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*From “Euthanasia” to Sobibor*, edited by Martin Cüppers, Anne Lepper, and Jurgen Matthaus, gives faces and names to both the perpetrators and the victims of Nazi genocidal crimes. The chilling collection of photos from Johann Niemann, the deputy commandant of the Sobibor camp, provides the reader with an inside view into daily life at a Nazi death camp. With stunning clarity, the editors bring to light the lesser known experiences of those associated with the Operation Reinhard death camps at Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka. In publishing Niemann's photo collection, the editors are informing a broad audience of Germany's systematic murder of medically institutionalized patients within Germany and the attempted extermination of European Jews at the Operation Reinhard death camps.

The photo collection is organized chronologically, beginning with Niemann's life as a journeyman painter in the late 1920s and concluding with Niemann as the deputy commandant of Sobibor in 1943. Niemann was born into a lower-middle-class family in Vollen, Germany, and joined the Nazi Party in 1931 upon turning eighteen. He was ambitious and continually sought job and economic advancement, which led him to join Heinrich Himmler's SS (Schutzstaffel), receiving appointments at various concentration camps within the German Reich. In 1939, Niemann participated in Operation T4, a secret German euthanasia program to eliminate Germans deemed “unworthy of life,” those with mental or physical handicaps. His experience in the euthanasia program prepared him to oversee the systematic killing of thousands in Poland at the Belzec and Sobibor death camps.

As the editors detail, once Operation T4 ended in late 1941, Niemann served as part of the initial cadre at the Belzec death camp in 1942, where “approximately 250,000 Jews” were killed during his tenure (p. 53). Niemann was then promoted to serve as deputy commandant of the newly built Sobibor death camp in September 1942. As his photo collection illustrates, Niemann exuded his authority at the camp through his well-groomed appearance, riding his horse alongside his dog, and by giving orders to his subordinates. As the editors note, taking photos of the internal workings of the camp violated Nazi policy, which denotes Niemann's sense of authority to violate Nazi rules.
On October 14, 1943, a coalition of Jewish prisoners at Sobibor attacked and killed Niemann, along with twelve other German and local collaborator staff. The photo collection includes images of Niemann and the other men being buried with full military honors at a cemetery near Chelm. Shortly after, the Sobibor camp ceased operations and was permanently closed as a German camp on November 23, 1943.

*From “Euthanasia” to Sobibor* provides a comprehensive visual record of the perpetrators of the Nazi extermination policy toward European Jews. The context at the beginning of each chapter, prior to the array of photos, provides the reader with a deeper understanding of the camps and how the camps enabled Nazi policy. Niemann's photos provide a visual representation of the “community of the people” in social settings amid the chaos of death and destruction. While the content can be repetitive, the photos provide researchers with a better understanding of the Sobibor camp and its layout prior to its closure in late 1943. Historians of World War II and the Holocaust will find this collection insightful.

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the network, at [https://networks.h-net.org/h-war](https://networks.h-net.org/h-war)

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