the Germanisation of Polish children, which was initiated in November 1939 by Himmler as *Reichskommissar für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums*. The guidelines for this operation were drawn up in *Rassenpolitisches Amt der NSDAP*. They stated that racially valuable children selected for Germanisation could not be older than 8 to 10 years of age, because only up to that age was a “real change in national identity” possible. Therefore, annual “screening,” among other things, was planned in this regard for all children in the GG aged from 6 to 10. However, unlike in the lands annexed to the Reich, the operation never fully developed in the GG (Szuman and Hrabar 1949: 12 ff.).

As can be seen in the photographs attached to the questionnaires, the operation of anthropological research in Podhale was carried out under field conditions. People were photographed against a background of cloth held with hands or hung on the outer wall of a residential or farm building.<sup>23</sup> Plügel photographed the inhabitants of other regions in the same improvised way. The aforementioned documents are the only ones that suggest that Plügel personally participated in the field research before he was hired at the IDO. After becoming the head of the *Referat Ethnologie*, he prepared the plan of the research among Jewish population in Tarnów which began at the end of April 1942, but he did not participate in it. The project was conducted by Viennese anthropologists Elfriede Fliethmann and Dora Kahlich (Michel 2000: 160). Plügel also prepared trips for training groups that were to conduct the research. He probably worked on questionnaires as well, as his name is featured on one of the forms for collecting racial data called “Anthropologisches Erhebungsblatt”, and that tool was used during the measurements carried out at the end of 1942 and in 1943 in several villages in the GG.

Plügel’s “photographic archive” is also noteworthy. The Washington collection included a set of negatives and colour slides made, as can be presumed, by Plügel himself or by a photographer who accompanied him during the trips (some of the photographs show people alongside Plügel). On each envelope containing a set of negatives in the amount corresponding to a single roll of film, there is the name of the village or other data indicating where the photographs were taken.<sup>24</sup> The films are numbered from 1 to 126, and everything indicates that they were kept in chronological order. Also, the frames were numbered, indicating that the collection consisted of at least 4,419 photographs. As has been previously mentioned, all of them must have been taken in 1940 since over a dozen of the photographs were used by Plügel as illustrative material in the text published in February 1941 in “Das Vorfeld”. None of the envelopes mentions the name of the photographer, but prints of some negatives found in the collection of the IECA have Plügel’s

23 Regarding Plügel’s interest in Podhale, it should be emphasised that, contrary to a frequently held belief, neither in the preserved documentation of the IDO nor in the collected accounts has any reliable information been found that would indicate that the research conducted in Podhale had a direct link with the *Goralenvolk* movement. Such suggestions can be found in the publication by W. Szatkowski, who states, among other things, that A. Plügel was actively involved in the operation of *Goralenvolk* (Szatkowski 2012: 98 f.).

24 Handwritten descriptions on all of the envelopes are in what appears to be Plügel’s handwriting.

22 JUA, IDO SRV, Box 53/02–11.



**Fig. 2:** A Lemko family from the village of Nowa Wieś in 1940 (Anton Plügel's archive: "Łemken b. Krynica 1" – JUA, IDO SRV, Box 63/027/018).

name written on the reverse side.<sup>25</sup> This allows us to assume that Plügel began collecting photographic documentation in Podhale by photographing items and archival materials in the Tatra Museum. The next photographs were taken in the Jewish quarters in Tarnów and Nowy Sącz. Several films also show Lemkos from a few villages. There are also over 1,100 photographs of residents of Podhale. In addition, Plügel photographed Poles living in the area of Krosno. Besides that, the collection includes a large series of photographs that portray entire families. They registered, among other things, scenes of everyday life, work on the field, architecture and clothing. Undoubtedly, Plügel began to work on the research materials before he was employed at the IDO. Preliminary compilations of the anthropometric data as well as loose notes have been preserved, which according to our analysis, were prepared by Plügel. This can also be evidenced by a card catalogue consisting of cards with the annotation "Plügel 1940" referred to Poles and Lemkos.<sup>26</sup>

There is only just over a dozen of these cards. It is possible that Plügel made more, but, as is the case of many materials from field studies, they have not been preserved or have not yet been found. In the work plan prepared by Plügel in July 1941 for the *Referat Ethnologie*, the scope of planned tasks is very wide. These are mainly studies on "Eastern races" including the preparation of a monograph on the Neolithic races of Eastern Europe and "racial

studies papers" concerning highlanders' villages, as well as anthropological examination of Poles exiled to work in the Reich and arrested members of the Polish resistance movement.<sup>27</sup> A few months later, in the next report, he mentioned specific research topics concerning the folk culture of the Carpathians: the study of the metal clasps of the highlanders, folk stories, highwayman legends of the Carpathian nations and pastoral culture in the Carpathians and adjacent areas.<sup>28</sup>

Plügel's interest in the Górale of Podhale was crowned by the aforementioned extensive "ethnological sketch", which was published in three successive issues of the magazine "Die Burg" (Plügel 1941b, 1942a, 1942b). In the introduction to the publication, he emphasises that his objective is not to present a purely ethnographic picture, but to determine "what position that people will take now and in the future" (Plügel 1941a: 95 f.). Therefore, after discussing the history of the region, demographic relations and the culture of *Górale* he focuses on indicating the impact of German colonisation on the culture of Podhale.<sup>29</sup> When assessing the character of *Górale*, Plügel looked for evidence

27 *Arbeitsbericht und Planung des Referates Ethnologie*, im Juli 1941 (A. Plügel, Typescript, NAK IfDO 21: 1377–1395).

28 *Arbeitsbericht des Referates Ethnologie*, Krakau, den 14. Oktober 1941 (A. Plügel, Typescript, NAK IfDO 21: 1449–1455).

29 According to historians' findings, German settlers from Saxony took part in the first phase of the colonisation of Podhale in the 14th centuries along with the Polish population. However, German settlers quickly assimilated into the dominating Polish population. That is why no German minority communities have been reported in Podhale (Adamczyk 1993: 14 ff.).

25 More about A. Plügel's photographs has been written in the publication by Elżbieta Duszeńko-Król (Duszeńko-Król – Sekunda 2014).

26 JUA, IDO SRV, Box 53/01/002–057.

that would confirm that they constituted “a distinct people, differing in a number of characteristic features from native Polish populations” (1942b: 236, 251). It is not difficult to notice that Plügel’s interest in *Górale* of Podhale was consistent with the policy pursued by the German administration of the GG towards selected population groups that Germanic ancestry was ascribed to or who were considered racially or culturally valuable enough to be subjected to Germanisation.

On 19 May 1942, Plügel was unexpectedly enlisted into the *Wehrmacht* and had to leave Kraków. At the end of April, under the planned operation of anthropological and ethnographic research at the SRV, he corresponded with a German tape recorder manufacturer regarding a special piece adjusted for ethnological recordings in the field. He also made endeavours to acquire high-quality photographic equipment and lighting to enable photographs to be taken in dark interiors, and even an X-ray machine “which has repeatedly been sought in anthropology.”<sup>30</sup> He also applied to the Headquarters of the *Wehrmacht* for permission to conduct anthropological and linguistic studies in prisoner-of-war camps (Michel 2000: 154). The contents of the letters he sent from France, where his unit was stationed, indicate that he was not enthusiastic about his duties as a soldier (Gottschall 2015: 102). Till the end of 1944, Plügel and Gottong are listed as employees of the IDO in all of the personnel lists, payrolls, workbooks and insurance cards of the SRV.<sup>31</sup>

### Women at SRV. Elfriede Fliethmann and Ingeborg Sydow

In a report from October 1942, Elfriede Fliethmann, who took over the direction of the *Referat Ethnologie* after Plügel left, mentions the implementation of a few tasks planned and prepared by her predecessor. First, in order to provide the employees who conducted measurements with final training, she writes that a “racial study” was carried out on a group of Poles and Ukrainians in a Kraków delousing facility for workers being sent to work in the Reich.<sup>32</sup> The documentation transferred from Washington includes only part of the photographs of men

and women taken there; the subjects were usually undressed from the waist up. Next, the research was carried out in Haczów in the Krosno District. It was directed by Dr. Dora Kahlich from the Institute of Anthropology at the University of Vienna. The material that was collected in this study has not been found so far, and little is known about the course and results of the study.<sup>33</sup> Laconic pieces of information on this subject can be found in the document entitled “Data on the life of Dr. Dora Maria Kahlich between 1932 and 1945”, which was enclosed to “Personalblatt” and drawn up by the authorities of the University of Vienna on 15 May 1945.<sup>34</sup>

The greatest project implemented by the *Referat Ethnologie* was the research in Podhale in the village of Szaflary between 18 June and 25 July 1942 and in Witów between 26 July and 15 August 1942. Szaflary was chosen mainly because of the historically evidenced German settlement in the Middle Ages, and Witów was chosen for the comparison and completion of data.<sup>35</sup> It can be said that in the case of Szaflary, this was a model research operation carried out on a scale that was not to be repeated (Fliethmann 1942a: 272). The study took into account anthropological data, health status, rate of natural increase, family genealogies, the economic situation and living conditions. In addition, the history of the village was used by accessing the available archival sources from Polish studies. Also, the team of archaeologists from the Archaeological Museum of Kraków conducted excavation works there in cooperation with Sektion Geschichte IDO.<sup>36</sup>

The study group was relatively large. Dr. Fliethmann directed anthropological measurements, and Dr. Sydow conducted the ethnographic research. A total of 1,003 people, that is, two-thirds of the entire community, including children younger than two years old and elderly people aged nearly 90 years old, were subject to detailed anthropological measurements and medical examinations. All persons were fingerprinted; there are also hundreds of cards

*schung*, Krakau, den 20. Oktober 1942 (E. Fliethmann, Typescript, NAK If DO 21: 1077–1095).

33 According to a report that was drawn up for the Polish underground authorities, approximately 300 people were subject to the measurements (Bałuk-Ulewiczowa 2004: 90).

34 The report by D. Kahlich states that the study in Haczów was conducted in the summer of 1942. Archiv der Universität Wien. Personal file: Koenner (Kahlich) Dora Maria/2246.

35 *Arbeitsbericht der Sektion für Rassen- und Volkstumsforschung*, Krakau, den 20. Oktober 1942 (E. Fliethmann, Typescript, NAK, IFDO 21: 1077–1095).

36 In the Archaeological Museum of Kraków, an excavation works log has been preserved which covers the period from 30 June to 26 September 1942. Archive of the Archaeological Museum of Kraków. File of the Szaflary station, No. 9.

30 See, e.g. the letter to Magnetophon AG in Berlin-Charlottenburg from 22 April 1942, or to *Kriegswirtschaftsstelle im Reichsforschungsrat* in Berlin-Steglitz from 14 March 1942 (JUA *Stare IDO*, Box 70 no pagination).

31 A large number of such documents concerning other employees of the SRV is located in the Archive of Karol Estreicher at the Kraków Society of Friends of Fine Art.

32 *Arbeitsbericht der Sektion für Rassen- und Volkstumsfor-*



**Fig. 3:** A family from Szaflary posing for a photograph. The photograph taken during the ethnographic field studies directed by Ingeborg Sydow in 1942 (JUA, IDO SRV, Box 70/326/019).

with handprints and a similar number of envelopes with strands of hair. A series of photographs of over 630 people, which complemented racial questionnaires, has been preserved. In addition, descriptions of 238 homesteads were prepared using long sociological questionnaires filled in during interviews with the heads of the families. Detailed data on all family members (e.g. education, occupation, memberships to associations) and information about the homesteads (e.g. the homestead's amount of land, types of crops, farming tools and basic food) were collected. The place and time of the military service completed by men, their literacy and many other details were recorded as well.

In addition to nearly 2,500 photographs complementing anthropological measurements in Szaflary, hundreds of other photographs have been preserved that illustrated the everyday life of its inhabitants, including clothing, houses, farm buildings, household utensils and other everyday objects. Both entire families and individuals were portrayed. The majority of them were taken by Sydow, but there are also photographs signed by Fliethmann. In Witów, anthropological and medical examinations were limited to 310 people aged between 20 to 50 years old, and only 69 homesteads were described in the sociological questionnaires. However, psychological tests began in this village, although on a very limited group of adults.<sup>37</sup> Starting in Szaflary, every study participant obtained a serial number which is visible on all questionnaires and photographs relevant to them. At the same time, the continuous numeration was kept for the next villages, which allows us

to precisely determine the number of people subjected to the study despite having incomplete documentation. Therefore, according to that order, residents of Szaflary were assigned numbers from 1 to 1003, and residents of Wawrzeńczyce near Kraków, the last village included in the research operation of the SRV, were given numbers from 3295 to 3672. Szaflary was the only village where a publication was prepared based on the collected ethnographic material. Sydow recapitulated the results of her study in the article *Volkskundliche Untersuchungen in dem góralischen Dorf Szaflar*, which was published in successive issues of "Deutsche Forschung im Osten" (Sydow 1942a; 1942b; 1943). Fliethmann described the purpose and course of anthropological and ethnological studies in Szaflary and Witów in a short text (Fliethmann 1942).

### Erhard Riemann and His Idea of Ethnological Studies

The situation in the *Referat Ethnologie* changed when ethnologist Dr. Erhard Riemann became the head of the SRV in mid-November 1942. His first actions aimed to substantially and personally separate the ethnic and cultural research – *Volkstumsforschung* – from the race research – *Rassenforschung*.<sup>38</sup> In a speech prepared for the plenary meeting of the IDO in July 1943, Riemann emphasised the particular significance of the Referat Volkstums-

<sup>38</sup> *Arbeitsbericht der Sektion Rassen- und Volkstumsforschung*, Krakau, den 7.7.1943 (E. Riemann, Typescript, JUA, IDO SRV, Box 01/01/09).

<sup>37</sup> JUA, IDO SRV Box 52/03/002–009, 015–016.

forschung for “strengthening German culture” in the East and the importance of focusing on its development. He also outlined an extensive plan of the most important tasks for its implementation. It was to involve a great ethnological “stocktaking” of the GG through field research based on a questionnaire that he created. He considered the investigation of the existing or non-existing German settlements to be particularly important. He emphasised that, in contrast to “*Deutscher Volkskundeatlas*,” where the material was collected by sending out sheets that were filled by local “dilettantes,” he wanted to entrust this task to people who had been professionally trained. It was supposed to be an operation conducted on a very large scale in 1,250 villages by five research groups including a German and Polish ethnologist and photographer (ibid.). A working version of the questionnaire, which we can assume that Riemann developed himself, has been preserved. It is a series of questions covering all basic issues related to the image of the folk culture of a given village.<sup>39</sup> Many questions include references to relevant passages from “*Deutscher Volkskundeatlas*” (DVA), which was mentioned by Riemann in a speech prepared for the plenary meeting of the institute: “In this questionnaire sheet, I included questions from “*Deutscher Volkskundeatlas*” and a smaller collection “*Landesaufnahme des Reichsgaues Danzig-Westpreußen*” to ensure the consistency of the collected data with that in neighbouring areas.”<sup>40</sup> Riemann describes the formation of the research team as follows: “I asked 40 leading ethnologists in the Reich to find personnel, and everywhere I was received with a keen interest in my project. I received particular support from the *Institut für Deutsche Volkskunde der Hohen Schule der NSDAP*, *Deutscher Sprachatlas* in Marburg and the *Institut für Volkskunde der Universität Breslau*, with which agreements of close cooperation have been concluded. After long conversations with a large number of applicants, I found German co-workers that I needed. It was equally difficult to acquire Polish co-workers who were hired in various institutions and establishments, and with great difficulty could be discharged from their previous places of work. And so I had complete personnel. The organisational preparations were fully completed, and on 1<sup>st</sup> April we were to begin the study. But at this moment *Losackeraktion* began, which caused the shutdown of my section, or a complete reduction in personnel [...]. The whole

effort of previous months of work was wasted. This was all the more regrettable because so far nowhere in the Reich has a collection of ethnological data on such a scale, with such density of data collection and such a method, been undertaken” (ibid.).

In the report, he also expresses his regret that for the same reason it was also not possible to implement the equally important task of creating an archive of documentation on German settlements in the GG. Concerning the commenced work, he mentions the photographic archive of negatives and glass plates that was under construction and which was meant to provide important ethnological material. Despite their fragmentary nature, the collections of photographs found during the research, especially in the archives of the EMK and the IECA JU, indicate that they were able to implement those plans at least in part.

Despite the SRV’s limited capability of action, which is indicated in the first part of the report, Riemann emphasises in another fragment of the report that the work of the section experienced a “particular acceleration” thanks to cooperation with the institution *Reichskommissar für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums*. This was somehow legitimated by his nomination as “an honorary research associate” of the *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* and his appointment to Academic Director of the Office of Research and Documentation. At a joint conference in 1943, the theme of which was “*Deutsche Forschung im Vorkarpaten- und Weichselraum als Grundlage für die praktische Volkstumsarbeit*”, the head of VoMi SS-Obersturmbannführer, Dr. Weibgen, and the director of the IDO, Dr. Wilhelm Coblitz, emphasised the need for focusing ethnic studies in a way that would help strengthen the German national character (Michel 2000: 161 f.).

In the report, Riemann also specifies what the cooperation between the SRV and the VoMi would involve in practice: “I will issue on an ongoing basis opinions on all ethnic issues, and I am working, e.g. on a plan of Germanisation of the population of German ancestry.” In addition, the section was to provide scientific justification for the selection of villages for Germanisation. The speech prepared for the plenary meeting of the IDO ends with the information that on the following day, Riemann would depart with a small working group for about two and a half months in the field to conduct ethnological research in the villages of Uszew, Biecz, Łañcut and Markowa.<sup>41</sup>

39 INR CC 113/20.

40 *Arbeitsbericht der Sektion Rassen- und Volkstumsforschung*, Krakau, den 7. 7. 1943 (E. Riemann, Typescript, JUA, IDO SRV, Box 01/01/09).

41 Ibid. See also the settlement of the costs of research in Uszew, sent to Obersturmbannführer Rommers from the VoMi, Kraków, 8–24 July 1943 (INR CC 113/2).

In her article, Ute Michel estimates that in 1943, the SRV ceased its research activities (Michel 2000: 162). However, the currently available documentation shows that although the scope of activities was significantly limited, the operation of collecting material continued until the autumn of 1943. In January and February 1943, Fliethmann directed studies in the village of Borowa, near Mielec, which was inhabited only by Poles. The large local Jewish community had already been expelled a few months earlier, and some Jews from Borowa were murdered by Germans at the time of their expulsion from the village. For nearly a month, the team of researchers filled in the data of measurements and medical examinations (questionnaires for 746 inhabitants), carried out psychological tests and “described” 56 families and homesteads using sociological questionnaires.<sup>42</sup> Borowa is the only village for which written summonses to appear before the “Anthropological Commission” under threat of punishment in the case of neglecting this duty have been preserved.<sup>43</sup> Concurrently with the operation in Borowa in January 1943, Dr. Sydow conducted studies in several German settlements near Mielec. The last village where the team of the SRV examined 378 adults was Wawrzeńczyce near Kraków. The archives transferred from Washington include anthropological and medical questionnaires with their data, as well as psychological tests.<sup>44</sup>

Based on the available sources, it appears that in 1943, co-operation with the VoMi became fundamental for the SRV. The documentation of the INR from the resources of the Central Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland includes several thousand pages of material collected in the field during the operation of the systematic collection of data for individual villages of the GG. This operation was conducted by VoMi in July and August 1942 using questionnaires entitled *Dorffragebogen – Kwestionariusz dla wsi* (Questionnaire for

Villages). Materials from 247 villages located within the administrative borders of 23 communes of that time have been preserved.<sup>45</sup> However, it is difficult to determine Riemann’s contribution to the development of the questionnaire and the extent to which he was involved in the collection of data in the field. In the summer of 1942, he was not yet working in the IDO; however, it can be assumed that this entire documentation was given by the VoMi to Riemann for analysis once he became the head of the SRV. The preserved questionnaires often contain very specific data about a given village. Among other things, they contain information about the village’s population, including its ethnic composition, occupational structure and economic migration. It is complemented by lists of names of young people who attended lower-secondary school or university in the preceding twenty years. There is also detailed information on the number and area of homesteads. Several hundred pages of material complementing standard replies was collected, including, e.g. descriptions of rituals, demographical data, and the others.<sup>46</sup>

The data on last names included in the *Dorffragebogen*, as well as a lot of general information related to particular villages, were undoubtedly used by Riemann while preparing his article on German last names in the Carpathians (Riemann 1944a). As part of the cooperation with VoMi, Riemann also edited the *Dorfbuch* (Book of Villages), which, after approval from Rosenberg’s Office, was to be sent to all villages in the GG that had been selected for Germanisation of re-Germanisation.<sup>47</sup> The archives of the INR include a printed copy titled *Unser Dorfbuch. Richtlinien für die Bearbeiter* (Moritz Diesterweg publishing house in Frankfurt am Main, without date). It contains 35 main issues that were to be considered when describing villages, along with detailed instructions for the people who were to collect and analyse the material.<sup>48</sup>

In 1943, Riemann personally conducted field explorations in the region studied in the operation of the VoMi. This is indicated not only by the announcement of his departure in the aforementioned report, but also by his preserved correspondence with various institutions. An anonymous author of a report written for the Polish underground concerning the activities of the SRV states that during his trips, Riemann collected ethnographic material

42 The material from this study – see JUA, IDO SRV, Box 20/24, Box 31/12, Box 37/25, Box 50/27, Box 52/08, Box 59/20, Box 71/07, Box 74/16.

43 In many villages, people were reluctant to undergo the examinations. In one of the reports, Fliethmann notes: “Due to the strong resistance to the study of the population, which we admittedly also experienced in Witów and Szafłary, and which was overcome thanks to the intervention of the police, it was impossible to examine the entire population in a given age group in Hańczowa. The resistance also made the psychological examinations very difficult.” *Arbeitsbericht der Sektion für Rassen- und Volkstumsforschung*, Krakau, den 20. Oktober 1942 (E. Fliethmann, Typescript, NAK, IfDO 21, 1077–1095).

44 JUA, IDO SRV, Box 16/45, Box 17/46–52, Box 21/29–32, Box 38/33–36, Box 51/35–38, Box 52/11.

45 INR CC 113/24–46.

46 INR CC 113/13, 113/50.

47 *Arbeitsbericht der Sektion Rassen- und Volkstumsforschung*, 7.7.1943 (E. Riemann, Typescript, JUA, IDO SRV, Box 01/01).

48 INR CC 113/6.

(customs, legends, beliefs, clothing, economic life) and language material (Bałuk-Ulewiczowa 2004: 84). This is also evidenced by 101 photographs that are largely dated from July to September 1943 and were taken by Riemann in over a dozen villages. The corresponding filled-in *Dorffragebogen* have been preserved for these photographs. They were found in the archives of the EM in Kraków, and one photograph at the INR.<sup>49</sup>

Based on the preserved documentation, it can be concluded that in April 1943, Riemann participated in a field study in Haczów organised by the VoMi. At the same time, Dr. Karl Haiding from the *Institut für Deutsche Volkskunde der Hohen Schule der NSDAP* conducted studies on folklore and children's games there.<sup>50</sup> A preserved fragment of the report *Haczow: Volkskundliche Untersuchungen vom 12. 4.–28. 4. 1943*, with a handwritten annotation “Dr. Weibgen,” presents a wider scope of the conducted research, including a comprehensive picture of the villages.<sup>51</sup> It mentions two directors of the team: Dr. Lorenzen from *Einsatzstab Rosenberg* – political direction, and Professor Martin from Marburg – scientific direction.<sup>52</sup> At the EM in Kraków there is a 22-page typescript of *Die Untersuchung des Dorfes Haczow /Kreis Krosno/ und der zugehörigen Gross-gemeinde* from April 1943. Bernhard Martin is mentioned as the author.<sup>53</sup> It is therefore not clear if Riemann joined this team. Perhaps he also conducted research in Haczów individually. In a July 1943 report on the work of the SRV, he states that for the studies carried out in connection with the preparation of the ethnographic atlas of the GG, he obtained the support of *Institut für Deutsche Volkskunde der Hohen Schule der NSDAP*, where Haiding worked, and *Deutscher Sprachatlas* in Marburg, where Professor Bernhard Martin worked.<sup>54</sup>

In 1944, only over a dozen people worked at the SRV, and its activities were limited mostly to

analysing previously collected material and doing work connected with the preparation of the exhibition *Deutsches Volkstum im Generalgouvernement*. Riemann was the author of a detailed catalogue of the exhibition with a historical introduction of over a dozen pages.<sup>55</sup> Due to the decision to evacuate, the exhibition was closed just three days after it opened, an incident which Riemann deplored in a letter sent from Miltach to A. Plügel at the address of his military post.<sup>56</sup> While briefly presenting E. Riemann's post-war scientific career, G. E. Schafft notes that he became the Professor of Ethnology and Linguistics at the University of Kiel in 1964 (2004: 191).

As has been previously mentioned, this study is mostly limited to reproducing the research conducted by the SRV as it appears in the light of the new documentary material, which is a more abundant source than that which was available to authors who wrote about the IDO in the past. But even with this abundant new material, research on this subject has not been exhausted. A separate study should be devoted to the activities of the Lviv branch of the IDO. A study of the documentation concerning Lemkos has only just begun. The disclosed new materials and photographs in Polish archives have only just been skimmed through, and the IECA JU team has already found more traces of the scattered documentation.

## Abbreviations

- BArch – Bundesarchiv in Berlin (previously Berlin Document Centre)  
 EMK – Ethnographic Museum in Kraków, MEK – Muzeum Etnograficzne w Krakowie  
 GG – General Government  
 IDO – Institut für Deutsche Ostarbeit (Institute for German Work in the East)  
 IECA JU – Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology at Jagiellonian University, IEIAK UJ – Instytut Etnologii i Antropologii Kulturowej UJ  
 INR – Institute of National Remembrance, IPN – Instytut Pamięci Narodowej  
 JU – Jagiellonian University, UJ – Uniwersytet Jagielloński  
 JUA – Jagiellonian University Archive, AUJ – Archiwum Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego  
 NAK – National Archives in Kraków, ANK – Archiwum Narodowe w Krakowie  
 SRV – Sektion Rassen- und Volkstumsforschung (Section on Race and Ethnicity)  
 TM – The Tatra Museum, MT Muzeum Tatrzańskie  
 TMA – The Tatra Museum Archives, AMT – Archiwum Muzeum Tatrzańskie  
 VoMi – Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle (Welfare Referatee for Ethnic Germans)

49 G. E. Schafft's assertion that the Washington collection included Riemann's photographs has not been confirmed.

50 In documenting music folklore, K. Haiding was assisted by a student named Doris Sauer, who later included information on the studies in Haczów in a book devoted to Haiding (Sauer 1993).

51 INR CC 113/59.

52 The team also included two of professor Martin's co-workers, professor Mitzka from *Deutscher Sprachatlas*, two students, an assistant from the *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle*, translators and a photographer (INR CC 113/59).

53 On the title page, there is a handwritten annotation “Riemann”. The text is in the form of an article intended for printing, but we could not determine whether it was ever published (EMK I/1690/MNP).

54 *Arbeitsbericht der Sektion Rassen- und Volkstumsforschung*, Krakau, den 7. 7. 1943 (E. Riemann, Typescript, JUA, IDO SRV, Box 01/01).

55 *Deutsches Volkstum im Generalgouvernement. Ausstellung Institut für Deutsche Ostarbeit*. August 1944, Krakau.

56 JUA, “Stare IDO,” Box 70 (no pagination).

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