

Life before Photoshop: Erased from the Past

Łukasz Migniewicz

Answers

Exercise 1

Modern photo-editing software first appeared in the late 19th century.	F
In the 19th century, photo retouching was mainly the domain of artists, who were often photographers.	T
Initially, only members of the highest social strata could afford to improve their photographs.	T
Photography became mass entertainment available to almost all in the first half of the 20th century.	T
Rulers have never retouched their images.	F
Textbooks for retouchers came with contemporary digital photography.	F
Photographs were already manipulated in the 19th century, both in order to beautify the persons presented and for expedient political reasons.	T
Modern photo-editing software first appeared in the late 19th century.	F

Exercise 2

Possible answer:

Abraham Lincoln was one of the co-authors of the 13th Amendment to the US Constitution abolishing slavery. Juxtaposing him with the senator, the main supporter of slavery, manipulated facts and could lead to falsifying the president's reputation. In turn, juxtaposing both figures and a clever photomontage could ridicule the ideas championed by John C. Calhoun.

Exercise 3

Possible answers:

- they were collaborators of Vladimir Lenin,
- they held top state posts,
- they became political opponents of Joseph Stalin (for different reasons and in different circumstances),
- they died as ordered by Joseph Stalin.

Exercise 4

Answer: YES.

Possible substantiation:

Trotsky and Kamenev were murdered on Stalin's orders and condemned to being erased from history, which is why they were removed from photographs representing the early stages of Bolshevik rule. Showing them together with Lenin, whom Stalin sought to present as his predecessor claiming that Lenin had anointed him as his successor, could have contradicted the legitimacy of the dictator's rule.

Exercise 5

Possible substantiation:

In the course of their careers, Kamenev and Trotsky clashed with Joseph Stalin. On his orders, they were sentenced to death (by a court ruling or as a political assassination). Erasing them from history was a necessity for Stalin since photographs and documents pointed out to their 'primacy' in the line of power (before Stalin) after Lenin's death. Before Trotsky and Kamenev fell from grace, Soviet propaganda had presented them together with Stalin as close collaborators, which did not fit in with the later narrative in which they were cast as traitors. The retouching served to strengthen the legitimacy of Stalin's rule.

Exercise 6

Possible answer:

What is the situation? – Falsification of all documents/censorship.

How should it be? – No censorship.

Why is it not as it should be? – A totalitarian system; state control over each aspect of life; falsification aimed at retaining the party's/an individual's grip on power, etc.

What should you do? – Find non-manipulated material; seek the truth.