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THE (REAL) FACES OF THE INDEPENDENCE DAY MARCH

RADEK VON HIRSCHBERG

I do not assign titles to the various images in this reportage. This is because I do not want to push my own view or limit their reading and experience options.

My mission is to reveal... the truth. Despite the fact that, in my opinion, this is the only conceivable strategy, I am well aware that it exposes me to the dissatisfaction and criticism of each side of the dispute surrounding the March. After all, a photographic report can also manipulate viewers by, for example, displaying just one sort of attitude presented on a given day. Because I do not believe in taking a one-sided approach, this series of images depicts the reality as I saw it and captured it: white, black, and everything in between.

It was simply the way things were out there.

I am delighted that, on this day, individuals representing often diametrically opposed worldviews, religions, and so on, peacefully gathered together. There were no acts of aggression this year, unlike prior years, however, I did spot and picture burning flares and masked individuals. At the same moment, in the same March, children, veterans (some in wheelchairs), Poles, and people of different nationalities and skin colors walked hand in hand. And this, in my opinion, is patriotism and Independence Day celebration.

Radek von Hirschberg



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employee at the European Parliament in Brussels. His research interests focus on 20th-century international relations and local issues in the history of the Suwałki region. His major published monographs include: “Safe haven. Canada and the Canadian Polish community towards Poland and Poles in 1939–1945” (*Bezpieczna przystań. Kanada i Polonia kanadyjska wobec Polski i Polaków w latach 1939–1945*), Warsaw, Neriton (2015) and “Editor Albert Morski. In the service of communism on both sides of the ocean” (*Redaktor Albert Morski. W służbie komunizmu po obu stronach oceanu*) in: “Not only the enduring and collaborators. Attitudes of journalists domestically and in exile from 1945 to 1989” (*Nie tylko niezłomni i kolaboranci. Postawy dziennikarzy w kraju i na emigracji*

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RADEK VON HIRSCHBERG (RADOSŁAW KWAŚNICKI)

As a photographer and art animator affiliated with the Nova Ars Poloniae Foundation (www.novaars.org), I use the pseudonym Radek von Hirschberg. I participate in a variety of creative activities, and my passion for experimenting allows me to push the boundaries of photography as well. I returned to this hobby after a thirty-year break, mixing it with freelance work.

My interest in photographing mountains and landscapes stems from my background and upbringing in the Giant Mountains. Natural light is something I adore. I mostly photograph in a creative manner, telling stories about how I see reality or constructing undiscovered narratives through what is in the frames. I do not only photograph landscapes; human beings also feature in my photographs, resulting in interesting portraits. Because the camera is an indispensable element of my daily life, I use it in my job to do street photography and reportage.

Almost everyone nowadays owns a camera and, in terms of technical ability, can take decent photographs. What matters to me is being able to express myself through photography in a specific place and time. Sometimes there is more profound content in it, and sometimes it is mostly about form.

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